



# Impact of Anxiety, Work-Life Balance, and Diversity on Employee Performance in Bangladesh's Hospitality Industry During COVID-19

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented strain on the hospitality industry, profoundly affecting employee mental health and operational dynamics. This study explores the complex interrelations between employee anxiety, work-life balance (WLB), and diversity factors (age, gender, and tenure) and their impact on performance within the hospitality sector in Bangladesh, a context underrepresented in existing literature. Employing a theoretical framework that integrates elements from psychological resilience theory and diversity management, the research utilizes regression analysis of survey data from 222 hospitality employees to dissect these dynamics. Results indicate that while anxiety significantly diminishes performance, reflective of resilience theory's predictions about stress impacts, diversity factors enhance performance, aligning with diversity management theory's postulates about the positive effects of varied workforce. Contrary to existing studies, WLB did not significantly impact performance, suggesting unique contextual influences within the Bangladeshi hospitality industry during the pandemic. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a non-Western context and by highlighting how global crises can variably affect employee performance metrics, dependent on individual and demographic factors. These insights extend theoretical discussions in hospitality and organizational psychology, offering nuanced understandings of workforce management during crises.

**Keywords:** Hospitality industry, anxiety, diversity, work tenure, age, gender, Work-life balance, performance, COVID-19 Pandemic

## **1. Introduction**

In 2019, the number of international tourists escalated to an all-time high at 1.5 billion, which was a 4% increase compared to 2018 (UNWTO, 2020). The global tourism industry estimated that this trend would carry forward to 2020, establishing the tourism industry as a stable and resilient contributor to the worldwide GDP. Unfortunately, the spread of the global epidemic, the coronavirus, had a landslide impact on tourism and, by default, the hospitality industry as all countries were forced to shut their borders to contain it. The coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, has been deemed a highly infectious disease as per the World Health Organization (Coronavirus, 2021). As per United Nations, Corona viruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses, which can range from the common cold to more severe diseases. The primary mode of transmission of the virus is through the droplets released when infected individual sneezes or coughs, making it an absolute necessity to impose wearing masks (Coronavirus, 2021).

As the world halted amid a global lockdown, with the restriction in movement, the hospitality industry suffered from most people being locked indoors. As a result, the number of international tourists, which expected a positive trend, fell by a tremendous 74% in 2020 (UNWTO, 2021a). As a result, the industry lost nearly US\$1.3 trillion in expected revenue, while the loss in global GDP spanned exceeding US\$2 trillion (UNWTO, 2021). This number is expected to worsen as the accumulated loss for 2020 and 2021 is expected to exceed US\$4 trillion (UNCTAD, 2021). This pandemic created chaos and uncertainty, especially for people in the hospitality industry, with nearly 100-120 million direct workers at risk of losing their employment (UNWTO, 2021). For every directly created job in tourism, one and a half indirect jobs had been generated, which placed the 330 million workers in the industry in a delicate position (ILO, 2020).

While tourism and the hospitality industry have become one of the fastest-growing industries, it is apparent that it is also in the group that has been adversely impacted. The greater their involvement in the sector, the more they were affected (ILO, 2020). With no hope to return to a state of normalcy anytime soon, the tourism and hospitality industry plunged into a state of uncertainty. Workers suffered from anxiety and stress as the looming job insecurity resulted from the global pandemic. Most hospitality employees, unlike employees from many other industries and streams, did not have the luxury to implement the “Work from Home” (WfH) (Ahmed et al., 2021) due to the nature of the service having a high “personal touch” (Hao et al., 2020; Ren & Chadee, 2020). This pandemic driven uncertainty is further fueled as ILO predicts that from the 305 million job losses globally, a majority will be from the tourism sector. Past research has indicated that pandemics negatively affect employee performance and mental health (De Witte et al., 2016). The ongoing job insecurity affects not only their mental but also their physical health to some degree. According to Khan et al. (2021), job insecurity can mediate the relationship between fear of economic crisis, non-employability, and mental health.

The paper thus explores the already suffering employees in the tourism and hospitality sector. It intends to understand whether the level of anxiety caused by the pandemic, WLB, age, gender and work tenure in their current organizations affect employee performance. The paper is structured in five segments. The second part is a literature review to form a solid theoretical background and is followed by methodology. Then findings, discussion and conclusion portray and explain the results and impacts of this quantitative study. Finally, the paper is concluded research limitations and future research implications. Different researchers have conducted several researches on the impact of anxiety, WLB, age, gender and tenure on employee performance in different sectors around the world but rarely on the hospitality sector, especially during COVID-19 pandemic. Employees working in the hospitality sector are among the most

affected by this pandemic in terms of job security and constant earnings. Their mental healths have constantly been impacted by this COVID-19 pandemic. Such mental pressure has triggered their anxiety level to go up which ultimately could impact their work performance in their hotels and resorts.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted significant gaps in understanding the effects of global crises on employee performance in the hospitality industry, particularly in non-Western contexts. Existing literature underscores the detrimental impact of anxiety, work-life balance (WLB), and diversity factors (age, gender, and tenure) on employee performance and mental health during crises. For instance, anxiety caused by job insecurity has been found to adversely affect employee performance and mental well-being, particularly in the hospitality sector, which faces heightened vulnerability during pandemics (Aguilar-Quintana et al., 2021). Additionally, WLB challenges have been shown to exacerbate stress and hinder performance, though their effects may vary across industries and regions (Karatepe et al., 2021). Despite the growing body of research, studies focusing on non-Western settings like Bangladesh remain scarce, leaving critical questions unanswered about how anxiety, WLB, and diversity shape employee performance in this context. This study addresses these gaps by exploring the interplay between these factors and their collective impact on performance in the Bangladeshi hospitality sector, contributing empirical evidence to the broader discourse on organizational resilience and workforce management during crises (Khan et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to identify whether there is any significant impact of anxiety, work-life balance and diversity (age, gender & work tenure) of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality sector during this COVID-19 Pandemic on their work performance.

