

Bibliometric Analysis of the Evolution of Employee Stress from Burnout to Well-being

*The Evolution of
Employee Stress*

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ABSTRACT

Employee stress has gained significant attention in recent years due to its far-reaching impact on individual well-being and organizational outcomes. This study aims to identify current trends and patterns in employee stress research, explore influential journals that are driving innovation in organizational health studies, and explore new themes and topics related to workplace well-being in the face of the dynamics of the modern work environment. This study used bibliometric analysis to evaluate scientific publications related to employee stress contained in scientific articles published in leading journals between 1984 and 2023. The collection and analysis of relevant studies were conducted systematically by utilizing the Scopus database and using visualization tools, such as VOSviewer, and statistical software, namely Publish or Perish and Microsoft Excel. The research revealed key themes, such as "Resilience," "Stress Management," and "Workplace Wellbeing," that indicate increasing attention to understanding and addressing employee stress. The analysis also identified influential academic works and leading institutions that contributed to the development of this research. This study advances employee stress research by mapping trends, recognizing key research areas, and identifying seminal works.

Keywords: *Bibliometric Exploration, Burnout, Employee Wellbeing, Resilience, Stress.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tren dan pola terkini dalam penelitian tentang stres karyawan, mengeksplorasi jurnal-jurnal berpengaruh yang mendorong inovasi dalam studi kesehatan organisasi, serta mengkaji tema dan topik baru terkait kesejahteraan di tempat kerja dalam menghadapi dinamika lingkungan kerja modern. Studi ini menggunakan analisis bibliometrik untuk mengevaluasi publikasi ilmiah terkait stres karyawan yang terdapat dalam artikel ilmiah yang diterbitkan di jurnal terkemuka antara tahun 1984 dan 2023. Pengumpulan dan analisis studi yang relevan dilakukan secara sistematis dengan memanfaatkan basis data Scopus serta menggunakan alat visualisasi seperti VOSviewer, serta perangkat lunak statistik seperti Publish or Perish dan Microsoft Excel. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan tema utama seperti "Ketahanan" (resilience), "Manajemen Stres" (Stress Management), dan "Kesejahteraan Di Tempat Kerja" (Workplace Well-Being) yang menunjukkan meningkatnya perhatian terhadap pemahaman dan penanganan stres karyawan. Analisis ini juga mengidentifikasi karya akademik berpengaruh dan institusi terkemuka yang berkontribusi terhadap pengembangan penelitian ini. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting dalam pengembangan studi tentang stres karyawan dengan memetakan tren, mengidentifikasi bidang penelitian utama, serta mengenali karya seminal.

Kata kunci: *Eksplorasi Bibliometrik, Kelelahan, Kesejahteraan Karyawan, Ketahanan, Stres.*

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INTRODUCTION

Job stress has been widely recognized as a crucial issue by many organizations, as reflected in various previous scientific studies (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Parker & DeCotiis, 1983; Hurrell et al., 1998; Alrawashdeh et al., 2021; Hadiyanto & Prasadjaningsih, 2025). Factors such as limited control over work processes, irregular and excessive working hours, and conflict-laden roles are sources of stress that are often identified in various sectors (Landy et al., 1994; Singh et al., 2012; Parker et al., 2021; Kubicek et al., 2023; Strassburger et al., 2023). These stressors are exacerbated in demanding and exhausting work environments, where total burnout among employees triggers high turnover rates and complicates employee retention efforts. The accumulation of unresolved stress not only undermines individual well-being but also disrupts overall organizational performance (Jamal, 1999; De Dreu et al., 2004; Buschkens et al., 2010; Calvo & Gutiérrez-García, 2016; Kim et al., 2025). Its impacts include a range of negative consequences, from increased employee mental health disorders, anxiety, and work depression, to organizational problems such as high absenteeism, low motivation, and morale, decreased service quality, and damaged corporate reputation (Murphy et al., 2007; Cooper & Dewe, 2008; VanderWeele et al., 2020). By examining the correlation between employee stress and evolving workplace dynamics, this research provides insights with significant implications for organizational psychology, human resource management, and work well-being (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017).

