

Interpersonal Communication, Relational Crafting's and Language Portfolio Impact on Job Stress: Exploring Moderating Role of Expatriates Experience

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, and language portfolio on job stress by examining both direct and mediating effects. Additionally, it explores whether these relationships differ between employees with below and above average experience levels through multi-group analysis. A quantitative research approach was employed, collecting data from 234 employees (121 with below average experience, 113 with above average experience) through a structured survey. The study utilized validated measurement scales and analyzed the data using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Smart-PLS. Reliability, validity, discriminant validity, and structural relationships were assessed, along with mediation and multi-group analysis (MGA) to compare differences across experience levels. Results indicate that interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting significantly reduce job stress. Conversely, language portfolio increases job stress, suggesting that while multilingual proficiency enhances communication, it may also introduce work-related pressures. Mediation analysis confirms that language portfolio partially mediates the relationships between interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, and job stress. The MGA findings reveal that the impact of language portfolio on job stress is stronger for below average experience employees. However, one hypothesis regarding the mediation of language portfolio between interpersonal communication competence and job stress was not supported in the MGA, indicating that this effect may not vary significantly across experience levels. This study contributes to workplace stress literature by integrating communication skills, proactive relational behaviors, and multilingualism as key determinants of stress. The findings offer theoretical advancements in job stress research and provide practical insights for organizations to enhance communication training, relationship-building initiatives, and language management strategies.

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Keywords: Language Portfolio, Interpersonal Communication Competence, Relational Crafting, Job Stress, Workplace Stress Management

Introduction

Stress in the workplace is a growing issue in organizational psychology and human resource management because excessive stress is detrimental to employees' well-being, job performance, and organizational productivity (Abd et al., 2023). There are several causes of workplace stress, such as workload overload, role

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conflict, poor social support, and poor communication (Ahmad et al., 2024). Among these, interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting have come to play a key role in determining workplace stress since they bear on the way employees communicate with their fellow workers, maintain workplace relationships, and deal with the demands of their jobs (Costin et al., 2023). Good interpersonal communication helps workers to express their grievances, obtain social support, and minimize misunderstandings, consequently decreasing job-related stress (Dodanwala et al., 2023). In the same way, relational crafting, or actively constructing workplace relationships to increase social and professional assistance, has been found to be associated with better job satisfaction and less stress (Montano et al., 2023). Yet even though these factors have been recognized as being crucial, their efficacy may be dependent on the language portfolio of an employee, or how many languages they speak and how well they are able to communicate in a variety of professional contexts (Zabin et al., 2023).

The growing internationalization of businesses and expanding diversity of workplaces have established language ability as a critical skill for productive workplace communication (Hermawan et al., 2023). Employees who possess multiple languages are able to communicate clearer and more meaningful professional relationships, minimizing chances of miscommunication and resultant stress (Hidayati et al., 2024). In contrast, employees who have limited proficiency in languages could experience difficulty during workplace communication, which increases their role ambiguity, social isolation, and stress level (Dietl et al., 2023). Since workplace communication is often cross-linguistic, there is a solid language portfolio that can act as a mediating variable that improves the beneficial effect of interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting on stress reduction at the workplace (Chen et al., 2024). In spite of the increased focus on language abilities in workplace communication research, few studies have investigated how language portfolio interacts with other workplace skills to affect job stress. This research seeks to fill this gap by investigating the mediating function of language portfolio within the associations between interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, and job stress.

Previous empirical research has widely explored the connection between job stress and interpersonal communication competence and repeatedly concluded that high communication competence is related to low stress levels (Hermawan et al., 2023). Previous studies have revealed that highly competent interpersonal communication employees are more likely to deal effectively with workplace problems, ask for assistance from their colleagues and superiors, and resolve interpersonal conflicts, which all help reduce workplace stress (Javaid & Ali, 2023). For example, according to (Mustofa et al., 2023), a research found that those workers who clearly communicated their workload issues to supervisors felt more control in their job and received greater support in the workplace, thus effectively lowering their level of stress. Likewise, according to (Sukmawati et al., 2024), poorly communicative employees were confronted with greater role ambiguity and interpersonal conflicts that resulted in greater job-related stress and dissatisfaction. Such findings highlight the central role of communication competence in minimizing workplace stress and well-being.

Relational crafting has also been discovered to play an important role in impacting job stress, with the employees applying proactive relationship-building strategies reaping increased workplace support as well as reduced psychological distress (Costin et al., 2023). It has been discovered that relational crafting assists workers in building a supportive workplace, which serves as a buffer for job stresses generated by workload pressure as well as ambiguity of role (Kaltiainen et al., 2024). A longitudinal field study discovered that the employees who performed relational crafting actively had lesser burnout and higher job satisfaction. Additionally, a study by (Kizrak et al., 2024) discovered that relational crafting increases employee autonomy and social integration at the workplace and also reduces stress levels.

Communication and stress management skills in workplace languages have also received extensive research empirically (Kaltiainen et al., 2024). Empirical research indicates that employees with expertise in two or more languages have a greater capability to cope in multilingual and multicultural workplace environments, eliminating the barriers of communication, reducing job-related stress (Riches et al., 2024). For example, (Ahmad et al., 2024) discovered that multilingual workers felt more confident in communicating with colleagues in the workplace and thus felt less anxiety and enhanced work performance. Conversely, workers who encountered language barriers could not comprehend work instructions and communicate with co-workers, hence boosting their stress level (Nasrul et al., 2023). According to these results, language portfolio appears to be an essential variable in the management of work stress that calls for further study on its mediational role in the relationship between communication skills and work stress.

In spite of the ample amount of research conducted on job stress, relational crafting, and interpersonal communication competence, various gaps exist in the literature (Li et al., 2023). For one, although earlier research has shown a correlation between communication competence and job stress, few studies have looked at the underlying mechanisms by which the relationship holds, especially the language proficiency factor (Sarwari et al., 2024). The majority of the research has centered on communication competence as a stand-alone ability, without considering the potential that language ability might influence the success of communication attempts in multicultural workplace environments.

Since language differences are a key source of work-related stress, it is essential to know how language

portfolio affects the stress-buffering effects of communication competence (Sukmawati et al., 2024). In the same way, even though relational crafting has been attributed to lower work-related stress levels, how far language skills can influence the functionality of relational crafting is not clearly understood (Abd et al., 2023). Workers possessing good relational crafting abilities can form workplace relationships, but language difference can prevent them from fully leveraging relationship-building capabilities, particularly when working in multinational and multicultural work settings (Narayan, 2023). Research has not yet established whether language ability increases the stress-reducing effects of relational crafting or if its lack diminishes these effects (Fathi & Rahimi, 2024). This lacuna underscores the necessity to investigate the mediating role of language portfolio in the relationship between relational crafting and job stress. Furthermore, while other studies have helped significantly in realizing the importance of multilingualism at work, minimal studies have considered its role as a mediator as compared to being an independent variable (van Tonder et al., 2023). Language skills are portrayed as an isolated competence, as opposed to one that is interactive with other work competencies in setting the stress level of workers (Lam, 2023). This study tries to bridge the gaps by examining the mediating role of language portfolio in interpersonal communication competence-relational crafting job stress relationships. In this way, this study provides a more nuanced insight into how work communication skills and relationship building skills interact with language capacity in the determination of stress.

The aims of this study are the following: (1) to investigate the influence of interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting on job stress, (2) to investigate the mediating effect of language portfolio between these relationships, and (3) to offer evidence about how language proficiency enhances workplace communication and relational skills' stress-buffering effects. Through answering these objectives, this research aims to fill some of the most significant gaps in the literature and bring about practical implications for improving workplace communication, employee health, and stress management strategies in multicultural workplaces.

