



Examining the Effect of Resilience on Job Engagement with the Mediation of Psychological Empowerment and Job Burnout

Elahe Hosseini^{1*} | Zohre Sadat Doaei² | Ali Jamadi³ | Maryam Yazdani⁴

1. Corresponding Author, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accounting, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran. Email: Elahe.hosseini@stu.yazd.ac.ir

2. Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accounting, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran. Email: doaei.bazargani@gmail.com

3. Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accounting, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran. Email: alijamadi73@gmail.com

4. Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Esfahan University, Esfahan, Iran. Email: myazdani.shakhes@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The workplace is a dynamic, yet stressful environment. The concept of resilience should be highlighted because work-related challenges might affect people's persistence. Overall, employees' resilience can lead to change management, higher motivation, and reduced burnout. The present study aims to investigate the association between resilience and job engagement with regard to burnout and psychological empowerment. For this purpose, the researchers employed a quantitative design in digital start-ups. The study population entails 1300 employees; then based on Morgan's table, 297 sample employees were selected for this study. The target Iranian start-ups were evaluated during the spring of 2022. The data were collected using a 25-item questionnaire, which was scored based on a 5-point Likert scale. Eventually, the data were analyzed using PLS2 software. The findings showed that psychological empowerment and resilience have a significantly positive impact on job engagement. Moreover, psychological empowerment and job burnout mediate the relationship between resilience and job engagement. The results also demonstrated that digital start-ups increased their employees' resilience through empowerment and training. In addition, creating and strengthening unique characteristics in employees can improve job engagement. Given that the factors of burnout are identified, it is possible to reduce the stress in the work environment and improve the level and quality of services to employees. Besides, promoting resilience will lead to better life management, enhanced interactions, and self-esteem, as well as a purposeful life. Consequently, organizations and employers will also benefit from such a personal improvement among their workforce.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the approach of positive psychology, with the motto of paying attention to human talents and capabilities, has been the focus of researchers in various fields. The main objective of this approach is to identify the structures and methods that provide a better life and happiness (Fang et al., 2022). With this in mind, the factors that cause a person to adapt more and more to the needs and threats of life are the most basic structures under research in this approach. Employee resilience is considered an important asset, and resilient employees are more effective in coping with difficulties and changes compared to others (Fan et al., 2021). Employee empowerment is mainly considered a persuasive action (especially in resilience issues) that increases performance by expanding investment opportunities (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Creating job engagement, trust, and commitment among employees can make the organization safe in facing the challenges of change. Empowering employees makes their participation in the organization's decisions more flexible because it enables quick response to environmental changes (Van Der Vegt et al., 2015). Work-life forms an important and large part of people's lives, and job engagement is considered a very important variable in measuring work-life. It is worth mentioning that the more the employees of the organization have attachments and involvement with their jobs, the better the situation of the organization (Arshad et al., 2021).

Considering the daily changes in science and knowledge, employee empowerment is of particular importance, employees should be psychologically empowered by their organization so that they feel confident, coordinated, and involved with their job and organizational roles. Then, they will experience organizational attachment, job involvement, and satisfaction (Kanjanakan et al., 2023). Unlike different concepts that only account for a single insignificant dimension of self, job engagement investigates broader aspects of individuals' self and offers a complete correlation with their performance (Rich et al., 2010). Based on the regulation of companies and institutions evaluation, digital start-ups are private institutions to expand and apply inventions and innovations, and also commercializing the results of research and development in the field of advanced technology. Digital start-ups face many changes and challenges that force them to hire talented people and specialists so that they can reduce the effect of the challenges, especially in jobs and critical situations to move towards decision-making. Digital start-ups, which sell their knowledge, strive to be learning organizations in which members try to improve their knowledge productivity as individuals and as a group. They can provide an opportunity for the employees to express their opinions and ideas (Tajpour et al., 2022). This enables talented employees to understand the organization's problems and try to find creative and novel solutions for their problems. So to make successful changes, digital start-ups should rely on the feedback of their knowledge workers.

There has been a multitude of research on the failure rate of digital start-ups in the field of IT. Accordingly, seminal research reported that only 56% of the companies that were established in 2014 could maintain their business into 2018 (Mansfield, 2019). Consequently, the failure rate is a critical issue for such organizations. Moreover, organizations are likely to face various challenges throughout their life cycle. They need to resort to the facilitating impact of resilience to overcome these challenges (Rahmanseresht et al., 2020). In addition, digital start-ups in IT experience a dynamic working environment, where productivity competencies are insufficient to guarantee their maintenance and continuity. Although constant activities and organizational improvement paths might lead to job engagement that is considered a strong source of organizational competitive advantage, even successful solutions and plans may gradually lose their influence due to the dynamic nature of the business environment in the long run. Thus, it is necessary to moderate existing capabilities as well as develop new skills and strategies to maintain a competitive advantage (Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2022). Hence, knowledge is regarded as the distinctive feature separating digital start-ups in the field of IT from other corresponding organizations, including entrepreneurs and newly-established companies. In other words, such companies implement scientific, exploratory, problem-solving, and facilitating processes to identify and resolve production-related troubles as well as enhance product and process efficiency within the organization (Hosseini et al., 2022). Overall, digital start-ups in IT fundamentally provide and share the necessary knowledge for making timely, effective, and productive decisions aiming to assist decision-makers in all different sectors (Tajpour et al., 2022). Moreover, these digital start-ups are expected to facilitate accomplishment in a business with regard to innovative products, procedures, and working plans, which might eventually lead to the development of entrepreneurship

potential and economic indexes in other organizations as well (Hosseini et al., 2022). What is more, IT digital start-ups are more likely to maintain their progressive attitude even under crises because of their fast-paced structure and highly efficient workforce. Hence, they can play a substantial role in economic resilience and accomplishing objectives in the competitive economic environment (Mohammadi et al., 2018). Despite the significance of the concept of resilience in digital start-ups in IT, there is no particular research investigating this feature of digital start-ups in the context of Iran.