In response to this complexity, research related to work stress has developed into two main dimensions, namely work stressors and individual differences, such as self-determination, self-efficacy, locus of control, and personality that influence coping mechanisms (Zaleski et al., 1998; Van Yperen & Hagedoorn, 2003; Deklava et al., 2014). Hessari et al. (2025) highlighted the imbalance of focus in the literature that tends to prioritize individual adaptation strategies to stress, while ignoring the systemic role of the work environment in creating or reducing stress. In fact, Kompier et al. (2000) emphasized that individual coping strategies are reactive and less effective in the long term. Shuttleworth (2004) and Bowen et al. (2014) also emphasized that the most effective way to reduce work stress is through the elimination or modification of stressors inherent in the organization. Supporting this organizational approach, recent empirical research at PT. Perkebunan Nusantara III (Persero) found that although work motivation and stress did not have a significant direct effect on job satisfaction, work discipline showed a strong positive effect (Gultom et al., 2024).

The research gap in this study lies in the dominance of individual psychological approaches in the literature that have not sufficiently discussed the systemic dimensions of the organization as the root cause of stress. In addition, comprehensive studies through a bibliometric approach to map the dynamics of work stress research are still very limited, especially in the context of developing countries. Most previous studies only examine micro aspects or are case studies, without presenting a comprehensive mapping of trends, key contributors, and research gaps in this field. Based on these problems, this study aims to explore trends and research patterns related to employee work stress through bibliometric analysis. This study will map the contributions of journals, authors, and main themes in work stress studies, as well as identify new topics that are starting to develop. Thus, this study not only enriches theoretical understanding but also provides practical policy directions in managing employee welfare amidst the dynamics of the modern work world.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The Effect of Work Stress

Job stress arises from the pressure experienced by individuals in carrying out their duties, often triggered by long working hours, task uncertainty, and role conflict (Landy et al., 1994; Singh et al., 2012). In a stressful work environment, these stressors can worsen fatigue and result in an imbalance between job demands and the individual's capacity to respond to them (Parker et al., 2021; Kubicek et al., 2023). The consequences of job stress

are not only individual but also have a broad impact on the organization. Individuals who experience chronic stress are at risk of experiencing physical and mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression (Calvo & Gutiérrez-García, 2016; Kim et al., 2025). Meanwhile, organizations face challenges such as high absenteeism, turnover, declining service quality, and damage to the company's reputation (Murphy et al., 2007; VanderWeele et al., 2020).

Studies Zaleski et al. (1998) and Deklava et al. (2014) tend to focus on individual factors in coping with stress, such as self-efficacy and internal control. However, this approach is considered less effective in the long term. Kompier et al. (2000) and Adwi (2025), emphasized that individual reactive strategies are not strong enough to cope with work stress sustainably. Therefore, approaches that emphasize organizational structural changes, as suggested by Shuttleworth (2004) and Bowen et al. (2014), which is becoming increasingly relevant, states that the most effective way to reduce job stress is through the elimination or modification of the stressors inherent in the organization.

