



WORK-RELATED STRESS EXPERIENCED BY TOUR GUIDES

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ABSTRACT

Work-related stress (WRS) is stress caused or exacerbated by work. As ‘maestro’, tour guides (TGs) perform a variety of tasks within and outside the job description. Tour guides inevitably feel stress due to the demands from various parties. This study focuses on WRS of TGs and contributes to the literature by identifying stress factors from the perspective of TGs. According to the explanatory sequential design frame, a quantitative study was conducted with 90 participants, followed by a qualitative one with 16. From the five categories extracted through content analysis, to understand the relationship between WRS and work-related ill health (WRIH), WRIH-type and WRIH-reason were further analyzed. Findings show that WRS accounts for 15% of all the health problems of TGs. Unsafe conditions (UCs) are responsible for much of the stress experienced, while harassment, bullying and mobbing (HBM) from customers, shopkeepers, drivers and travel agents is the main stressor.

KEYWORDS

occupational safety and health, work-related stress, tour guide, unsafe behaviour, unsafe conditions

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1. INTRODUCTION

In its simplest definition, stress can be defined as constant mental tension. Lazarus (1966) stated that stress occurs when an individual feels that a person will not be able to achieve a sufficient level of success in the face of demands and threats to his/her well-being, while Raymond (2000) stated that stress arises when individuals worry that they cannot cope with certain situations. Selye (1936) pointed out that stress is the body’s reaction to a change that requires physical, mental and emotional adaptation. The common points that stand out in the definitions are that it is a personal

experience and caused by pressure, expectation or threat, and it negatively affects the individual’s ability to cope or at least their perception of their competence.

Work-related stress (WRS) is stress caused or exacerbated by work. In this case, the person perceives the work environment with a sense of inadequacy in the face of the demands placed on him/her (Health and Safety Authority, 2022). This situation causes the employee to deviate from normal reactions in a way that disrupts psychological and/or physiological states (Caplan et al., 1975). This can also have negative organizational consequences (Karasek & Theorell, 1990). However, even if it does not apply at all times

and in all circumstances, there are also cases where stress can stimulate personal development, trigger employee motivation and have a positive impact on work engagement by causing effort and time to be invested to meet challenging demands (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; Crawford et al., 2010; Karatepe et al., 2014; Lepine et al., 2005). Common job stress factors include excessive workload, long working hours, role conflicts, low job control, job insecurity, lack of support from managers and work colleagues, career concerns and interpersonal relationships (Andrews, 2010, p. 523; Finch, 2020; Olsen et al., 2019; Slišković, 2017).

The effects of job stress on individuals can be listed as follows: (a) physical (fatigue, muscular tension, sleep disturbances, headaches, gastrointestinal upsets such as diarrhoea or constipation, dermatological disorders and raised blood pressure / cardiovascular disease); (b) psychological (anxiety and irritability, depression, discouragement, pessimism, cognitive difficulties, such as a reduced ability to concentrate or make decisions, labile emotions); (c) intellectual (loss of concentration, lack of motivation, difficulty with thought processes, loss of memory and poor decision-making); and (d) behavioural (substance [including alcohol] misuse, decreased libido, aggression, inappropriate display of behaviour, isolation, a drop in work performance, unpunctuality, disinterest, lower tolerance of frustration and impatience) (Department of Health, State Government of Victoria, n.d.; University of Cambridge, 2023).

Beehr and Newman (1978) emphasized that if job stress is high or persistent enough, it can have lasting effects on physiological and psychological well-being. Stress can cause various chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disorders (Cooper & Marshall, 1976; French Jr. & Caplan, 1970). Chandola et al. (2006) found a relationship between work-related stress and metabolic syndrome (including abdominal obesity, high blood pressure and insulin resistance), which increases the risk of heart attack and type 2 diabetes. Accordingly, those who experience chronic work-related stress are twice more likely to experience the syndrome than those who do not.

Job dissatisfaction and burnout are the most prominent psychological effects of work-related stress (Konopaske et al., 2018; Robbins et al., 2014, p. 469). This is also associated with absenteeism, turnover rate and turnover intention (Siu et al., 1997). According to Ross (2006), the effects of job stress on the organization are high absenteeism, high labour turnover, poor timekeeping, poor performance and productivity, low morale, poor motivation, increased employee complaints, increased ill-health, accidents and incident reports. Vanagas and Bihari-Axelsson (2004) argued that each individual may perceive the stress factor differently and that one person may be affected either more or less than another.

The following section presents a literature review summarising the findings of previous empirical studies on this topic. Next, an explanation of the research methodology is provided. The findings are then presented. The discussion compares the results with those of other studies by discussing the limitations of the study and potential research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many studies examining the negative effects of stress on employees in terms of mental state, physical health, work performance, job satisfaction, commitment level and turnover intention in the hospitality industry with its labour-intensive, excessive workload, intense communication with guests, long working hours and 24/7 service structure (Hon et al., 2013; Jung & Yoon, 2013; Kim, 2008; Kim et al., 2015; Krone et al., 1989; O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Tsaur & Tang, 2012). Lo and Lamm (2005) proposed an individual (working hours, wage level, interpersonal relationships, work-home balance), organizational (company's occupational health and safety policies, employment policies, organizational structure, culture), industrial (characteristics of sectors, stakeholder pressures, professional association policies and practices) and national level (governmental institutions and regulations) approach to provide a more in-depth perspective on occupational stress in the hospitality sector.

Carrillo et al. (2020a) examined the stress experienced by tour leaders under four headings and 30 items: external factors, tourists' attitudes and behaviours, the nature of work and job roles. According to the study, among the external factors, problems at border gates, theft incidents, strikes and transportation accidents were the leading sources of stress. These were followed by undermining authority (tourists' attitudes and behaviours), collecting tips for others (job roles), transportation delays and natural disasters (external factors), being responsible for tourists' safety (job roles), irrelevant demands and misunderstanding instructions (tourists' attitudes and behaviours), sexual harassment (external factors), long journeys, variable monthly earnings and long working hours per day (nature of work).

Carillo et al. (2020b) evaluated external factors as the most stressful for tour leaders because they are unexpected and beyond control. Tsaur and Lin (2014) identified the challenges causing uncomfortable, tense feelings and stress that tour leaders constantly face and spend extra time and energy to resolve. Stress originating from the tour (disturbing behaviour of tour members and non-solution-oriented approaches of suppliers), the tour company (employees not fulfilling

their duties) and personal (low and unstable income and work-family conflicts) accumulates over time and deteriorates mental health. Ayaz and Demir (2019) examined the sources of work-related stress in tour guides in six categories: nature of work, legal and organizational, operational, psychological and social, sectoral and occupational. Low wages, illegal tour guiding, work-social life balance and work-family balance were identified as important stress factors.

Dalgıç et al. (2021) found that the complaints conveyed by tourists to tour guides during the tour cover a wide range such as food, exorbitant prices charged by shopkeepers, hotels, the difference between the purchased tour and the tour program as distributed by the tour guide, uncomfortable vehicles, waiting in line at the entrance to museums and archaeological sites, entrance fees to museums and archaeological sites, congestion in the tour program, little time at archaeological sites and bus drivers. In a similar study conducted by Akgün et al. (2022), among the complaints reported by tourists to tour guides were poor service and food quality in restaurants, not following the content of the tour program, old vehicles, seating plan on buses, accommodation facilities, misbehaviour of hotel staff and bus drivers, tourists disrupting the tour by arriving late at departure time during the tour, joint tours with tourists speaking different languages, and long waiting times in front of museums were listed. Wang et al. (2010) suggested that the poor condition of the tour vehicle, such as being old, dirty, the microphone not working and air conditioning, is the main source of stress and anxiety for tour leaders. Akgunduz and Eser (2020) underlined that tour guides are also exposed to stress due to factors such as job insecurity, limited alternative job opportunities, and the necessity for continuous self-improvement. Ababneh (2017) indicated that job stress causes at least 15 Jordanian tour guides to leave the profession every year.

Tour guides have to hide their negative emotions and project positive emotions to tourists when they encounter various problems during the tour (Lei, 2019, p. 1252). The study carried out by Wong and Wang (2009) revealed that emotional labour, or in other words, institutionally required emotions, not only contributes to success in the profession but is also a source of stress. Emotional labour-induced stress felt during a trip causes mental distress as well as insomnia and abdominal pain. Mackenzie and Raymond (2020) expressed the relationship between the stress experienced by adventure tour guides and customer expectations, and dangers on the tours. Mackenzie and Kerr (2013) argued that communication difficulties due to language and cultural differences, lack of information provided to staff regarding trip details, unsuitable equipment and inappropriate

customer groups; while lack of trust between the travel agency manager and the tour guide expose tour guides to stress on adventure tours. The study conducted by Xu et al. (2018) with Taiwanese tour guides revealed a significant relationship between job stress (workload, work-family imbalance, organizational task) and turnover intention.

