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Employee resilience in Morocco: Exploratory Analysis and Perspectives through Organizational drivers

La résilience des employés au Maroc : Analyse exploratoire et perspectives à travers les leviers organisationnels

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Abstract

The concept of resilience has recently been of particular interest in the managerial debate; in fact, it is a recent approach that organizations can use to address challenges and rethink how they can deal with adversity, especially in the current circumstances.

In a context of constant change and crisis, employee resilience in organizations is of paramount importance. However, research on individual resilience at the professional level is still limited, hence the interest of our current study, which aims to understand how organizations and employees were responding to the COVID-19 crisis in Morocco and developing the resilience of their employees. To our knowledge, very few studies have specifically explored this topic in organizations in Morocco.

We used NVIVO 12 software and manually, the Braun & Clarke analysis model (2006 cited by Maguire, M. and Delahunt, B. (2017)) to analyze the body of interviews conducted.

Among the main results of our research, Human Resources Management (HRM) professionals interviewed noted that the resilience of employees in Morocco in times of crisis is increasingly recognized for its positive effects on various organizational aspects. They add that resilient employees are distinguished by their ability to manage their emotions and adapt with creativity and ambition, besides maintaining their performance despite constraints. Finally, organizational factors, especially HRM practices, are key to building employee resilience.

Therefore, like researchers such as Luthans, Vogelgesant, and Lester (2006) (cited by Bardoel et al. 2014), our experts interviewed encourage organizations to invest in the development of psychological capital and especially in the resilience of their employees.

Keywords: crisis management, organizational resilience, employee resilience, HRM practices.

JEL Classification: M12

Paper type: Empirical research

Résumé

La résilience a connu, ces derniers temps, un intérêt particulier dans le débat managérial ; en fait, Il s'agit d'une approche récente que les organisations peuvent exploiter pour relever des défis et repenser comment elles peuvent s'y prendre contre l'adversité, surtout dans les circonstances actuelles.

Dans un contexte de crise et de changement constant, la résilience des employés au sein des organisations est d'une importance capitale. Les recherches sur la résilience individuelle au niveau professionnel sont encore limitées, d'où l'intérêt de notre étude actuelle, qui vise à comprendre comment les organisations ont répondu à la crise du COVID-19 au Maroc et à développer la résilience de leurs employés. À notre connaissance, très peu d'études ont spécifiquement exploré ce sujet dans les organisations au Maroc.

Nous avons utilisé le logiciel NVIVO 12 ainsi que manuellement, le modèle d'analyse de Braun & Clarke (2006 cités par Maguire, M. et Delahunt, B. (2017)) pour analyser le corpus des entretiens menés.

Parmi les principaux résultats de notre recherche, les professionnels de la gestion des ressources humaines (GRH) interrogés ont noté que la résilience des employés au Maroc en temps de crise est de plus en plus reconnue pour ses effets positifs sur divers aspects organisationnels. Ils ajoutent que les employés résilients se distinguent par leur capacité à gérer leurs émotions, à s'adapter avec créativité et ambition, en plus de maintenir leur performance malgré les contraintes. Enfin, les facteurs organisationnels, et en particulier les pratiques de GRH, jouent un rôle clé dans le renforcement de la résilience des employés.

Par conséquent, à l'instar des chercheurs tels que Luthans, Vogelgesant et Lester (2006) (cités par Bardoel et al. 2014), nos experts interrogés incitent les organisations à investir dans le développement du capital psychologique et surtout dans la résilience de leurs employés.

Mots clés : gestion des crises, résilience organisationnelle, résilience des employés, pratiques de GRH.

JEL Classification : M12

Type du papier : Recherche empirique

1. Introduction

Because of the crises and the constant change in the current socio-economic context, at the global level, we are noticing various behaviors that are emerging within organizations. For example, during COVID-19, more than half of Moroccan households (58%) experienced the temporary cessation of employment of at least one of their members due to the lockdown measures imposed. Of all employed individuals, 16% opted for telework during the health lockdown. (HCP-2020, 2nd COVID-19 panel). Faced with these changes and discontinuities, some employees exhibit signs of stress, obsolescence, and burnout. (Koninckx, G., Teneau, G. (2010), Prasad and Vaidya (2020) cited by Hamouche S. (2021)). Hence the need for resilience, defined by Salisu et al., 2020 (cited by Dettori, A., Floris, M. (2021)) as the ability to adapt to change, in order to overcome crises for individuals, organizations, and society (Liu et al., 2020 cited by Dettori, A., Floris, M. (2021)).

