



When Job Demands Dominate: Rethinking the Buffering Role of Family Support in the JD–R Model Among Migrant Domestic Workers

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KEYWORDS: Workload, Work Environment, Family Support, Job Stress, Migrant Workers, JD–R Model

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Publication Date: 24 April-2026

DOI: [10.55677/GJEFR/05-2026-Vol03E4](https://doi.org/10.55677/GJEFR/05-2026-Vol03E4)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of workload and work environment on job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan, with family support as a moderator within the Job Demands– Resources (JD–R) framework. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data from 399 purposively selected respondents were analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLSSEM). Results show that workload ($\beta = .416, p < .001$) and work environment ($\beta = .321, p < .001$) significantly increase job stress, with workload as the strongest predictor. Family support has no significant direct effect ($\beta = -.063, p > .05$) and does not moderate the relationship between job demands and stress. The model explains 51.3% of the variance in job stress ($R^2 = .513$). Findings confirm the JD–R health-impairment process in transnational labor contexts and underscore the importance of structural workplace interventions to enhance migrant workers' psychological wellbeing.

Cite the Article: Putri, A.C., Efendi, N., Wulandari, J., Saptiani F. (2026). When Job Demands Dominate: Rethinking the Buffering Role of Family Support in the JD–R Model Among Migrant Domestic Workers. *Global Journal of Economic and Finance Research*, 3(4), 205–216. <https://doi.org/10.55677/GJEFR/05-2026-Vol03E4>

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The acceleration of globalization and transnational labor mobility has significantly reshaped contemporary labor markets. International migration for employment has become a structural component of many developing economies, including Indonesia, where migrant workers contribute substantially through remittances and domestic unemployment reduction. Among Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI), women represent a dominant proportion, particularly in the domestic and caregiving sectors abroad, including Taiwan. While their economic contribution is widely acknowledged, far less attention has been given to the psychological costs associated with migrant labor, especially in highly demanding domestic work settings.

Female migrant workers in Taiwan are frequently employed as live-in caregivers for elderly individuals, domestic helpers, or household assistants. These occupations are characterized by long working hours, limited rest periods, emotional labor, and blurred boundaries between work and personal life. Unlike formal sector employees, domestic migrant workers often operate within private households, where labor oversight is minimal and job demands are highly personalized. Previous studies have documented that such working conditions expose migrant women to excessive physical workload, emotional strain, and social isolation (Marella, 2019; Martiyani, 2016). However, despite the growing body of migration research, empirical investigations focusing specifically on the mechanisms that generate job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers remain limited.

Job stress has been conceptualized as a psychological strain that arises when job demands exceed an individual's coping resources. According to Robbins and Judge (2021), stress emerges when environmental pressures are perceived as threatening or overwhelming relative to one's adaptive capacity. In occupational contexts, prolonged exposure to high job demands may lead to emotional exhaustion, reduced well-being, and diminished performance. For migrant workers, stress is further intensified by cultural displacement, language barriers, and limited access to institutional support systems.

A useful framework for understanding job stress is the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model developed by Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti. The JD–R model proposes that all occupations can be analyzed through two broad categories: job demands

and job resources. Job demands refer to aspects of work that require sustained physical or psychological effort, such as workload, time pressure, and emotional demands. Job resources, on the other hand, refer to aspects that help individuals cope with demands, such as autonomy, social support, and feedback. When job demands are high and resources are insufficient, a health-impairment process occurs, leading to stress and burnout. Recent international evidence confirms that migrant domestic workers frequently experience long working hours, role ambiguity, and limited institutional protection, all of which increase psychological strain and vulnerability to stress-related outcomes (International Labour Organization, 2021; Hsieh & Wang, 2022).

In the context of female migrant domestic workers, workload represents a central job demand. Workload includes both quantitative aspects (e.g., number of tasks, long working hours) and qualitative aspects (e.g., complexity of caregiving responsibilities, emotional regulation). Excessive workload has consistently been associated with increased stress and adverse mental health outcomes. Additionally, the work environment plays a critical role. The work environment encompasses both physical conditions (e.g., cleanliness, ventilation, sleeping arrangements) and psychosocial factors (e.g., relationship with employers, communication climate, respect, and social support at work). Unfavorable work environments may amplify psychological strain by creating chronic exposure to interpersonal tension or physical discomfort.