2.1. UNSAFE BEHAVIOUR AND UNSAFE CONDITIONS

Traditionally, work-related accidents are categorized as unsafe conditions (UCs) and unsafe behaviour (UB) (Choudhry & Fang, 2008). Although the employee, who is a part of the work environment and is affected by all kinds of environmental factors, is held responsible for the majority of work-related accidents due to his/her (unsafe) behaviour (Esin, 2007), studies conducted for more than twenty years show that organizational factors are the basis of serious and/or fatal accidents rather than individuals (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, 2019).

Abdelhamid and Everett (2000, p. 54) define an unsafe condition as one "in which the physical layout of the workplace or work location, the status of tools, equipment, and/or material violate contemporary safety standards". However, they also note that UCs are due to the following causes: (a) management actions/inactions; (b) worker or co-worker unsafe acts; (c) nonhuman related event(s); and (d) UCs as a natural part of the working place. This classification covers UB as well. In this research, UCs are categorized as social-organizational, physical, structural, political and legal environments. Specifically, unsafe social-organizational factors (SOF) include UCs created by travel agencies, drivers, shopkeepers, customers, associations and other TGs whereas an unsafe physical environment (PE) includes vehicles (tour buses), and facilities (accommodation, food and beverage).

UB refers to "any behaviour that an employee engages in without regard to safety rules, standards, procedures, instructions and specific criteria in the system" (Li et al., 2018, p. 1). However, as Abdelhamid and Everett (2000) mention, unsafe acts may not be regardless of the working conditions. In this research, unsafe practices are considered either by the TG (worker) or by the driver (co-worker) and are categorized as negligence, unintentional fault (UF) and carelessness. An UF is considered beyond the employee's control and sub-categorized as physical, psychological and inexperience where physical represents tiredness, sleeplessness, ageing, doing things not a duty; inexperience covers inexperience, unconsciousness, lack of knowledge and youth; and psychological represents worries for the future, trying to do one's best, proving oneself and low self-confidence.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to shed light on WRS from the TGs' perspective. As an explanatory sequential design (Guetterman et al., 2015), this study employs first quantitative and then qualitative data to enhance the knowledge of occupational safety and health (OSH) in the context of TGs. Both the survey questions, closed and open-ended, and the codebook were adapted from previous research (Akkuş, 2021; Akkuş et al., 2022). The survey was carried out in January 2021 and 90 usable surveys were obtained from the TGs who work in different regions in Turkey. The survey results were then analyzed using SPSS, the questions for the focus groups (FGs) were formed. Four FGs were held in March 2021, each with four TGs, 16 TGs were included in the total and 80,053 word-length texts were coded and analyzed between May–September 2021.

To ensure the validity of the research, several approaches were followed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Whittemore, et al., 2001). First, the study applied triangulation: TGs from different regions of the country, with different ages, gender and target markets were included in the study using purposive sampling; both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. TGs' narrations were summarized by the researchers for participant confirmation at the end of each FG session. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and a rich set of descriptions was provided with codes and themes. A computer-based programme (MAXQDA, 2021) was used to carry out the analysis.

3.1. PARTICIPANTS

On 22 June 2012, the Law on the Profession of Tourist Guide was published in the *Resmî Gazete* by a decision of the Council of Ministers in Turkey (*Turist Rehberliği Meslek Kanunu*, 2012). Accordingly, to be admitted to the profession, it is required to have graduated from associate, undergraduate, or graduate degree programmes of tourist guiding departments at universities or to complete a national or regional tourist guiding certificate programme organised by unions under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The opportunity to become a tour guide has increased considerably in recent years with the growth of both undergraduate and graduate programmes. However, in addition to training, the requirements for obtaining a licence include passing an examination in a foreign language and taking part in training trips to different geographical regions organised by the Union of Chambers of Turkish Tourist Guides (*Turist Rehberleri Birliği – TUREB*) under the supervision and control of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Trips to seven regions must be completed to obtain a national tour guide licence. Otherwise, the person can only work as a local tour

guide in the region(s) where he/she participated in the training. In addition, by paying certain fees, tour guides can choose to be active or inactive for a year. Whereas in 2021 the number of tour guides was 12,097, in 2023 the number of professional tour guides has increased to 12,878 in Turkey. Of those, 10,021 people have activated their 'cards' for the year 2023.

Of the participants in the survey 74 were male while nine of the participants in the FG were female (67% of tour guides are male in Turkey). The majority (52 participants in the survey and 6 participants in FG) were working in the Marmara region, consistent with the national average (45%). Although tour guides registered with the Istanbul Chamber of Tourist Guides (*İstanbul Turist Rehberleri Odası – İRO*), Çanakkale Chamber of Tourist Guides (*Çanakkale Bölgesel Turist Rehberleri Odası – ÇARO*) and Bursa Chamber of Tourist Guides (*Bursa Bölgesel Turist Rehberleri Odası – BURO*) naturally work mainly in the Marmara region, there is no obstacle for such a guide to lead tours in other regions if his/her 'card' is national. In this respect, it can be said that tour guides provide mainly national rather than regional services.

However, there is no national data to compare results about age and experience. The majority of the participants in this study were between the ages of 31 and 40 with more than 11 years of experience, and 78% of them had health insurance.

4. FINDINGS

While 9% of the survey participants had work-related accidents (WRA), 29% of them had work-related ill health (WRIH). All of the FG participants had to deal with OSH issues to some extent. 60% of the survey participants and 13 of the FG participants had no OSH education. After applying content analysis to both the FG data and the open-ended questions of the survey, five categories were derived: reason for WRA, type of WRA, reason for WRIH, type of WRIH, and prevention. To fully understand the place of stress in the OSH context, the codebook for all the codes and sub-codes related to 'WRS' is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Description of work-related ill health type

WRIH-type	Frequency (f)	%
Physical	216	51.1
Mental	207	48.9
including:		
work-related stress	63	14.9
others	144	34.0
Total	423	100.0

Source: authors.

