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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring the Relationship between Psychological Resilience and Job Performance of Lebanese Bank Employees During the Financial Liquidity Crisis

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between psychological resilience and the job performance of bank employees in Lebanon during the financial liquidity crisis that began around late 2019, in terms of descriptive characteristics.

Lebanon has been experiencing a financial collapse since October 2019, although some warning signs had been building up for few years earlier. This liquidity crisis has had significant negative impacts on the country's banking sector and on the public perception of bank employees. As a result, it has affected their psychological resilience and job performance. To date, no specific research has been conducted on how psychological resilience influences the job performance of bank employees under such scrutiny conditions.

This is a cross-sectional, correlational pilot study based on data from 84 employees across various banks in Lebanon. Two tools were used to collect data: the Brief Resilience Scale and a Job Performance Scale.

The findings showed a significant positive relationship between psychological resilience and job performance. Resilience accounted for 20% of the variation in job performance. Employees who were more enthusiastic about their work tended to have higher resilience. Job performance was also higher among younger male employees, those with a more comfortable income, and those who approached their work with enthusiasm.

KEYWORDS Lebanon · Banking sector · Psychological resilience · Job performance · Financial crisis · Employee well-being

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1 Introduction

Lebanon has been enduring one of the most severe economic collapses in its modern history since October 2019 (Youssef, 2020). This crisis has caused the Lebanese pound to suffer an 81% loss in its value, with an extreme reduction in the gross domestic product (Shallal et al., 2021). The situation is further compounded by multiple concurrent challenges: the country's struggle to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, recovery efforts from the devastating Beirut Port explosion of August 2020, and ongoing social and economic unrest (Human Rights Watch, 2021). According to the World Bank (2021), while all economic sectors have been severely impacted, the banking sector has experienced particularly critical effects on multiple levels.

The banking sector in Lebanon, long considered the backbone of the economy, has been severely impacted by this socio-economic instability and has witnessed a significant decrease in its performance and efficiency (Zougheib, 2020). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2021), by June 2021, around 15% of the bank employee's workforce had been laid off since October 2019, with many others experiencing wage reductions and reduced working hours. Additionally, a report by the Association of Banks in Lebanon (ABL, 2022) revealed that as of January 2021, the number of bank branches had decreased by over 30% since the start of the financial crisis, with many more closures occurring subsequently.

The crisis has caused profound mistrust among customers, many of whom have lost access to their savings. El-Hajjar (2020) reported several violent incidents and confrontations between customers and bank employees due to withdrawal restrictions. Customers have largely blamed the banks for the financial crisis and see bank employees as part of the problem. This public perception has created an additional layer of stress for bank employees, who must manage both professional responsibilities and social stigma.

While the economic downturn can be measured in various ways, the psychological effects of the crisis are more complex and potentially more damaging to individual well-being, particularly given the parallel and subsequent crises in Lebanon (Yacoub & Abou Ibrahim, 2022). This psychological impact has been particularly severe for bank employees, who not only endure the economic consequences of the crisis but must also handle negative public perception of their role while simultaneously striving to maintain job performance in the face of mass layoffs and increased workloads.

2 Literature Overview

2.1 Conceptualizing Psychological Resilience

Resilience is a multifaceted concept that refers to the capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities to adapt and recover from significant disruptions or adversities (Masten, 2018). It is important to distinguish resilience from similar concepts such as flexibility, agility, and robustness, despite their overlapping characteristics (Duchek, 2020). Flexibility represents the ability to quickly adjust to environmental changes (Golden & Powell, 2000), while agility refers to the capacity to quickly recognize opportunities, change direction, and avoid problems (McCann, 2004). Robustness describes a system's ability to maintain functions despite disruptions (Kitano, 2004).

While flexibility and agility are necessary for addressing daily challenges and changes, resilience is essential for coping with unexpected threats and crises (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). A key distinguishing feature of resilience is its adaptation aspect, which enables individuals and organizations to emerge from crises stronger than before—a characteristic that differentiates resilience from mere robustness (Madni & Jackson, 2009).

At the individual level, psychological resilience is the ability to endure challenges like stigma, work issues, and financial problems, while coping effectively with these difficulties (Crowe et al., 2016). Fletcher and Sarkar (2013) define psychological resilience as the capacity of individuals to positively adapt and maintain mental well-being despite experiencing adversity, which can include trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. This definition highlights resilience as both a process and an outcome.