A great number of studies in this field examined the results of resilience and job engagement, but the impact of concepts such as psychological empowerment and job burnout has been neglected. It should be stated that among the conducted research, a comprehensive model regarding these four characteristics has not been presented; therefore, these four variables are the basis of the current research. It can be concluded that based on the research performed on job engagement, researchers consider the role of resilience in job engagement with the mediation of psychological empowerment and job burnout as vital. The current research and its conceptual model are designed based on logical sources and previous research with a new arrangement. It seems that no study has yet been conducted in the field of the effect of resilience on job engagement, considering the important role of job burnout and psychological empowerment as discussed in this research. With this in mind, the current research investigated the variables of resilience, empowerment, job burnout, and job engagement in digital start-ups.

2. Literature and Hypothesis Development

Resilience is conceptualized as the capacity to endure stressful situations and gain strength against difficulty. This means that a resilient person, regardless of environmental conditions that can be psychologically stressful, is emotionally positive, self-confident, and optimistic enough to continue working effectively (Caniëls & Baaten, 2019). Resilience not only causes people to use their existing abilities in difficult conditions and in the presence of dangerous factors to achieve personal and social success and growth, but it is the ability to learn to do things better despite adversity. So resilience is considered a latent organizational capability (van den Berg et al., 2022). In psychology, resilience indicates a person's ability to recover after enduring negative emotions and adapt to the changing demands of stressful experiences (Niitsu et al., 2017). Employee flexibility means the ability to manage resources well, cope with more workload, respond to mistakes and crises learn from them, and view changes as an opportunity for development (Kuntz et al., 2017). Resilience is not just passive resistance to harm or threatening conditions, but a resilient, contributing person is active and constructive in their surrounding environment. Resilience is the ability of a person to establish a biological-psychological-spiritual balance against dangerous conditions (Qiao et al., 2022).

Resilient employees can react and adapt to challenges and changing conditions effectively (Franken et al., 2020). The way employees participate in organizational decisions is essential for organizational resilience (Gover & Duxbury, 2018). When employees use their professional resources to quickly react to changes and uncertainty, they show flexible behavior (Villanueva & Martins, 2022). Resilient employees can resist and deal with organizational challenges (Arshad et al., 2021). Employees with high flexibility perform better in controlling stressful situations and adapt positively to the situation, persist in work, and can better deal with emotional stressors (Al-Hawari et al., 2020). Steinkopf et al. (2018) showed that there is a negative relation between work-related stress and resilience. Therefore, improving resilience among employees will result in job stress reduction in the face of challenging or threatening situations (Dana et al., 2022). Employees who experience positive emotions even in adverse circumstances and show flexibility are potentially energetic and emotionally connected to their job duties (Steinkopf et al., 2018). Kim et al. (2019) stated that personal characteristics, such as resilience, significantly affect employee engagement (Kim et al., 2019). In addition, Dai et al. (2019) showed that employees' flexibility will decrease the desire to leave their jobs and increase job engagement (Dai et al., 2019). There is a direct relationship between resilience and job engagement, which highlights employees' dedication to their jobs when they demonstrate higher levels of resilience. Consequently, these employees will experience optimum job satisfaction and minimum burnout. In addition, resilience can help individuals deal with negative experiences and revive them (Giustiniano et al., 2018). For instance, unprecedented events and weak performance at work can negatively affect employees, which might lead to disengagement and weariness. Nonetheless, these employees can resort to resilience to establish a sense

of improvement and belonging to the organization that will promote their confidence and inspiration (Vargas-Hernández & Cota, 2022). That is why employees constantly seek resilience and attempt to enhance this feeling. According to Aggarwal (2022), employees need to implement resilience in a dynamic workplace to improve their performance and engagement, which could be organizational and personal as well. Their dedication to their job might lead to higher performance and organizational success eventually. Meanwhile, they will be more likely to attend job events and take an active role at work. Furthermore, the concept of engagement is associated with effectiveness, innovation, productivity, as well as organizational expenses and benefits. Aggarwal (2022) asserted the interrelatedness between resilience and job engagement. MacLeod et al. (2009) define engagement as "creating opportunities for communication among employees widely and easily" (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). It also refers to creating a motivating and encouraging environment that, in addition to proper care, satisfies the desires of employees to connect with their work. Job engagement expresses the concept of flexibility and continuous improvement. The concept of job engagement was created to reduce employee burnout and increase their fun, connecting them with their job and creating a team spirit that helps achieve the set goals (Jeung, 2011). Macey and Schneider (2008) believed that successful employee engagement can create a balance between working conditions and physical needs (Macey & Schneider, 2008). There is a positive correlation between job engagement and psychological empowerment in two different channels: job resources and job demands. This association may also result in reduced inspiration and determination among the employees. Due to job demands, employees are likely to run out of energy and experience health issues. On the other hand, job resources can inspire employees toward job engagement.