While job demands are central to stress development, the JD–R model also highlights the buffering role of resources. Social support, particularly family support, has long been recognized as an important protective factor against stress. Emotional encouragement, reassurance, and instrumental assistance from family members may enhance resilience and coping capacity (Russo et al., 2016). In traditional employment contexts, family support often mitigates work-related stress by providing emotional stability and practical assistance outside the workplace. Contemporary JD–R research emphasizes that job demands exert stronger effects in contexts characterized by low institutional regulation and limited organizational support structures (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Lesener et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2021).

However, in transnational migration settings, the role of family support becomes more complex. Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan typically live far from their families, with communication limited to digital platforms. Although emotional support may still be perceived, its physical absence raises important theoretical questions regarding its effectiveness as a buffering resource. Does geographically distant family support retain sufficient contextual immediacy to moderate the impact of intense job demands? Or are structural workplace conditions more influential than distal social resources? Emerging research on transnational families suggests that geographically distant emotional support may provide symbolic reassurance but has limited capacity to buffer structural workplace stressors (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2021; Hammer et al., 2022).

Despite the theoretical relevance of these questions, limited empirical research has tested family support as a moderating variable within the JD–R framework among migrant domestic workers. Most studies examining job stress among migrant workers focus either on job demands or general wellbeing outcomes without explicitly modeling the interaction between demands and personal resources. Furthermore, the majority of JD–R research has been conducted in corporate, healthcare, or public sector settings, leaving informal and domestic migrant labor contexts underrepresented.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining (1) the direct effects of workload and work environment on job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan, (2) the direct effect of family support on job stress, and (3) the moderating role of family support in the relationships between job demands and stress. By situating this analysis within the JD–R framework, the study aims to extend the model’s applicability to transnational domestic labor and evaluate the boundary conditions of personal resources in migration contexts.

Understanding these dynamics is not only theoretically significant but also socially urgent. Indonesian female migrant workers represent a vulnerable labor population whose psychological well-being directly influences productivity, long-term health, and quality of life. Identifying whether stress is primarily driven by structural job demands or mitigated by social resources has important implications for labor regulation, institutional support, and policy intervention.

In sum, this research contributes to organizational behavior and migration studies by empirically testing the JD–R model in a transnational labor context and critically examining the buffering capacity of distant family support. By clarifying the determinants of job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan, the study provides a foundation for both theoretical refinement and evidence-based policy development.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Job Stress in Migrant Labor Contexts

Job stress has been widely examined in organizational psychology as a psychological response arising when job demands exceed individual coping resources. According to Lazarus and Folkman’s transactional stress theory, stress is not merely an external stimulus but a cognitive appraisal process in which individuals evaluate whether environmental demands threaten their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In occupational settings, persistent stress exposure may result in emotional exhaustion, health deterioration, and decreased job performance.

Among migrant workers, job stress tends to be structurally intensified. Migration entails separation from family, adaptation to new sociocultural environments, and dependence on employers for legal and economic security. These factors introduce additional

stressors beyond routine job demands. Empirical studies on migrant domestic workers have shown heightened vulnerability to psychological strain due to precarious legal status, long working hours, and social isolation (Marella, 2019; Martiyani, 2016). However, much of the existing literature conceptualizes migrant stress as a broad psychosocial phenomenon rather than isolating specific workplace determinants and their interaction mechanisms.

This indicates a need to move beyond descriptive accounts of vulnerability and toward explanatory models that clarify how job characteristics systematically produce stress within migrant domestic labor settings. Recent occupational health studies demonstrate that migrant domestic workers exhibit higher levels of psychological distress compared to local workers due to combined exposure to job demands, social isolation, and dependency on employers (Hsieh & Wang, 2022; WHO, 2022).

The Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model as an Integrative Framework

The Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model developed by Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti provides a flexible theoretical framework for examining occupational stress across diverse sectors. The model posits two broad categories of job characteristics:

1. **Job demands**, defined as physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of work requiring sustained effort and associated with physiological or psychological costs.
2. **Job resources**, defined as aspects of work that reduce job demands, stimulate personal growth, or buffer the negative impact of demands.

The JD–R model proposes two primary processes:

1. A **health-impairment process**, where excessive demands lead to strain and burnout.
2. A **motivational process**, where resources foster engagement and well-being.

A core theoretical proposition of the JD–R framework is the *buffering hypothesis*, suggesting that resources mitigate the adverse effects of job demands on strain outcomes. This interactive mechanism has been widely supported in corporate, healthcare, and educational sectors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). However, most empirical validations have been conducted in formal organizational environments with clear managerial structures and institutionalized support systems.