Psychological resilience involves several key components, including emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, adaptive coping strategies, self-efficacy, and social support networks (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Together, these elements help individuals navigate difficult situations and maintain psychological balance even under severe

stress. According to Bonanno (2004), resilience is not simply about bouncing back to a previous state but involves active adaptation that can lead to post-traumatic growth and enhanced psychological functioning.

2.2 Psychological Resilience in the Workplace

In the workplace, psychological resilience is a valuable psychological resource that helps employees cope with challenges and negative experiences they encounter in professional environments (Cooke et al., 2019). Luthans et al. (2006) identified psychological resilience as a key component of psychological capital– alongside hope, optimism, and self-efficacy–that contributes to positive organizational behavior and employee performance.

Research has shown that psychological resilience can positively affect employees' self-confidence and autonomy levels, improve their professional skills, and indirectly boost job and life satisfaction (Delgado et al., 2017). Moreover, higher levels of resilience are linked to a reduction in mental health issues such as burnout and depression, as well as decreased turnover intentions (Manzano Garcí a & Ayala Calvo, 2012).

King et al. (2016) found that resilient employees are more adaptable during organizational change and are more likely to see challenges as opportunities for growth rather than threats. This adaptability is particularly valuable during times of crisis or significant organizational transformations. Additionally, Youssef and Luthans (2007) highlighted that resilient employees tend to bounce back faster from setbacks and maintain higher performance levels despite difficult circumstances.

2.3 Job Performance During Crisis

Job performance refers to the extent to which an employee completes tasks or behaves according to established expectations (Caillier, 2010). It includes various dimensions, such as task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance (Koopmans et al., 2011). During crises, the adaptive dimension of performance becomes particularly important, as it reflects employees' ability to manage change, handle work stress, solve problems creatively, and learn new tasks and technologies (Pulakos et al., 2000).

During a crisis, employees' job performance becomes crucial for organizational survival. Adaptability, responsiveness, resourcefulness, and resilience can help organizations effectively respond to crisis situations (Hameed & Waheed, 2011). As noted by James and Wooten (2010), crises test organizational systems and individual capabilities, often revealing both strengths and weaknesses that may remain hidden during periods of stability.

Pourteimour et al. (2021) argue that during crises, the psychological capital and job performance of employees are considered more important than ever. Research supports this, showing that organizations with resilient workforces are better able to maintain productivity and service quality during disruptions (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). However, maintaining high performance during crises requires not only individual resilience but also supportive organizational structures and leadership practices (Barasa et al., 2018).

2.4 Relationship Between Psychological Resilience & Job Performance

There is increasing evidence that shows a positive link between psychological resilience and job performance, especially in high-stress environments. Employees with higher levels of psychological resilience are better able to cope with workplace stressors and challenges, which often leads to better job performance (Luthans et al., 2007).

A landmark study by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) found that psychological capital, which includes psychological resilience, was positively linked to job performance across various organizational contexts. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Avey et al. (2011) confirmed that psychological capital was positively associated

with favorable employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance, and negatively related to undesirable employee attitudes and behaviors.

Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) showed that employees with higher levels of psychological resilience were better able to maintain positive emotions when facing workplace stressors, contributing to higher levels of job satisfaction and enhanced performance. Building on this work, Meneghel et al. (2016) found that collective team resilience positively influenced team performance by promoting positive emotions and team job satisfaction.

The link between resilience and performance seems especially strong during times of crisis. Shin et al. (2012) found that employees with higher resilience levels maintained higher performance during organizational change, while those with lower resilience showed significant declines in performance. Similarly, a study by Kuntz et al. (2017) demonstrated that employee resilience was positively associated with adaptive performance during organizational crises, with this relationship being mediated by psychological empowerment.

In the banking sector specifically, Salisu et al. (2020) examined the relationship between psychological resilience and job performance among bank employees in Nigeria during an economic crisis. Their findings indicated that psychological resilience significantly predicted both task and contextual performance, with this relationship being partially mediated by work engagement. However, research focusing on the Lebanese banking sector during the current crisis is still lacking.