Empowerment, followed by employees' participation, is a driving force for increasing economic productivity and sustainably preserving natural resources (Surya et al., 2021). Empowerment includes the participation of employees at tactical and strategic levels and not only refers to the fact that people consider themselves the owners of their work but also do their work in a flexible and discretionary way (van den Berg et al., 2022). Empowerment increases people's resilience through motivation, and the best empowerment approach is to improve the willingness of employees to participate. Ugwu et al. (2014) showed that psychological empowerment directly affects job engagement (Ugwu et al., 2014). Researchers argued that in job engagement, employees use their personalities, emotions, and physical behaviors to link to their role performance (Edelia & Aslami, 2022). Nonetheless, employees intend to implement physical and emotional behaviors to move away from similar scenarios, particularly if they feel they are disengaged with the job. According to the related literature, psychological empowerment is positively associated with job engagement (Amor et al., 2021). Consequently, the concept of empowerment may highlight the impact of resilience. Hence, organizations would prefer to entrust responsibilities to employees who are experienced and autonomous. Nikraftar and Hosseini (2022) argued that employees' resilience is highly prominent, specifically when there is a crisis and the managers are unavailable.

Globally, organizations have been dealing with the growing competition. Thus, they are required to promote customer support, productivity, and customer satisfaction (Tajpour et al., 2023). In addition, it is argued that employees might be able to demonstrate enhanced and quicker productivity if they are provided with flexibility, autonomy, and decision-making authority. Consequently, it will lead to substantial improvement within the organization (Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2022). If employees are hired for a long contract or permanently, they are most likely to understand all the rules and routines within the organization (Sergio & Rylova, 2018). As a result of employee empowerment, employees will perceive that their opinions are considered valuable by the organization and they are regarded as a part of the company. Accordingly, such employees will develop creativity and dedication toward their duties. Ukil (2016) asserted that there would also be a more approachable working environment. Moreover, job engagement and psychological empowerment are likely to lead to constructive results for individuals, including productivity and well-being (Baker & Albrecht, 2018; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Psychological empowerment is believed to positively influence job engagement and consequently employees' task achievement (Juyumaya & Torres, 2022). Employees will also be able to voice their opinions more freely and courageously in case they are adequately engaged with their work. Hence, decision-making involvement by the employees might lead to enhanced organizational commitment toward achieving personal and company objectives (Hashemiamin & Ramezani, 2022).

H1: Resilience has a significant effect on job engagement.

H2: Resilience has a significant effect on psychological empowerment.

H3: Resilience has a significant effect on job engagement through the mediation of psychological empowerment.

Exhaustion is considered a key sign of job burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) defined burnout as a multidimensional construct of "exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy". It is said that among these three aspects, exhaustion is the most obvious manifestation of burnout, which is characterized by the feeling physically and emotionally depleted in the work field, and more importantly, burnout disrupts the quality of work life. Satisfying many work demands (job stress) leads to permanent overload and ultimately employee burnout (Klusmann et al., 2021). Burnout is not only a personal problem due to the resulting physical and mental health, but it also has negative consequences for organizations (Blackstock et al., 2015). Rushton et al. (2015) have shown that greater flexibility protects employees from burnout and contributes to personal success among employees and their health care (Rushton et al., 2015). Recently, Samsudin et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review that showed that bullying behaviors are related to individual outcomes such as job burnout, psychological stress, and adverse psychological and physical effects (Samsudin et al., 2018). Rossiter and Suchos (2018) support the impact of different forms of bullying and burnout (and its three individual components, exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy).

As was already mentioned, job burnout reflects a condition in which work resources cannot meet work needs. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, needs such as safety are essential, and it is very important that people feel safe and able to change by organizational changes and developments (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). In addition, the World Health Organization (2020) reports that burnout is more common among workers, especially after the outbreak of COVID-19. In order to reduce job burnout and motivate employees towards attractive benefits, bonding with colleagues in the work environment and strong alignment between managers and employees, supportive leadership in the organization, and promoting the culture of participation in the organization are proposed (Singh et al., 2018). Employees who are uncertain about engagement in their job may perceive a lower level of organizational justice and an integrated teamwork environment, which can lead to the development of occupational burnout and explain the association between engagement and burnout in workplace (Ronen & Mikulincer, 2009). In addition, engagement uncertainties, including stress and avoidance, are proven to interfere with occupational performance and result in poor compatibility at the workplace. Accordingly, Pines (2004) argued that uncertainty in job engagement leads to higher levels of job burnout among employees.

Hence, job burnout is regarded as a disorder that might develop as a result of long-term stressful conditions. It encompasses three aspects emotional, physical, and mental burnout (Hosseinabadi-farahani et al., 2018). Moreover, professional burnout refers to the reduction of compatibility with personal accomplishment factors, lower integrative attitudes, and the syndrome that is made up of emotional fatigue. Particularly, tiredness and fatigue are claimed to be the major characteristic of this complicated syndrome (i.e., job burnout) (Sabokro & Hosseini, 2022). Consequently, employees are more likely to experience negative conditions, emotional pressure, and job burnout when workplace demands and expectations are higher and they are unable to provide the required response (Mobarakeh & Karimi, 2016). Sabokro and Hosseini (2022) also asserted that constant feelings of uncertainty, decreased energy to perform effective activities, loss of ultimate philosophy of life, lack of sympathy, as well as mental and physical disorders can lead to occupational burnout. Therefore, such employees may experience different emotional issues such as depression, helplessness, and feeling trapped in the job. Although employees might be able to deal with such increasing pressures in the short run, constant exposure to difficulties might result in impaired physical and psychological resilience leading to job burnout (Srivastava et al., 2019). Hence, job burnout explains the physical, emotional, and mental tiredness associated with longitudinal working experience in an emotionally tough environment. It is also defined as the lack of energy and enthusiasm; so, respective employees would demonstrate weariness and boredom toward their job duties. Consequently, job burnout could be the byproduct of constant pressure at work, which might be imposed by internal or external factors. It can

then lead to reduced self-efficacy, poor performance, and higher health-related issues (Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001). There is a direct relationship between job burnout and low resilience, low job satisfaction, high secondary stressors, and constant use of avoidance strategies (e.g., self-reprimand and lack of behavioral engagement). It is reported that a multitude of workplace issues can be regarded as the perceived cause of low resilience among employees.