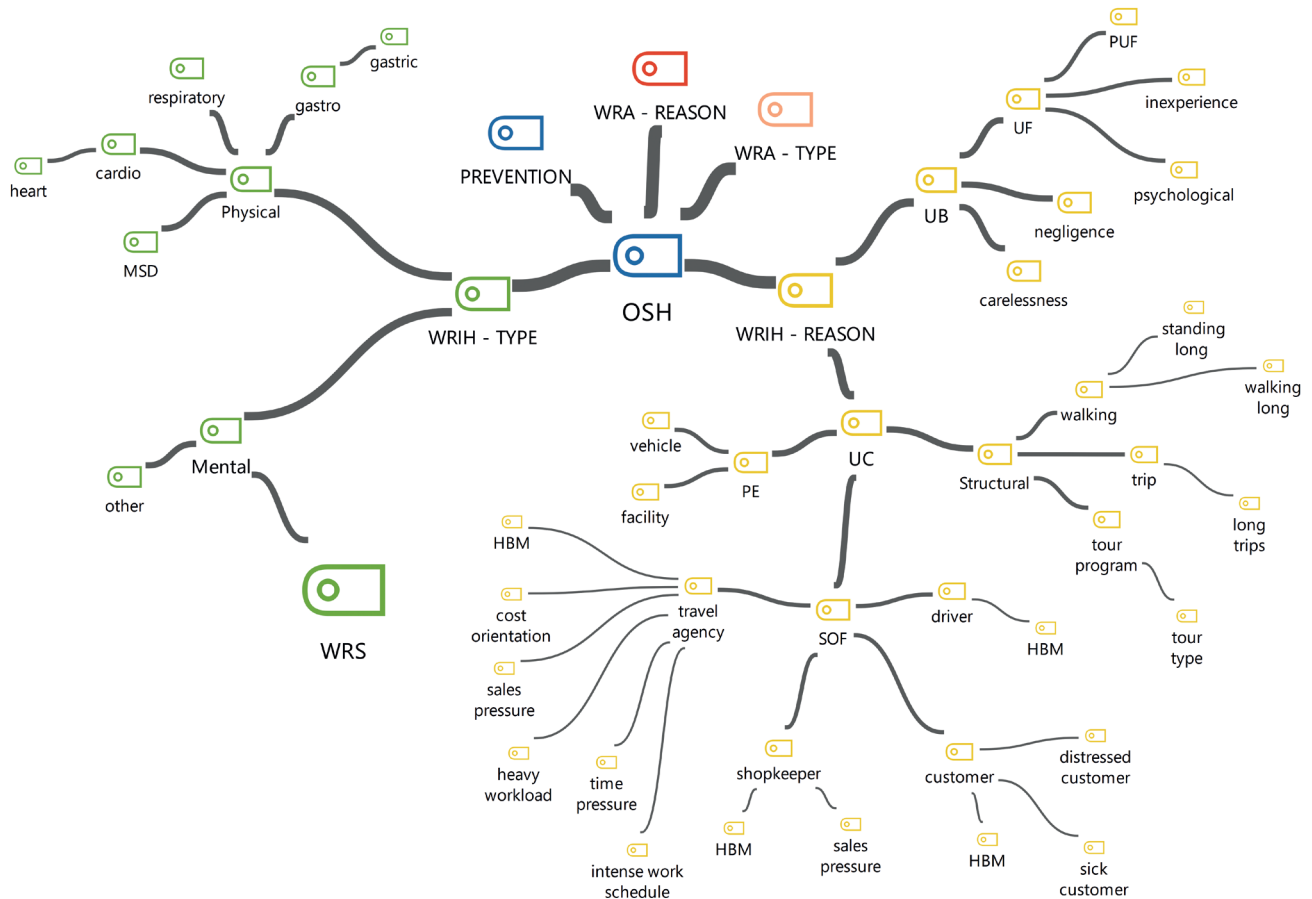


Figure 1. Codebook related to work-related stress (WRS)

Note: HBM – harassment, bullying and mobbing, MSD – musculoskeletal disorder, OSHA – occupational safety and health, PUF – physical unintentional fault, SOF – social-organizational factor, UB – unsafe behaviour, UC – unsafe conditions, UF – unintentional fault, WRA – work-related accidents, WRIH – work-related ill health

Source: authors

The WRIH-type category has two codes: physical and mental (Table 1). Physical health problems ($f = 216$; 51.1%) are almost equal to the mental health problems ($f = 207$; 48.9%) that TGs have experienced. Within mental-based WRIH, WRS ($f = 63$; 14.9%) is the most common code among others (psychological problems and psychological fatigue).

To understand the relations between stress and related codes, code relations analysis and code intersection analysis were utilised by MAXQDA 2021. Code relations analysis shows that reasons for WRS are mainly due to UCs ($f = 63$; 79.7%) (Table 2). SOF ($f = 45$; 56.9%) is the foremost reason under this code with customers and travel agency ($f = 17$; 21.5% for both), shopkeepers ($f = 9$; 11.4%) and drivers ($f = 2$; 2.5%), respectively. Structural factors and PE ($f = 9$; 11.4% for both) related to the TGs’ WRS ranked second after SOF among UC.

According to code relations analysis, unsafe behaviours ($f = 16$; 20.3%) are in second place. Only a TGs’ UF was found to be associated with WRS: physical ($f = 10$; 12.7%), inexperience ($f = 4$; 5.1%) and

psychological factors ($f = 2$; 2.5%), respectively. WRS was determined to have relations with other WRIH-types: psychological disorders ($f = 8$; 61.5%) and physical health problems ($f = 5$; 38.5%). Among physical problems, only gastric ($f = 3$; 23.1%) and heart ($f = 2$; 15.4%) were found to be related to stress.

Table 2. Code relations of work-related stress (WRS)

Codes		Stress	
		frequency (f)	%
WRIH-reason	unsafe condition	63	79.7
	social-organizational factor including:	45	56.9
	customers	17	21.5
	travel agency	17	21.5
	shopkeepers	9	11.4
	drivers	2	2.5
	structural	9	11.4
	physical environment	9	11.4

Table 2 (cont.)

Codes		Stress	
		frequency (f)	%
WRIH-reason	unsafe behaviour	16	20.3
	tour guides / unintentional fault	16	20.3
	including: physical	10	12.7
	inexperience	4	5.1
	psychological	2	2.5
	Total	79	100.0
WRIH-type	physical including: gastro heart	5	38.5
		3	23.1
		2	15.4
	mental including: psychological disorders	8	61.5
		8	61.5
	Total	13	100.0

Note: irrelevant or negligible codes (i.e. $f = 1$) were not included; WRIH – work-related ill health. Source: authors.

4.1. WORK-RELATED ILL HEALTH-REASON AND WORK-RELATED STRESS / UNSAFE CONDITIONS

Code intersection analyses were performed to better illustrate the relationships between the above-mentioned codes and WRS. TGs’ verbatim statements related to code relations were also given in the figures. UC is identified as the main contributor of WRS by several sub-codes: SOF, structural factors, and PE.

4.1.1. SOCIAL-ORGANIZATIONAL FACTOR AND WORK-RELATED STRESS

The analyses show that customers and the travel agency make the highest contribution to TGs’ WRS. Problems with shopkeepers and drivers are other stress-based factors in the working life of TGs. Among SOF, a common factor stands out: harassment, bullying and mobbing (HBM; $f = 19$; 24.1%). Furthermore, HBM is not only the leading factor but also the highest among all stress-based contributors. One-fourth of the WRS that TGs suffer is due to HBM from customers, travel agencies, shopkeepers and drivers. Sales pressure from shopkeepers and travel agencies, and distressed customers are the main causes of HBM (Figure 2).

Customers and work-related stress

Problems with customers are varied, but three of them are related to stress (Figure 3): distressed customers ($f = 8$; 10.1%), HBM ($f = 6$; 7.6%), and sick customers ($f = 3$;

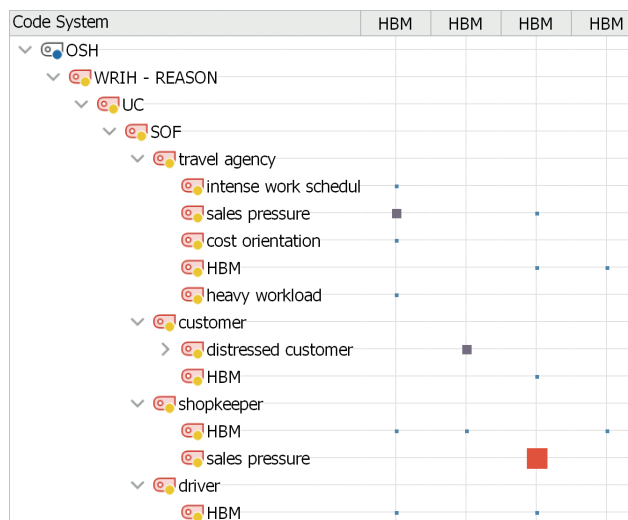


Figure 2. Code relations of harassment, bullying and mobbing (HBM) Note: OSH – occupational safety and health, WRIH – work-related ill health, UC – unsafe condition, SOF – social-organizational factor Source: authors

3.8%). HBM from customers is mostly due to men’s (or women’s) sexual interest in TGs. Customers inviting TGs to their hotel rooms, waiting in front of the TGs’ rooms, texting and proposing marriage contribute TGs’ WRS. Female TGs are particularly concerned about tour groups consisting mainly of male tourists from certain countries. Female TGs come up with solutions such as wearing fake wedding rings, talking about their families and children, and changing their phone numbers. Distressed customers often argue with tour guides to change the tour programme according to their wishes or have arguments about any topic with tourists from countries with which they do not have friendly relations. Sick customers are another stress factor for the TGs. A statement by a TG summarizes well customers with certain health problems that require special attention:

N: Also, I ask my customers, whether they come from abroad or not, about their health history. I make such phone calls with customers; let’s say before going on a tour. I say, do you have a special health condition that I need to know? For example, some of those coming from abroad are allergic to bees. You know, I need to know such details while travelling. Because the bee vaccine should be with him, you should also know that you can intervene urgently when your guest is stung by a bee. Because even in the most luxurious hotels, for example, let’s say the customer is allergic to mushrooms... A friend’s guest was served at the hotel and the woman was hospitalized. So this is happening in a 5-star hotel. That’s why I want to know about food details, now allergies have increased a lot, or I want to know about people with high blood pressure because it happens to us, I need to know what the medicine is (FG-IV, Pos. 461).