Therefore, the this study has three main objectives,

1. To measure the impact of anxiety among the employees working in the tourism and hospitality sector during COVID-19 Pandemic on their work performances.
2. To measure the impact of diversity (age, gender & work tenure) of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality sector during COVID-19 Pandemic on their work performances.
3. To measure the impact of work life balance of the employees working in the tourism and hospitality sector during COVID-19 Pandemic on their work performances.

## **2. Literature Review & Research Hypotheses**

As per the millennial population, traveling and tourism are significant aspects that they have deemed an essential component of their lifestyle (Cavagnaro et al., 2018; OECD, 2018). As per a study conducted by Airbnb, people in China and India considered personal experience to be more desirable than asset ownership (Airbnb, 2016). As a result, millennials travel more than any other generation as of the present; with trends indicating an increase in the frequency of travel as they become more financially stable (Nielsen, 2017). This is reflected in the expansion of the tourism sector as it outgrew the pace of the global economy (UNWTO, 2020). Millennial travel accounts for 40% of Europe's outbound travel, classifying them as the largest age group traveling internationally (Ketter, 2019).

The global pandemic has been one of the most significant and impactful events that has affected the tourism industry (Zencker & Kock, 2020). Air flight and sea travel were deemed as the main cause behind the rapid spread of the virus across different countries (Chinazzi et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2020a, b). As most borders were closed, ships were docked, most flights halted, and hotels and restaurants shut, the global tourism sector incurred a loss amounting around US\$4.5 trillion as it dropped to US\$4.7 trillion in 2020, their contribution to the global GDP

fell by 49.1% compared to 2019; which was equivalent to a GDP 3.7% decline of the global economy in 2020 (WTTC, 2021). As per the World Trade and Tourism Council, in 2019, the sector's contribution to the global GDP was 10.4%, which decreased to 5.5% in 2020.

Since tourism is a labor-intensive sector (Sharma et al., 2021), the slowdown of this industry has the potential to risk millions of jobs which may cause us to step back on the sustainable development goals (World Tourism Organization, 2020). The pandemic affected the entire hospitality value chain (Gössling et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2021; Roy et al., 2021). All upcoming events were cancelled; accommodations and restaurants were shut down. This was followed by continuous reports of bankruptcies and layoffs, with Flybe, a British Airline, and declaring bankruptcy in March 2020. Others have started seeking state assistance, including Scandinavian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, and Virgin in March 2020 (Gössling et al., 2020).

While many studies emphasize the negative impact of anxiety on employee performance, others present contrasting perspectives. For instance, research by Aguiar-Quintana et al. (2021) found that while job insecurity significantly increased anxiety and depression among hotel employees, these psychological strains did not directly diminish self-rated task performance during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting a potential role of resilience or other moderating factors (Aguiar-Quintana et al., 2021). Similarly, while work-life balance (WLB) is often linked to enhanced employee well-being and performance, some findings indicate its effect can be inconsistent. Said et al. (2023) revealed that while WLB positively impacted personal and professional outcomes in the educational sector during COVID-19, its influence on job performance varied depending on role clarity and support structures (Said et al., 2023). These contradictions highlight the complexity of the interactions between anxiety, WLB, and performance, suggesting that context, industry, and individual factors significantly influence these relationships.

## **2.1. Anxiety and Work Performance**

Factors like competition, enhanced workload, extreme working conditions, and increasing job demands significantly contribute to occupational stress (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020). The pandemic has worsened the effect of these factors (Ahmed et. al, 2023; Kumar et al., 2021). Most organizations like educational institutions, corporate offices had to adapt the WFH strategy (Shareena & Shahid, 2020). This has given rise to new stressors which affect job performance, cause distress, and diminish life satisfaction (Kumar et al., 2021). The pandemic has caused a shift in everyone's lifestyle and routine, including people, businesses, schools, and the economy (Gautam & Sharma, 2020). With people working from home, it became challenging to draw a boundary between their personal and professional lives (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). This was mentally debilitating and demotivating for many employees, causing them increased distress, anxiety and lowered their work performance (Huda et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2021). In research published by Hu et al. (2020), it was found that mortal salience regarding COVID-19 could be positively correlated with employee anxiety. As a consequence of the COVID-19 infection, employees are experiencing anxiety as they have a fear of being infected and may have an adverse influence on work behavior and personal well-being (Karatepe et al., 2021; Trougakos et al., 2020).

It was found that people with higher anxiety performed poorly on all instruments (Haslam et al., 2005). There is a positive relationship between psychological illnesses and absences, where the psychological diseases include employee-reported job anxiety and manager-reported workforce stress, depression, and anxiety (Jones et al., 2016). Specifically, workers with depression or anxiety disorders were more prone to absences and poor work performance (Druss et al., 2000, Kessler and Frank, 1997; Plaisier et al., 2010; Stewart et al., 2003.). In

addition, job insecurity has also been positively correlated with anxiety and depression (Aguar-Quintana et al., 2021). Therefore, the first hypothesis is

H1: Anxiety among employees during COVID-19 pandemic has a negative and significant influence on employee performance in the hospitality sector.