Literature Review

Interpersonal Communication Competence and Job Stress

Interpersonal communication competence is a person's ability to effectively exchange messages, get understood by others, and facilitate social interactions within a workplace (van Tonder et al., 2023). It involves competencies like active listening, expressiveness, and emotional intelligence, all of which lead to improved workplace relationships and fewer misunderstandings (Chen et al., 2024). Job stress, however, refers to the psychological and physiological tension experienced by workers resulting from overwork, role confusion, interpersonal conflicts, and perceived lack of support (Vallasamy et al., 2023). The demand-control-support model emphasizes that job stress is a function of the level of job demands, the extent of control one has over his/her tasks, and the support from supervisors and co-worker (Costin et al., 2023).

Empirical studies have continuously established that communication competence bears a close relationship with job well-being (Hermawan et al., 2023). Research has revealed that workers with good interpersonal communication skills have lower stress levels because they are able to negotiate expectations at work, request help, and create good workplace relationships better (Kızrak et al., 2024). For example, studies in organizational psychology have found that workers who successfully convey their concerns and needs to supervisors gain more job control and emotional support, less job-related anxiety, and reduced burnout (Montano et al., 2023). Findings also suggest that lack of good communication skills causes interpersonal conflicts at the workplace, role confusion, and social isolation, all increasing job stress (Costin et al., 2023).

H1: *Interpersonal communication competence has a significant impact on job stress.*

Relational Crafting and Job Stress

Relational crafting is the active work employees do to change their workplace relationships to make their work environment more supportive and interesting (Doden et al., 2024). It involves looking for central interactions, forging working relationships, and building collaboration with colleagues and managers (Harju et al., 2024). Through relational crafting, employees increase feelings of belongingness, social support, and job satisfaction that can potentially reduce the impact of job stress (Abd et al., 2023). Based on the job demands-resources model, it is assumed that workers' stress decreases when they have sufficient social and emotional resources. Relational crafting enhances these resources by enhancing teamwork coherence and promoting interpersonal relationships that contribute to the improvement of workplace problems (Li et al., 2023).

Empirical studies have shown the beneficial impact of relational crafting on stress mitigation and workplace well-being (Dodanwala et al., 2023; Kasumagić-Kafedžić & Đuliman, 2024). It has been proven through a study that employees who engage in relationship-building are more job-satisfied and experience

less psychological distress because of the emotional and instrumental support they enjoy (Dodanwala et al., 2023). Occupational psychology research finds that relational crafting allows workers to redefine their work in a manner that encourages collaboration and mutual support, diminishing the sense of burden arising from job over exigency (van Zyl et al., 2023). Moreover, findings indicate that workers with stronger work relationships are less susceptible to job strains since they can solicit assistance from their social network for problem-solving and emotional support. These results add empirical support to the idea that relational crafting is an important process involved in stress management, and therefore the following hypothesis:

H2: *Relational crafting has a significant impact on job stress.*

Language Portfolio and Job Stress

A language portfolio is an individual's proficiency in multiple languages and the ability to apply the languages in an effective manner within professional settings (Fathi & Rahimi, 2024). It includes linguistic skills such as speaking, writing, and comprehension, which are critical in workplace communication, especially within globalized and multicultural workplaces (van Tonder et al., 2023). Employees with a strong language profile can communicate easily with co-workers, clients, and managers from various linguistic backgrounds, facilitating collaboration and communication becoming less of an issue (Guzmán & Garcia, 2025). Job stress, on the other hand, is psychological and emotional stress resulting from high job demands, low control, and inadequate support. Language issues in the workplace, like misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and self-expression difficulties, can lead to job stress, especially in positions involving frequent cross-cultural communication (Ahmad et al., 2024). Empirical findings indicate that proficiency in language has a strong association with workplace happiness and stress. Research shows that workers with excellent multilingual skills have lower levels of stress due to their ability to express themselves clearly, grasp instructions well, and establish better professional relationships (Hidayati et al., 2024).

Capitalizing on these empirics, there are grounds for contention that having an adequately built-up language portfolio functions as an umbrella against employment stress. Language-skill-abler employees tend to be well-poised in engaging in communications more effectively, curtailing the occurrences of confusion, and easily operating in highly variegated working environments (Kiryakova & Menshikova, 2023). Multilingual employees, in fact, tend to get more jobs done with independent initiative and supportive human relations in return, that serve as imperative measures in discouraging employment-connected stress (Narayan, 2023). By enhancing the clarity of communication and creating a more harmonious work atmosphere, language ability lessens interpersonal tensions and improves work performance (van Tonder et al., 2023). Hence, the language portfolio job stress relationship is predicted to be negative, resulting in the following hypothesis:

H3: *Language portfolio has a significant negative impact on job stress.*

Mediating Role of Language Portfolio

Empirical studies have always proven that interpersonal communication competence as well as language ability are most important factors that determine the level of workplace stress (Narayan, 2023). Experiments have illustrated that those workers who possess good communication skills have lower job stress because they are in a position to express their needs, resolve conflicts, and create positive workplace relationships (Riches et al., 2024). Similarly, research in workplaces where there is multilingualism has shown that language proficiency enhances the effectiveness of communication by reducing miscommunication, promoting confidence, and facilitating ease of interaction (Menggo et al., 2023). Employees who are not linguistically competent in the workplace dominant language are prone to struggle when articulating themselves, hence causing frustration, segregation, and higher levels of stress (Costin et al., 2023). In addition, research has shown that differences in language exaggerate conflicts in the workplace and role ambiguity and, consequently, escalate job tension. Conversely, employees with a strong language portfolio are better positioned to translate their ability in communications into actual, effective workplace interactions, reducing further stressors (Dietl et al., 2023).

According to these findings, it would be reasonable to state that language portfolio is a significant mediating variable in the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and workplace stress. Though effective communication skills allow people to manage interactions in the workplace more competently, the presence of a language bar impedes the full expression of such competence (Lam, 2023). A well-developed language portfolio reinforces the effect of people skills ability by optimizing the clearness and precision of message sending and receiving across different work settings (Moqbel & Al-Kadi, 2023). Multilingually competent as well as capable communicators have better access to social support, clarify work, and build good professional relationships that all decrease stress (Kasumagić-Kafedžić & Đuliman, 2024). Thus, language ability is hypothesized to play the role of a bridge that enhances the negative correlation between communication competence and job stress, and the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: *Language portfolio mediates the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and job stress.*

Existing literature has created a clear connection between job stress and relational crafting, where employees actively forge relationships at the workplace with a reduced psychological strain. It has been shown that relational crafting helps to boost social support, dampen inter-worker conflicts, and enhance the feeling of belongingness, which is associated with a lower stress level (Dodanwala et al., 2023). Concurrently, language proficiency research in the workplace has shown that multilingual workers find it easier to establish professional relationships because they can communicate clearly and appropriately. Workplace diversity studies also show that language proficiency makes networking and collaboration easy, which are fundamental elements of relational crafting (Harju et al., 2024). Employees with poor language skills, on the other hand, may struggle to build relationships, which would lead to social isolation and increased work stress.