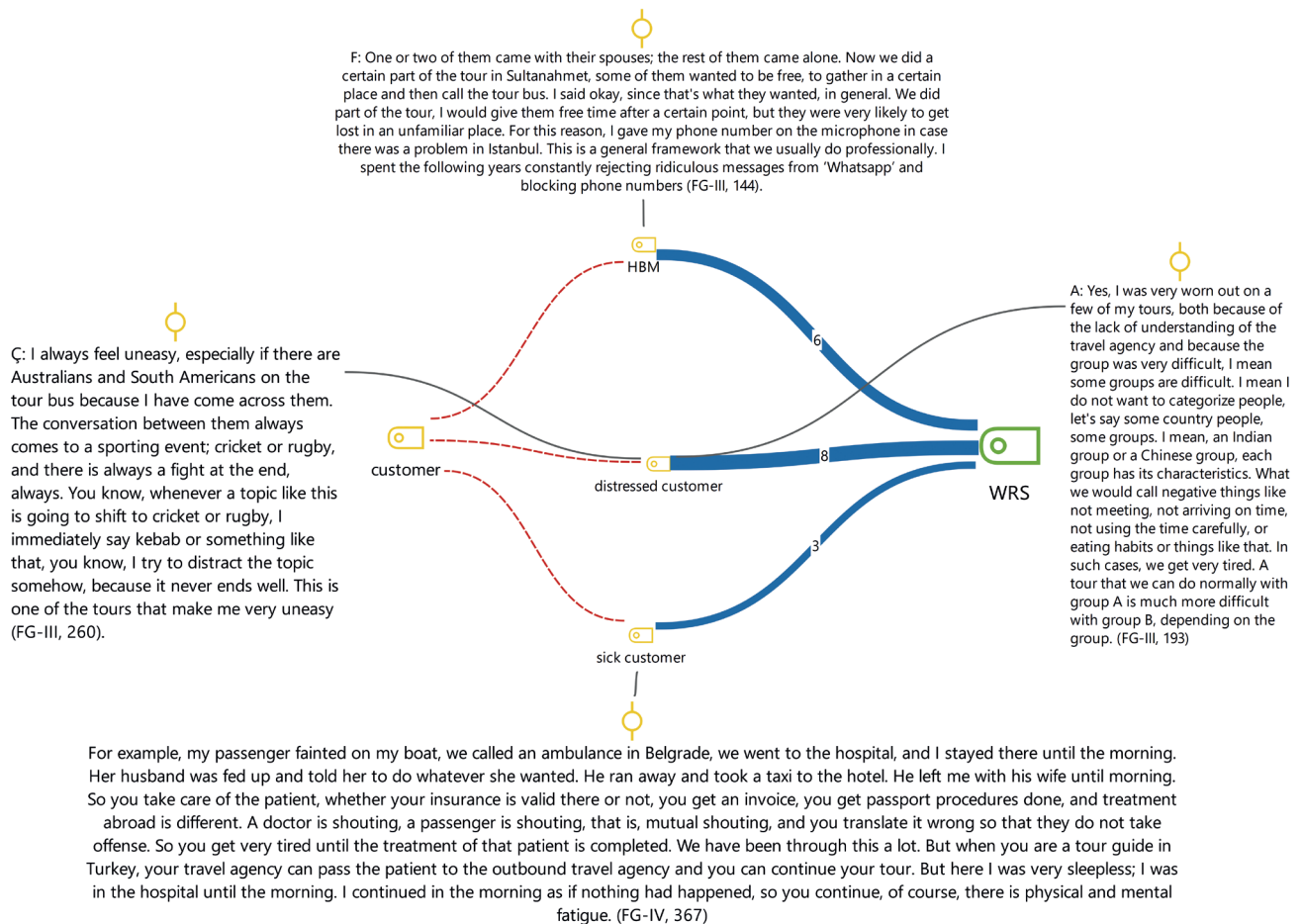


Figure 3. Code intersections between customer and work-related stress (WRS)

Note: FG – focus group

Source: authors

Travel agency and work-related stress

Travel agencies create stress on TGs due to various factors (Figure 4): HBM ($f=4$; 5.1%), cost orientation, sales pressure, an intense work schedule ($f=3$; 3.8% for each), heavy workload and time pressure ($f=2$; 2.5% for the rest). All these factors are closely related to the high expectations of travel agencies for the TGs. Mobbing from travel agencies is mostly due to sales pressure or cost orientation. Travel agencies evaluate TGs according to the sales volume realised in a tour. TGs do not get enough rest during or between tours:

D: Yes, sometimes, as I said, there can be very busy programs so that the travel agency can sell the tours, it also happens in Istanbul tours, especially in local groups; this is something that happens very often. He/she writes whatever comes to his mind on the list. Even if we put Antalya and Cappadocia aside, in a busy place like Istanbul, when there are programs such as breakfast in Eyüp Sultan in the morning, noon prayers in Süleymaniye, afternoon prayers in the newly built Çamlıca Mosque, etc., and when it is a crazy marathon in Istanbul and most of our tour is on the road and we are worried about getting someone somewhere on

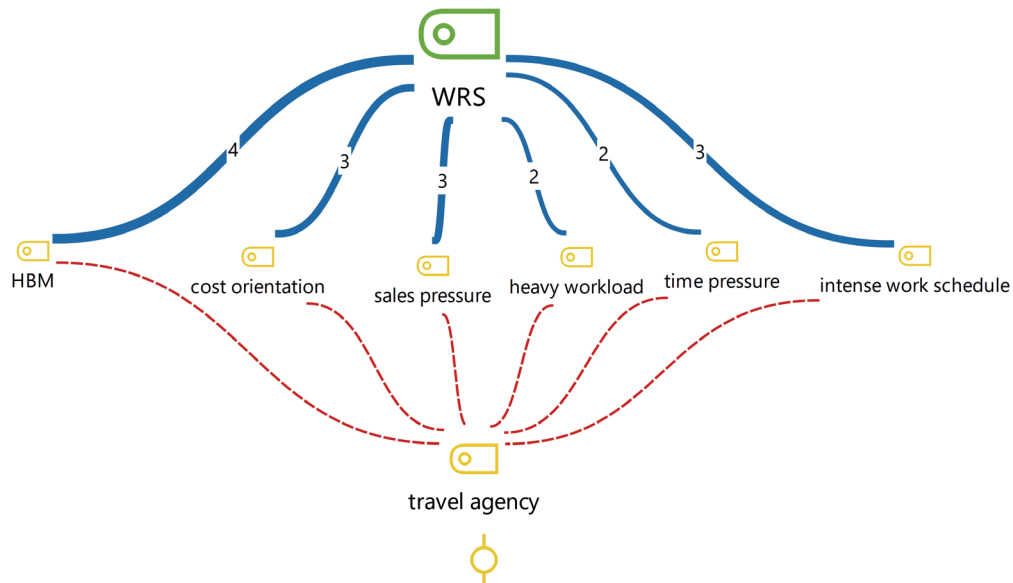
time, bus captains and tour guides, of course, when we are all under stress, such traffic accidents are inevitable, and in general, it is not the guides who make these tour programs (FG-IV, Pos. 120).

Despite overly demanding travel agencies, TGs accept their profession as it is:

A: So you are responsible for the group, the situation there, the conditions of the restaurant, the hotel, accommodation, food and beverage, entrances, exits, visits, the whole thing depends on you. Imagine something like the conductor of the orchestra saying I'm sick and leaving his baton (FG-III, Pos. 21).