## **2.2. Work-Life Balance and Performance**

As per Kalliath and Brough (2008), work-life balance is defined as the perceived sense of personal feeling where an employee believes they have the necessary compatibility between work and life that promotes their life priorities. In context to college students, stress, general anxiety, and symptoms of depression were negatively related to their work-life balance (Sprung & Rogers, 2020). Similarly, Haar et al. (2014) found work life balance negatively associated with anxiety and depression after studying seven different cultures. In Nigeria, the level of concern among bankers was perceived to be high when the work-life balance was low (Uzonwanne & Ijide, 2017).

When people are placed in situations where they generate negative feelings from anxiety and depression, this could limit their cognitive resources in work leading to a more unsatisfactory task performance (Beal et al., 2005; Ford et al., 2011). However, some of the employees were able to turn the stress of the job in this pandemic into a driving factor and coping mechanism displaying a high level of resilience, establishing a positive relationship between the level of resilience and job performance (Aguar-Quintana et al., 2021). This in turn, positively influences their perception of their self-rated performance. In the music industry, Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) has been seen to negatively affect self-rated performance (González et al., 2017). In the context of the Spanish hospitality industry, there have also been researches yielding no direct relationship between anxiety and self-reported performance (Aguar-Quintana et al., 2021). Based on the previous literature and current pandemic context, this study proposes the second hypothesis.

H2: WLB among employees during COVID-19 pandemic has a positive and significant effect on employee performance in the hospitality sector.

## **2.3. Diversity (Tenure, age and Gender) and Work Performance**

### **2.3.1. Employee Work Tenure in Their Current Organisation and Performance**

There has been historical evidence of correlation between employee tenure, that the number of years an employee has been with the current organization and their performance, several studies identified this relationship as an increased level of personal, educational, professional experience and commitment and thus increasing the work performance (Hu et al., 2016; Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995; Nafukho et al., 2004). Although, some studies in the past identified that when job tenure increases, employees become bored doing the same task and loses interest and thus there is a possibility for fall in performance (Ng & Feldman, 2013). A similar study in 2010 yielded mixed results, as they identified that while long tenured employees displayed counterproductive behavior, they also portrayed the same long tenured employees of greater in role performance and citizenship performance. Besides, interestingly the long tenure and greater performance yielded stronger relationship for younger and women employees (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

Past literature has supported that, over the course of time an employee works for an organization, their performance increases as they gain job knowledge, skills and abilities (Myers, Griffith, Daugherty, & Lusch, 2004). Past literature has also supported that a higher tenure is interpreted by employees as a indication of higher security as they have higher

experience and portrayed higher levels of loyalty to their employers (Gregg & Wadsworth, 1995). Thus, employees assume their jobs are more secure and they are less stressed over job security and can focus more on work performance. From another angle, the higher tenure is playing the same role during the Covid-19 pandemic, as many employers are being forced to letting go of existing staff and downsizing, the staffs with longer tenure interprets themselves as protected since employers will usually let go off newer and recently recruited staff. It is also financially feasible for the employers to let go off recently recruited staff. To be more specific, although tenure may increase job related human capital but more importantly tenure is more strongly associated with organization specific human capital. This particularly helps employees to collaborate better, attain more essential skills and achieve higher work performance (Humphrey, Morgeson, & Mannor, 2009; Steffens, Shemla, Wegge, & Diestel, 2014). Therefore, in current pandemic context the third hypothesis is,

H3: Work tenure in the current organization has a positive and significant effect on employee performance during COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality sector.

### **2.3.2. Age and Work Performance**

Effective diversity management is based on appreciation of commonalities and awareness of differences of different employees. Diversity in an organization helps in pooling the best talent, reduces the gap between increasingly diverse customer bases, increases creativity, encourages innovation and thus improving the competitiveness of the firm. This in turn has been proven to have an impact of firm performance (McMahon, 2010). Different types of people see the world in different ways. Having divergent perspectives can be helpful when groups are trying to come up with creative ideas or solve complex problems and aids with firm performance (Prieto, Phipps & Osiri, 2009). Empirical evidence indicates that as workers grow old, they have higher job satisfaction and thus they have higher job involvement and motivation to perform better. When comparing to younger workers this relative strength in motivation aids older workers to perform better (Rhodes, 1983). Although some studies in the past indicated that the tenure of the team is responsible for higher performance rather than the age of individual employees, thus if a team has been performing together for a long time, they tend to outperform others (Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). Positive relationship between age and performance has also been indicated in recent studies as well (Pahos & Galanaki, 2019; Cleveland & Lim, 2007).

Upon reviewing 22 years of articles published on 46 different behavioral science journals, McEvoy & Cascio (1989) concluded that although age and performance is not significantly related, however, their study yielded that when it comes to younger employees there is a correlation between age and performance. The difference in performance can perhaps be attributed to generational difference as studies indicate that work values and motivation also change not only with age but also between generations. Since, older employees could be from previous generation, it has also been reported that they were in general more work centric and satisfied with work (Wey & Sutton, 2002). Another recent study by Lee (2016) identified that, as older employees are more experienced in intern personal relationship maintenance and are able to manage their emotions better than the younger employees, this also has a positive impact on their work. They also identified that age and work pride is directly related to work performance. Thus this study proposes the forth hypothesis,

H4: Age has a positive and significant effect on employee performance during COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality sector.