Despite the crucial importance of this phenomenon, especially in today's unstable environment (Hartmann S. et al. 2019), research examining individual resilience at the professional level is still in its infancy (King and Rothstein, 2010; Sommer et al., 2016, cited by Sharma S. et al 2016).

Because of the key role played by employees in changing and especially the resilient people, who are deemed best equipped to adapt to a constantly changing workplace (Bardoel et al. 2014), our work focuses on resilience in organizations and more specifically on the employee level, trying to describe how organizations are behaving in the face of new challenges from a Human Resources Management (HRM) perspective. This decision is based on the observation that human resource capability has not been duly underscored, despite its inherent potential. (Plimmer et al., 2017, as cited by Franken E. et al., 2022). Individual behaviors relevant in the workplace, particularly those involving interactions with the environment, have not been sufficiently examined, even though they constitute the fractals from which group and organizational capabilities could evolve (Hall et al., 2016, as cited by Franken E. et al., 2022). In practice, since the added value of the HR function is rarely measured in tangible terms, HRM is not perceived as a significant contributing component in many organizations (Guest, 2011, as cited by Bardoel et al., 2014). However, this situation is gradually evolving, partly due to pressures exerted by recent major environmental shifts. Examples include global financial crises and the COVID-19 pandemic (IJntema, 2020). It is with the intent to understand how organizations and employees react to adversity, that we have chosen to adopt the qualitative method via semi-directional interviews, because it allows analyzing agents and their actions in depth, especially by dealing with a complex phenomenon, such as the resilience of employees in organizations during the COVID-19 crisis, a recent subject characterized by several controversies according to the literature (Britt et al. 2016).

To our knowledge, very few studies in the context of COVID-19 have been conducted with organizations on Moroccan territory about employee resilience. Thus, this work aims to contribute to bridging this gap by trying to answer the following question research: In order to cope with crises, how do organizations in Morocco react and proceed to build and develop the resilience of their employees?

To answer this question, we structure our manuscript as follows: initially, the first section will be dedicated to the theoretical elements and factors of employee resilience in organizations. Next, we will present the methodology used to conduct this research. Finally, the results will be analyzed and discussed, and new research avenues will be presented.

2. Literature review

2.1. Resilience: a unique field of research, explored at various levels:

In the literature, general resilience does not exist, but different levels of resilience depend on several spheres of life (Gu and Day, 2007; Luthar et al., 2000; Vanderbilt-Adriance and Shaw, 2008; Windle, 2011 cited by Foerster et al. (2017)). The concept of organizational resilience has emerged in the management sciences in the context of crisis management that can be experienced by firms. It is a question of moving from the individual to the organization, on his ability to cope with the various disruptions (Weick 1993 cited by Linnenluecke, M. (2017)). More commonly, organizational resilience refers to the ability of organizations and their employees to show strength, perseverance, and recovery when faced with adversity (Linnenluecke, M. 2017). It means a set of intrinsic characteristics of organizations that are able to react and recover quickly or develop innovative approaches to dealing with challenges, unlike other organizations (e.g. Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003; Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007 cited by Hartmann S. et al 2019). The development of this capability according to Weick and Sutcliffe (2007 cited by Linnenluecke, M. (2017)) goes through its three dimensions: When the firm uses the necessary means and resources, as well as a willingness to survive, to demonstrate an ability to withstand shocks and measure its magnitude while avoiding collapse, this first capacity is called: An absorptive capacity. The second is a renewal, where the organization shows the capacity to reinvent itself, to see the essentials, and to imagine new solutions to the crisis that has not yet drawn all its contours. Finally, the ability to be aware of this crisis, to be able to learn from it, is called appropriation.

At the Human Resources level and Concerning definition perspectives, the concept of resilience in the literature of management sciences is outlined generally by researchers using: a results-based perspective, a resource-based perspective, and a process-based perspective. (Fisher, Ragsdale, and Fisher, 2018; Infura & Luthar, 2018 cited by IJntema, 2020).