2.5 Contextual Factors Affecting Lebanese Bank Employees

The unique challenges facing Lebanese bank employees create a distinctive context for studying the relationship between psychological resilience and job performance. Several key factors must be considered:

- Public Perception and Stigmatization: As highlighted by El-Hajjar (2020), bank employees have faced significant stigmatization and hostility from the public, who often hold them accountable for the financial crisis. This social stigma can impact employees' psychological well-being and, potentially, their performance. Research by Major and O'Brien (2005) indicates that stigmatization can lead to increased stress, decreased self-esteem, and impaired cognitive functioning, all of which may negatively affect job performance.
- Job Insecurity: around 15% of bank employees having been laid off since October 2019 (ILO, 2021), those who remain employed likely experience high levels of job insecurity. Shoss (2017) notes that job insecurity is associated with increased psychological distress and decreased job satisfaction and performance. However, individuals with higher psychological resilience may be better able to manage these feelings of insecurity and maintain performance despite uncertainty.
- Increased Workload: The closure of over 30% of bank branches (ABL, 2022) has likely resulted in increased workloads for remaining employees, who must manage the same volume of customer needs with reduced personnel. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) suggest that excessive job demands without corresponding resources can lead to burnout and decreased performance, though personal resources such as resilience may buffer these effects.
- Economic Hardship: Bank employees, like other Lebanese citizens, are experiencing personal economic hardship due to the devaluation of the Lebanese pound and rising inflation. This personal financial stress may create additional psychological burden that could affect workplace functioning (Leana & Meuris, 2015).
- Multiple Concurrent Crises: Beyond the financial crisis, bank employees are also coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the aftermath of the Beirut Port explosion, and ongoing social unrest (Human Rights Watch, 2021). This accumulation of stressors may test the limits of psychological resilience and potentially overwhelm coping resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018).

Given these unique contextual factors, understanding how psychological resilience relates to job performance among Lebanese bank employees offers valuable insights for both theory and practice. This knowledge gap represents a significant opportunity for research contribution, as findings may inform interventions to support bank employees' resilience and performance during the ongoing crisis.

2.6 Potential Research Directions

The relationship between psychological resilience and job performance is particularly relevant in the context of the Lebanese banking sector, which is experiencing unprecedented challenges. While existing research provides a foundation for understanding this relationship, the unique circumstances in Lebanon call for contextually specific investigation.

As such, applicable research may be conducted to address several key questions, namely: How do Lebanese bank employees develop and maintain psychological resilience in the face of multiple concurrent crises? What organizational factors support or undermine resilience in this context? How do different dimensions of resilience (e.g., emotional, cognitive, behavioral) relate to various aspects of job performance? And what interventions might effectively enhance resilience and performance among bank employees during this prolonged crisis?

By addressing these questions, researchers can contribute to both theoretical understanding of resilience in extreme contexts and practical knowledge to support employees and organizations navigating severe crises. Such insights may prove valuable not only for the Lebanese banking sector but also for other industries and regions experiencing significant disruption and uncertainty.

3 Scope, Aim & Research Questions

Existing literature provides substantial evidence of a positive link between psychological resilience and job performance across various organizational settings. However, to the best of our knowledge, no prior study has specifically examined this relationship among bank employees in Lebanon—particularly within the context of the country's ongoing and multifaceted crisis.

Given this gap, the present study aims to explore the relationship between psychological resilience and job performance among bank employees in Lebanon, taking into account their descriptive characteristics.

Within this context, and during the multifaced financial crisis in Lebanon; responses to the following questions were sought:

Q1: What are the psychological resilience and job performance levels of bank employees?

Q2: Is there a significant difference between the mean scores bank employees obtain from the “Brief Resilience Scale” and “Job Performance Scale” in terms of their descriptive characteristics?

Q3: Is there a significant relationship between bank employees’ psychological resilience and job performance levels?

4 Data Collection & Study Design

This study used a descriptive and correlational design. Data was collected via an electronic survey conducted between October 2023 and January 2024.

The study population (N ≈ 24,000) included all employees in the Lebanese banking sector. A sample of 84 participants (n = 84) was obtained using chain sampling. The process began with a group of acquaintances working in five different banks, who were invited to complete the survey and asked to share the link with others in their networks. This method helped ensure wider reach across various institutions.