### 2.3.3. Gender and Work Performance

There has been varying results on the relationship between gender and work performance, as it is a delicate matter studies often carefully focused on the diversity aspect of gender role and performance rather than the direct role played by gender on employee work performance. A 2002 study by Kidder (2002) demonstrated significant differences of performance in line with traditional gender roles. A more recent study by Daraba, et al., (2021) portrayed that during the pandemic work practices and performance had direct relationship with many other factors including the employee gender. Therefore, the last and final hypothesis of this study is,

H5: Gender has a significant effect on employee performance in the hospitality sector during COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality sector.

Tourism being one of the fastest expanding industries accounting for one out of 10 jobs worldwide (UNWTO, 2019) it is a significant economic driver. Despite many tourism and hospitality workers being affected as a result of COVID-19, it is not receiving ample attention. Thus, this study aims to study the degree of influence of anxiety, work life balance and diversity on employee work performance in the hospitality sector during this pandemic. In accordance with the literature review and the aim of this research, the theoretical framework presented below in Figure-1 has been prepared to test the relationship between the five independent variables and the dependent variable, which is employee performance.

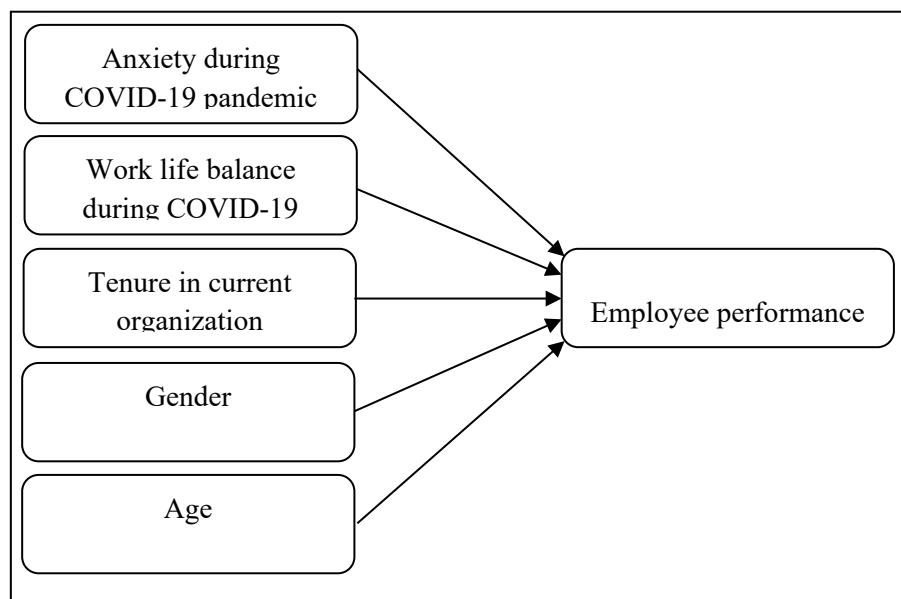


Figure 1: Theoretical framework of this research

## 3. Methodology

This study has used explanatory or causal research design to test the relationship between the independent and dependent variables for several reasons. First of all the objective is to find out the causal impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Secondly, this study will be using empirical evidences to conduct a statistical analysis between the dependent and independent variables. Finally, around 222 responses have been collected using a questionnaire consisting items on anxiety, WLB, self-rated performance and some demographic variables like age, gender and work tenure.

### **3.1. Participants**

The target audience for this study was employees working in the hospitality sector of Bangladesh, mainly in hotels and resorts. The participants are based in hotels and resorts in the capital Dhaka, and the main tourist destination in the country, Cox's Bazar. All the respondents were aged between 21 to 50 years, where 13.5% of them were females. In total 500 survey questionnaires were distributed and received 222 completed responses. The respondents were selected through the convenience sampling method to reach out to employees interested to participate in this study. All the respondents had given their consent before responding to this questionnaire.

Among the 222 survey respondents who are currently working in the hospitality sector, 13.5% are females and 86.5% of them are males. 32.4% of the respondents are between 21-25 years, 43.2% are between 26-30 years, 13.5% are between 31-35 years and 10.8% are between 36-50 years old. Almost 43% of the respondents have been working in their current organization for at most 2 years and almost 85% have work tenure in their current organization for at most 5 years.

### **3.2. Research Instruments**

A questionnaire has been developed by combining items from three separate questions on anxiety, WLB and self-rated performance along with some demographic questions on age, gender and work tenure of the employees working in the hospitality sector. These questionnaires have been collected from past literatures. The anxiety questionnaire has 20 items developed by Zung (1971) with Likert scale of 1-4 where 1 stands for none/little of the time and 4 stands for all the time. The WLB questionnaire have 5 items with 1-5 Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree which is developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996). The questionnaire on self-rated performance have been developed by Abramis (1994) which has 4 items with 1-5 Likert scale where 1 is very poorly and 5 is exceptionally well. There were three other demographic variables to identify age, gender and work tenure in their current organization with 1 item each.

- Employee performance (Dependent variable)
- Anxiety (Independent variable)
- Work life balance (WLB) (Independent variable)
- Tenure in current organization (Independent variable)
- Age (Independent variable)
- Gender (Independent variable)

### **3.3. Reliability Test**

The reliability test is conducted using Cronbach's Alpha values where a questionnaire with 0.7 Cronbach's Alpha value was mostly considered and 0.6 was accepted at certain cases by Hair et al. (2009) and Bakon and Hassan (2013) respectively. In our study, as presented in the following Table-1, anxiety questionnaire has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.779, WLB has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.994 and self rated performance has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.866. This shows high level of reliability of these questionnaires as all the Cronbach's Alpha values are above 0.7.