Domestic migrant labor presents a structurally distinct context. Work is performed in private households rather than formal organizations, employment relationships are highly personalized, and institutional monitoring is limited. These structural differences raise theoretical questions about whether the JD–R model—and particularly its buffering mechanism—operates similarly in informal transnational labor arrangements.

Thus, applying the JD–R model to Indonesian female migrant domestic workers in Taiwan not only extends empirical testing to an underrepresented population but also allows examination of the model’s boundary conditions. Recent meta-analytic and longitudinal studies reaffirm that job demands predict strain more consistently than external personal resources across occupational settings (Lesener et al., 2020; Bakker & Demerouti, 2023).

Workload as a Core Job Demand

Within the JD–R framework, workload is one of the most robust predictors of job strain. Workload includes quantitative overload (excessive number of tasks, long hours) and qualitative overload (complexity and emotional regulation requirements). High workload depletes energetic resources and triggers the health-impairment process.

For domestic migrant workers, workload is often intensified by live-in arrangements that blur boundaries between work and rest. Unlike formal employment with fixed schedules, domestic workers frequently experience extended availability expectations. Additionally, caregiving roles for elderly individuals involve emotional labor, patience, and sustained vigilance, increasing psychological burden.

Although previous migration studies acknowledge long working hours as a stressor, few studies have operationalized workload within a structured theoretical model such as JD–R. This study therefore positions workload not merely as a descriptive hardship, but as a theoretically grounded job demand that systematically predicts job stress. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that workload intensity predicts emotional exhaustion and stress across cultural contexts, particularly in carerelated occupations (Schaufeli, 2021; Eurofound, 2023).

Work Environment as Structural and Psychosocial Demand

Beyond workload, the work environment constitutes another critical determinant of stress. The work environment encompasses both physical conditions (e.g., accommodation quality, workspace safety) and psychosocial climate (e.g., employer treatment, communication quality, interpersonal respect).

In domestic employment, the employer–employee relationship is highly intimate and powerimbalanced. Since domestic workers reside in employers’ homes, negative interpersonal dynamics may become continuous stress exposure rather than episodic workplace conflicts. The lack of peer interaction and organizational grievance mechanisms further amplifies psychological vulnerability.

While work environment has been widely studied in organizational behavior literature, its conceptualization in migrant domestic labor remains underdeveloped. Most existing studies focus on exploitation or abuse narratives rather than systematically measuring

environmental characteristics as structured predictors of stress. This research reframes work environment as an integrated job demand within the JD–R structure, strengthening theoretical coherence. Work environment factors such as supervisory behavior, interpersonal climate, and perceived fairness are increasingly recognized as structural determinants of psychological strain (Inceoglu et al., 2022).

Family Support as a Personal Resource: Theoretical Ambiguity

Social support has long been recognized as a protective factor in stress research. Within the JD–R model, social support functions as a job or personal resource that buffers the impact of demands. Emotional reassurance, informational guidance, and instrumental assistance can enhance coping capacity and reduce strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Family support, in particular, has demonstrated stress-buffering effects across various occupational groups (Russo et al., 2016). However, the effectiveness of family support may depend on contextual immediacy. In transnational migration settings, family members are geographically distant. Communication occurs primarily via digital platforms, potentially limiting tangible assistance and reducing contextual understanding of daily work challenges.

This raises a critical theoretical question:

Can geographically distant family support function as an effective buffering resource within the JD–R model?

Most JD–R studies assume resource proximity within the same work or social system. The migrant domestic labor context challenges this assumption, creating theoretical ambiguity regarding the strength and operational mechanism of family support as a moderator.

Empirical evidence addressing this issue remains scarce. Studies often examine direct effects of social support on well-being but rarely test interaction effects between job demands and family support among migrant workers. Recent research indicates that family support is more strongly associated with work–family conflict reduction than with direct attenuation of job stress caused by structural job demands (Hammer et al., 2022; Boccagni & Baldassar, 2021). Consequently, the buffering hypothesis remains insufficiently validated in transnational domestic labor contexts.

Research Gap and Theoretical Positioning

Based on the preceding review, three critical gaps emerge:

1. **Contextual Gap:** The JD–R model has rarely been tested among migrant domestic workers operating in informal household-based employment systems.
2. **Mechanism Gap:** Limited studies examine interaction effects between job demands and family support in transnational migration contexts.
3. **Boundary Condition Gap:** The effectiveness of geographically distant family support as a buffering resource remains theoretically unresolved.

This study addresses these gaps by integrating workload and work environment as structured job demands and examining family support as a moderating personal resource within the JD–R framework. By doing so, it evaluates whether the buffering mechanism holds in a context characterized by geographic separation, informal employment structures, and limited institutional protection.