Based on these findings, it is possible to conclude that language portfolio mediates relational crafting and workplace stress by highlighting the impact of relationship-building behavior (Hammad Al-Rashidi et al., 2023). Although relational crafting enables employees to build professional relationships and obtain social support, language competence governs how much relations are properly maintained (Noesgaard & Jørgensen, 2024). Multilingual employees are more prone to practice relational crafting, thereby enjoying improved professional relationships and stress relief. Through the elimination of communication barriers, a strong language profile boosts the stress-buffering abilities of relational crafting, in a manner that work interactions become more meaningful and less stressful (Liang et al., 2023). Accordingly, the mediating role of linguistic competence is anticipated to strengthen the negative relationship between relational crafting and occupational stress, and the resulting hypothesis is as follows:

H5: *Language portfolio mediates the relationship between relational crafting and job stress.*

Theoretical Framework Supporting the Research

The work here is rooted in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model of (Demerouti et al., 2001), a comprehensive conceptualization of job demands and resources interacting to determine worker stress and well-being. The JD-R model posits job stress where demands exceed supplies, leading to psychological and physiological stress (Kizrak et al., 2024). Interpersonal communication skill and relationship building are defined in this research as individual skills that allow employees to manage workplace interactions, request help, and reduce stress (Riches et al., 2024). Extremely effective employees in interpersonal communication can express their needs, solve conflicts, and build healthy relationships, thus reducing stress. Similarly, relational crafting, or the intentional management of workplace relationships, enables job control and social support and diminishes perceived stress (Nasrul et al., 2023). How well these resources work may very well depend on the employee's language portfolio, which is the key mediator of these interactions. As the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory postulates, people seek to attain and retain resources that facilitate their coping with stressors, and language proficiency serves as an essential resource that optimizes the utility of communication competence and relational crafting (Sukmawati et al., 2024). Workers with effective language skills are more capable of utilizing their interpersonal communication ability and relational crafting activities, since language skills break the limitations on requesting aid and developing professional connections, thus minimizing job stress (Costin et al., 2023). Moreover, the Demand-Control-Support model proposes that workers feel less stress if they exercise control over their work and get sufficient social support. Well-designed language portfolio can improve job control by allowing unambiguous communication, minimizing misunderstandings, and integrating into society, thus reinforcing the negative link between communication/relationship skills and job stress. Such an integrated theory view highlights language ability as pivotal in enhancing communication competence and relationship crafting's potential to buffer from stress, setting the foundation for the hypothesized relationships in the current study. Thus, based on above we developed the following conceptual framework which is shown in Figure 1.

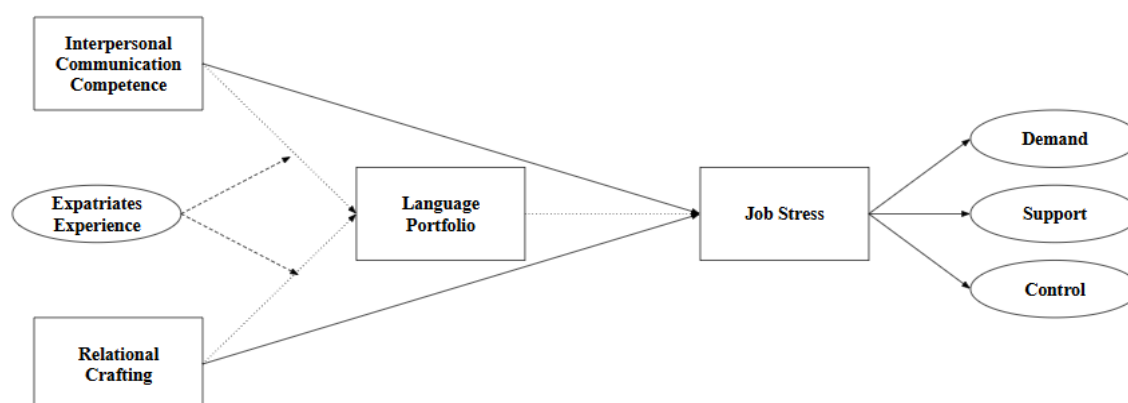


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

Methodology

This research applied a quantitative, cross-sectional study design to investigate the effects of interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, and language portfolio on occupational stress. The research also tested the mediating effect of language portfolio and performed a multi-group analysis (MGA) according to experience levels. The research included working professionals from different industries in order to provide diversified representation from workplace environments. The sample was 234 respondents, including 121 workers who were labeled as having below-average experience (three years and below) and 113 workers who were labeled as having above-average experience (above three years). This division enabled a comparative examination of the way experience level affects the interaction between communication competence, relational crafting, language portfolio, and job stress. The sampling method was non-probability purposive sampling, whereby only those workers with the necessary work experience were involved in the study.

A structured questionnaire was used in the study as the main data collection instrument. Measurement scales employed in the study were all borrowed from existing research studies that had earlier been validated to guarantee reliability and validity (Table 1). The questionnaire had several sections, with each section designed to measure one of the key constructs, namely, interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, language portfolio, job stress (demand, control, and support dimensions), and demographic data. All constructs were measured with Likert-type scales ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Data were obtained through online and offline distribution of the survey in order to optimize participation and secure a representative set of respondents. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, and they participated in the survey on a voluntary basis. The questionnaire was also pre-tested with a small sample of professionals in order to test its clarity and pertinence, and minor adjustments were introduced prior to large-scale data collection.

Table 1: Questionnaire Profile

Variables	No of Items	Source
Interpersonal Communication Competence	10	(Sexton & Orchard, 2016)
Relational Crafting	7	(Shusha, 2014)
Language Portfolio	7	(Wicking, 2016)
Job Stress	17	(Alves et al., 2004)

Data analysis was done in Smart-PLS (Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling) because of its capacity to handle intricate relationships, small to moderate-sized samples, and latent variable models. The data analysis was carried out in a series of stages. Reliability and validity checks were first carried out using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) to determine if all constructs achieved the required threshold values. Discriminant validity was tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion to ascertain that the constructs were dissimilar from each other. Hypothesis testing was also done using path analysis, whereby structural model findings shed light on the direct and mediating relationships between the variables. The validity of relationships was ascertained using t-values and p-values. With the respondents classified into below-average and above-average experience groups, the research conducted multi-group analysis (MGA) using Smart-PLS to investigate if the levels of experience moderated the relations among the key constructs. This enabled an examination of how professional experience affects the effect of interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, and language portfolio on job stress. MICOM test was also administered to verify configural and measurement invariance prior to conducting the MGA.

Results

Table 2, Figure 2 and Figure 3 shows reliability and validity statistics for the variables of the study, split according to respondents who have above average and below average levels of experience. The outer loadings on all the constructs are well over the acceptable benchmark of 0.60, reflecting adequate item-level reliability. Cronbach alpha coefficients vary between 0.835 and 0.941 for above average experience participants and between 0.847 and 0.940 for below average experience participants, reflecting good internal consistency. Composite reliability (CR) coefficients for all the constructs are well above the suggested 0.70, thus validating the measures as reliable. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for every construct are more than 0.50, validating convergent validity. Interestingly, the interpersonal communication competence (ICC) construct has the strongest reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.941 for above average experience and 0.940 for below average experience), which means this construct is highly measured for both groups. The relational crafting (RC) construct, though reliable, is the lowest AVE (0.503 for above average experience and 0.521 for below average experience), indicating potential for improvement in variance capture within this construct. These results validate that the measurement model of the study fulfils the reliability and validity requirements, thus making the subsequent analyses robust.