Table-1: Reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Anxiety	20	0.779
Work life balance (WLB)	5	0.774
Employee performance	4	0.866
Tenure in current organization	1	N/A
Age	1	
Gender	1	

#### 4. Findings and Analysis

A Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) model was ran using SPSS with self-rated work performance as the dependent variable and anxiety, WLB, age, gender and work tenure in the current organization as dependent variables. Before running MLR, assumptions of regression were tested to justify the use of regression in this study.

The low R-square value highlights the limited explanatory power of the current model but does not undermine its significance. In complex studies, particularly involving human behavior, low R-square values are common yet valuable for identifying relationships (Xu et al., 2022). Missing variables, such as psychological resilience or organizational culture, may enhance the model's predictive accuracy in future research (Hayes, 2021). Employing variable selection techniques like adjusted R-squared or AIC/BIC could also improve the model's robustness (Chicco et al., 2021). Despite limitations, the study provides meaningful insights into the relationships among key variables in the hospitality sector during COVID-19.

##### 4.1. Testing Assumptions of Regression

1<sup>st</sup> Assumption: Normality of standardized residuals. As shown in the figure below, the standardized residuals of employee performance have followed a normal distribution in this study which satisfies the first assumption of regression.

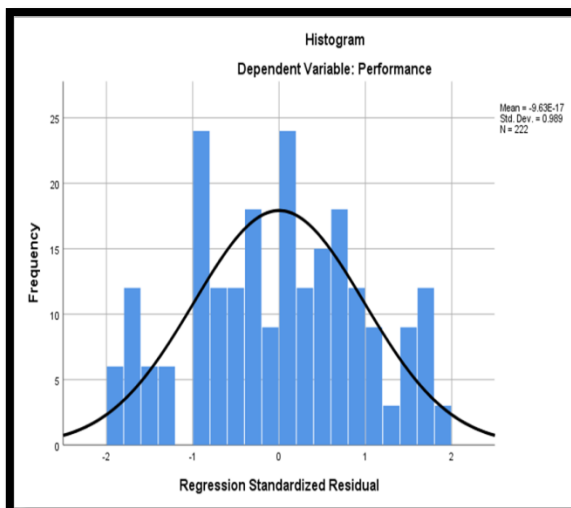


Figure 2: Normality of standardized residuals

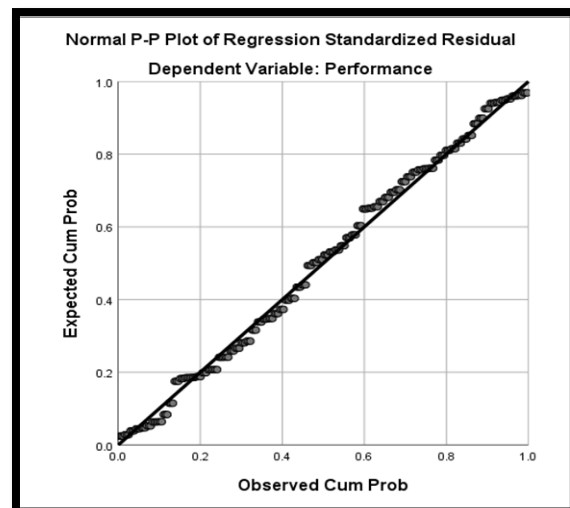


Figure 3: linear relationships

Source: SPSS output

2<sup>nd</sup> assumption: Having linear relationship between the dependent and independent variable. As shown in the following P-plot, there is linear relationship exist between the dependent variable (performance) and independent variables (anxiety, tenure in the current organization, age and gender) of this study. This satisfies the second assumption of regression.

3<sup>rd</sup> assumption: Not having Homoscedasticity among the variables. Homoscedasticity means having the same variance of errors among all values of the independent variables in a study. On the other hand, having different variance of errors across different values of the independent variables means heteroscedasticity. Having high level of heteroscedasticity in a study can lead to severe misinterpretation of the findings (Berry & Feldman, 1985; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). The figures presented in appendix-2 show that there is very little Homoscedasticity present in this data set as all the data values are evenly distributed in this study.

## 4.2. Descriptive Statistics

Construct validity of this analysis was tested using descriptive means and standard deviations of the dependent and independent variables. According to Hair et al. (2009), the construct of a study is divergently valid if the correlations between the items are not much highly correlated, for example less than 0.85. For a more detailed and accurate analysis, means and standard deviations are two most appropriate estimates of dispersion and central tendency of the values in a study.

According to the descriptive statistics table (appendix-1), the mean anxiety level of all the responses is 1.816 (in a scale of 4) with a standard deviation of 0.359 which is the lowest among all the dependent and independent variables in this study. This means the level of dispersion of anxiety among all the respondents were pretty low in comparison to other variables. On the other hand WLB and performance have relatively similar mean, 3.338 and 3.375 respectively (on a scale of 5) and standard deviation of 0.746 and 0.835. The average age of all the respondents is 28.84 years with a standard deviation of 6.54 years. This means respondents were mostly between 22.3 to 33.4 years.