Shopkeeper and work-related stress

Another important social stress factor for the TGs is shopkeepers (Figure 5) with their HBM ($f=7$; 8.9%) and sales pressure ($f=2$; 2.5%). Shopkeepers' HBM mostly stems from sales pressure and turns into harassment. The TGs feel that the shopkeepers follow their every move and exert pressure by calling them day and night or by showing anger and power:

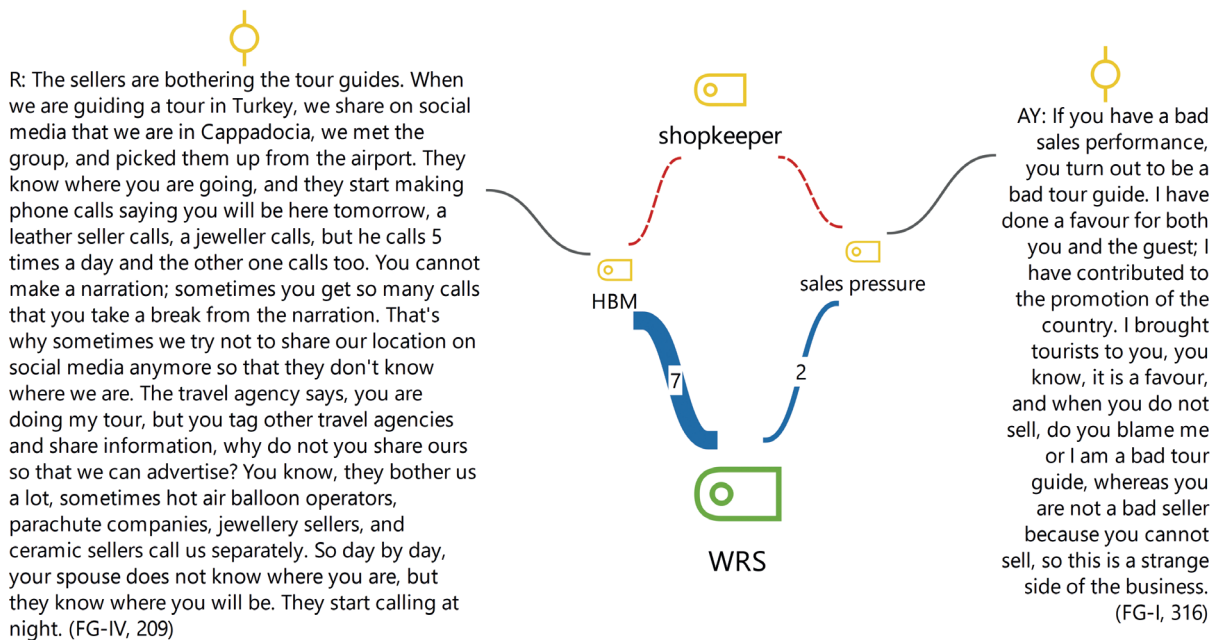


UÜ: There are many demands on tour guides. The travel agency prepares and sells the tour. The travel agency brings groups from abroad or domestic groups called in-going. They deliver the group to you and you control the bus captain, restaurants, and hotels. You ask the guests with a microphone if they have any diseases such as diabetes or claustrophobia or this and that. These are the things we all do. So 772 TL is the price of a tour package. You are asked to be health personnel and if your guest is old, you are expected to be a caregiver. You will be an entertainer at work; you will take the microphone and tell jokes. You are asked to sing songs, you are told not to bring complaints. With the mentality that whatever the guest says is right, crisis management is required in times of crisis. There are very big pressures like this on the tour guide. Therefore, the burden of tour guides should be eased. I mean, we are definitely in a very difficult situation under these conditions, whether it is terrorist incidents or traffic accidents, it shows that our life safety is in danger. There is a lot of pressure on tour guides and travel agencies can put pressure on some of our colleagues. I mean, we will give you this much money, don't you like it? Turkey's conditions are very good money and so on, but when you evaluate it all, you are the only one on the bus, all the duties are on you. So you are responsible for the group, you are responsible for the safety of the vehicle; you are responsible for the passengers to wear their seat belts. If they are diabetic, prioritize them at meals; make sure they take their medicines, and so on. So there is a lot of pressure on the tour guide. Especially travel agencies know this and ignore it and do not support us in this regard. So we are lone fighters. Let me say this frankly, we are the scapegoats again, in the slightest incident, negative feedback, complaint, and disorganization, it is us again. (FG II, 239)

Figure 4. Code intersections between travel agency and work-related stress (WRS)

Note: HBM – harassment, bullying and mobbing, FG – focus group

Source: authors



R: The sellers are bothering the tour guides. When we are guiding a tour in Turkey, we share on social media that we are in Cappadocia, we met the group, and picked them up from the airport. They know where you are going, and they start making phone calls saying you will be here tomorrow, a leather seller calls, a jeweller calls, but he calls 5 times a day and the other one calls too. You cannot make a narration; sometimes you get so many calls that you take a break from the narration. That's why sometimes we try not to share our location on social media anymore so that they don't know where we are. The travel agency says, you are doing my tour, but you tag other travel agencies and share information, why do not you share ours so that we can advertise? You know, they bother us a lot, sometimes hot air balloon operators, parachute companies, jewellery sellers, and ceramic sellers call us separately. So day by day, your spouse does not know where you are, but they know where you will be. They start calling at night. (FG-IV, 209)

AY: If you have a bad sales performance, you turn out to be a bad tour guide. I have done a favour for both you and the guest; I have contributed to the promotion of the country. I brought tourists to you, you know, it is a favour, and when you do not sell, do you blame me or I am a bad tour guide, whereas you are not a bad seller because you cannot sell, so this is a strange side of the business. (FG-I, 316)

Figure 5. Code intersections between shopkeeper and work-related stress (WRS)

Note: HBM – harassment, bullying and mobbing, FG – focus group

Source: authors

N: It is very true what Ms. Dilek said. Female tour guides seem to face less pressure from the sellers compared to men. There were even male tour guides who were subjected to violence (FG-IV, Pos. 220).

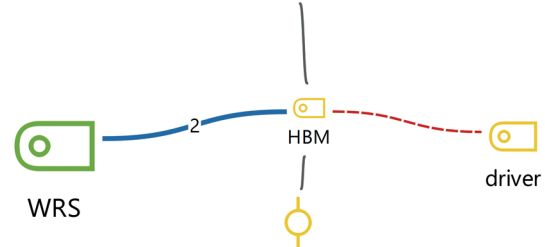
Some TGs have found solutions by hiding their profession:

AA: I travel in disguise a lot; I dress the same as the tourists. I don't walk with the group after leaving them inside for the last restroom break. I say the tour bus is on the right and then on the left. Toilet break and there are shops on the right, you know 'gift shop'. I leave my group there. Sometimes, if I think of it, I hide my professional tour guide work card and go to the bus with my hands in my pockets, looking left and right. You know, just like a tourist. However, I feel like I could have been their target too if I had gone with the group saying, "Let's go, let's go". I consciously choose this strategy there (FG-I, Pos. 213).

Drivers and work-related stress

The driver is an integral part of the tour and can be seen as a co-worker of TGs since they have to work in coordination for long hours for the success of the tour. However, drivers become another stress creator for TGs. They either try to dominate and conflict or make HBM (f = 2; 2.5%) on them (Figure 6). Some drivers sexually harass female TGs. Others try to dominate regardless of the gender of the TGs.

D: When I was 22, I started working as a tour guide, I was quite young. Many tour bus drivers came to ask for my hand and asked me to marry them. They were sending me strange messages. I wore a ring for years until I came to Istanbul. People thought I was married and I kept telling people I was married. I had some trouble with these people. (FG-IV, 167)



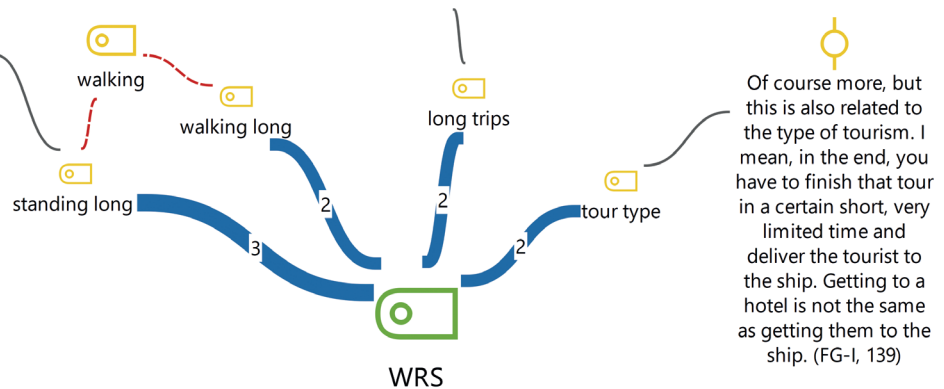
HÜ: And there is pressure from tour bus drivers. The driver wants to end his shift early. They don't want us to give too much time at the ruins. I took a break in Güvercinlik Valley, then the driver said, is there a need to give so much time? I said, what are you talking about? I mean, I am the tour guide and I set the time, what are you talking about? It goes on like this throughout the tour. Everywhere we go, he says you set too much break time. Finally, I had to call the travel agency. We argued with the bus driver in front of the group, and then I said if you don't change the bus driver, I'm leaving the tour here, find a tour guide. (FG II, 177)

Figure 6. Code intersections between drivers and work-related stress (WRS)