In this work, we adopt the process-oriented perspective because it suggests that resilience is a dynamic process by which people adapt to a stressor, which allows this perspective to dominate in the work context, so results-based and resource-based perspectives on resilience can also be incorporated (Bonanno et al., 2015; Kossek and Perrigino, 2016; Van Breda, 2018 cited by IJntema, 2020).

According to this last perspective, employee resilience is defined as a "dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation in the context of significant adversity" (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker, 2000, p. 543 cited by Hartmann et al. 2019). This meaning is characterized by two determining elements (Masten, 2001 cited by Hartmann et al. 2019). The first is the experience of adversity at work, which can take the form of either isolated, high-intensity circumstances (e.g. a crisis) or low-intensity but high-frequency or high-duration circumstances (e.g. forms of stress at work) Fisher et al. 2018 cited by Hartmann et al. 2019). In all these circumstances, the experience of adversity represents a challenge and a threat to an employee's performance and well-being (Richardson, 2002 cited by Hartmann S. et al 2019). The second determinant of resilience is positive adjustment, whereby the employee returns to a steady state of well-being or performance or bounces back beyond (Britt et al., 2016). It should be noted that the resilience process occurs over time in the context of specific person-environment interactions (Britt et al., 2016).

Furthermore, there is a strong link between worker and organizational resilience, as many researchers view organizational resilience as the key to building employee resilience through a dynamic process that links organizational and employee levels. In addition, they argue that the availability of resiliency programs improves the overall resilience of the organization, which in turn increases employee resilience. (Teng-Calleja, M., et al. 2020).

2.2. Employee in Crisis: controversial literature issues of Employee Resilience.

In contrast to earlier theorizations that made employee resilience a stable personality trait, today it is defined as an “organizational sustained and facilitated ability to mobilize resources to continuously adapt and develop at work, even in the face of difficult circumstances” (cf. Wagnild & Young, 1993 cited by Näswall 2019). Incorporating the vision of Luthans (2002 cited by Näswall 2019) that resilience is a “developable” capability among employees.

To this end, we adopt in this work the following contemporary conception of resilience as a transformational process in which individuals not only face and successfully manage change, but also learn from it and adapt accordingly to thrive in their new environment (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Richardson, 2002; Baird et al., 2013 cited by Näswall 2019).

Because the use of the term resilience refers to a wide range of attributes and processes, that are positive in the face of stressful circumstances, researchers (Britt et al. (2016)) invite scholars in their studies to **make critical distinctions between different patterns of resilience traits**. Which is considered as the biggest constraint to progress in the literature on resilience.

Therefore, what are exactly the different qualities that are supposed to indicate resilience, particularly in the realm of personality?

Besides, Time is another conceptualization issue closely linked to the study of resilience, because it is fundamentally associated with adaptation processes. So, rather than the more simplistic causal models that currently dominate the field, resilience should be studied as a dynamic construct within a dynamic working system. (Britt et al. (2016))

Consequently, (Britt et al. (2016)) suggest to better understand the nucleus of resilience building versus history or outcomes, the co-occurrence and influence of correlates of resilience capacity and its demonstration over time should be monitored

Also, there is a need to clarify which outcomes researchers should focus on when studying resilience to significant adversity and whether resilience trajectories for different outcomes will converge, as the study of resilience in the scientific literature on development and psychology focuses on a broader range of outcomes, including adherence to key stages of cognitive, social, emotional and physical development (Masten, 2001 cited by Britt et al. (2016)).

Furthermore, researchers consider the possibility of growth after exposure to significant workplace adversity as a distinct trajectory of resilience. Masten and Narayan (2012) (cited by IJntema, 2020) for example proposed "post-traumatic growth" as a distinct trajectory that can result from exposure to adversity.

Although such a trajectory is possible, most researchers studying post-traumatic growth assessed construction by asking individuals to report on how a given traumatic event or a significant stressor improved them (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1996 cited by Britt et al. (2016)). Critics of this approach argue that individuals are unable to judge the extent to which a given event has altered them and that a reported change may therefore not be associated with a real change (Frazier et al., 2009 cited by Britt et al. (2016)).