Employee Well-Being and the Role of Bibliometric Studies in Work Stress Research

In the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, employee well-being is determined by the balance between job demands and available resources. High job demands without adequate support can lead to stress and burnout, while the availability of resources such as superior support, a positive work environment, and meaning in work can increase employee engagement and performance. Kirani and Rahmadani (2023) stated that personal characteristics and a supportive work environment play an important role in driving work performance. Research by Tarek et al. (2025) and Kurniawati and Nuvriasari (2025) also confirmed that support from superiors, meaningful work, and high levels of happiness have a significant influence on increasing employee engagement. In developing academic studies related to work stress, the bibliometric approach is an effective tool to provide a comprehensive picture of publication patterns, influential authors, and dominant topics in the literature. According to Abdullah (2023), this method is very useful in identifying research gaps and mapping the direction of future scientific developments. Thus, a deeper understanding of the literature and field conditions can encourage the formulation of more targeted organizational strategies to improve employee well-being.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs bibliometric analysis to investigate scientific publications related to employee stress. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative approach to evaluate bibliographic patterns in scholarly literature and plays a key role in understanding the temporal development of a research field, as well as in identifying research gaps that require further investigation (Todeschini & Baccini, 2016; Iqbal et al., 2022). By examining diverse information sources, this method enables researchers to grasp the shifting dynamics in the field, thus supporting the advancement of current knowledge and practices (Iqbal et al., 2024). The use of bibliometric analysis offers a holistic view of the research landscape, encompassing both foundational and emerging studies. This method aids researchers in detecting new research trends, mapping author collaborations, and identifying practical implications of existing findings, providing valuable insights for future studies on employee stress.

The research was carried out systematically in three stages. First, data collection was conducted using the Scopus database, chosen for its comprehensive coverage and high-quality academic resources (Kipper et al., 2020; Rashmi & Kataria, 2022). The search utilized keywords like “employee stress,” “workplace stress,” and “occupational stress,” covering publications up to December 31, 2022, with no language restrictions. Second, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to refine the data. Only peer-reviewed articles relevant to employee stress with complete bibliometric information were included, while irrelevant or incomplete entries were excluded to ensure analytical accuracy. Third, the data were analyzed using ScientoPy and VOSviewer. ScientoPy examined publication

metrics such as annual output and thematic trends, while VOSviewer visualized bibliometric networks, including keyword co-occurrence and author collaborations. These tools enabled the identification of research patterns and future gaps. The selection of Scopus, ScientoPy, and VOSviewer is justified by their academic reliability and widespread use, ensuring credible insights through visualization tools such as author network maps, keyword trend maps, and publication graphs (Abdullah, 2023; Oladinrin et al., 2023).

RESULTS

The findings of this study effectively address each research question presented in the methodology section. Visual representations generated using ScientoPy and VOSviewer are used to present the results, with Figures 1 and 2 showcasing the development and increasing prominence of keywords related to stress and stress management.

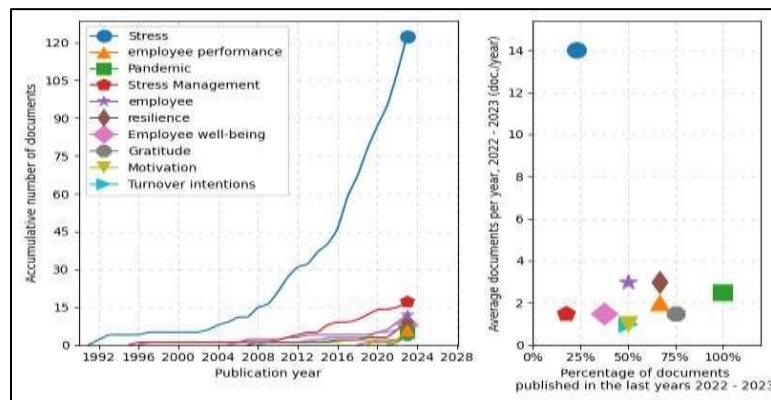


Figure 1. Author Keyword Evolution Per Year

The sustained focus on “Stress Management” and “Resilience” underscores the growing recognition of coping strategies and mechanisms in mitigating stress. Researchers such as Beddoe et al. (2013), O’Dowd et al. (2018), Baskin and Bartlett (2021), and Liang and Cao (2021), have actively examined approaches to strengthening individual resilience and equipping professionals with effective tools to manage workplace stress. The emphasis on “Employee Well-being” as a prominent trend in stress research reflects a holistic perspective. Rather than solely addressing stressors, this approach prioritizes the overall well-being of employees, aligning with the broader organizational movement toward fostering healthy and supportive work environments (Wood et al., 2020). The emergence of “Pandemic” as a critical area of focus underscores the contemporary significance of stress research, particularly within the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Scholars such as Bulińska-Stangrecka and Bagieńska (2021), Chanana and Sangeeta (2021), and Newman and Ford (2021) have explored the distinctive stressors introduced by pandemic-related challenges and their effects on employee well-being and performance.