Theoretically, this research contributes to refining the JD–R model by testing its applicability and boundary conditions in transnational domestic labor. Empirically, it expands migration and occupational stress literature by moving beyond descriptive vulnerability accounts toward explanatory modeling of stress determinants and interaction mechanisms.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Conceptual Foundation

This study adopts the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework developed by Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti as the primary theoretical lens. Within this model, job stress is conceptualized as a strain outcome resulting from the **health-impairment process**, whereby excessive job demands consume energetic resources and lead to psychological exhaustion.

Formally, the stress mechanism can be expressed as:

$JS=f(JD, JR)$ Where:

JS = Job Stress

JD = Job Demands

JR = Job Resources

In this study, job demands are operationalized as **Workload (WL)** and **Work Environment (WE)** (when unfavorable), while job resources are represented by **Family Support (FS)** as a personal resource. Thus, the empirical model can be expressed as:

$$JS=\beta_0+\beta_1WL+\beta_2WE+\beta_3FS+\beta_4(WL\times FS)+\beta_5(WE\times FS)+\varepsilon$$

This formulation allows examination of both direct (main) effects and moderating (interaction) effects consistent with the JD–R buffering hypothesis.

Workload and Job Stress

Within the JD–R framework, workload constitutes a prototypical job demand. It requires sustained physical and psychological effort, thereby triggering the health-impairment process. Theoretically, workload depletes energetic resources in proportion to its

intensity and duration. When resource depletion exceeds recovery capacity, strain manifests as job stress. For female migrant domestic workers, workload is multidimensional:

1. **Quantitative overload** (long working hours, multiple tasks)
2. **Qualitative overload** (complex caregiving tasks, emotional labor)

Live-in arrangements intensify workload by eliminating clear boundaries between work and rest. Unlike formal employees with scheduled shifts, migrant domestic workers may face continuous availability expectations. According to the conservation of resources logic embedded in the JD–R model, such sustained resource depletion predicts increased stress levels.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Workload has a positive and significant effect on job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan.

Work Environment and Job Stress

The work environment represents both structural and psychosocial working conditions. In domestic migrant labor, the work environment includes physical accommodation quality, employer treatment, communication climate, and relational dynamics.

An unfavorable work environment functions as a chronic job demand because it introduces persistent interpersonal tension and environmental discomfort. According to the JD–R model, chronic exposure to adverse psychosocial conditions intensifies cognitive appraisal of threat and reduces perceived control, thereby increasing strain.

In household-based employment, the absence of formal grievance systems or peer support may amplify environmental stressors. Consequently, poor work environment conditions are expected to elevate job stress levels.

Thus:

H2: An unfavorable work environment has a positive and significant effect on job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan.

Family Support and Job Stress

Within the JD–R framework, social support functions as a personal resource that enhances coping capacity. Family support provides emotional reassurance, meaning-making reinforcement, and psychological stability. From a stress appraisal perspective (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), individuals with stronger perceived support are more likely to appraise stressors as manageable rather than threatening.

Even in transnational contexts, digital communication may sustain emotional bonds that reduce feelings of isolation. Therefore, higher perceived family support is expected to directly reduce job stress.

Hence:

H3: Family support is theoretically expected to reduce job stress; however, in transnational contexts its effectiveness remains empirically uncertain.

Moderating Role of Family Support in the Workload–Stress Relationship

A central proposition of the JD–R model is the **buffering hypothesis**, which states that resources weaken the positive relationship between job demands and strain.

Mathematically, moderation occurs if:

$$\frac{\partial JS}{\partial WL} = \beta_1 + \beta_4 FS$$

If $\beta_4 < 0$, then increasing family support reduces the marginal effect of workload on stress. Theoretically, family support enhances emotional resilience and coping mechanisms. Migrant workers who perceive strong family encouragement may interpret heavy workload as purposeful sacrifice rather than overwhelming burden. Thus, family support may attenuate the impact of workload on stress.

However, given geographic separation, the effectiveness of family support as a buffer is empirically uncertain—making this hypothesis both theoretically grounded and exploratory in boundary-condition testing.

Therefore:

H4: Family support negatively moderates the relationship between workload and job stress, such that the positive effect of workload on job stress is weaker at higher levels of family support.

Moderating Role of Family Support in the Work Environment–Stress Relationship

Similarly, family support may buffer the impact of unfavorable work environments. When interpersonal conflicts or poor living conditions occur, emotional reinforcement from family may mitigate psychological strain.