Accordingly, occupational relationship experts have maintained that organizations are required to develop a psychological attitude to resilience because it highlights employees' dealing with improper relationships and poor communication capabilities as the barriers to interaction and risk-taking (Huang et al. 2016; Rushton et al. 2015). According to Luthar and Cicchetti (2001), resilience demonstrates individual's capability to deal with difficulties and stressors and overcome their potential continuous detrimental impacts either in daily life or the workplace.

Zhou & Chen (2021) showed that work stress causes burnout in employees through the effect of resilience. Furthermore, there is a substantially negative relationship between resilience and stress and burnout (Nikraftar & Hosseini, 2022). Meanwhile, job satisfaction will increase and employees' turnover will decrease with the reduction of burnout. Accordingly, Yang and Gu (2022) recommended that various factors, such as resilience, workload, social support, and organizational self-esteem, as well as emotional demands, should be taken into account to reduce burnout among employees. They further argued that career commitment can be enhanced among employees when the focus is shifted toward burnout, resilience, social support, and occupational growth.

H4: Resilience has a significant effect on job burnout.

H5: Resilience has a significant effect on job engagement through the mediation of job burnout.

The conceptual model of the research is selected according to the research literature as follows.

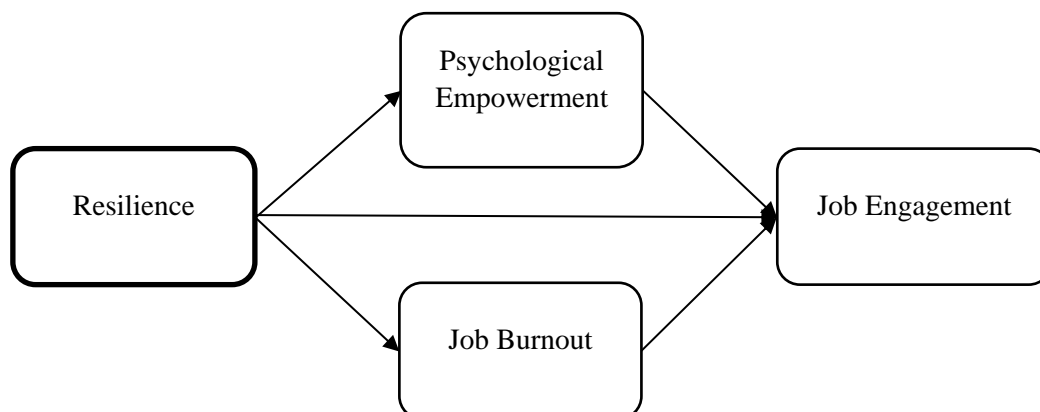


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model (Based on the Theoretical Foundations of Research)

3. Methodology

The current research is applied as far as purpose is concerned, and it is considered a descriptive-correlational study in terms of methodology. The statistical population of the research was those human resources who were members of international digital start-ups in the field of information technology and computer software in the spring of 2022. Our selection criterion was international digital start-ups that had 5 years of experience in the international market. The researchers decided to choose digital start-ups in the IT industry as the study population. That is because these companies and organizations are prominent in the country's scientific and technology development to commercialize ideas and knowledge through providing services and products, promote product and service quality based on research and development measures, maintain and develop sustainable competitive advantage in the fields of software, hardware, and network security, enhance electronic capabilities, and developing internet services.

From 79 companies in the science and technology parks of Iran's state universities (Shiraz, Isfahan, Yazd, Tehran, and Qazvin), 179 companies met the criterion in which a total of 1300 people were working in the international sectors, and based on the Morgan table, the sample size was 297 people

randomly selected. To collect data, we used a questionnaire including 25 closed questions; 6 questions from Connor and Davidson's resilience scale (2003), 6 questions from Edwards and Klipatrick's (1984) occupational attachment standard questionnaire, 7 questions from Spritzer and Mishra's psychological empowerment questionnaire (1997), 6 questions from Moslesh and Jackson's (1986) job burnout, with a 5-point Likert scale (from completely disagree to agree). Since this questionnaire is intended to measure the respondents' attitudes, the Likert scale was used by the researchers. Meanwhile, the 5-point Likert scale was selected because it is the most common type compared to the 7 and 9-point scales. Furthermore, the 5-point Likert scale can demonstrate the two sides of the opinion continuum without a major reference to the neutral tendency (Salamzadeh et al., 2022). The research examined the relationships between variables applying PLS2 software and structural equation modeling. The reason why we used this software, in addition to the small sample size, is that there is no need to normalize the data (Kline, 2015). This method is a statistical model for investigating the relationships between latent variables and manifest variables.