The continued examination of “Employee Performance” and “Turnover Intention” underscores an understanding of the complex interplay between stress and professional outcomes. Investigating how stress affects job performance and employee retention is vital for both researchers and organizations seeking to enhance workforce management and productivity. The rising interest in “Gratitude” and “Motivation” indicates a shift toward incorporating positive psychology interventions into stress management research. By exploring the roles of gratitude and motivation in mitigating stress, these studies offer a nuanced perspective that focuses not only on alleviating stress but also on fostering positive dimensions of employee experiences. Collectively, these trends represent a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to the study of employee stress. They reveal an evolving understanding of its causes, consequences, and potential interventions,

emphasizing the importance of integrating psychological well-being, organizational priorities, and positive outcomes into contemporary workplace strategies.

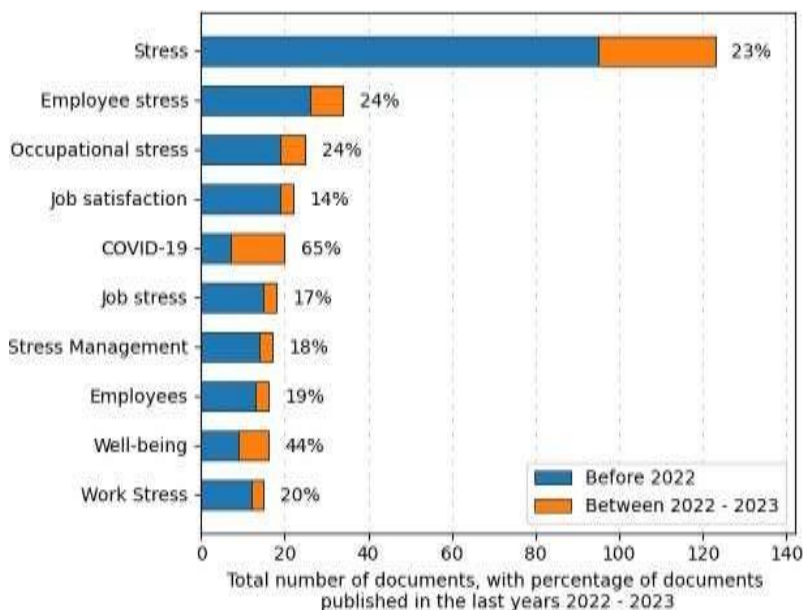


Figure 2. Publication Trends with Keywords related to Stress

The focus on critical keywords such as depression, anxiety, and burnout, as illustrated in Figure 2, highlights the attention these concepts receive in the sensitive domain of employee stress research. Contemporary studies delve into key themes associated with stress and stress management, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has introduced unprecedented challenges to mental health on a global scale.

This research addresses issues such as depression, anxiety, and burnout, all of which have profound implications for individual well-being. Moreover, it explores the role of stress management strategies, including mindfulness, resilience, and quality of life, as pivotal factors in alleviating stress and fostering mental wellness. These components collectively contribute to a comprehensive approach to understanding and mitigating the impacts of stress on employees (Heath et al., 2020; Kriakous et al., 2021; Pineda et al., 2022).