Consequently, these authors argue that there is a need to assess growth-related areas before and after traumatic events and to document the true extent of change and predictors of such change. Britt et al. (2016)).

2.3. Protective factors: the cornerstone of employee resilience

According to all the knowledge background described before in the literature, employee resilience is considered as a collective goal that organizations should pursue and achieve, so how they can create and maintain healthy, productive, and resilient workers?

Several researchers such as Barends et al (2021) have found that there is a wide range of factors that predict employee resilience, so they distinguish between "risk" factors that negatively affect resilience and "protective" factors that support or enhance resilience. Studies have

suggested that improving protective factors should be preferred because it is more effective and generally has the greatest effect, rather than reducing risk factors that have a moderate to low effect (Eshel et al 2017, Lee et al 2013 cited by Barends et al 2021).

On the other hand, demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, duration of employment, experience, and education have been found to have little or no effect on employee resilience (Dyrbye et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2013; Al-Hawari et al., 2020 cited by Barends et al., 2021).

However, it should be noted that organizations have an invaluable influence on employee resilience (Seville, 2018 cited by Teng-Calleja et al 2020), as it goes beyond the concept of individual resilience at work and depends largely on the resources offered by the organization (Naswall et al., 2019).

With this in mind, organizations can either favor or disadvantage it with the presence or absence of interventions and practices at the human resources management level (Bardoel et al., 2014). Therefore, organizations must commit to fostering employee and organizational resilience (Teng-Calleja et al 2020).

While there is currently very little research on employee resilience, the recent wave of studies on "struggles and flourishing" requires a more comprehensive understanding of how resilience can be fostered within organizations (Nishikawa, 2006 Ledesma J., 2014), hence the value of our exploratory study in this regard.

2. Research methodology

Our exploratory research ran from May to September 2022, using an interview guide about employee resilience during the COVID-19 period, and we dedicated 45 to 60 minutes for each interview. Out of respect for the principle of saturation, we limited our research to eight semi-directional interviews, which were recorded on the researcher's dictaphone and transcribed after ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the data collected.

To enrich our approach and come out with conclusive and relevant results, we opted for the thematic content analysis TCA manually, according to the model of Braun & Clarke (2006 cited by Maguire, M. and Delahunt, B. (2017)), in addition to the use of the Nvivo 12 software which was of great utility in that it makes possible a rapid access to verbatim and word frequency counting.

Our analysis unit consists of eight interviewees, experts or professionals in the field of Human Resources Management, each from a different organization in Morocco, who meet our inclusion criteria: employee (male or female) in the Human Resources function, he experienced the COVID-19 crisis at work, each having at least 5 years of experience in the organization, the latter is characterized by different sizes (Very Small Company, Small and Medium Enterprise or Large Enterprise), coming from different sectors of activity (private/public, various economic sectors).

Table 1: Description of our analysis unit

Interviewee	Fonction	Organisation	Activity	Duration in minutes	City
Int_1	HRM	Large private enterprise	Industry	45	Casa
Int_2	HRM	Public company	Service	46	Casa
Int_3	HRM	Public company	Service	60	Rabat
Int_4	HRD	Large private enterprise	Industry	56	Casa
Int_5	HRD	Small and Medium-sized enterprises	Service	45	Fes
Int_6	HRD	Small and Medium-sized enterprises	Service	52	Casa
Int_7	HRD	Large private enterprise	Industry	45	Casa
Int_8	HRM	Multinational	Industry	48	Tangier

HRM: Human Resources Manager

HRD: Human Resources Director

Source: Authors

The questions in our interview guide were organized thematically, with the main themes revolving around:

- **the concept of resilience, its significance, and its consequences:** to examine the managerial relevance of employee resilience in the Moroccan context. which aims to measure the level of awareness concerning this subject within the realm of Human Resources in Morocco in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. It delves into the perception of resilience by investigating how experts discern the presence or absence of its defining characteristics among employees, besides its consequences on different organizational levels.
- **factors and HRM practices associated with employee resilience:** to comprehend how employee resilience is triggered and strengthened in organizations, by exploring the key factors and relevant HRM practices, specifically those aimed at creating and enhancing employee resilience in Morocco during the COVID crisis.