Formally:

$$\frac{\partial JS}{\partial WE} = \beta_2 + \beta_5 FS$$

If $\beta_5 < 0$, family support weakens the positive relationship between poor work environment and stress. However, the buffering mechanism may be less effective for structural environmental stressors compared to workload. While emotional support can help reinterpret workload meaning, it may not directly change daily environmental discomfort or employer behavior. Testing this moderation effect therefore contributes to clarifying whether distal personal resources can counteract structurally embedded workplace conditions.

Thus:

H5: Family support negatively moderates the relationship between work environment and job stress, such that the positive effect of an unfavorable work environment on job stress is weaker at higher levels of family support.

Integrated Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework of this study is structured as follows:

- **Direct Effects**
 - Workload → Job Stress (H1)
 - Work Environment → Job Stress (H2)
 - Family Support → Job Stress (H3)
- **Moderating Effects**
 - Workload × Family Support → Job Stress (H4)
 - Work Environment × Family Support → Job Stress (H5)

This model simultaneously tests the **health-impairment process** and the **buffering mechanism** proposed by the JD–R theory within a transnational domestic labor context.

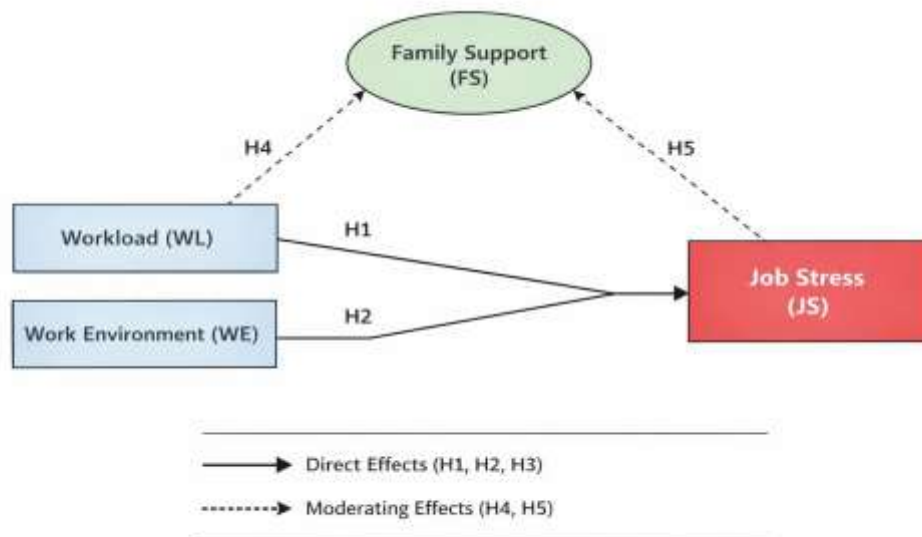


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

RESEARCH METHOD RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the structural relationships among workload, work environment, family support, and job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan. The study aimed to test both direct effects and moderating effects as proposed within the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework developed by Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti.

A variance-based Structural Equation Modeling approach using Partial Least Squares (PLS–SEM) was employed. PLS–SEM was selected for three primary reasons:

1. The model includes moderating (interaction) effects.
2. The research aims are predictive and theory-extending.
3. The target population is relatively specific and potentially limited in size.

The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS (version 4), following the two-step approach: evaluation of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of Indonesian female migrant workers employed in Taiwan, particularly those working as domestic helpers and elderly caregivers under live-in arrangements.

A purposive sampling technique was applied with the following inclusion criteria:

1. Female Indonesian migrant worker.
2. Currently employed in Taiwan for at least six months.
3. Working in domestic or caregiving sectors.
4. Willing to participate voluntarily.

Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through Indonesian migrant community networks and social media groups. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5%, resulting in 399 respondents.

Measurement of Variables

All constructs were measured using multi-item Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instruments were adapted from established scales and modified to fit the migrant domestic labor context.

1. Workload (WL)

Workload was conceptualized as a job demand reflecting quantitative and qualitative overload.

Indicators were adapted from prior workload scales within JD–R research.

Sample items:

- WL1: “I have to work very long hours every day.”
- WL2: “The amount of work I am expected to do is excessive.”
- WL3: “My tasks require continuous physical effort.”
- WL4: “My job requires high emotional involvement.”

2. Work Environment (WE)

Work environment captured both physical and psychosocial working conditions.

Sample items:

- WE1: “I feel comfortable with my living and working conditions.”
- WE2: “My employer treats me with respect.”
- WE3: “Communication with my employer is clear and fair.”
- WE4: “I feel safe in my work environment.”