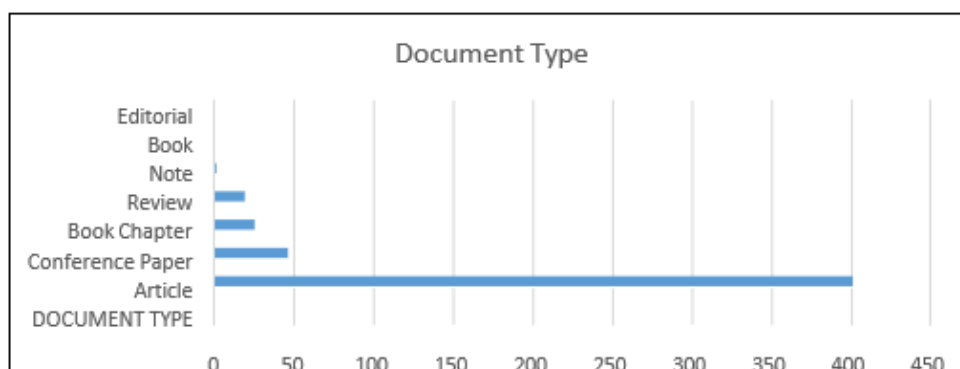


Figure 3. Bar-trend Graph of Document Types

The majority of publications in this analysis were in the form of articles, comprising a significant 82.91% of the total. Conference papers, another important form of scholarly communication, accounted for 12.06% of the publications. Review papers, which provide comprehensive assessments of existing literature, made up 5.03% of the total, as shown in Figure 3. Other document types collectively represented less than 5% of the

publications. It is also noteworthy that one document was not identified by Scopus, highlighting the thoroughness and transparency of the analysis.

Table 1. Distribution of Publications in Various Disciplines

Field of Science	Number of Documents
Business	190
Medicine	142
Social Sciences	128
Psychology	109
Engineering	49
Computer Science	48
Economics	29
Environmental Sciences	28
Arts and Humanities	24
Decision Sciences	24
Nursing	16
Energy	8
Pharmacology	8
Multidisciplinary	7
Biochemistry	6
Health Professions	5
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	5
Mathematics	3
Neuroscience	3
Chemical Engineering	2
Earth and Planetary Sciences	2
Materials Science	2
Physics and Astronomy	2
Chemistry	1

Table 1 shows the distribution of publications across disciplines, with Business, Management, and Accounting leading at 29.58%, followed by Medicine (22.08%) and Social Sciences (19.83%). Psychology contributes 16.90%, while Engineering and Computer Science account for 7.64% and 6.70%, respectively. Economics, Econometrics, and Finance (4.52%) and Environmental Science (4.38%) follow, with Chemistry having the smallest share (0.56%).

The dominance of 190 publications in Business, Management, and Accounting reflects a strong focus on employee stress within organizational settings, highlighting its relevance to workplace performance. Medicine's 142 publications indicate stress as a critical health issue. The intersection of these fields emphasizes a holistic understanding of stress, bridging organizational outcomes and individual well-being.

Internationally, the United States leads with 134 publications, followed by India (56) and the United Kingdom (50), demonstrating global attention to employee stress. Australia (37), China (26), and Germany (26) also show notable contributions. Other countries like South Korea, Canada, Malaysia, and Taiwan enrich this global discourse. This widespread research reflects a shared international effort to address employee stress through culturally informed and evidence-based strategies.