3. Results

3.1. Employee resilience in Morocco: the emergence of an innovative concept and distinctive characteristics in covid 19 context, with an invitation to focus on managers

Speaking of HR crisis management-related issues and employee resilience, in particular, the interviews conducted with HR managers reveal many observations:

Beginning with the escalating importance of "employee resilience" as an innovative concept in Morocco, particularly during crises as a catalyst, so it is imperative to raise awareness about it. This increasing managerial interest underscores the need to recognize the presence or absence of resilience characteristics in employees in Morocco. Consequently, its nonexistence poses challenges, especially for specific populations like managers, who aspire to maintain continuity despite the adversities presented by a crisis, so that organizations in Morocco can provide more efforts in this sense.

As the first observation, the interviewees noted that **it is essential to raise awareness of the growing interest of this new concept in Morocco, especially in times of crisis as a catalyst.**

Int_4.: *"It is important but unfortunately it is a subject that is not very developed in Morocco at the HR level in a direct way... It is a recent subject that we do not adopt as an objective when we plan the processes... Maybe indirectly they are there... it is like the digitalization that appears with Corona. We need a trigger that pushes towards that"*

Int_7.: *"For me, once I heard about resilience I automatically thought about the crisis because when we are in normal times we are in our comfort zone so resilience is called upon, especially in difficult times"*

Int_6.: *"Given our business, practically we have to adapt daily to the problems, with the customers, with the competition but generally it is more necessary in times of crisis and ideally the person must have this ability whatever the context"*

The HR experts respondents feel that **the managerial interest in "employee resilience" is growing**, in light of its effects, benefits, and advantages, often repeated, for example, it promotes involvement (five times), organizational confidence (nine times), commitment (nine times), retention (twice), performance (thirteen times), competitiveness (twice), productivity (fifteen times), job satisfaction (ten times), and employee well-being (four times)...

so that the interviewees emphasize the newfound recognition of resilience's importance, notably in the post-COVID-19 context, where organizations have adapted their perspectives and ways of working. Resilience is acknowledged as a key factor influencing employee commitment, satisfaction, motivation, and overall organizational effectiveness in handling challenging situations.

Int_1: *"Concerning what happened in COVID-19, at many levels, we reviewed the way of seeing things, e.g., the way of working. It seems to me now that we are more ready to deal with such situations effectively and efficiently"*

Int_1: *"No matter what the situation, managers will know how to lead the organization in any situation, there is a confidence that sets up a pride culture, the feeling of saying that nothing can happen to us, it is very important to have this kind of feelings at the level of the organization"*

Int_8: *"With the resilience of employees we can effectively achieve the objectives so it, positively, impacts the commitment, involvement, and retention of employees in a challenging situation"*

Int_4: *"For me, the resilience of an employee is very important because it allows me to have a productive employee and consequently, we will also develop satisfaction and motivation of HR"*

Int_2: *"There are direct links (employee resilience) to employee wellbeing as well, which is why it is much more valued today by employees and organizations."*

Int_5: *"In my opinion, it ensures performance and competitiveness and the organization's continuity to exist, so investment in human capital is necessary to achieve it".*

Int_3: *"Even for an organization it's a matter of survival in highly competitive environments because if a crisis happens it's the end"*

Therefore, it is important to recognize the existence or otherwise of employee resilience characteristics. The HR professionals interviewed indicated that they are noticing concrete signs of resilience in employees, through several characteristics, such as their ability to manage emotion and adaptation, sometimes with creativity and ambition, which allows a certain continuity at the levels of Performance and productivity, as well as resistance to the constraints imposed by a negative context, like the COVID 19 crisis and even manage to develop anticipation of difficulties and preparation for the future.

Int_7: *"For me, a resilient employee must be strong in the face of challenges, he must not give up"*

Int_8: *"A resilient employee is an ambitious person who thinks creatively and can even anticipate crises, and learn to manage them and be ready to resist."*

Also, the HR professionals, added that the resilience of employees varies relatively according to the population affected, its absence **is considered to be problematic when it is felt by a certain population who aspire to continuity despite the crisis, namely: managers.**

So, we conclude that managers or executives are an interesting population that deserves to be studied according to the interviewees, because they are seen as the people most in demand to

become resilient in an unfavorable environment. In addition, managers are expected to be leaders, self-reliant, persevere without disruption, influence employees positively, take responsibility for decision-making, and manage the crisis to protect the organization from all its adverse effects.