(Note: Negatively phrased items were reverse-coded when necessary.)

3. Family Support (FS)

Family support was operationalized as perceived emotional and motivational support from family members in Indonesia.

Sample items:

- FS1: “My family gives me emotional encouragement.”
- FS2: “I can share my problems with my family.”
- FS3: “My family understands the difficulties of my work.”
- FS4: “My family motivates me to stay strong.”

4. Job Stress (JS)

Job stress was conceptualized as psychological strain resulting from work demands.

Sample items:

- JS1: “I feel emotionally exhausted because of my work.”
- JS2: “I feel stressed due to my job.”
- JS3: “I often feel tense while working.”
- JS4: “My job makes me feel mentally drained.”

Measurement Model Evaluation

The reflective measurement model was assessed using the following criteria:

1. Indicator Reliability

Outer loadings ≥ 0.70 (acceptable ≥ 0.60 in exploratory research).

2. Internal Consistency Reliability

- a) Cronbach’s Alpha ≥ 0.70
- b) Composite Reliability (CR) ≥ 0.70

3. Convergent Validity

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50

4. Discriminant Validity

- a) Fornell–Larcker criterion
- b) Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) < 0.85

Common method bias was assessed using Harman’s single-factor test and full collinearity VIF values (< 3.3).

Structural Model Evaluation

After confirming measurement validity and reliability, the structural model was evaluated using:

1. Path Coefficients (β)

Estimated via bootstrapping (5,000 resamples).
Significance determined at $p < 0.05$.

2. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Evaluating explanatory power of Job Stress.

- a) 0.25 = weak
- b) 0.50 = moderate
- c) 0.75 = substantial

3. Effect Size (f^2)

- a) 0.02 = small
- b) 0.15 = medium
- c) 0.35 = large

4. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Using blindfolding procedure ($Q^2 > 0$ indicates predictive relevance).

Moderation Analysis

Moderating effects (H4 and H5) were tested using the product-indicator approach in PLS-SEM.

Interaction terms were constructed as:

- a) $WL \times FS$
- b) $WE \times FS$

Moderation significance was evaluated through bootstrapped interaction path coefficients. A negative and significant interaction coefficient (β_4 or $\beta_5 < 0, p < 0.05$) supports the buffering hypothesis.

Simple slope analysis was conducted to visualize moderation effects at low (-1 SD) and high (+1 SD) levels of family support.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would be used solely for academic research. No identifying personal information was collected.

Summary of Analytical Model

The final structural equation tested was:

$$JS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WL + \beta_2 WE + \beta_3 FS + \beta_4 (WL \times FS) + \beta_5 (WE \times FS) + \epsilon$$

This model simultaneously tests:

- 1. Direct effects (H1–H3)
- 2. Buffering moderation effects (H4–H5)
- 3. The health-impairment and resource-buffering mechanisms of the JD–R framework

RESULTS DESCRIPTIVE AND MODEL FIT

A total of **399 respondents** were included in the analysis.

All indicator loadings exceeded 0.70, indicating strong convergent validity. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above 0.50, confirming adequate construct validity.

Composite Reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha values were greater than 0.70, demonstrating high internal consistency reliability. Discriminant validity was confirmed through both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios below 0.90.

The structural model explains **$R^2 = 0.507$** , indicating that workload, work environment, family support, and their interaction terms explain **50.7% of the variance in job stress**. According to PLS-SEM guidelines (Hair et al., 2019), this represents **moderate explanatory power**.

The overall model is statistically significant:

$$F(5, 393) = 80.86, p < .001$$

Structural Model Results Direct Effects

Table 1: Structural Model Results (Direct Effects)

Hypothesis	Path	β (Std.)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Workload → Job Stress	0.515	6.472	0.000	Supported
H2	Work Environment → Job Stress	0.373	4.866	0.000	Supported
H3	Family Support → Job Stress	-0.076	-1.268	0.206	Not Supported

Source: Output of statistical data analysis

Interpretation

1. **H1 supported:** Workload has a strong positive effect on job stress.
2. **H2 supported:** Work environment positively influences job stress.
3. **H3 rejected:** Family support does not significantly reduce job stress.

Workload emerges as the **dominant predictor**.

Moderation Analysis

Interaction terms were created using standardized variables.

Table 2. Moderation Effects Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H4	Workload \times Family Support \rightarrow Job Stress	-0.047	-0.320	0.749	Not Supported
H5	Work Environment \times Family Support \rightarrow Job Stress	0.048	0.376	0.707	Not Supported

Source: Output of statistical data analysis

Interpretation

Both interaction terms are **non-significant** ($p > .05$).