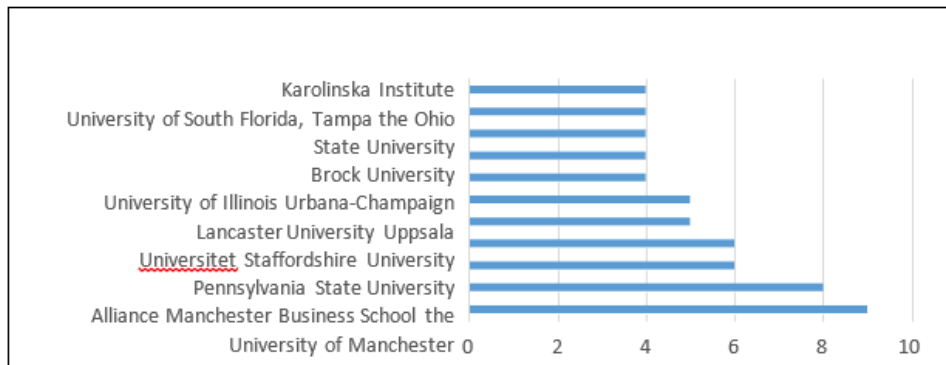


Figure 4. Journals and Institutions in Employee Stress Research

Figure 4 shows that the research landscape on employee stress is shaped by key journals such as the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, Frontiers in Psychology, International Journal of Hospitality Management, Work and Stress, and the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology. Each of these journals offers a unique perspective, contributing to a multidisciplinary approach that examines the psychological, environmental, and occupational aspects of stress. In addition, research institutions such as The University of Manchester, Pennsylvania State University, Staffordshire University, Uppsala Universitet, Lancaster University, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign play a critical role in advancing our understanding of employee stress. Figure 6 shows these institutions fostering a comprehensive approach to the study of stressors, coping mechanisms, and overall well-being, reflecting a global and interdisciplinary effort to address the complex dynamics of workplace stress.

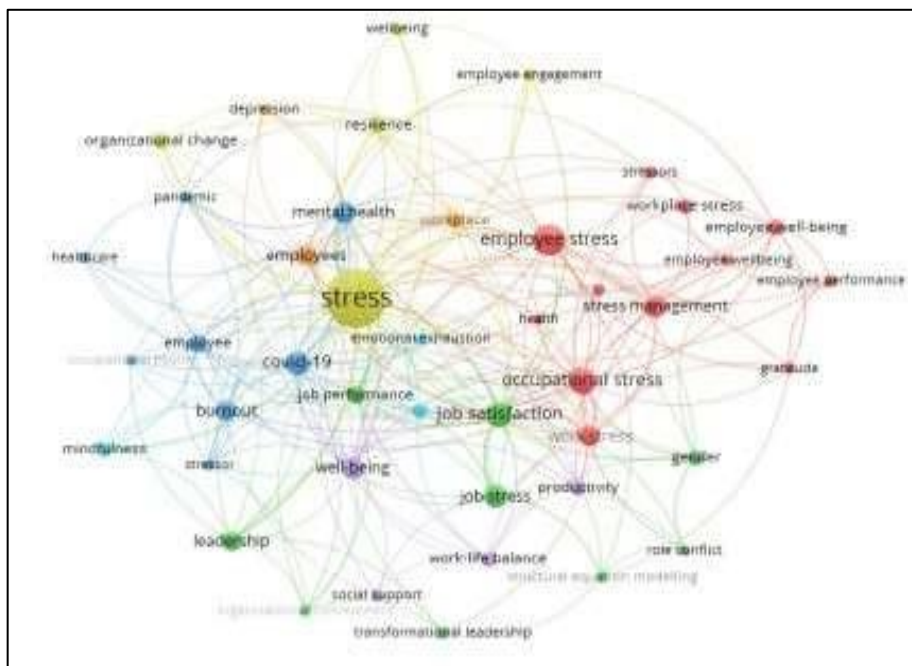


Figure 5. Keyword Analysis

The analysis of key terms on Figure 5 related to employee stress reveals a broad array of factors and interventions. The frequent appearance of terms such as “Job Stress,” “Occupational Stress,” and “Workplace Stress” underscores the focus on identifying stressors within professional settings. Additionally, terms like “Stress Management,” “Well-being,” and “Work-life Balance” reflect a concurrent emphasis on strategies designed to alleviate stress and promote overall employee health. The inclusion of “COVID-19” points to the pandemic’s impact on workplace stress, highlighting the

evolving nature of stress research. Keywords such as “Burnout” and “Mental Health” further stress the far-reaching consequences of stress, particularly its connection to mental well-being.

In terms of interventions, terms like “Mindfulness,” “Resilience,” and “Health Promotion” indicate holistic approaches aimed at preventing and managing stress. The prevalence of terms such as “Leadership,” “Organizational Change,” and “Work Environment” suggests the importance of leadership and organizational structures in influencing stress levels. Furthermore, terms like “Remote Work” and “Technostress” acknowledge the changing work environment and its effects on employee stress. Overall, these keywords reflect the multifaceted nature of employee stress, covering both the identification of stressors and the application of various strategies to mitigate stress and promote well-being.