Table 2: Variables reliability and validity

Category	Variables	Items	Outer loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Above average experience	Control	C1	0.806	0.836	0.880	0.552
		C2	0.752			
		C3	0.760			
		C4	0.776			
		C5	0.637			
	Demand	C6	0.714	0.838	0.885	0.606
		D1	0.787			
		D2	0.786			
		D3	0.752			
		D4	0.752			
	Interpersonal Communication Competence	D5	0.814	0.941	0.950	0.655
		ICC1	0.823			
		ICC2	0.822			
		ICC3	0.846			
		ICC4	0.778			
		ICC5	0.864			
		ICC6	0.826			
		ICC7	0.830			
		ICC8	0.822			
		ICC9	0.719			
	Language Portfolio	ICC10	0.754	0.894	0.917	0.613
		LP1	0.798			
		LP2	0.802			
		LP3	0.862			
		LP4	0.751			
		LP5	0.762			
		LP6	0.769			
	Relational Crafting	LP7	0.730	0.835	0.876	0.503
		RC1	0.698			
		RC2	0.637			
		RC3	0.768			
		RC4	0.663			
		RC5	0.740			
		RC6	0.699			
	Support	RC7	0.752	0.868	0.901	0.605
		S1	0.802			
		S2	0.680			
		S3	0.827			
		S4	0.834			
		S5	0.717			
Below average experience	Control	S6	0.793	0.904	0.926	0.677
		C1	0.837			
		C2	0.795			
		C3	0.818			
		C4	0.811			
	Demand	C5	0.834	0.852	0.894	0.629
		C6	0.840			
		D1	0.840			
		D2	0.765			
		D3	0.767			
	Interpersonal Communication Competence	D4	0.743	0.940	0.949	0.649
		D5	0.844			
		ICC1	0.825			
		ICC2	0.782			
		ICC3	0.864			
		ICC4	0.816			
		ICC5	0.847			
		ICC6	0.778			
		ICC7	0.794			

Variables	Items	Outer loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Language Portfolio	ICC8	0.779	0.919	0.936	0.676
	ICC9	0.768			
	ICC10	0.794			
	LP1	0.820			
	LP2	0.845			
	LP3	0.863			
	LP4	0.834			
Relational Crafting	LP5	0.864	0.847	0.884	0.521
	LP6	0.793			
	LP7	0.727			
	RC1	0.691			
	RC2	0.631			
	RC3	0.716			
	RC4	0.687			
Support	RC5	0.779	0.890	0.917	0.650
	RC6	0.735			
	RC7	0.803			
	S1	0.844			
	S2	0.672			
	S3	0.872			
	S4	0.875			
	S5	0.786			
	S6	0.770			