Note: HBM – harassment, bullying and mobbing, FG – focus group Source: authors

AA: For example, I had varicose veins, and we have a genetic family circulatory disorder. I had varicose veins because of my job as a tour guide, I know friends who have the onset of varicose veins due to standing too much. I even advise my young colleagues, for example, in Hagia Sophia, you can talk for 3 hours, tourists will listen to you standing for 3 hours, but I say "don't do that", I advise them to talk for five minutes, take a few steps, even if you continue the same subject, move the customers a little because it is very difficult to stand in the same place. I think the most difficult day of the Anatolian tour is Istanbul, especially the day in Sultanahmet. It is a day of very intense standing narration, you are waiting in the entrance line for a very long time, and it is a tour with a lot of both physiological and psychological pressure. (FG-I, 280)

R: We travel at night on our tours abroad. Here's another thing the doctor said. You set off in the afternoon. 24 hours later you reach your hotel and sitting the same way on the bus creates a slight wound on your back, which of course leads to a hernia. Hernia in the back. I experienced this for the first time. A little pain in the neck, this happens on long journeys and when returning at the end of 8 days. That's why I said that now that the pandemic has started, I will work with tourists from abroad again this summer. Since we do not travel at night with tourists from abroad, I do not have any problems with those tours. (FG-IV, 267)



Of course more, but this is also related to the type of tourism. I mean, in the end, you have to finish that tour in a certain short, very limited time and deliver the tourist to the ship. Getting to a hotel is not the same as getting them to the ship. (FG-I, 139)

Figure 7. Code intersections between structural factors and work-related stress (WRS)

Note: FG – focus group Source: authors

4.1.2. STRUCTURAL FACTORS AND WORK-RELATED STRESS

Structural factors refer to the nature of the profession and consist of trips, walking, responsibility and tour program. This code is composed of standing for long hours ($f = 3$; 3.8%), long walks, tour type and long trips ($f = 2$; 2.5% related to the rest) (Figure 7).

TGs are well aware of the challenges of their profession. As mentioned above, it is an extremely demanding job and the TGs accept it as it is. They know that tour guiding requires long trips, long walks, standing, constant talking, often staying away from home, and an irregular life. When these structural factors of tour guiding are combined with intense work schedule, sales and time pressure from travel agencies, distressed customers, HBM and sales pressure from shopkeepers, PE such as facilities and vehicles, and UFs of the TGs such as physical tiredness, sleeplessness and inexperience, the problems begin (Figure 8).

4.1.3. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND WORK-RELATED STRESS

As subcodes of PE, facilities ($f = 6$; 7.6%) and vehicles ($f = 3$; 3.8%) are other UC factors related to stress (Figure 9). Facilities refer to the accommodation and food and beverage places that travel agencies have contracts with therefore these are the places where TGs are obliged to stay or eat. In most cases, the lack of hygiene in the hotel or the food is the cause of stress.

Vehicles, in other words, the tour bus, which is an indispensable part of tours, causes stress by accidents



Figure 8. Code relations of structural factors
 Note: OSH – occupational safety and health, WRIH – work-related ill health, UC – unsafe condition, SOF – social-organizational factors, PE – physical environment, UB – unsafe behaviour, UF – unintentional fault, PUF – physical unintentional fault
 Source: authors

and breakdowns due to age and poor maintenance. Vehicles as a stress contributor are also strongly related to the intense work schedule and cost orientation of travel agencies (Figure 10). A TG explained the situation as follows:

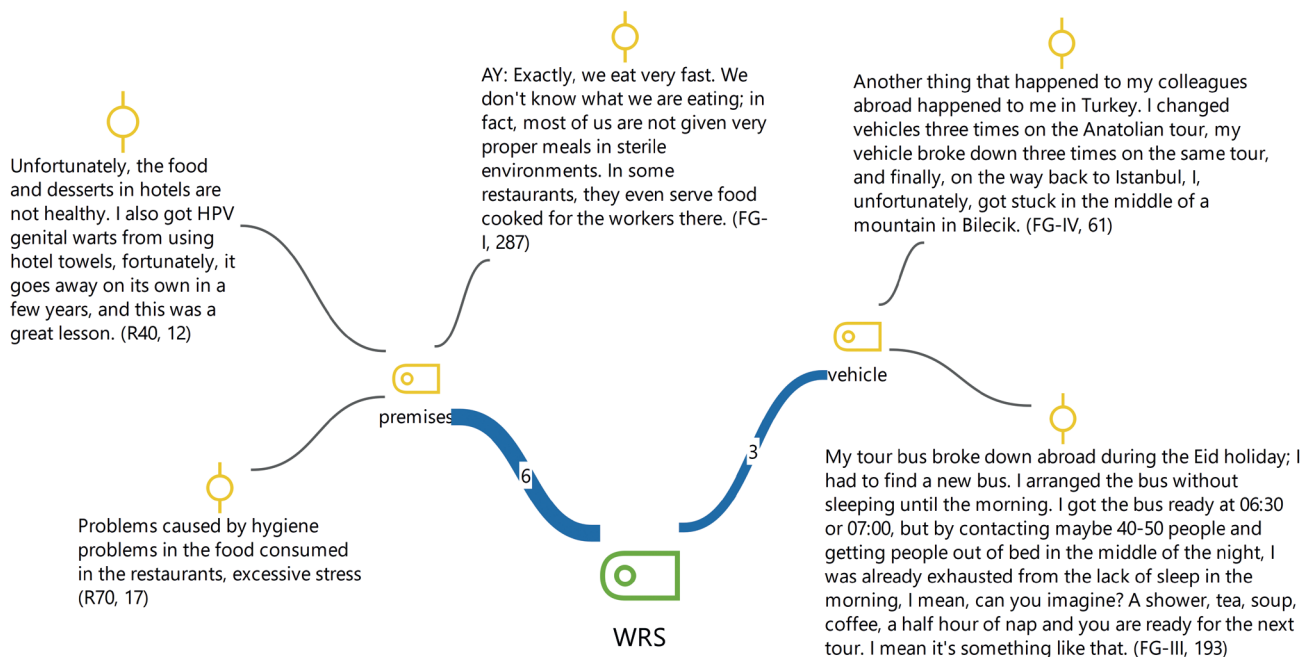


Figure 9. Code intersections between physical environment (PE) and work-related stress (WRS)
 Note: R – respondent, FG – focus group
 Source: authors

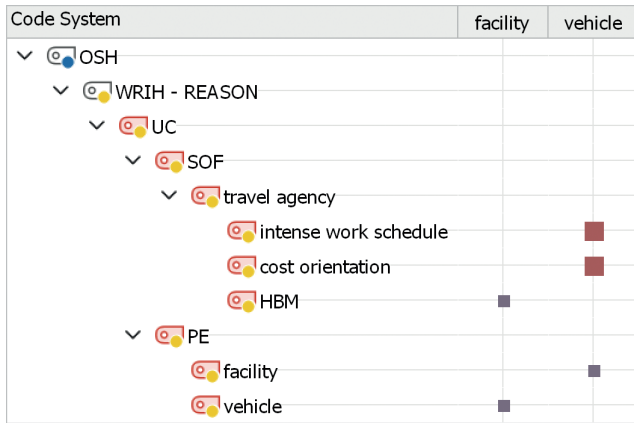


Figure 10. Code relations of physical environment (PE)
 Note: OSH – occupational safety and health, WRIH – work-related ill health, UC – unsafe condition, SOF – social-organizational factors, HBM – harassment, bullying and mobbing
 Source: authors

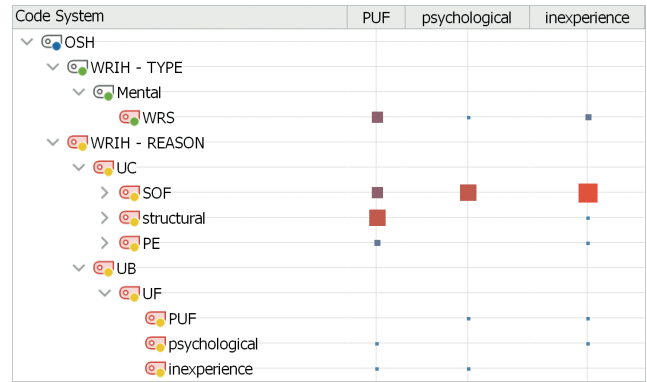


Figure 12. Code relations of unintentional fault (UF)
 Note: OSH – occupational safety and health, WRIH – work-related ill health, WRS – work-related stress, UC – unsafe condition, SOF – social-organizational factor, PE – physical environment, UB – unsafe behaviour, PUF – physical unintentional fault
 Source: authors

AA: Likewise, to cut down on tire costs in the maintenance of vehicles, they change the tires in 5 years instead of 3 years, or they retread the tires. Something unheard of in any foreign country is being done in Turkey. They stick a layer on the melted and worn tires, supposedly grooved, and they think that the tires will manage this way (FG-I, Pos. 126).