Given the individual and organizational requirements felt by this **population** - managers in positions of responsibility - the interviewees consider resilience as a real matter that organizations in Morocco nowadays have an interest in developing, given the strategic stake and its discernibly positive outcomes, especially within the context of crises.

Int_6: *"It all depends on the personality of leader or manager... how he takes it, and not everyone is capable of doing it " ... "For the employee, he must be pushed by the management, the rate of employees who shows their resilience without being pushed by the managers I think it is low"*

Int_1: *"You have to set an example to others, you have to know that you can become resilient because you are in a management function, and at certain times in a difficult situation you have to show that you have nothing to do, the first thing is, it is perfectly normal like any human being, it will have apprehension, it will have doubts due to the uncertainty of the environment; except that you keep it to yourself, about your collaborators you have to show another active image in this difficult situation"... "the management role and organization is very important here"*

Int_2: *"When you trust the manager you are ready to be resilient without thinking"*

3.2. How employee resilience in Morocco works in times of crisis? mapping key factors and HRM practices:

Nevertheless, when talking about crisis management in organizations in Morocco, HR experts draw attention to the specificities of each organization, including its **awareness of the importance of the subject and its implementation of HRM factors and practices encouraging to improve this resilience, especially for the future.**

According to the interviewees, the innate nature of this resilience in some employees cannot be denied, by relying on personal factors such as personality and competence, but there are also social factors, thanks to the help of the entourage composed mainly of family, friends, colleagues, and leaders... In addition, HRM professionals explained the particular importance of organizational factors, especially HRM practices that promote employee resilience; such as:

- Training

Int_8: *"I think that among the essential factors apart from personality and experience, is the intervention of the organization for the benefit of its employees, for example through the training of employees and their personal development"... "We have recently benefited from a training on resilience in which we have learned a great deal that it has affected self-regulation, optimism, flexibility of reflection, social support, self-learning, and sense of efficiency"*

- Communication

Int_1: *"I insist on one very important thing is communication because it makes it possible to talk that it is a certain moment just to understand the people or to say here we have a problem and this is how we will solve it, so communication is very important in this kind of situation"*

- Motivation:

Int_5: *"We are in material recognition through bonuses, the organization of ceremonies, in sharing, but there is still work to be done " After come of course the appropriate working conditions: availability of places of prayer, catering... "*

Int_8.: *"Motivation remains a key element that the company has an interest in using to achieve the resilience of its employees"*

- Social support and the quality of relationships

Int_5: "Everything depends on the relationship and its quality, especially between the employees and their managers, otherwise there is malaise and rigidity"

Int_2: "It illustrates a kind of cooperation on both sides: a cooperation between employees and that of employees with the organization as a place of trust in the end it is the result that counts it is the general performance of the company, personal relations... and above all trust. when you trust the manager you are ready to be resilient without thinking"

Int_5: "The resilient employee is someone who first seeks the recognition and consideration of his superiors and of course the respect of his employees so if the company offers the right conditions why not?"

4. Discussion

4.1. Employee resilience: a rapidly emerging concept with academic insights into interest, benefits, and behaviors

In this section, we verify the achievement of our objective described at the beginning through our exploratory study:

A recent subject, but one that is becoming more and more important in the organization in Morocco, because awareness of its challenges is gaining momentum, especially in crisis management. Therefore, the organization must arm itself with all relevant resources to ensure the resilience of its employees and thus promote their involvement, confidence, commitment, retention, performance, competitiveness, productivity, satisfaction, and well-being at work... which would lead it to become a resilient organization that could survive and even grow and flourish.