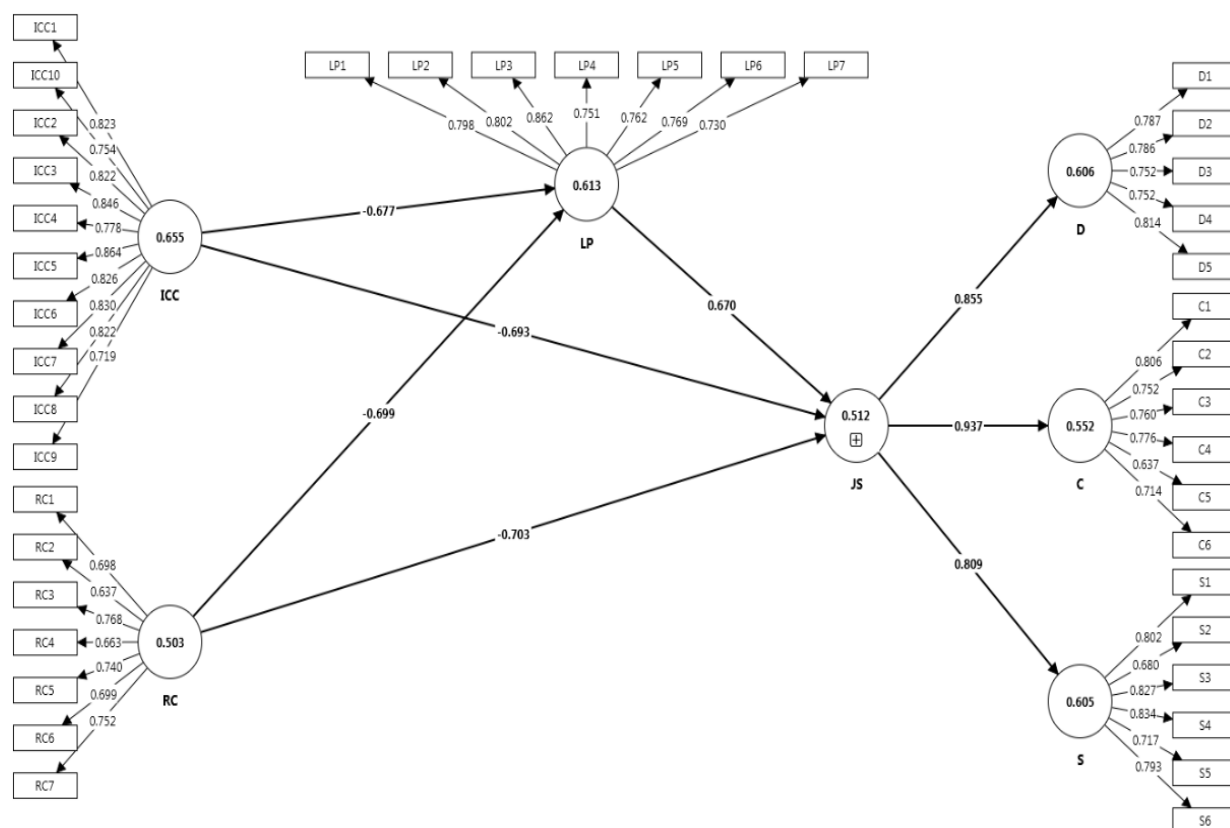


Figure 2: Measurement Model of Above average experience

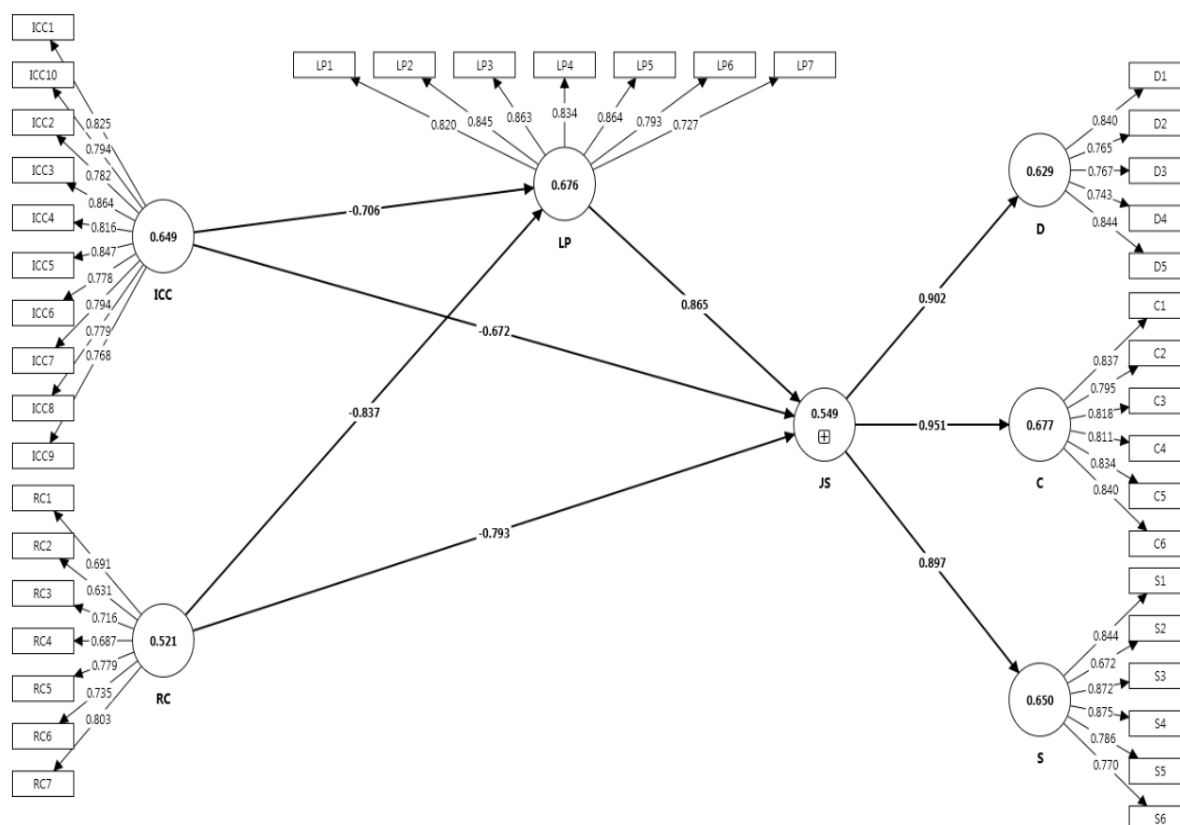


Figure 3: Measurement Model of Below average experience

Table 3 reports the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) estimates, evaluating discriminant validity between study variables. For participants with above average experience, HTMT values fall between 0.255 (demand and control) and 0.796 (relational crafting and support), showing constructs are sufficiently distinct from each other. The construct of interpersonal communication competence (ICC) has moderate to high correlations with other measures, specifically relational crafting (HTMT = 0.775) and language portfolio (HTMT = 0.735), indicating some conceptual similarity. For participants with below average experience, the strongest HTMT value is between relational crafting and demand (0.835), suggesting that relational crafting is more associated with job demands for less experienced employees. All estimates of HTMT are below the critical value of 0.90 despite a few high values, ensuring discriminant validity. The results thus show that the constructs are not conceptually equivalent, establishing measurement model validity.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

		C	D	ICC	LP	RC	S
Above average experience	Control						
	Demand	0.255					
	Interpersonal Communication Competence	0.723	0.571				
	Language Portfolio	0.693	0.615	0.735			
	Relational Crafting	0.741	0.613	0.775	0.789		
Below average experience	Support	0.725	0.511	0.688	0.675	0.796	
	Control						
	Demand	0.526					
	Interpersonal Communication Competence	0.693	0.697				
	Language Portfolio	0.411	0.510	0.324			
	Relational Crafting	0.582	0.835	0.817	0.343		
	Support	0.845	0.764	0.761	0.771	0.747	

Table 4 summarizes the model fit statistics, that is, R-square, adjusted R-square, predictive relevance (Q^2), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). The R-square for job stress among above average experience participants is 0.600, meaning that 60% of job stress variance is accounted for by the independent variables. Likewise, language portfolio accounts for 56% of its variance ($R^2 = 0.560$). For below average experience participants, explanatory power is higher, with job stress explaining 76.5% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.765$) and language portfolio explaining 71% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.710$). Predictive relevance (Q^2) values are greater than 0.50 in all models, showing high predictive accuracy. SRMR values (0.065 for above average experience and 0.052 for below average experience) are less than the 0.08 threshold, showing a good model

fit. These results emphasize that the suggested model is able to explain job stress and language portfolio for both groups, with higher predictive capability for workers with less than average experience.

Table 4: *R-square statistics Model Goodness of Fit Statistics*

		R-square	R-square adjusted	Q2	SRMR
Above average experience	Job Stress	0.600	0.589	0.554	0.065
	Language Portfolio	0.560	0.552	0.537	
Below average experience	Job Stress	0.765	0.759	0.601	0.052
	Language Portfolio	0.710	0.705	0.677	

Table 5, Figure 4 and Figure 5 presents the findings of structural model analysis in terms of beta coefficients (β), standard errors (SE), t-values, and p-values for each hypothesis. For workers with more than average experience, the results indicate that interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting play key roles in buffering job stress. The strong negative effect of interpersonal communication competence on job stress ($\beta = -0.311$, $p = 0.001$) implies that veteran staff with high competence in communication can better cope with workplace problems, resolve conflicts, and establish strong support networks to minimize stress. Likewise, the negative influence of relational crafting ($\beta = -0.326$, $p = 0.001$) shows that employees who actively change their workplace relationships, through seeking aid, reinforcing co-operations, and interacting with co-workers, report less stress. This is in line with past research indicating that seasoned workers, who usually bear more duties and experience greater exposure to the dynamics of the workplace, stand to gain a lot from robust interpersonal and relational skills in streamlining their workloads and diminishing mental stress. But an interesting result is language portfolio's positive effect on occupational stress ($\beta = 0.232$, $p = 0.019$), suggesting multilingual or language-proficient employees could experience higher stress levels through greater expectations, more communication tasks, and rich interactions, especially in multicultural or international work teams. This implies that although language ability is a value, it also places additional mental and emotional burdens on seasoned staff, particularly if they are called upon to perform key negotiations, translations, or cross-cultural communications. Also, the mediating effect of language portfolio on the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and job stress ($\beta = -0.086$, $p = 0.021$) and relational crafting and job stress ($\beta = -0.103$, $p = 0.037$) indicates that though language skills strengthen the stress-alleviating influence of communication competence and relational crafting, they only do so in a limited manner. The comparatively weaker mediation effects indicate that interpersonal and relational competences have more direct impacts on stress for experienced employees compared to language competence. It indicates that organizations that intend to minimize stress among experienced employees must pay attention to building competent communication and relational approaches in place of highlighting language skills as a key instrument for stress minimization.

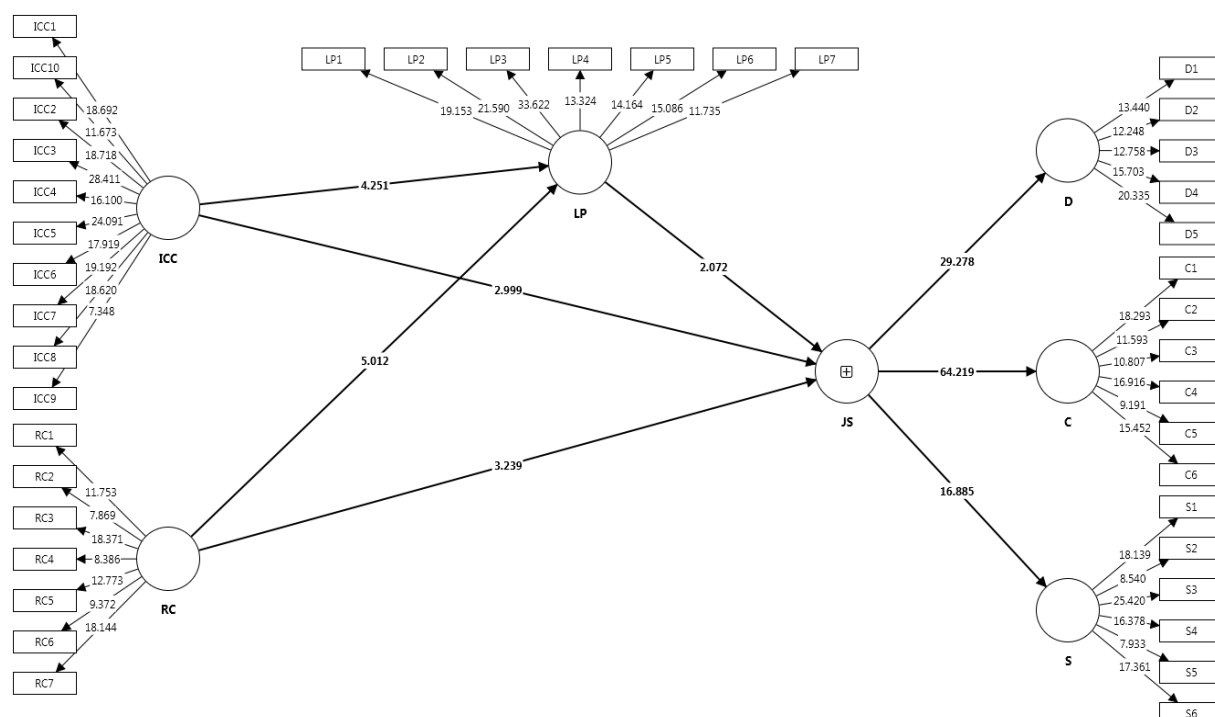


Figure 4: *Structural Model for Path Analysis of Above average experience*

For less experienced employees, the results indicate that although interpersonal and relational skills continue to be paramount, language competence plays a far greater role in determining job stress levels. The