3.1. Measurement, Reliability, and Validity

In this research, resilience was the independent variable, job engagement was the dependent variable, and psychological empowerment and job burnout were the mediating variables. To ensure the accuracy and correctness of the research results, the technical characteristics of the questionnaire were evaluated in two sections for validity and reliability, using different criteria. To measure the content validity of the tool, we benefited from the opinions and comments of some professors and experts knowledgeable about the subject, and to measure the construct validity, the structural equation modeling (SEM) of convergent and divergent validity was used. To determine the convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) index was employed and for the divergent measurement, the extracted root mean-variance index was used (Charkhkar & Sabokro, 2022). Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were applied to measure reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a factor varying from 0 to 1. A Cronbach's alpha value higher than 0.7 indicates acceptable reliability (Cronbach, 1951). Composite reliability (CR) was introduced by Werts et al. (1974) and its advantage over Cronbach's alpha is that the reliability of the constructs is calculated according to the correlation of their constructs with each other. If the composite reliability value for each construct is above 0.7, it indicates adequate internal reliability for measurement models, and if it is less than 0.6, it indicates the absence of reliability. Table 1 presents the value of these coefficients for each structure.

As shown in Table 1, the mean square root values of the extracted variance are above the acceptable minimum of 0.5; thus, research variables have divergent validity. Since the root values of the average variance extracted are higher than the correlation of the desired variable with other variables, divergent validity will be accepted if the numbers included in the main diameter are greater than their underlying values (Nikraftar, 2022). So it can be said that the variables have validity and their divergent validity is confirmed.

Table 1. Factor Loadings, Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and Convergent Validity of the Model

Variables	Index	Questions	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Empowerment	tr1	What I do is very important to me.	0.695	0.874	0.501	0.832
	tr2	Personally, my occupational activities are valuable (significant) for me.	0.733			
	tr3	I master the skills needed to perform my career responsibilities.	0.680			
	tr4	I have the opportunity to use my career initiatives in performing responsibilities.	0.816			
	tr5	I greatly influence what happens in my work unit.	0.675			
	tr6	I believe my colleagues care about my success.	0.666			
	tr7	I trust my colleagues to share important information with me.	0.667			

Table 1.

Variables	Index	Questions	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Resilience	ta1	I can think of a solution for every challenge on my way.	0.737	0.854	0.500	0.796
	ta2	The successes I have had in the past have made me so confident that I will be able to face the challenges and problems in the future.	0.765			
	ta3	I usually return to my original state after illness, injury, and other challenges.	0.624			
	ta4	I try my best in everything and I do not care about the result.	0.620			
	ta5	In case of stress and crisis, I know where to seek help.	0.665			
	ta6	When I'm under pressure, I don't lose my focus and think properly.	0.719			
Job Engagement	ds1	Time passes quickly for me at work.	0.715	0.872	0.534	0.823
	ds2	I am very interested in my job.	0.794			
	ds3	I usually go to work a little earlier, to make the preparations for work.	0.732			
	ds4	The most important events happened to me are related to my job.	0.591			
	ds5	I will probably keep on working even if I don't need the money.	0.763			
	ds6	I can think of a solution for every challenge on my way.	0.771			
Job Burnout	fs1	I feel that my career has taken my strength and power mentally.	0.649	0.870	0.530	0.829
	fs2	I feel they have taken advantage of me at the end of a working day.	0.767			
	fs3	I feel tired at the thought of going to work in the morning on a working day.	0.839			
	fs4	It is difficult to deal with my colleagues and it puts me under mental pressure.	0.780			
	fs5	I feel that I deal with some employees of the organization as objects without human personality.	0.609			
	fs6	I feel that my manager and colleagues blame me for some of the problems.	0.706			

Table 2. Divergent Validity of the Model

Variables	Psychological Empowerment	Resilience	Job Engagement	Job Burnout
Psychological Empowerment	0.781			
Resilience	0.639	0.708		
Job Engagement	0.705	0.597	0.735	
Job Burnout	-0.235	-0.297	-0.165	0.735

Based on the mentioned contents and the results obtained from the SmartPLS2 software output in Tables 1 and 2, the validity (convergent and divergent) and reliability (factor loading, composite reliability coefficient, and Cronbach's alpha) of the measurement models are appropriate.

4. Findings

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

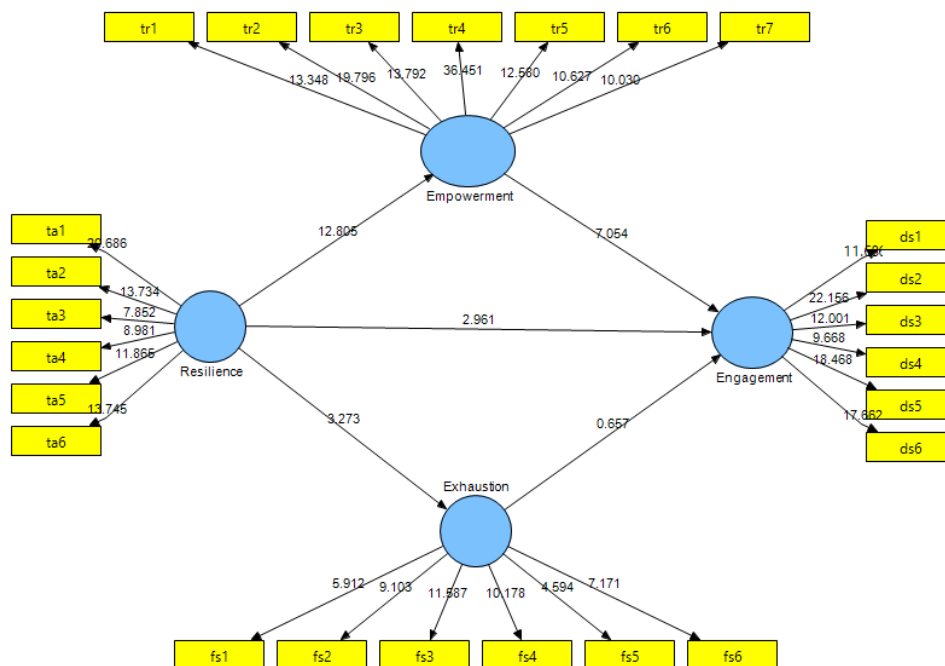
According to the results of the research, the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender was 63% male and 37% female, in terms of education 35% bachelor and below, 54% master and 11% Doctorate and above. In terms of job experience, 24% had below 10 years of experience, 48% had 10 to 20 years, and 28% had more than 20 years.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of demographic characteristics