Table 2: Correlation analysis

	Performance	Anxiety	WLB	Tenure	Age	Gender
Employee performance	1					
Anxiety	-0.433**	1				
WLB	-0.046	0.153*	1			
Tenure (in current organization)	0.224**	-0.013	0.026	1		
Age	0.084	0.280**	0.102	0.428**	1	
Gender	0.119	0.147*	0.171*	-0.273**	-0.232**	1
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Correlation explains the degree of relationship between two variables explains and the correlation value lies between -1 to +1, where -1 means strong negative relationship and +1 means strong positive relationship between the variables. Whereas zero correlation means there is no relationship exist between the variables. In this study, according to the above table, there is negative correlation exist between anxiety level and work performance of the employees which is highly significant at 0.01 level. Which means anxiety level increases then their employee performance will decrease and vice versa. There is very weak negative correlation exists between WLB and performance which is also insignificant. All the other independent variables have weak positive correlation with employee performance. The correlation between

performance and tenure in the current organization is highly significant. According to Ringim, et al. (2012), the correlation should not 0.75, whereas a higher correlation would suggest an issue exist in the findings. The current study does not have any of such issues exist in our findings. According to Hair et al. (2009), in order to use regression analysis in a study, the correlation values between all the variables are expected to be lower than 0.85 which indicates construct validity. This study fulfills that requirement where the highest correlation is 0.433 between anxiety and performance.

#### 4.3. Regression Analysis

According to Campbell et al. (2008), Regression analysis identifies how strongly the dependent variable correlates with the independent variables and also helps us create a model where all the independent variables will try to predict the movement in the dependent variable. In the following model summary table, the R-Square is 0.335 which means 33.5% of the variability in performance can be explained by anxiety, WLB, age, gender and tenure of the employees in their current organization. The prediction level of a good fit model is expected to be at least 60% of the dependent variable (Imna & Hassan, 2015). In our case the adjusted R-Square is 33.5% which is much lower than the expected values of 60%. Which means our model is not a good fit model. If the Durbin-Watson value is below 1.5 (in our case the value is 0.641) then there is positive autocorrelation exists among the respondents of the study. The significance of F-change is 0.000 which is highly significant. This means the addition of the independent variables significantly improved the model prediction.

Table 3: Model summary

					Change statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate	R Square Change	Df1	Df2	Sig F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	0.579	0.335	0.32	0.689	0.335	5	216	0.000	0.641
a. Predictors: (Constant), Tenure current org, Anxiety, WLB, Gender, Age									
b. Dependent Variable: Performance									

In the beta coefficient (Table 4), anxiety has a negative significant influence on performance with a beta coefficient of -0.531 and significant value of 0.000. This means if Anxiety level of an employee increases by 1 (in a scale of 4) unit then that employee's performance will decrease significantly by 0.531 unit (in a scale of 5). On the other hand, WLB has an insignificant negative influence on performance with beta coefficient of -0.046 and significant value of 0.418. This means WLB does not have a significant influence on work performance. All the other independent variables, tenure in current organization, age and gender, in this model have significant positive influence on employee performance with beta coefficients of 0.210, 0.220, 0.313 and significance level of 0.001, 0.001, and 0.000 respectively. Therefore it can be clearly stated that tenure in current organization, age and gender have positive significant influence and anxiety has negative significant influence on work performance of employees working in the hospitality sector during COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. WLB, on the other hand, does not have significant influence over employee performance in this sector.

Table 4: Beta Coefficients - Anxiety, WLB, Tenure, Age, Gender and Employee Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.814	0.356		10.702	0.000
Anxiety	-1.233	0.139	-0.531	-8.857	0.000
WLB	-0.052	0.064	-0.046	-0.811	0.418
Tenure in current org.	0.093	0.028	0.210	3.328	0.001
Age	0.028	0.008	0.220	3.326	0.001
Gender	0.763	0.147	0.313	5.182	0.000

Depending to our overall findings and information related to significance level and beta coefficient presented in the above table, the first, third, fourth and fifth hypotheses of this study can be accepted and the second hypothesis has been rejected as presented in Table 6.

Table 5: Supporting and not supporting the hypotheses of this study

Hypothesis	Beta Coefficient	Significance (P<0.05)	Result
H1	Anxiety among employees during COVID-19 pandemic has a negative and significant influence on employee performance in the hospitality sector.	0.000	<b>Supported</b>
H2	Work-life balance (WLB) among employees during COVID-19 pandemic has a positive and significant effect on employee performance in the hospitality sector.	0.418	<b>Not supported</b>
H3	Work tenure in the current organization has a positive and significant effect on employee performance during COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality sector.	0.001	<b>Supported</b>
H4	Age has a positive and significant effect on employee performance during COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality sector.	0.001	<b>Supported</b>
H5	Gender has a significant effect on employee performance in the hospitality sector during COVID-19 pandemic in the hospitality sector.	0.000	<b>Supported</b>

According to the findings of this study, hypothesis 1, 3, 4 and 5 have been accepted (supported) and only hypothesis 2 has been rejected (not supported). This means based on the survey responses of the employees working in the hospitality sector during COVID-19 Pandemic, this study has found significant negative influence of employee anxiety on work performance. This means anxiety among the employees caused by this pandemic has negatively impacted their work performance. Diversity, on the other hand, has a positive influence on performance, meaning more experienced, older and gender diversified workforce is performing better in this sector during this covid-19 pandemic. The findings of this study doesn't support hypothesis 2, which means employee work-life balance during this pandemic doesn't influence their work performance.

## 5. Discussion

COVID-19 pandemic has put the hospitality sector in a huge crisis. The crisis is related to the survival of the businesses and also the mental health conditions and job security of the employees working in this sector. The main objective of this paper was to examine the influence of anxiety, WLB, age, gender and tenure of the employees working in the hospitality sector on their respective performances. Among the 222 survey respondents who are currently working in the hospitality sector, 13.5% are females and 86.5% of the respondents were males. The average age of the respondents is 29 years and their average tenure in the current organization is 3.2 years. Almost 43% of the respondents have been working in their current organization for at most 2 years and almost 85% have work tenure in their current organization for at most 5 years. This means, the female to male ratio of the respondents is relatively lower in this sector and most of the respondents have been working in this sector for 2-5 years.