strong negative influence of interpersonal communication competence on job stress ($\beta = -0.274$, $p = 0.001$) shows that even for less experienced workers, good communication skills assist in coping with stress through enhanced interaction with colleagues, superiors, and clients. Yet, relational crafting's influence on job stress ($\beta = -0.200$, $p = 0.046$) is less for the newer employees than for their more experienced counterparts, indicating that new employees are less likely to make full use of relational crafting tactics because of unfamiliarity with the workplace, reduced confidence, or fewer professional networks. The strongest result in this category is the significant positive effect of language portfolio on job stress ($\beta = 0.660$, $p < 0.001$), which shows that workers with more proficient language are under significantly more stress. This may be because of the added workload, communication pressure, and increased performance expectation imposed on employees who show proficient language skills. Since less experienced staff are yet learning to fill their positions, the need for good communication, particularly within multilingual or culturally diverse settings, could create stress instead of making work easier. In addition, the mediating role of language portfolio between relational crafting and job stress ($\beta = -0.476$, $p < 0.001$) and interpersonal communication competence and job stress ($\beta = -0.101$, $p = 0.047$) implies that language competence is an essential mechanism by which these abilities are linked to levels of stress. Yet, in contrast to the high-experience group, the mediation effect for the low-experience group is much more pronounced, especially between job stress and relational crafting. Relational crafting will be much more effective at lowering stress when employees themselves possess strong language skills, probably due to the fact that language abilities give them the tools to achieve positive workplace relationships and obtain social support. These findings suggest that for newer employees, organizations should prioritize language support programs, stress management initiatives, and gradual exposure to high-pressure communication tasks to reduce the burden of language-related stress while allowing them to develop relational and communication competencies over time.

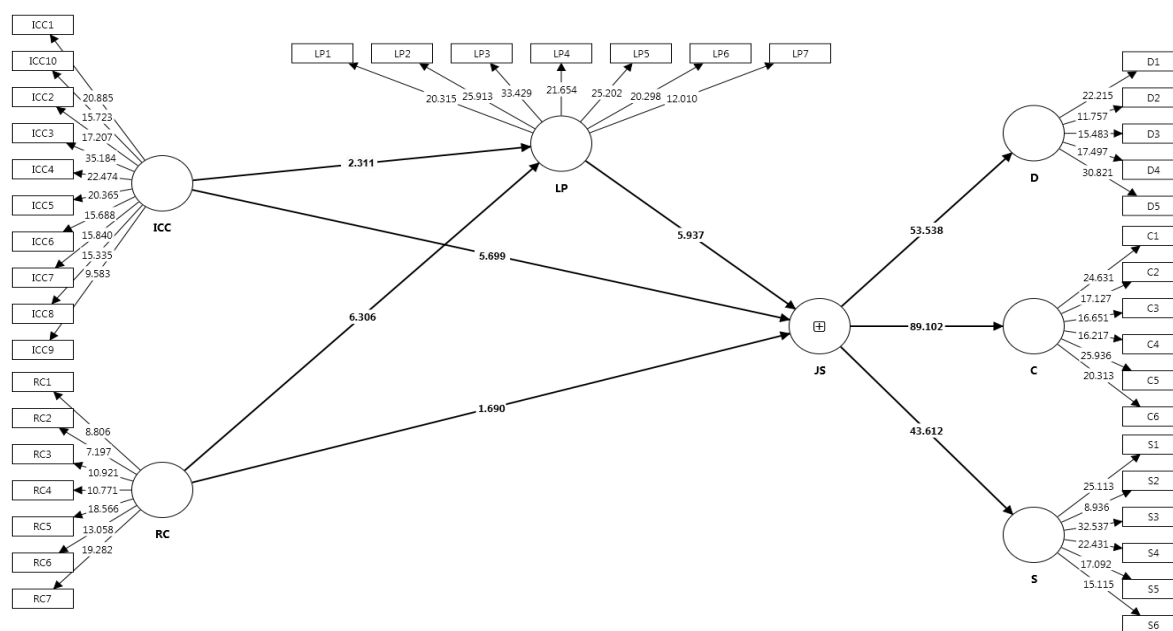


Figure 5: Structural Model for Path Analysis of Below average experience

Table 5: Path Analysis

	Hypothesis	β	SE	t-Value	p-Value
Above average experience	Interpersonal communication competence has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.311	0.104	2.999	0.001
	Relational crafting has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.326	0.101	3.239	0.001
	Language portfolio has a significant impact on job stress.	0.232	0.112	2.072	0.019
	Language portfolio mediates the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and job stress.	-0.086	0.042	2.031	0.021
	Language portfolio mediates the relationship between relational crafting and job stress.	-0.103	0.058	1.786	0.037
Below average experience	Interpersonal communication competence has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.274	0.048	5.699	0.001
	Relational crafting has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.200	0.118	1.690	0.046
	Language portfolio has a significant impact on job stress.	0.660	0.111	5.937	0.000
	Language portfolio mediates the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and job stress.	-0.101	0.061	1.679	0.047
	Language portfolio mediates the relationship between relational crafting and job stress.	-0.476	0.124	3.848	0.000

Table 6 shows the Measurement Invariance of Composite Models (MICOM) test findings, determining if relationships between constructs are the same across levels of experience. Permutation mean difference and original difference values show large differences in the effects of interpersonal communication competence ($p = 0.021$), relational crafting ($p = 0.009$), and language portfolio ($p = 0.002$) on work stress between high- and below average experience groups. Interestingly, the effect of language portfolio on work stress varies considerably across groups (difference = -0.428 , $p = 0.002$), indicating that language skills have a greater influence on coping with stress among below average experience workers. Mediation effects of language portfolio also exhibit considerable differences, especially between relational crafting and job stress (difference = 0.373 , $p = 0.004$), which implies relational crafting might operate differently based on employees' experience levels. These findings validate partial measurement invariance, making multigroup analysis justified.

Table 6: MICOM Test

	Original (Group_ High)	Original (Group_ Low)	Original Difference	Permutation Mean Difference	Permutati on p-Value
Interpersonal communication competence has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.311	-0.274	-0.037	-0.034	0.021
Relational crafting has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.326	-0.2	-0.126	-0.12	0.009
Language portfolio has a significant impact on job stress.	0.232	0.66	-0.428	-0.41	0.002
Language portfolio mediates the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and job stress.	-0.086	-0.101	0.014	0.012	0.048
Language portfolio mediates the relationship between relational crafting and job stress.	-0.103	-0.476	0.373	0.368	0.004

Table 7 reveals the outcomes of the multigroup analysis, contrasting structural path coefficients for high- and below average experience staff. The differences are substantial for the influence of interpersonal communication competence on job stress (mean difference = -0.037 , $p = 0.035$), relational crafting on job stress (mean difference = -0.126 , $p = 0.005$), and language portfolio on job stress (mean difference = -0.428 , $p = 0.001$). While language portfolio plays a large role in mediating the correlation between relational crafting and job stress in both groups, its mediating effect between interpersonal communication competence and job stress is not significant ($p = 0.082$). What these findings infer is that the fundamental relationships generalize across groups, but experience scales their strength and that language competency has a greater impact on job stress in the less-experienced employees. This underscores the importance of tailored stress management interventions based on employees' experience levels.