Parameter		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	186	63%
	Female	111	37%
Education	Bachelor and Below	103	35%
	Master	162	54%
	Doctorate and Above	32	11%
Job Experience	Below10-Year	71	24%
	10 To 20 Years	144	48%
	More Than 20 Years	82	28%

4.2. Inferential Statistics

The fit of the model has been examined at three levels: measurement, structural, and general. Validity and reliability have been applied to check the level of measurement. To check the structural level, the value of t-statistic, the coefficient of determination (R^2), and Q^2 have been used, and at the general level, GOF values have been applied. Based on the results, the value obtained for the path of the effect of resilience on job attachment was 2.961, the effect of psychological empowerment on job attachment was 7.054, the path of the effect of resilience on psychological empowerment was 12.805, the path of the effect of job burnout on job attachment is 0.657, and the path of the effect of resilience on job burnout was 3.273. The critical value of four of the five paths is greater than 1/96 at the 95% confidence level, this means that the paths are significant, the structural model is appropriate, and the four research hypotheses are confirmed. (Figure 2).

**Fig. 2.** T- Statistics

Another criterion for checking the fit of the structural model in research is the R^2 coefficients related to the endogenous hidden variables of the model. R^2 is applied to check the intensity of relationships between structures, and it is only applicable to dependent but not independent structures. R^2 is a measure that shows how the exogenous variables affect an endogenous variable, and the values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are considered respectively strong, medium, and weak values of R^2 (Salamzadeh et al., 2022). In this research, the coefficient of determination of the variable of psychological empowerment is equal to 0.408 and it is 0.534 for job engagement, which shows the appropriate level of this effect, but the coefficient of determination for job burnout is 0.88, indicating the weak level of this effect (Figure 3).

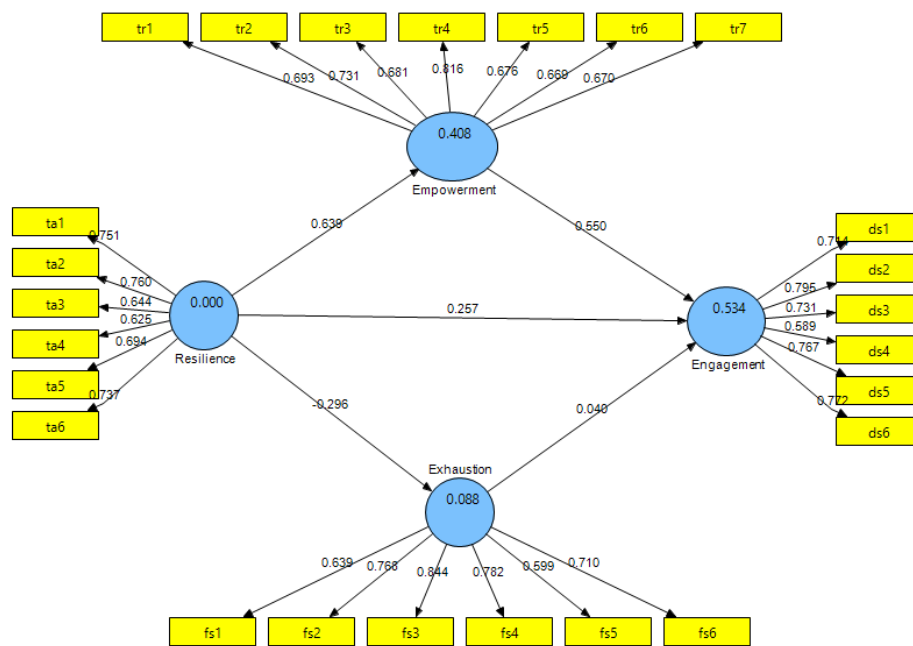


Fig. 3. Model in the Mode of Standard Factor Loading Coefficients

The results showed that the highest impact coefficient of 0.639 is related to the impact of resilience on psychological empowerment.

4.3. Criterion Q²

The Q² criterion expresses the product of the combined values of the research structures in the values of the coefficient of determination related to them. This criterion, which was introduced by Stone and Geiser (1975), determines the predictive power of the model in the dependent variables. According to Stone and Geiser, models with an acceptable structural fit should have the ability to predict the indicators related to the endogenous structures of the model. Kline (2015) asserted that well-defined relationships between constructs in a model will lead to sufficient influence of the construct indicators on each other, and hence, the hypotheses are confirmed accurately. For all endogenous constructs, the values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate low, moderate, and strong predictive power, respectively. In the current research, this criterion was 0.204 for psychological empowerment, and 0.279 for job engagement, showing that the fit of the model of the research is acceptable.