Positive psychology suggests that organizations that build resilience in their employees will be more adaptive and successful over time (Luthans et al., 2002 cited by IJntema, 2020). In this regard, multiple researchers have noted that a strategic approach to HR management can create skills among employees, allowing the organization to improve and adapt more effectively to change and adversity. They confirm that with resilient employees, the organization itself becomes resilient and gains a competitive advantage. (Beck and Lengnick-Hall 2011 cited by Bardoel et al. 2014). Because the presence of strong and adaptable employees increases the success rate of change, as well as reduces potential negative effects on the one hand, such as absenteeism, staff turnover, and reduced involvement (Suhandiah, S. 2020), burnout through its two dimensions: disengagement and fatigue at work (Rastogi et al., 2018 cited by Heewon et al. 2022) and it promotes performance, professional behavior, mental health and well-being on the other hand (Suhandiah, S. 2020).

Thus, the organization's ultimate objective is to develop resilience in its human resources, since a resilient employee is characterized by his flexibility and continuity despite the crisis (COVID-19 example). He even manages to develop anticipation and preparedness for the future, thanks to his learning ability to demonstrate adaptation to any context of change.

This is in line with the findings of researchers in the workplace (such as Bardoel et al. 2014), who consider that resilient employees are best equipped to cope with change, because, when faced with adversity: emotionally, they are more stable, more open to new experiences and more flexible to various challenges (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004 cited by Bardoel et al. 2014). Because in practice, resilient behaviors effectively promote an individual's ability to cope with combined challenges and crises. They represent "the ability of employees to use resources to continually adapt and thrive at work, even under difficult circumstances" (Kuntz et al., 2016, p. 460 cited by Franken et al. (2022)). With this in mind, there are several conceptualizations of resilience, but Franken, E. et al. (2022) summarize that employee resilience is centered on three basic behaviors: network operation, learning, and network adaptability (Kuntz et al., 2017 cited by Franken et al. (2022))

4.2. Fostering employee resilience through organizational levers: controversial effectiveness and showcasing leadership-member relationship.

There are internal variables on which employee resilience depends, including positive self-esteem, robustness, strong coping skills, sense of coherence, personal effectiveness, optimism, strong social resources, adaptability, risk-taking, low fear of failure, determination, perseverance, and a high tolerance for uncertainty (Bonanno, 2004; Carver, 1998; Masten, 2005; O'Leary, 1998; Patterson et al., 2002; Ungar 2004 cited by Ledesma J., 2014).

Apart from these personal factors, the professionals interviewed stressed the organization's key role in building the resilience of its employees in Morocco and, if necessary, creating it to help them in difficult times (COVID-19 crisis).

In the same vein, several researchers (such as Luthans, Vogelgesang and Lester (2006) cited by Cooke et al. 2018) have considered employee resilience as a malleable skill and can therefore be developed and exploited through good organizational management and especially human resources management practices (Albrecht et al., 2015; Demerouti, van Eeuwijk, Snelder, & Wild, 2011; Wang et al., 2014 cited by Cooke et al 2018). These practices contribute to the development of psychological capital in general (which contains self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience), attitudes and behaviors, as well as organizational performance in normal times and also in times of crisis.

Thus, organizations are invited by researchers such as Bardoel et al. 2014 through a culture promoting resilience to conduct practices directly and indirectly related to the resilience of their human resources, mainly Bardoel et al. (2014) listed in their results: the development of social support at work, work-life balance practices, employee assistance programs, employee development programs such as resilience training, flexible work arrangements, rewards and benefits systems, occupational health and safety systems, risk and crisis management systems, and diversity management.

This aligned with the interviewees' emphases in this paper, notably the following organizational drivers: training, communication, motivation, organizational social support as well as the quality of the relationship between the different members of the organization and especially the relationship between the leader and the employee.

According to Asfar and Saeed 2010 (cited by Kakkar S. 2019), the literature notes that the relationship with the supervisor plays a decisive role in the work of the subordinate, this dynamic is formulated in Leader-Member exchange theory LMX, Which considers social Exchanges in nature are based on a trust that gestures of goodwill will be reciprocated at some point in the future (Blau, 1964 (cited by Settoon R.P et al, 1996)). For this reason, this specific relationship is deemed as an important precedent to resilience and it is the nature of the leader-subordinate relationship that plays a vital role in building resilience. Therefore, by developing and maintaining long-term relationships based on mutual trust with their followers, leaders can strengthen employee resilience. Besides, supportive leaders, also have a stronger role in increasing employee resilience when perceived performance pressure is high (Wang and Bartram, 2019 cited by Kakkar S. 2019)

Nevertheless, according to several researchers, the effectiveness of MHR practices is not explicit and specific to resilience in the literature (Bardoel et al. 2014)

Bowen and Ostroff (2004), (cited by Bardoel et al. (2014)), note that these practices can create the desired effect and attitude in the employee when there is consistency between how they are designed and exercised on one side and how they are perceived, which is why it is essential not only to examine their implementation in the organization but also to verify their perception by employees.