Figure 2 shows that the most frequently encountered document types in research on employee stress are journal articles and conference papers. This highlights the significant contribution of original studies and academic discourse in advancing knowledge on the topic. The dominance of these two formats suggests a strong emphasis on scholarly work within academic and professional conference environments (Abdullah, 2023). Research by Garousi & Fernandes (2016) reveals that journal articles receive an average of 12.6 citations, compared to conference papers, which average 3.6 citations. This supports the widely recognized view that journal articles are authoritative and more credible sources due to their rigorous peer review processes and comprehensive research findings. These results underline the strength of scholarly discourse on employee stress, highlighting the critical role of high-quality research articles in advancing knowledge in the field.

Table 2. Top Ten Most Cited Sources

Cites	Authors	Title	Year	Journal Source
678	J.B. Avey, F. Luthans, S.M. Jensen	Psychological capital: A positive resource for combating employee stress and turnover	2009	Human Resource Management
510	J. Skakon, K. Nielsen, V. Borg, J. Guzman	Are leaders' well-being, behaviors and style associated with the affective well-being of their employees? A systematic review of three decades of research	2010	Work and Stress
348	J. D'Arcy, T. Herath, M.K. Shoss	Understanding Employee Responses to 2014 Stressful Information Security Requirements: A Coping Perspective	2014	Journal of Management Information Systems Routledge
334	S.J. Ashford	Individual Strategies for Coping with Stress during Organizational Transitions	1988	The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science
316	J.E. Bono, T.M. Glomb, W. Shen, E. Kim, A.J. Koch	Building positive resources: Effects of positive events and positive reflection on work stress and health	2013	Academy of Management Journal
282	C.L. Cooper, S. Cartwright	Healthy Mind; Healthy Organization A Proactive Approach to Occupational Stress	1994	Human Relations
259	M. Vakola, I. Nikolaou	Attitudes towards organizational change: What is the role of employees' stress and commitment?	2005	Employee Relations
198	J.R. Henly, S.J. Lambert	Unpredictable work timing in retail jobs: Implications for employee work-life conflict	2014	Industrial and Labor Relations Review Cornell University
192	J.W. O'Neill, K. Davis	Work stress and well-being in the hotel industry	2011	International Journal of Hospitality Management
181	K.A. Aikens, J. Astin, K.R. Pelletier, K. Levanovich, C.M. Baase, Y.Y. Park, C.M. Bodnar	Mindfulness Goes to Work: Impact of an Online Workplace Intervention	2014	Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Lippincott Williams and Wilkins

Given the limited number of previous bibliometric studies on employee stress, this research aims to fill the gap by providing an in-depth bibliometric analysis using advanced tools such as VOSviewer. The study explores global research trends, key themes, and scholarly collaborations, offering insights into the evolution of employee stress studies. A visual mapping of relationships between researchers and studies enhances the understanding of scientific networks in this field.

Table 2 shows a significant rise in publications from 1984 onwards, indicating growing academic attention toward workplace stress and the need for effective stress management strategies. The study emphasizes the importance of employee stress management within the context of business and organizational performance. Keyword co-occurrence analysis, illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 4, reveals prominent themes such as “Stress Management,” “Work-Life Balance,” “Resilience,” “Burnout,” and “Emotional Exhaustion.” These terms reflect a shift in research focus from merely identifying stressors to exploring strategies and personal traits that support employee well-being. Notably, the increasing appearance of “Work-Life Balance” and “Motivation” signals a growing awareness of the importance of mental health and balanced lifestyles in the workplace.

Table 2 presents the most influential academic works, “Psychological capital: A positive resource for combating employee stress and turnover” ranking highest in citation impact. These works serve as key references for future studies. Figure 6 highlights the leading institutions in this field, including The University of Manchester, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, demonstrating their significant role in shaping employee stress research. This study offers a comprehensive overview of global publication trends and thematic developments, contributing valuable guidance for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers focused on managing employee stress in modern organizations.