The e-survey consisted of three main sections:

- Descriptive Information Form: Collected data on participants' gender, age, marital status, perceived income sufficiency, and enthusiasm for their job.
- Brief Resilience Scale (BRS): Developed by Smith et al. (2008), this six-item self-report scale assesses psychological resilience using a 5-point Likert scale. Items 2, 4, and 6 are reverse scored. A higher total score indicates greater resilience. The BRS has a single-factor structure and a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .80.
- Job Performance Scale: Developed by Kirkman and Rosen (1999) and later adapted by Sigler and Pearson (2000), this scale measures job performance through four items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. A higher score reflects higher job performance. The scale has a one-dimensional structure and a Cronbach's alpha of .76.

These scales were selected due to their concise structure, single-dimensional format, and high internal consistency. Data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel Data Analysis ToolPak and DATATab Statistics Software.

Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentage, mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation values. To assess normality, skewness and kurtosis values were checked and found to be within the acceptable range of ±1.96, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). As a result, parametric tests were applied. Statistical analyses included the t-test, Pearson correlation, and simple regression analysis. All data were evaluated at a 95% confidence interval, with a significance level set at $p < .05$

5 Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights, a few limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample size is relatively modest compared to the overall number of bank employees in Lebanon, and the sampling method used was non-random, which may introduce some degree of community bias.

However, the sample size and sampling method remain suitable for the scope and purpose of this study. Data collection took place during a particularly challenging period marked by financial, social, and institutional instability, which limited broader access. Additionally, the data was collected over a relatively short timeframe, which may affect the generalizability of the results.

Second, to encourage participation among busy employees, the survey was designed to be brief and included a focused set of descriptive variables. While this helped improve the response rate, it also meant that some potentially relevant factors were not captured. Future studies may consider expanding the scope of data collected to build on these findings.

6 Results

The following section presents the main findings of the study based on the analysis of the survey data collected.

6.1 Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants

Table 1 presents the demographic and descriptive characteristics of the 84 bank employees who participated in the study. The sample consisted of 58% males and 42% females. The majority (70%) were married, and slightly more than half (56%) were aged 40 years or older. Most participants (73%) reported an uncomfortable income level, while 27% considered their income comfortable. Regarding job enthusiasm, 68% reported doing their job enthusiastically, whereas 32% did not.

Table 1

Variables	Groups	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	35	42%
	Male	49	58%
Marital status	Single	25	30$
	Married	59	70%
Age	< 40 years	37	44%
	≥ 40 years	47	56%
Income Level	Uncomfortable	73	73%
	Comfortable	11	27%
Do you do your job enthusiastically?	No	27	32%
	Yes	57	68%

6.2 Psychological Resilience

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the items on the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). Mean item scores ranged from 2.80 to 3.60, with an overall scale mean of 3.22, indicating a moderate level of psychological resilience among participants. Skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range, suggesting a normal distribution. The internal consistency of the BRS was acceptable, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, meeting the minimum threshold for reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). This supports the use of the scale in the current context.

Table 2

Items of the Brief Resilience Scale	Mean	Std.	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.	3.19	1.11	1	5	-1.01	-0.12
I have a hard time making it through stressful events. *	2.80	1.18	1	5	-0.53	0.63
It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.	3.42	1.18	1	5	-0.99	-0.33
It is hard to snap back when something bad happens. *	3.05	1.23	1	5	-1.23	0.22
I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.	3.60	1.09	1	5	-0.41	-0.62
I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life. *	3.30	1.06	1	5	-1.02	-0.19

6.3 Job Performance

As shown in Table 3, mean scores on the Job Performance Scale ranged from 3.92 to 4.42 across the four items, with an overall mean of 4.27, indicating a relatively high level of job performance among participants. All items demonstrated low skewness and kurtosis, supporting the use of parametric analyses. The internal reliability of the scale was Cronbach's alpha = 0.72, which is slightly above the accepted threshold and suggests adequate internal consistency for the sample.