4.4. Overall Model Fit

Examining the research overall model was done using the GOF criterion. This criterion is the geometric mean of the average coefficient of multiple determination in the average of commonality. Three values of 0.36, 0.25, and 0.01 are considered the strong, medium, and weak values for GOF. Since the average commonality was equal to 0.515 and the average coefficient of determination was equal to 0.343, the obtained GOF value indicated a strong fit of the model.

$$GOF = \sqrt{Communtality \times R^2} = 0.420 \tag{1}$$

4.5. Examining the significance coefficient of the mediator hypothesis

The Sobel test is used to check the significance coefficient of the mediator hypothesis of the research. In the Sobel test, a z-value is calculated by the following formula, and if this value exceeds 1.96 at the 95% confidence level, the mediating effect of a variable is determined to be significant.

$$z \text{ value} = \frac{a * b}{\sqrt{(b^2 * s_a^2) + (a^2 * s_b^2) + (s_a^2 * s_b^2)}} \tag{2}$$

In addition to the Sobel test, to determine the intensity of the indirect effect through the mediator variable, VAF is used, which has a value between 0 and 1, and a closer value to 1 means a stronger influence of the mediator variable. The value of VAF is calculated through Table 4:

$$VAF = \frac{a*b}{(a*b)+c} \quad (3)$$

Table 4. Z-Values and Effect Intensity of Mediating Variables

Assumptions of formulas	The mediating variable of psychological empowerment	The mediating variable of job burnout
a: Path coefficient between the mediator and independent variables	0.639	-0.296
b: Path coefficient between mediator and dependent variables	0.555	0.040
c: Path coefficient between dependent and independent variables	0.257	0.257
Sa: Standard error related to the path between mediator and independent variables	0.053	0.077
Sb: Standard error related to the path between mediator and dependent variables	0.069	0.059
VAF	0.597	0.048
z-value	11.286	-3.457

Table 4 shows that the z-value of the Sobel test for the mediating relationship with the presence of the psychological empowerment variable is 11.286, which is greater than 2.58, indicating that at the 99% confidence level, and considering the mediating variable of psychological empowerment, there is a significant relationship between the resilience variable and job engagement. Thus, the hypothesis of the effect of resilience on job engagement through the mediation of psychological empowerment is confirmed. In addition, the z-value calculated by the Sobel test for the mediating relationship with the presence of the burnout variable is equal to the absolute value of 3.45, which is greater than 2.58, so it can be stated that at the 99% confidence level and with the presence of the mediating variable of job burnout, there is a significant relationship between resilience variable and job attachment. Accordingly, the hypothesis of the effect of resilience on job engagement through the mediation of job burnout is confirmed.

The value of VAF for the mediation relationship with the presence of psychological empowerment is equal to 0.579. This means that almost 58% of the total effect of resilience on job engagement is explained by psychological empowerment. The value of VAF for a mediating relationship with the presence of burnout is equal to 0.048. In other words, almost 4% of the total effect of resilience on job engagement can be explained through job burnout.

Concerning the research hypotheses, in the structural fit using t coefficients, the coefficients must be higher than 1.96 to confirm their significance at the confidence level of 0.95 (Thomas, 2003). It should be noted that the t values only indicate the accuracy of the relationships, but they do not help measure the intensity of the relationship between the structures, and the path coefficients indicate the positive or negative effect of one variable on another variable.

Table 5. The Results of the Hypothesis Test

Row	Research Hypothesis	Impact Factor	T -Statistics	Result
1	Resilience - Job Engagement	0.257	2.961	Confirmed
2	Resilience - Psychological Empowerment	0.639	12.805	Confirmed
3	Resilience - Psychological Empowerment - Job Engagement	0.555	7.054	Confirmed
4	Resilience - Job Burnout	-0.296	3.273	Confirmed
5	Resilience - Job Burnout -Job Engagement	0.040	0.657	Rejected

As can be seen in Table 5, four of the research hypotheses had a critical value greater than 1.96 and were confirmed, and the last one, that is, the hypothesis of the effect of job burnout on job engagement, was rejected.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Developing job engagement for organizations will bring very positive results and will be a key to gaining a competitive advantage. Job engagement will benefit both the organization and the employees. It can significantly increase organizational effectiveness, productivity, and morale by involving employees deeply in their work and making work a meaningful experience.

As the first hypothesis, that resilience has a positive and significant effect on job engagement, was confirmed, it can be stated that individual characteristics such as resilience significantly affect employee engagement. Highly resilient employees make organizations resistant. According to Duchek (2020), companies need to develop resilience capacity to overcome difficult conditions so that they can react appropriately to unexpected events. Also, according to Aggarwal (2022), employees who have resilience and are more flexible are more involved in their jobs and show a higher level of loyalty to the company. Therefore, Employees will find better opportunities to overcome obstacles and distractions if managers support them. One of the measures that managers can take to understand the conditions of employees is to conduct an anonymous job satisfaction survey and receive employees' opinions. It is very important that in the process of recruiting and hiring employees in digital start-ups, managers should choose people with good resilience.

Given that interactions and collaboration between directors/managers and employees to share knowledge and provide support can lead to the development of resilience, organizations are recommended to highlight the significance of extensive communications within the workplace. Moreover, it is suggested to perform training courses to discuss and emphasize various strategies, including self-control, stress management, and emotional management at work. Consequently, high levels of resilience along with job engagement will lead to improvement and problem resolution in the organization. Therefore, according to Ebrahimi and Noornejad Vanoush (2022), digital-oriented companies focus on improving organizational processes and capabilities to actively and purposefully deal with unexpected events. Resilient companies can rebuild internal and external resources and competencies to meet the requirements of changing circumstances.