This indicates:

1. Family support does **not buffer** the effect of workload on job stress.
2. Family support does **not buffer** the effect of work environment on job stress.

Thus, **H4 and H5 are rejected**.

Final Structural Equation

$$JS = 2.773 + 0.515WL + 0.373WE - 0.076FS - 0.047(WL \times FS) + 0.048(WE \times FS)$$

Thus, only workload and work environment significantly predict job stress.

Key Empirical Findings

1. Workload is the strongest determinant of job stress.
2. Work environment significantly increases stress.
3. Family support does not directly reduce stress.
4. Family support does not function as a buffering resource.
5. Model explains 50.7% of job stress variance (moderate-to-strong explanatory power).

DISCUSSION

This study examined the effects of workload and work environment on job stress and tested the moderating role of family support among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan within the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) framework. The findings indicate that workload and work environment significantly increase job stress, while family support neither directly reduces stress nor moderates the relationships between job demands and stress. The model explains 50.7% of the variance in job stress, indicating moderate explanatory power. These results provide strong empirical support for demand-driven stress formation in transnational domestic labor contexts.

Workload as a Dominant Job Demand

The strong positive effect of workload confirms the health-impairment process proposed in the JD–R model, which posits that excessive job demands deplete energetic resources and lead to psychological strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Lesener et al., 2020). The magnitude of the workload coefficient indicates that quantitative and qualitative overload constitute the most influential predictors of stress among migrant domestic workers.

Recent longitudinal and cross-sectoral research consistently demonstrates that sustained workload intensity predicts emotional exhaustion, burnout, and reduced well-being (Schaufeli, 2021; Eurofound, 2023). These findings are particularly relevant in live-in domestic work arrangements where temporal boundaries between work and rest are blurred. Within such contexts, continuous performance expectations and limited recovery opportunities accelerate resource depletion, thereby intensifying stress outcomes.

The present results therefore reinforce contemporary JD–R scholarship emphasizing that job demands exert stronger and more consistent effects on strain outcomes than external personal resources, particularly in structurally constrained employment settings (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Lesener et al., 2020).

Work Environment as a Structural Stressor

The significant effect of work environment further supports demand-based explanations of occupational stress. Within JD–R theory, unfavorable environmental conditions function either as direct demands or as the absence of resources necessary for effective coping (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). In domestic migrant labor, environmental stressors include interpersonal dynamics with employers, communication quality, perceived fairness, and physical living conditions.

Recent empirical studies confirm that relational climate and supervisory behavior are critical determinants of employee psychological well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2022). In private household employment, where formal organizational structures and grievance mechanisms are limited, environmental stressors become continuous rather than episodic exposures. Consequently, stress formation is not solely task-driven but structurally embedded in daily working conditions.

The combined effects of workload and work environment explain more than half of the variance in job stress, underscoring the central role of structural job characteristics in shaping psychological outcomes. This finding aligns with international occupational health evidence demonstrating that working conditions remain the primary determinants of worker mental health across sectors (WHO, 2022).

Reconsidering the Role of Family Support

Contrary to theoretical expectations, family support does not significantly reduce job stress. Although social support is traditionally conceptualized as a protective resource, recent evidence suggests that its effectiveness depends on contextual proximity and domain relevance (Hammer et al., 2022; Boccagni & Baldassar, 2021).

In transnational migration contexts, family support is primarily mediated through digital communication and lacks direct involvement in daily work experiences. While such support may provide emotional reassurance, it may not alter structural job demands or environmental conditions.

This domain-specific limitation helps explain the absence of a significant direct effect.

The finding is consistent with contemporary research indicating that family support more strongly reduces work–family conflict than it mitigates stress generated by workplace structures (Hammer et al., 2022). Thus, the present study refines JD–R theory by demonstrating that not all personal resources exert equivalent protective effects across contexts.

Absence of Buffering Effects

The moderation analysis reveals that family support does not buffer the effects of workload or work environment on job stress. This result challenges the universal applicability of the buffering hypothesis traditionally associated with social support theory. Meta-analytic and longitudinal evidence indicates that buffering effects are typically modest and context-dependent, particularly when resources originate outside the domain in which stressors occur (Lesener et al., 2020; Viswesvaran et al., 2021). In the present context, job stress arises from structurally embedded workplace demands, whereas family support operates in a geographically and functionally separate domain. The findings therefore support a domain-specific interpretation of JD–R: resources are more likely to buffer demands when they originate from the same structural context (e.g., supervisor support, autonomy, organizational fairness) rather than from external social systems.