Table 7: Multigroup Analysis

Path	Group_Above Average (Mean)	Group_below Average (Mean)	Mean Difference	t- Value	p- Value	Result
Interpersonal communication competence has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.311	-0.274	-0.037	2.120	0.035	Significant
Relational crafting has a significant impact on job stress.	-0.326	-0.200	-0.126	2.850	0.005	Significant
Language portfolio has a significant impact on job stress.	0.232	0.660	-0.428	3.920	0.001	Significant
Language portfolio mediates the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and job stress.	-0.086	-0.101	0.014	1.750	0.082	Not Significant
Language portfolio mediates the relationship between relational crafting and job stress.	-0.103	-0.476	0.373	4.150	0.000	Significant

Discussion

The complexity of work relations requires comprehension of the impact of communication competence, relational skill, and language ability on employees' job stress perception. Interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting are the key drivers of the reduction of job stress in the work environments

of the globalization era through cooperative relationship, conflict management, and workplace harmony. However, the presumed impact of language ability as an antecedent in the relationship has a multi-faceted nature because it will facilitate and complicate work demands. The current research explored the interaction of the variables and had notable direct and mediated effects on job stress. Through differentiation among the employees with dissimilar levels of experience, the research provides a better comprehension of how office conflict is managed by business practitioners based on their ability for communication, establishing meaningful relationships, and managing multilingual interactions. The results not only verify the contribution of these psychological and social processes in reducing or increasing job tension but also demonstrate significant implications for workplace policy toward employee well-being.

The findings confirm that interpersonal communication competence is substantial in reducing work stress, and this confirms its importance for business communication and stress alleviation. Employees with good communication skills will be better equipped to handle work issues, be able to raise issues effectively, and build compassionate relationships, all of which by themselves lead to decreased stress. Effective communication allows employees to clarify expectation, request help when necessary, and address conflicts effectively, thus averting misunderstandings that may turn into workplace stressors (Mustofa et al., 2023). This is supported by earlier research that indicated workers with high interpersonal communication competence report fewer work-related tensions because they are able to use constructive conversations and operate social interactions excellently. Second, these employees would likely feel more confident and competent in managing job demands, alleviating the psychological cost of stress at work. Interestingly, communication competence's impact on stress management is more prevalent among employees who have more job experience, as they are possibly more aware of the dynamics in the workplace and how to strategically employ communication measures (Sarwari et al., 2024). In contrast, less-experienced employees will continue to develop these skills and learn organizational requirements, with their relatively lesser impact still being quite notable in the reduction of stress. This implies that organizations must spend on communication training initiatives, especially for their first-generation workers, so they acquire vital capabilities that can act as stress-deterrent measures in the workplace in the long run.

The study also ensures that relational crafting is a vital predictor of workplace stress reduction by pointing to the importance of an active social context in the organization. Employees engaged in relational crafting work proactively to build their supportive networks, adjust their job relationships, and create a collaborative work environment, which fosters emotional support, all of them linked to stress reduction (Doden et al., 2024). By proactively seeking positive social interactions and shaping workplace relationships in their favor, employees can guard against the harmful effects of job demands and optimize overall work experience. Previous research has shown that relational-crafting employees are more likely to establish a sense of belonging, emotional stability, and a solid support network, all of which are crucial in diffusing stress. Besides, relational crafting enables workers to tailor their social context to suit their work demands and consequently derive satisfaction from their work and experience it as less overwhelming. The study also uncovers that older workers benefit most from relational crafting when it comes to job stress reduction, likely due to the fact that they are in a better position to deal with their working relations and already have a professional network in place (Li et al., 2023). On the other hand, junior employees may not yet have progressed to the stage of building these relationships, and thus relational crafting would be less immediately effective in managing stress for them. These results highlight the importance of encouraging relational crafting practices within organizations, such as team-building activities, mentorship programs, and collaborative work environments, to allow employees to build healthy workplace relationships and reduce job stress.

Unexpectedly, the research shows that greater language portfolio is linked to greater job stress, and it can be inferred that multilingualism, instead of reducing stress, can bring in more challenges in the workplace. Although language proficiency is usually thought of as a plus, allowing employees to communicate efficiently in heterogeneous teams and global networks, it can also mean extra responsibilities and pressures that add to greater stress levels (Hidayati et al., 2024). Staff members with high language abilities tend to be required to perform complex communication roles, such as translating, mediating, or facilitating cross-cultural interactions, which have the potential to elevate cognitive load and workplace demands. This concurs with prior studies showing that multilingual workers can be expected to receive higher expectations from their peers and superiors, which result in work overload and stress. In addition, less experienced employees seem to be more vulnerable to language-based stress because they have limited experience in high-stakes communication situations and stress to perform in an environment of multiple languages (Mawardah & Efendi, 2025). These results contradict the belief that language competence is always a safeguard against work stress and rather suggest the possibility of more responsibility and role uncertainty. Organizations need to acknowledge the double effect of language skills and implement measures so that multilingual workers are not overwhelmed with too much communication-based work. Language support, delineation of distinct job roles, and workload balancing can reduce stress related to high language proficiency and enable employees to utilize their skills optimally.

The results validate that language portfolio is an intervening variable between interpersonal

communication competence and job stress, with an intricate relationship among the variables. While effective interpersonal communication competence tends to minimize stress by allowing workers to articulate ideas clearly, facilitate workplace interactions harmoniously, and resolve conflicts effectively, the integration of language proficiency adds complexities to the picture. Those workers with greater communication competence and larger language portfolios could have a higher workload because of their capacity to fill communication gaps in multilingual work environments. This extra work, for instance, serving as interpreters or handling cross-cultural communications, would offset the stress-reducing effects of excellent interpersonal communication abilities, resulting in a mixed effect on job stress (Sukmawati et al., 2024). Previous studies are in favor of the notion that although multilingual workers have a unique edge in the workplace, they can also experience increased expectations, role confusion, and mental overload, which can lead to job stress. Surprisingly, language portfolio's mediating effect appears stronger in less experienced employees because they may not be able to handle language tasks concurrently with the main job tasks. More experienced workers may have already adapted to manage these additional linguistic tasks more efficiently. These findings emphasize the necessity for structured workplace policies that do not burden multilingual employees with language-related activities outside of their fundamental job responsibilities (Costin et al., 2023). Organizations can deal with this by offering specialized training, defining distinct communication-related tasks, and devoting more resources such as translation support or AI-based communication solutions. Such programs have the potential to allow employees to employ their interpersonal communication ability without an undue increase in job stress.

The results indicate that language portfolio is also a mediator between relational crafting and work stress, uncovering the influence of language ability on the buffering effects of proactive relationship building in the workplace. Employees who engage in relational crafting are likely to be less stressed since they tend to establish harmonious workplace relationships, seek social support, and make the workplace more teamwork-oriented (Chen et al., 2024). But when language portfolio is introduced as a mediating variable, relational crafting's impact on stress reduction becomes more complex. High language portfolio employees can be in a special situation where their multilingual skills increase their capacity to establish diverse social relationships, but at the same time, add to their work responsibilities. This conforms with earlier research indicating that multilingual workers tend to assume other interpersonal functions, for example, facilitating international cooperation, coaching non-native speakers, or cultural brokering, which can lead to work strain (Fathi & Rahimi, 2024). The mediating effect is more pronounced for less experienced workers since they may not have yet mastered the coping strategies necessary for dealing with the higher demands of multilingual communication. On the other hand, more experienced employees might enjoy more independence in boundary setting and delegating communications tasks, mitigating any potential stressors associated with their language abilities. This only serves to further highlight the need for organizations to acknowledge the twofold effect of multilingualism on office dynamics. As much as competence in multiple languages can aid in the pursuit of friendly relationships, it should not become so exhaustive that it undermines the stress-relieving potential of friendly interactions within the workplace (Kızrak et al., 2024). Employers can ensure the creation of a more caring atmosphere for workers by encouraging fair delegation of duties, offering language-related incentives, and ensuring that building their multilingual skills does not become a further source of stress.