The study started with a theoretical framework to predict performance of the employees working in the hospitality sector through the influence of five independent variables. According to the findings of this study, four of the five independent variables can significantly predict work performance of the employees working in this sector. During this time of COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety among the workers working in the hospitality sector is the prime predictor of their work performance. Working from home during this pandemic are mentally debilitating for the employees, which eventually causes increased anxiety and lower performance (Kumar et al., 2021). Moreover, mortal salience regarding this COVID-19 pandemic could eventually cause higher anxiety level of the employees as they fear of being infected by the virus and could harm their well-being (Hu et al., 2020; Karatepe et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2021; Trougakos et al., 2020). The findings of this paper also support the above facts. It has been found that the level of anxiety has a significant negative influence on the level of employee performance.

The next influential factor of this study is the employee tenure in their current organization. It has a significant positive influence on employee performance. Which means as the employees spend more time in their current organizations, their work performances increases. This study also found similar (significant positive) influence of age and gender on employee work performance. This means as the employees become old their performance also increases. Gender, on the other hand, also significantly influences employee performance. It has been found that average performance is much higher among females and males.

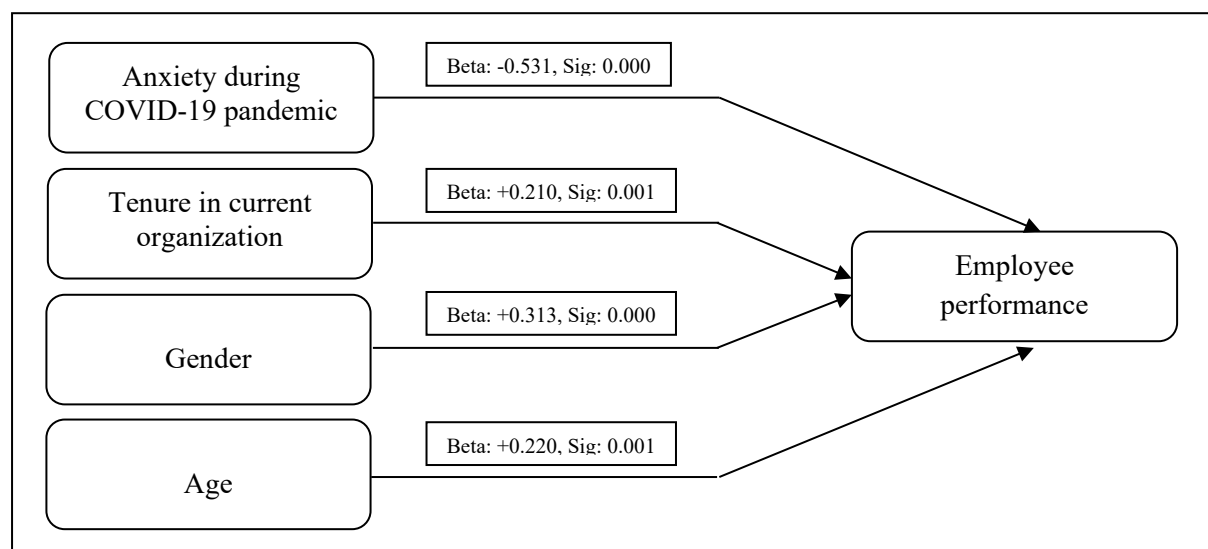


Figure 4: Final framework of the study (R-Square = 0.335)

The final framework of this study (Figure-4) with all the independent variables with significant influence on employee performance has been given above. At the end, it has been found that Anxiety, age, gender and employee tenure in their current organization can predict 33.5% of the variability of their performance in the hospitality sector during COVID-19 pandemic, where anxiety has the highest influence level on performance among all the independent variables. WLB, on the other hand, could not significantly predict the variability in employee's performance.

## **6. Limitations & Future Research**

This study was conducted in a small geographic location in the Southeast Asia. The low female participation rate (13.5%) limits the generalizability of findings across genders. Future studies should ensure balanced gender representation, considering the male-dominated nature of Bangladesh's hospitality sector.

The number of respondents is only 222 with female participation of only 13.5%. The main reason for such limitations was the difficulty faced in reaching out to the target audience (employees working in the hospitality sector) during this COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the hotels and resorts were closed due to lockdowns and movement restrictions in the country. Still the researchers tried their best to visit the hotels and resorts that were still open in order to collect as much survey responses as possible. Such limitations could be countered by collecting more responses for this study. The study also only considered Bangladesh as sample, and for two reasons it might not be ideal to judge the challenges of tourism sector in Bangladesh. Firstly, because, the Bangladeshi economy has been resilient and overcame the pandemic driven slow growth faster than the rest of the world and secondly, the Bangladeshi tourism destinations receive more domestic visitors and less foreign tourists thus were less affected. COVID-19 pandemic has opened a vast array of research field in the hospitality or tourism sector of developing countries. Researchers need to find out other variables that are influencing employee performance and well-being in this sector during this pandemic (Huda et al. 2020; Huda et al., 2019). A more diverse and larger survey audience can come up with more significant and insightful findings which could be highly acceptable in the research arena. Findings of such researches could help the management of these hotels and resorts in taking proper steps to counter the negative impacts of this COVID-19 pandemic on employee performance and well-being.