Theoretical Integration

This study contributes to occupational stress theory in three ways. First, it reinforces the healthimpairment mechanism of JD–R by demonstrating that structural job demands remain the primary drivers of stress in informal transnational labor contexts. Second, it refines resource-based stress theories by showing that external social support may have limited protective capacity when stressors are structurally embedded. Third, by explaining a substantial proportion of stress variance, the model demonstrates strong predictive validity in a population rarely examined in organizational research.

Practical Implications

The findings indicate that effective stress reduction strategies must prioritize structural workplace interventions rather than relying solely on personal coping or familial support. International labor evidence consistently shows that improving working conditions and regulating workload are the most effective approaches to protecting migrant workers' psychological well-being (International Labour Organization, 2021; WHO, 2022).

Policy and organizational implications include:

- workload regulation and clear work–rest boundaries
- improved employment standards for domestic workers
- strengthened institutional oversight and accountability
- provision of work-based support resources

Structural reform, rather than individual adaptation, emerges as the primary pathway to stress reduction in transnational domestic labor systems.

Theoretical Implications

This study offers three interrelated theoretical contributions to occupational stress and migration research.

First, it extends the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model to an underexamined employment structure—transnational domestic labor. Unlike formal organizational contexts where most JD–R evidence originates, domestic migrant work is characterized by private household employment, limited institutional oversight, and blurred work–life boundaries. By demonstrating that workload and work environment strongly predict job stress in this structurally informal setting, the study confirms the cross-context

robustness of the health-impairment mechanism while simultaneously highlighting the importance of employment structure as a conditioning context for stress formation.

Second, the findings refine the resource–strain relationship within JD–R by specifying boundary conditions for personal resources. While JD–R traditionally posits that resources mitigate strain and buffer the effects of demands, the present results show that geographically distant family support neither reduces stress nor moderates demand–strain relationships. This suggests that resource effectiveness is contingent upon contextual proximity and domain alignment. Personal resources external to the work system may lack sufficient immediacy to counteract structurally embedded job demands. The study therefore advances a domain-specific interpretation of the buffering hypothesis, where resource impact depends on structural embeddedness rather than mere availability. Third, this research contributes to migration scholarship by shifting explanatory emphasis from individual vulnerability to structural determinants of psychological outcomes. Much of the migrant worker literature emphasizes psychosocial adaptation and coping. In contrast, the present model demonstrates that stress among migrant domestic workers is primarily produced by institutionalized job demands and working conditions. This repositioning integrates migration research more explicitly with organizational stress theory and supports a structural perspective on migrant well-being.

Taken together, the study does not merely apply JD–R to a new population; it refines the theory’s scope conditions by demonstrating when and why personal resources may fail to function as protective mechanisms in transnational labor contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of workload, work environment, and family support on job stress among Indonesian female migrant workers in Taiwan within the Job Demands–Resources framework. The findings provide consistent evidence that job stress in transnational domestic labor is primarily driven by structural job demands rather than external personal resources. Workload emerged as the strongest predictor of stress, while unfavorable work environments also exerted a significant influence. In contrast, family support neither reduced job stress nor buffered the impact of job demands.

These results make an important theoretical contribution by clarifying boundary conditions of the JD–R model in structurally constrained employment systems. While the health-impairment mechanism remains robust across contexts, the buffering function of personal resources appears contingent upon contextual proximity and structural embeddedness. In transnational labor arrangements characterized by geographic separation and limited institutional protection, external family support may lack the immediacy required to counteract workplace stressors.

From a practical perspective, the findings underscore that effective stress reduction for migrant domestic workers requires structural intervention rather than reliance on individual coping or familial resilience. Policies aimed at regulating workload, improving working conditions, and strengthening labor protection mechanisms are essential for safeguarding psychological well-being in this population.

More broadly, this study advances international discussions on occupational stress by demonstrating that psychological outcomes in global labor mobility are shaped primarily by institutional and structural conditions. Future research should further investigate context-specific resource effectiveness and compare work-based versus non-work-based support mechanisms across different migration regimes.

Concluding Insight

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that job stress is predominantly shaped by structural job demands rather than external familial resources. The findings affirm the centrality of workload and work environment within contemporary occupational stress theory while questioning the universal buffering assumption of family support. These results provide a theoretically grounded and empirically robust contribution to international discussions on job stress management and organizational sustainability.

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