DISCUSSION

The results of the bibliometric analysis in this study show that attention to employee work stress has been increasing in recent decades, reflecting the urgency for organizations to address the psychosocial impacts of modern work dynamics. One of the main findings is the emergence of themes such as “Stress Management”, “Resilience”, and “Employee Well-being” which are increasingly prominent in the global literature. This focus indicates a shift from a reactive, individual-based approach to a more holistic and proactive approach that considers the organizational context as a whole. In addition, the keyword trend analysis shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant driver in expanding the scope of research on employee stress. Keywords such as “pandemic”, “anxiety”, and “burnout” have consistently appeared in recent years, indicating that this global disruption has triggered widespread awareness of the importance of mental health interventions in the workplace. Studies such as those by Chanana & Sangeeta (2021) and Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagińska (2021) support this finding, where psychological distress has increased significantly due to remote working systems, job uncertainty, and social restrictions.

Furthermore, the distribution of disciplines shows that employee stress studies are not only relevant in the realm of psychology, but also in business, medicine, social sciences, and engineering. This confirms that work stress is a multidisciplinary phenomenon that requires cross-field collaboration to formulate effective solutions. The dominance of publications in the fields of business and management also reflects that this issue is now seen as a strategic factor that influences organizational productivity and sustainability. Leading institutions such as the University of Manchester, Pennsylvania State University, and the Karolinska Institute have become centers of significant contribution in the development of theories and practices related to work stress. The involvement of institutions from various countries also reflects the importance of a cross-cultural approach in understanding the context of work stress, where local social, economic, and cultural factors influence individual perceptions and responses to work pressure.

However, this analysis reveals an imbalance in the research approach. Most of the literature still focuses on the psychological aspects of individuals, while the structural and systemic dimensions of the organization are often ignored. This finding is in line with criticism from Kompier et al. (2000) and Hessari et al. (2025) and who considered that individual coping strategies are short-term and less effective without structural improvements in the work environment. Therefore, future research directions need to explore more organizational-based interventions, such as job design changes, supportive leadership, and flexible work policies. Methodologically, the bibliometric approach has proven effective in mapping research dynamics and identifying gaps and new directions in the field of work stress. However, it should be noted that this method has limitations in capturing the quality and depth of content of each publication. Therefore, future research is recommended to combine the bibliometric approach with content analysis or systematic review to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study makes a valuable contribution to the evolving field of employee stress research by employing a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to reveal key insights into its current landscape. Through an in-depth examination of publication patterns, prevalent research themes, major contributions, and leading institutions, the results highlight the increasing focus on exploring and addressing employee stress in recent years. Key research themes such as “Resilience,” “Stress Management,” and “Workplace Well-Being” have emerged as central areas of inquiry, illuminating the complex nature of employee stress and the urgent need for targeted interventions. Our analysis of influential academic works identifies seminal papers that have made enduring contributions to the field, serving as foundational references for both scholars and practitioners.

However, it is important to recognize the limitations of this study. The analysis predominantly relied on data from the Scopus database, which, while comprehensive, may not encompass the full breadth of relevant publications in the expansive field of employee stress. Moreover, while the bibliometric approach is effective for quantitative evaluation, it lacks the ability to capture qualitative dimensions of publications, such as the depth of the research or the significance of its contributions. To address these shortcomings, future research should consider using a wider range of databases and adopt more sophisticated methods to evaluate the quality and impact of scholarly work. Delving into specific subcategories within employee stress such as evaluating the effectiveness of various stress management strategies or examining the role of organizational culture in mitigating stress could yield richer insights.

Bibliometric analysis, within the context of employee stress research, serves as a powerful tool for identifying publication trends, recognizing key research areas, and acknowledging influential works. The insights derived from this analysis will guide future research initiatives, support evidence-based practices, and drive positive change in the field of employee well-being and stress management.

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*The Evolution of
Employee Stress*

1682