## **7. Conclusion**

Covid-19 has been a turbulent for the global economy. Resulting from the pandemic driven social distancing and lockdowns, the tourism and hospitality industry has been the most affected. Most of the hotels and resorts were closed throughout 2020 and most of 2021. This eventually affected income and mental health of the employees working in this sector. This study was designed with a purpose to identify the impact of anxiety, diversity and work-life balance of the employees working in this sector on their work performance during this pandemic. Based on the findings of this study, anxiety and diversity (age, gender & work tenure in current organisation) of the employees have significant influence over their work performance during this COVID-19 Pandemic. This means, an increased level of anxiety among the employees during this pandemic decreases their level of work performance. It was also found that older and more experienced employees tend to perform better than the others in this sector during this pandemic. On the other hand, work-life balance had insignificant influence over employee performance. Therefore, the management of the resorts and hotels must take into consideration the impacts of higher level of anxiety and diversity on employee

work performance during this COVID-19 Pandemic. So, in order to have higher employee performance, initiatives must be taken by the management to minimize employee anxiety levels and maximize diversity of the employees working in this sector during this pandemic.

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## Appendix

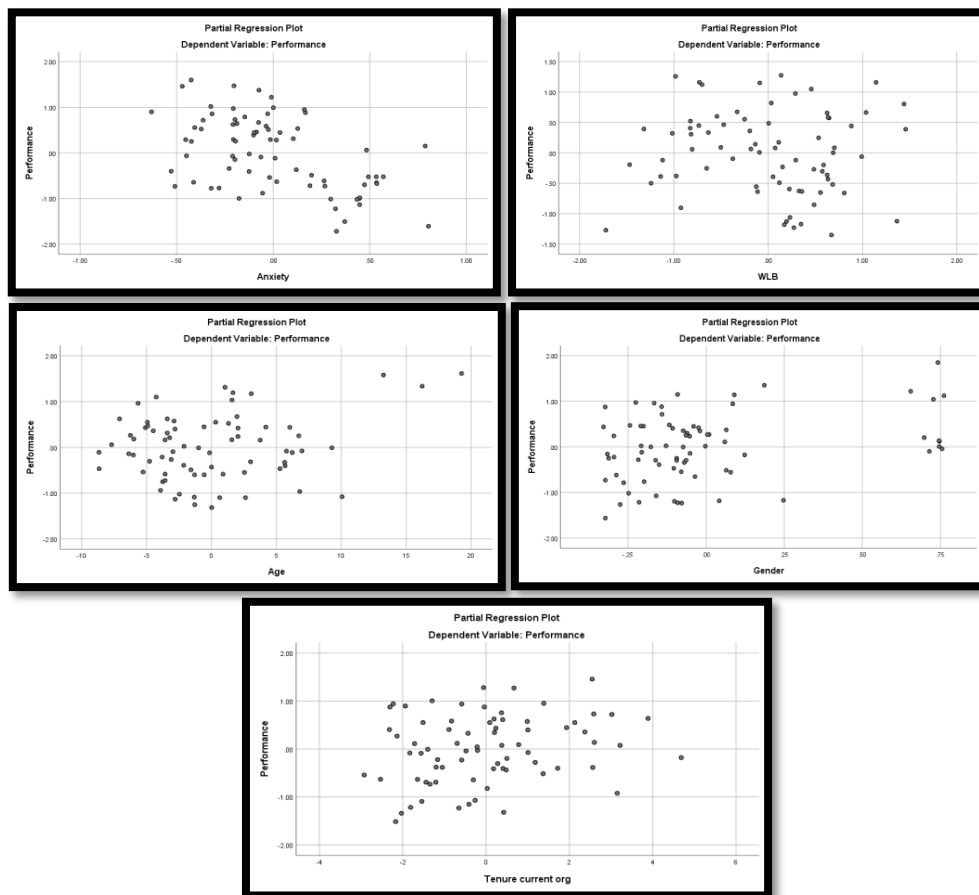
### List of tables

**Appendix-1 (Table):** Descriptive Means and Standard Deviation

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Anxiety	222	1.816	0.359
WLB	222	3.338	0.746
Tenure in Current org	222	3.200	1.893
Age	222	28.840	6.543
Gender	222	1.14	0.343
Performance	222	3.375	0.835

### List of Figures

**Appendix-2 (Figure):** No Homoscedasticity among the variables



### **Appendix-3: Survey items**

#### **Demographic**

- Your gender
- Your total work experience (in years)
- Your work experience in current organisation (in years)

#### **Anxiety (Zung, 1971)**

Please evaluate the following statements during this COVID-19 Pandemic:

- I feel more nervous and worried than usual
- I feel afraid/scared for no reason at all
- I get upset easily or feel panicky
- I feel like I'm falling apart
- I feel that everything is all right and nothing bad will happen
- My arms and legs shake and shiver
- I am bothered by headaches, neck and back pains
- I feel weak and get tired easily
- I feel calm and can sit still easily
- I can feel my heart beating fast
- I am bothered by dizziness or weakness
- I have fainting tendency or feel like I am going to faint
- I can breathe in and out easily
- I get feelings of numbness and/or itchiness in my fingers and toes
- I am bothered by stomachaches or indigestion
- I have to empty my bladder often
- My hands are usually dry
- My face gets hot and blushes
- I fall asleep easily and get a good night's rest
- I have bad dreams

#### **Work-life balance (Netemeyer et al. (1996)**

During this COVID-19 Pandemic:

- The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.
- The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill my family responsibilities.
- Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.
- My job produces stress or tension that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties/responsibilities
- Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.

#### **Self rated performance (Abramis (1994)**

While working during this COVID-19 Pandemic, how well were you in

- Handling the responsibilities and daily demands of your work?
- Performing without mistakes?
- Making the right decisions?
- Getting things done on time?