The findings of the multi-group analysis (MGA) are interesting regarding the interplay of interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, language portfolio, and job stress as moderated by experience. The empirical evidence indicates that experience significantly moderates all the hypothesized relationships with significant differences in the way employees with or without experience above or below the mean react to the variables. Specifically, the contribution of interpersonal competence and relational crafting to job stress was greater in employees with experience above the mean, with the implication that experienced employees have greater abilities to utilize their communication and interpersonal skills in stress management (van Tonder et al., 2023). In addition, language portfolio was more strongly related to job stress in lower average experience employees, indicating that those employees with lower tenure can be more challenged by the additional pressure of multilingual communication. Also, the mediating role of language portfolio between relational crafting and job stress was significant in groups, providing evidence that language skills influence the effectiveness of workplace relationships in reducing stress (Nasrul et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the mediation role of language portfolio between interpersonal communication ability and job stress was revealed to be non-significant, which implies that language ability does not change the benefits of effective communication ability in reducing stress in any significant manner. This declined hypothesis reveals that despite interpersonal communication ability being an important determinant of job stress management, the contribution of multilinguality to this correlation could be negligible. These results highlight the importance of experience-based approaches to organizational stress management, where support systems are designed based on employees' tenure and language-related needs.

Together, the results of this study present strong evidence that interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting are essential in reducing job stress, with language portfolio being both an enabler and a potential source of stress depending on the level of experience of the employee. The strong mediation effects indicate that although multilingualism increases communication effectiveness and relational interaction, it

also brings in additional job pressures, especially for less experienced employees. In addition, the multi-group analysis highlights the differential effect of these relationships by experience level, and calls for specific organizational responses to meet the needs of different levels of employees in coping with work demands. These findings set the stage for future research on other contextual influences, including cultural diversity, organizational support systems, and industry-specific difficulties, to continue to generalize and extend our knowledge of job stress dynamics. Practically, organizations need to understand the dual-faced nature of proficiency in languages so that multilingual staff are facilitated and not overwhelmed. Through an environment at work that appreciates communication skills, relationship-building actions, and workload distribution based on equality, organizations can develop a stronger, more engaged, less stressed workforce.

Implications

This research has important theoretical implications by developing the conceptualization of job stress from the perspectives of communication competence, relational crafting, and language portfolio, combining ideas from job demands-resources (JD-R) theory and social exchange theory (SET). The results revalidate the JD-R model by showing that interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting are important personal resources that enable employees to counteract the psychological strain of workplace demands. By creating a direct connection between these competencies and lower job stress, this research enhances current stress and occupational well-being literature by highlighting the active role that employees can play in redefining their work lives to act as buffers against stressors. The research also extends SET by demonstrating how employees with high interpersonal communication and relational crafting skills create positive social interactions, which result in mutual support that reduces job stress. Language portfolio's role both as a mediating and direct factor further enhances theoretical approaches because it adds an innovative cognitive and social aspect to workplace stress studies. As opposed to earlier research works that have dealt with multilingualism in predominantly cultural intelligence or communication effectiveness aspects, the current study draws attention to its duality—on the one hand, as an asset which ensures quality of contact, and on the other, as a constraint that makes one's job even more complex, especially among lower-grade specialists. The multi-group analysis also extends the theoretical discussion by showing how the impacts of these constructs differentially depend on employees' level of experience, further supporting the contextual sensitivity of stress processes. By bringing these findings together, this study provides a richer and more comprehensive theoretical model that connects communication, relational processes, and stress theories, setting the stage for further research on how individual and organizational variables collectively influence workplace well-being.

This study's findings provide important practical implications for organizations, HR professionals, and policymakers that are keen to support healthier, more productive work cultures. Considering the important role that interpersonal communication competence plays in managing job stress, it is important that organizations allocate resources to communication training programs designed to endow employees with the ability to communicate clearly, manage workplace conflicts well, and engage in positive social interactions. In addition, relational crafting has been recognized as a key mechanism in stress management, and the implication is that firms ought to promote employees' active construction of work relationships through collaboration, mentorship, and social support networks. The double role of language portfolio as resource and stressor points to the necessity of having organized policies concerning multilingual obligations. Although multilingual workers can promote cross-cultural teamwork and productivity, such workers need to be ensured not to be overly tasked with translation responsibilities or similar tasks without fair recognition or appropriate support. Multi-group analysis also supports that level of experience has a significant impact on how employees handle stress, further indicating that mentoring programs and individually customized support interventions should be offered to help inexperienced workers acquire communication and relational capabilities for stress relief. Secondly, HR policies must concentrate on developing an inclusive workplace in which employees feel confident to deal with their relational and communicative strategies effectively, without being stressed by language-related issues. Thirdly, leadership training programs must stress the value of supportive communication, relationship management, and workload distribution in an equitable manner so that employees from all levels of experience possess the requisite resources to deal with their job demands efficiently. By applying these findings to organizational practice, companies can increase employee well-being, decrease turnover, and foster a more engaged and resilient workforce.

Limitations and Future Directions

Notwithstanding its contribution, the research has its limitations that present avenues for future studies. First, the research mainly used respondents' own reports, which could lead to common method bias since communications competence, relational crafting, language portfolio, and job stress that respondents perceive about themselves can be influenced by their individual biases. Future studies might include multi-source data collection methods, e.g., supervisor or peer ratings, to gain a more objective view of interpersonal

communication and relational crafting behaviors. Second, the current study was set in a unique workplace setting, which restricts the generalizability of findings across industries and cultures. Since workplace communication etiquette and relational patterns could differ quite radically across industries, cross-industry and cross-cultural research may be useful in increasing the external validity of these results. Further, whereas this research studied the language portfolio factor, it did not differentiate between various categories of language proficiency (e.g., native vs. foreign language proficiency) or the particular issues workers experience when working in multilingual contexts. Research in the future might examine how levels of language competency affect stress in differing workplace environments and whether certain coping strategies are more effective for workers with multilingual job duties.

Yet another limitation of this research is that it has a cross-sectional design, which limits the possibility of making causal inferences regarding the interlinkages between interpersonal communication competence, relational crafting, language portfolio, and job stress. Although strong theoretical rationales and empirical evidence strengthen these interlinkages, subsequent research must utilize longitudinal designs to trace how these interlinkages change over time, especially as workers acquire experience and acclimatize to work pressures. Furthermore, the study failed to consider potential moderating variables like organizational support, leadership, or personality, which might impact the degree to which communication competence and relational crafting reduce job stress. Future research might include interaction effects to determine which individual or contextual variables reinforce or diminish these relationships. In addition, even though the research examined the mediating effect of language portfolio, it did not examine other alternative mediators like cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, or adaptive work behavior, which may further elucidate the underlying mechanisms for how interpersonal and relational skills are related to job stress. Finally, as work dynamics transform further with remote and hybrid workplace models, future studies may explore the influence of virtual communication spaces on interpersonal communication competence and relational crafting effectiveness in mitigating stress. Bridging such gaps shall not only advance theoretical concepts but also provide greater insights into organizational strategies for fostering employee well-being in varied and dynamic workplaces.

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