5. Conclusion:

The objective of our study is to explore the resilience of employees in organizations in Morocco, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. We are looking to identify drivers and relevant practices to put in place as part of the human resources crisis management strategy.

Among the primary findings of our study, HRM professionals interviewed highlighted that the resilience of employees in Morocco during times of crisis is progressively acknowledged for its beneficial impact on diverse organizational facets. They further underscore that resilient employees stand out for their adeptness in emotion management, creative and ambitious adaptation, as well as the maintenance of performance amid adversity. Ultimately, organizational factors, particularly HRM practices, assume a pivotal role in cultivating employee resilience.

Besides, our paper makes several significant contributions. First, it fills a theoretical gap, as little research has focused on exploring employee resilience, which is a recent and useful phenomenon during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. We are interested in different aspects such as interest, characteristics, factors, and human resources management interventions related to this topic.

In addition, our study makes an empirical contribution by focusing specifically on the Moroccan context. To our knowledge, very few studies have been carried out on employee resilience in organizations in Morocco, which motivates us to bridge this gap by exploring the perception of human resources experts on the stakes and managerial implications of this topic. In addition, our analysis unit is made up of a group of HR professionals who do not have the same degree of experience and professional maturity, working in different heterogeneous organizations in Morocco, from different sectors of activity, and of different sizes, which can also contribute to understanding and exploring the contextualized phenomenon in Morocco in the difficult context of COVID-19.

Nevertheless, our study remains very limited. First, this is a first exploratory qualitative study. Thus, we cannot generalize the results of this research.

Although the discursive analysis was carried out both manually and using the Nvivo 12 software, which made it possible to obtain valuable data, it is not without limitations, particularly in terms of subjectivity and the possibility of omitting relevant data.

The experts interviewed consider that employee resilience in Morocco is a new, exciting, and interesting concept, which raises questions and expectations for academic research. So we think it would be appropriate to do a quantitative study so that we can generalize our findings and dig deeper into the topic.

Aside from soldiers, given the stressful conditions that they often face, it is not surprising that much of the research on employee resilience has been conducted in the military so far. However, due to the specificities of the context, the conclusions are not always generalized to the entire labor force.

Hence, Britt et al. (2016) encourage future work on resilience to expand to include a broader sample of workers and occupations in which significant adversity could occur. Therefore, HR experts consider it particularly important to understand how managers deal with and react to crises, since they are supposed to be leaders who direct the organization and employees, and the latter turn to them in times of crisis (Braverman, 1992) cited by Nourse K., 2009). Leaders are also particularly affected by the increasing pressure and high levels of stress (Roche et al., 2014 cited by Förster et al., 2017) which can lead to psychological disorders, such as mental exhaustion. This can create a dysfunctional climate for everyone involved. To this end, the resilience of leaders is crucial not only for the health and well-being of leaders themselves, but also for subordinates and the competitiveness of organizations (Roche, Haar, and Luthans, 2014) cited by Förster et al., 2017).

Due to this, there is a need to investigate specific protective factors that encourage the resilience of leaders and thus potentially reduce the likelihood of executive burnout (Zunz, 1998 cited by Förster et al., 2017). So, for a deeper understanding of how organizations can foster resilience among their employees in Morocco (especially managers), they look forward to advances in academic research in this area. Professionals interviewed stressed the importance of studying human resources management interventions, procedures, and measures related to this concept. Among the five factors that have the greatest influences on resilience figure: Self-efficacy, Positive affect and optimism, Sense of coherence, and social support, besides LMX (Barends et al (2021)), notably, we underly the importance of social support and LMX, as organizational factors and HRM practices, that deserves to be studied in future researches.

for example, the in-depth investigation of the effect of organizational social support, potentially mediated by the establishment of high-quality relationships between leaders and employees, is of paramount importance to us.

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