4.2. WORK-RELATED ILL HEALTH-REASON AND WORK-RELATED STRESS / UNSAFE BEHAVIOUR

UBs of TGs have three sub-codes: UFs, negligence and carelessness. Only UF, which refers to the unconscious behaviours of the TGs, has been found related to WRS (Figure 11) with the sub-codes of physical ($f = 10; 12.7\%$),

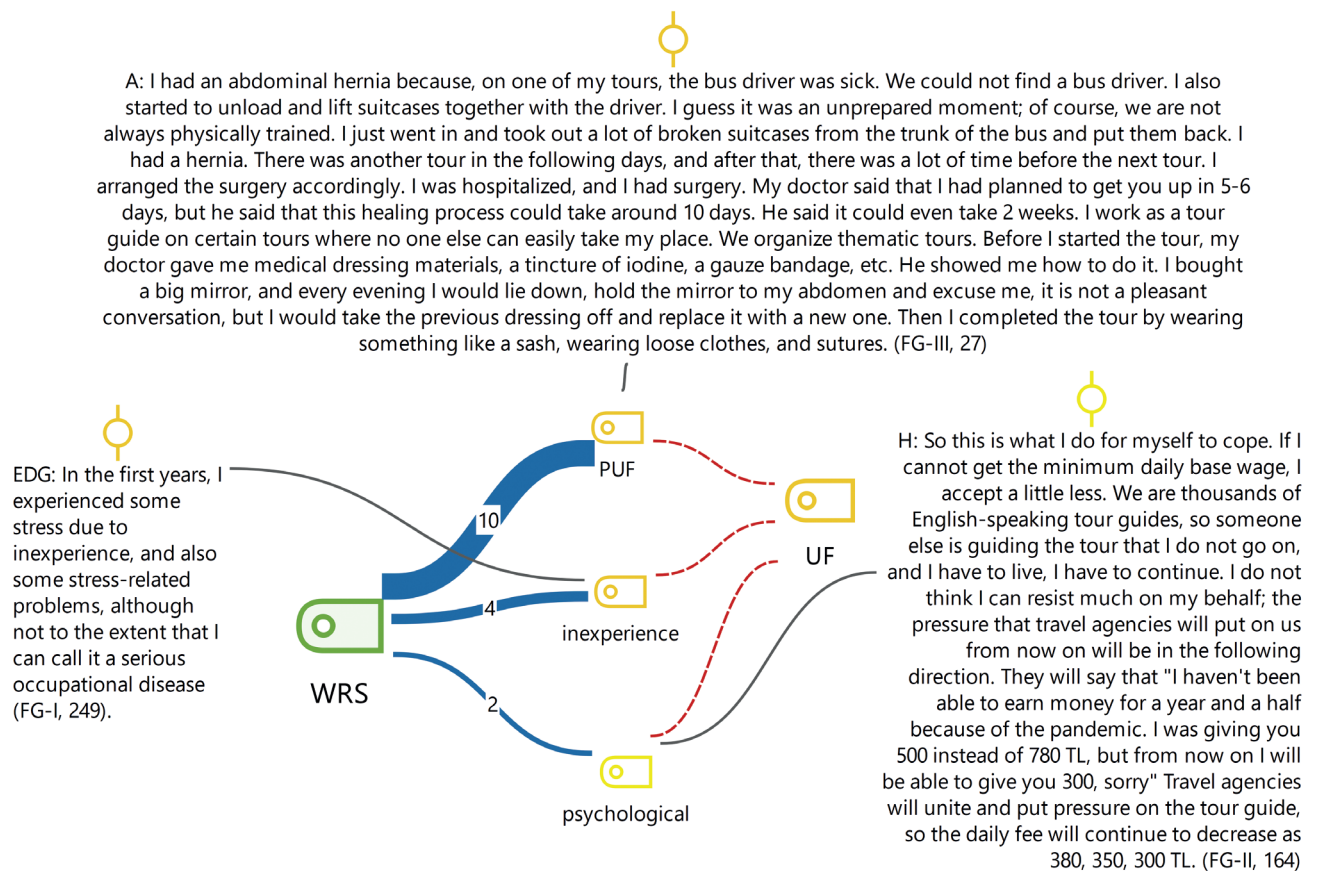


Figure 11. Code intersections between tour guides (TGs') unintentional fault (UF) and work-related stress (WRS)
 Note: FG – focus group, PUF – physical unintentional fault, UF – unintentional fault, WRS – work-related stress
 Source: authors

inexperience ($f=4$; 5.1%), and psychological ($f=2$; 2.5%). Physical UFs are mostly caused by tiredness, ageing, lack of sleep and doing things that are not their duty such as carrying bags. Psychological factors are mainly due to worry about the future and trying to do one's best while inexperience is the main reason for the code. These sub-codes are also related to each other.

The unintentional behaviour of TGs is highly related to SOF (Figure 12). Travel agencies with cost orientation and HBM make the highest contribution to the UB of TGs. TGs' worries about the future and inexperience are affected by these factors. However, physical UF is the main contributor to WRS amongst other UBs.

4.3. WORK-RELATED ILL HEALTH TYPE AND WORK-RELATED STRESS

Physical WRIH-types are musculoskeletal disorder (MSD), respiratory, gastrointestinal, cardio, infection, head and skin problems. Only two of them, gastric ($f=3$; 23.1%) and heart ($f=2$; 15.4%) problems were found to be related to WRS (Figure 13). Mental WRIH-types are coded as stress, psychological disorders, psychological fatigue and professional deformation. The last three are grouped as others. Only psychological disorders ($f=8$; 61.5%) were related to the WRS. Contrary to the WRIH-reason, these relationships do not mean that one is the reason for another. However, these three work-related health problems are correlated to some extent.



Figure 14. Code relations of work-related ill health (WRIH) type
 Note: OSH – occupational safety and health, UC – unsafe condition, SOF – social-organizational factor, PE – physical environment, UB – unsafe behaviour, UF – unintentional fault, PUF – physical unintentional fault
 Source: authors

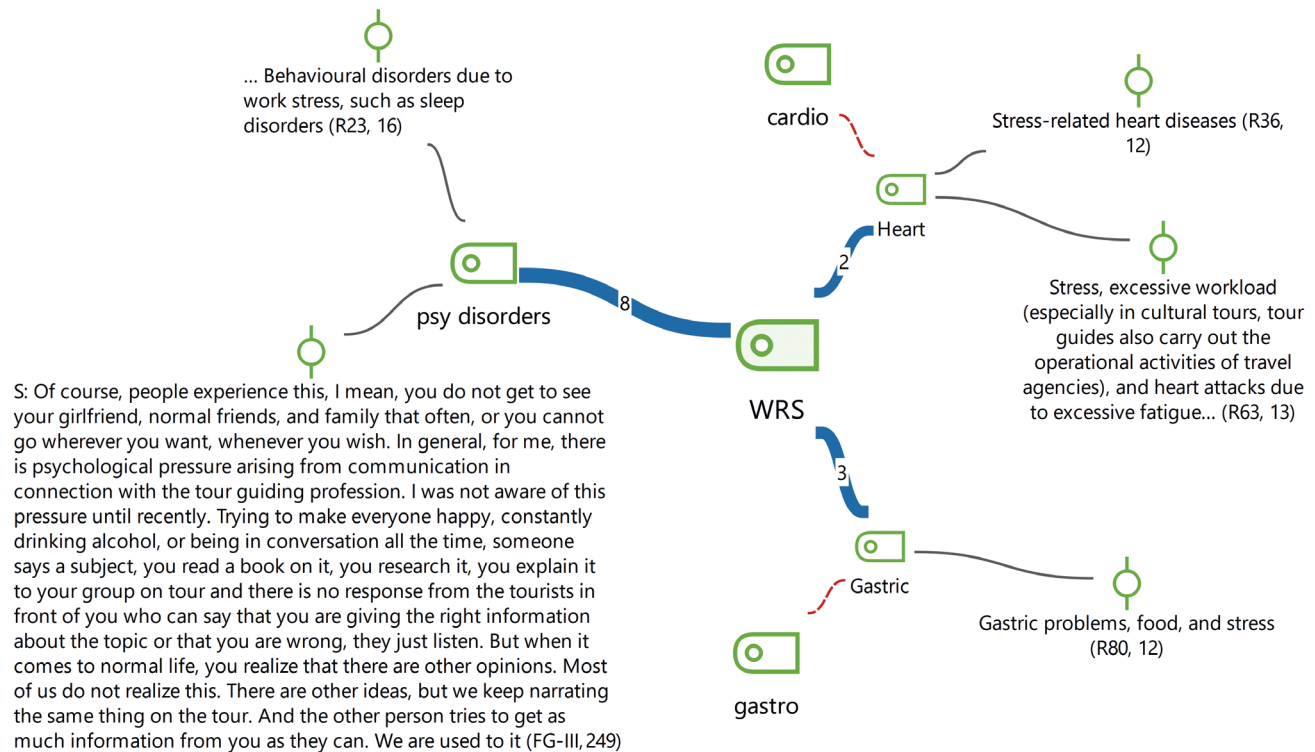


Figure 13. Code intersections between other health problems and work-related stress (WRS)
 Note: R – respondent, FG – focus group
 Source: authors

When the relations between the three codes and WRIH-reasons are analyzed, structural factors seem responsible for the physical health problems, which are followed by facilities and UFs. HBM and the heavy workload caused by travel agencies with a slight effect on physical health problems (Figure 14).