Table 3

Items of the Job Performance Scale	Mean	Std.	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
I complete my tasks on time.	4.42	0.71	2	5	0.48	-1.02
I achieve my business goals	3.92	0.96	2	5	-0.55	-0.58
I am sure that I have exceeded the standards in the service quality I offer.	4.38	0.76	2	5	-0.02	-0.94
When a problem arises. I produce a solution rapidly	4.36	0.69	2	5	0.47	-0.83

6.4 Differences Based on Descriptive Characteristics

Table 4 presents comparisons of mean scores on the Brief Resilience Scale and Job Performance Scale across different demographic and descriptive variables. No statistically significant differences in resilience scores were found based on gender, marital status, age group, or income level ($p > .05$). However, participants who reported doing their job enthusiastically had significantly higher resilience scores ($p < .001$). For job performance, significant differences were observed in relation to gender, age, income level, and job enthusiasm. Enthusiastic employees, in particular, scored higher on job performance than those who did not report enthusiasm for their work ($p = .027$). Marital status, however, did not show a significant difference in performance levels.

Table 4

Variables	Groups	Brief Resilience Scale			Job Performance Scale		
		$\bar{x}$	t	P	$\bar{x}$	t	p
Gender	Female	3.19	0.38	.703	4.18	1.19	.237
	Male	3.25			4.33		
Marital status	Single	3.23	-0.02	.984	4.33	-0.63	.527
	Married	3.22			4.24		
Age	< 40 years	3.1	1.46	.147	4.33	1.1	.274
	≥ 40 years	3.32			4.19		
Income Level	Uncomfortable	3.21	-0.66	.510	4.23	-1.43	.157
	Comfortable	3.35			4.50		
Do you do your job enthusiastically?	No	2.75	-4.97	<.001	4.06	-2.25	.027
	Yes	3.45			4.36		

6.5 Correlation Between Psychological Resilience and Job Performance

To examine the relationship between resilience and job performance, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. As shown in Table 5, there was a positive, moderate correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.46$, $p < .001$), indicating that higher levels of psychological resilience were associated with higher levels of job performance among participants.

Table 5

Pearson Correlation	r	P
Resilience Scale and Performance Scale	0.46	<.001

6.6 Effect of Psychological Resilience on Job Performance

A simple linear regression analysis was performed to assess the predictive power of psychological resilience on job performance. The model summary is presented in Table 6. The results showed that psychological resilience explained 21% of the variance in job performance ($R^2 = 0.21$, $F = 21.66$, $p < .001$).

The regression coefficient for resilience was significant (B = 0.39, $t = 4.64$, $p < .001$), suggesting that for every one-unit increase in psychological resilience, job performance increased by 0.39 units. These findings confirm that psychological resilience is a significant and meaningful predictor of job performance among Lebanese bank employees during the financial crisis.

Table 6

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Standard error				
0.46	0.21	0.20	0.52				
ANOVA	**df**	**F**	**p**				
	1	21.66	<.001				
	Unstandardized Coefficients	**Standardized Coefficients**				**95% confidence interval for B**	
	B	**Beta**	**Standard error**	**t**	**p**	**lower bound**	**upper bound**
(Constant)	3.00		0.28	10.8	<.001	2.45	3.55
Resilience Scale	0.39	0.46	0.08	4.64	<.001	0.22	0.56

The dependent variable: Job performance

7 Conclusion & Implication for Future Research

In the present study, the relationship between bank employees' psychological resilience and job performance during the multifaced financial crisis in Lebanon was discussed in terms of some of their descriptive characteristics. The preliminary findings revealed that the participating bank employees had a moderate level of psychological resilience and a high level of job performance.

While Lebanese bank employees would be expected to have a low level of job performance in such a dire environment, the outcomes of the study showing that they have a high level of performance can be considered an interesting result. Of the employees who took part in the study, those who were relatively younger males, with a comfortable income level, and who did their job enthusiastically, had significantly higher job performance levels. On the other hand, only those who did their job enthusiastically had a higher psychological resilience level.

Moreover, a positive significant relationship was determined between psychological resilience and job performance. Though, psychological resilience was determined to have a moderate effect on bank employees' job performance levels. Within this context, it is recommended that in addition to the psychological resilience variable, future research could include other variables such as burnout, depression, stress, anxiety and fear from public perception and stigma, etc., which would probably have a noteworthy impact on job performance within the stated conditions.

Finally, it can be said that addressing psychological resilience may contribute to positive organizational outcomes such as improved job performance of bank employees in Lebanon, despite the multifaced financial crisis affecting the country.

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