The second hypothesis, namely a meaningful positive relationship between resilience and psychological empowerment, was confirmed. Thus, developing effective communication among employees and giving power or authority to employees can improve resilience and psychological empowerment. Moreover, Van den Berg et al. (2021) argued that psychological empowerment is positively associated with both individual and team resilience given that the relationship between employees and their manager is crucial. Then, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) claimed that employees' independence and autonomy can result in empowerment. Consequently, organizations and specifically digital start-ups should resort to employee training at the workplace. Employees should be developing professionally and enhancing their commitment to the organization, provided that managers can help them deal with the barriers and promote resilience. Considering that the purpose of empowerment is to create an organization, composed of committed and enthusiastic employees who perform their job duties because they both believe and enjoy doing it. Saeeda Ardakani et al. (2019) concluded that organizations need to prepare the ground for employee development, which will lead to the enhancement of organizational added value.

As the third hypothesis, that resilience has a positive effect on job engagement through the mediation of psychological empowerment, was confirmed, one can conclude that improving the employees' awareness of the organization's environment, creating job motivation, providing teamwork conditions, developing interpersonal communication between employees, and enriching organizational culture in the direction of job engagement can strengthen this effect. Furthermore, Amor et al. (2021) emphasized the association between job resources and job engagement. It is also asserted that psychological empowerment can be promoted through work design by the management (Spreitzer, 1995). Similarly, Gong et al. (2021) argued that empowering environments (embedded with support, opportunities, and resources) can potentially lead to psychological enablement among respective employees. Consequently, such employees are more likely to respond with their highly engaged attempts toward successful task completion, and they would be less likely to leave the organization. Considering that usually educated and experienced people work in digital start-ups, it is recommended that consulting and trusting employees and developing a work environment based on trust should be on the agenda of managers. To move on the path of progress and creation of a strong knowledge-based company, the organization can

properly improve the level of interest and motivation of the employees towards the assigned task. For this purpose, organizations need to enhance their processes, develop human resource strategies, and constantly observe their employees' satisfaction to promote psychological empowerment.

According to the fourth hypothesis that resilience has a significantly inverse impact on job burnout, it should be stated that increasing resilience and motivating employees to cope with changes will reduce burnout. Also, Zhang et al. (2018) showed that resilience does not only prevent burnout but also promotes employee motivation (i.e., work engagement). Improving people's mental health, will reduce absenteeism and improve employees' performance. Strengthening the employees' self-esteem can lead to the reduction of burnout and the feeling of being useless and unhelpful. Accordingly, managers are advised to prepare the ground for knowledge sharing and constant education as opposed to an environment that motivates silence. It can also be associated with managers' attempts to develop a teamwork environment where employees are allowed to be involved in decision-making.

Regarding the fifth hypothesis that resilience does not affect job engagement through the mediation of job burnout, it can be said that bored employees are willing to avoid work, this avoidance causes a lack of engagement. In addition, Huang et al. (2016) argued that enduring emotional and interactive stress can lead to career burnout that affects professional efficiency adversely. Emotional exhaustion is also referred to as the employee's emotional strain at work (Rushton et al., 2015). Therefore, resilience might encourage employees to maintain their efficacy irrespective of the hardship and stress at the workplace (Khaksar et al., 2019). The mediating impact of burnout on job engagement has not been investigated comprehensively in the existing literature; hence, the present study contributes to the literature by observing this relationship. Consequently, organizations are recommended to plan exciting and inspiring professional meetings outside the workplace. Such weekly or monthly meetings can help enhance employees' interpersonal skills and motivate them to achieve organizational objectives. Therefore, organizational interactions would prove more efficient if they align with the workplace culture. In addition, employees' participation in decision-making activities within the organization's culture and strategies as well as their engagement in work-related measures will lead to promoted job engagement. Given that employee satisfaction and job engagement are crucial for organizational success and improvement, managers are expected to develop an environment offering practical plans to motivate employees and reduce the possibility of burnout.

Although digital start-ups in Iran have a short-term history, they are progressing and growing day by day, and they cooperate with researchers and participate in the process more easily. Considering that digital start-ups try to develop cooperative relationships to achieve organizational perfection, it is possible to increase their resilience through empowering and training employees. Developing unique characteristics in employees will improve their efficiency, leading to an increase in job engagement and the work-life quality of individuals and organizations. Identifying the factors of burnout can help reduce the stress in the work environment and, accordingly, improve the level of providing services to employees. For the survival and continuation of the activity of Iranian digital start-ups, it is necessary to increase the ability and capacity of the organization to be able to deal with crises and return to normal business conditions.

6. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This research encountered some limitations and the researchers made an effort to reduce the respective effects. First, the research was conducted in digital start-ups and other types of companies were not included. Second, it was limited to a certain geographical area and the results may not be the same in other contexts. Therefore, it is recommended to perform a similar methodology in different areas where the researchers might be able to compare the findings of two or more regions in an integrated study. Third, the small sample size reported in this research may affect the generalization of the results. However, the study is valuable due to the presence of a double mediation model in this field. For future research, it is suggested to study the specific effects of structural empowerment on job engagement and organizational resilience. In addition, the effect of empowering employees on performing positive organizational behaviors (OCB) and the effect of anxiety disorder on job engagement and organizational resilience should be investigated in other research. Eventually, future studies can be conducted with a larger sample size (even from different backgrounds) in order to improve the generalizability and reliability of the findings.

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