However, SOF (UC) is mainly responsible for psychological disorders and stress. Travel agencies ($f=8$) with intense work schedules, time pressure, customers, shopkeepers, PE and structural factors are the main contributors to mental problems. UBs, especially physical UF due to tiredness and sleeplessness also contribute after UC.

5. DISCUSSION

Despite TGs having a crucial role in the tourism industry and benefiting multiple groups such as tourism providers, tourists and locals, limited interest has been shown in the work-related challenges of TGs so far (Ababneh, 2017). Few studies on this topic reflect consumers' perspectives (Chen & Chang, 2020). WRS has been studied for recent decades in the context of the tourism industry. However, the stressors of TGs have not been sufficiently investigated. This study makes a comprehensive contribution to the literature by determining the possible reasons for WRS from the TG's perspective. The relations of WRS with both physical and mental health problems are also discussed in this study. Out of 90 surveys and 16 FG participant statements, five categories are derived, and for this study two of them, WRIH-type and WRIH-reason, were assessed to understand the role of stress in TGs' occupational safety and health.

The results show that WRS accounts for 15% of all health problems for TGs. Being psychologically worn-out was found one of the most common problems of TGs in Turkey in the study by Ulusoy et al. (2021). The same study revealed that when considered together with focusing problems, sleep disorder and mental fatigue, mental problems accounted for 22% of TGs' work-related health problems. This finding is much lower than our findings. This study demonstrated that work-related mental health problems account for almost half of all health problems. This is consistent with the findings of Health and Safety Executive (2021) which revealed that WRS is one of the leading occupational risk factors today.

An important contribution of this study is to identify possible reasons for WRS. Unsafe work-related conditions were found to be the main stressor for TGs. Among other factors contributing to UC, SOF stands out, accounting for more than half of the TGs' WRS. There is one striking factor that is present in almost all SOF:

HBM. The fourth of these factors arising from HBM is harassment and bullying from customers, shopkeepers, drivers and harassment and mobbing from travel agencies. Sexual harassment from customers, drivers and shopkeepers is a prominent problem especially for female TGs (Carillo 2020a; Köroğlu et al., 2020; Wong & Wang, 2009; Zengin et al., 2014). The studies also show that sexual harassment is related to burnout and harms the psychological well-being of female TGs (Alrawadieh, 2021).

This study also demonstrated that customers and travel agencies, two integral parts of the package tour, are the primary reasons for TGs' WRS. Distressed or sick customers and harassment from customers are significant stressors for TGs. This result confirms similar studies in Turkey where 'unkind' customers cause health problems for TGs (Ulusoy et al., 2021). Organising a group at the beginning of the tour, and dealing with late and anxious tourists, are also mental stress factors for Chinese TGs (Chen & Chang, 2020). Tour leaders in South America state that customers' attitudes and behaviour increase their stress levels. Annoying customers who do not follow recommendations or warnings put extra burdens on TGs, and affect them negatively (Tsaur & Lin, 2014), which is also consistent with this study.

Travel agencies contribute to TGs' stress by mobbing, cost orientation, sales pressure, intense work schedule, heavy workloads and time pressure. The intense work schedule of TGs (Köroğlu et al., 2020) was also associated with stress in the study by Ulusoy et al. (2021). Most tour guides do not have time to rest because of their busy tour schedule (Chen & Chang, 2020). Chinese TGs sometimes have to stay with another guest in their room to reduce operational costs (Tsaur & Lin, 2014). These studies are consistent with our findings emphasising the cost-oriented approach of travel agencies. Besides, female TGs have more problems with travel agencies than male TGs (Alrawadieh et al., 2021). They have trouble not only with travel agencies but also with shopkeepers and drivers. Sales pressure from shopkeepers often turns into harassment (HBM) and increases WRS, as well. TGs need to build good relationships with drivers as they are critical to the success of the tour (Tsaur & Lin, 2014). Köroğlu et al. (2020) found that drivers were responsible for almost half of the problems that female TGs experienced. Therefore, drivers can be a source of stress by affecting or impeding the progress of the tour when they have poor dialogue with TGs or by harassing them (Tsaur & Lin, 2014; Wang et al., 2010).

This study also supports the existing literature (Ababneh, 2017; Chowdhary & Prakash, 2008; Mackenzie & Kerr, 2013): structural factors such as standing for long hours, long walks, tour type and long trips contribute to the TGs' WRS. The problems start

when these structural factors of tour guiding combine with other stressors such as HBM, intense work schedule, sales and time pressure, distressed customers, facilities, vehicles, physical tiredness, sleeplessness and inexperience. Especially during the peak season, TGs can only stay at home a few days a month, so they have no 'private life' (Chen & Chang, 2020), exhibit unsocial behaviour (Alrawadieh et al., 2021), and their relations with their family are negatively affected (Batman, 2003; Köroğlu et al., 2020).

Unsafe work-related PEs affecting not only the physical health but also the mental health of TGs' are facilities and vehicles. Hotels, restaurants and other facilities contribute more to the WRS of TGs due to a lack of hygiene. Old or poorly maintained tour buses (Batman, 2003; Wang et al., 2010) are highly associated with intense work schedules and cost orientation. In this study, vehicle-related stress was lower than others although Wang et al. (2010) found that risk arising from tour buses is the biggest risk at 14%. However, in that study WRA was probably taken into account and vehicles were considered as a risk factor for traffic accidents (e.g. tour bus crashes). In this study, stress was handled as a WRIH, and not as risks arising from buses.

Although UCs are put forward as the main reason, UB (only UFs in this study) is also responsible for one-fifth of the TGs' WRS. However, more than half of this stressor was physical UF (tiredness, sleeplessness and doing things not a duty such as carrying bags) and it was because of the working conditions, i.e. UC. This stressor is also highly correlated with cost orientation and mobbing from travel agencies. Ulusoy et al. (2021) studied WRIH-reasons of TGs. According to their findings, UBs account for 34.1% (physical – 15.1%, psychological – 6%, inexperience – 12% and negligence – 3%) of work-related health problems. However, this rate is not specific to WRS, but for all WRIH-types. Psychological UFs are not specific to TGs in Turkey. Ababneh (2017) also argued that TGs worry about the future in Jordan.

Stress is related to gastric and heart problems (physical), and comes after structural factors such as long trips, standing for long hours and long walks. This is congruent with the study of Tsaur and Lin (2014) which says long-term tours, fast eating, different foods and nervous moods especially may cause mainly intestine and stomach diseases. Stress-induced stomach problems were also determined by Wong and Wang (2019). Heart-related risks increase due to changing eating habits during tours, especially outbound (Wiardani et al., 2018). No other association between stress and other physical health problems was found in this study although significant relationships have been found in some studies such as voice disorders (Cansu, 2020; Sanssené et al., 2019). Stress is also related to psychological disorders (mental), and comes after

SOF, which mainly consists of travel agencies with intense work schedules and time pressure, customers and shopkeepers. This finding confirms the studies determining the highest probability of TG burnout due to high job stress (Ababneh, 2017; Alrawadieh, 2021; Tsaur & Lin, 2014).

Although this study has made extensive contributions to the literature, some limitations need to be outlined. Firstly, this study was carried out in Turkey with non-probability sampling, therefore generalizations may be limited. Further studies on the OSH problems of TGs will shed more light on this issue. Secondly, this study reflects WRS and related factors from TGs' perspectives. Future studies may involve other parties such as travel agency managers, drivers and tourists to give a more holistic picture.

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