



Covid-19 Related Stressors and Performance: The Case of Lebanese Employees During the Pandemic

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Abstract: In the aftermath of Covid-19 and the national lockdown, various firms and companies were obliged to operate remotely from work. This provided several challenges and opportunities to both employees and employers. The reason for carrying this study goes to this new stressful and challenging subject that took over the globe. In this study, the results for the effect of job stress related to the Covid-19 pandemic and employees' performance in Lebanon will be discussed. The effect of the three main independent stress-building factors were measured that includes: perception of safety, job insecurity, and financial loss, which in return reflect on the dependent variable or factor: employees' performance in Lebanon. The measurement of inferences of these independent job stressors was accomplished by a Google-form survey, with a structured questionnaire. SPSS was the appropriate procedure used to make the inferences of the outcome. The revelation of the analysis depicts that there was no relationship between the perception of safety and the employees' performance while there was a significance relationship between job insecurity, financial loss, and performance. The study shows and indicates that to reduce the stress and enhance the performance of employees, wherever possible, specifically during a crisis, working operations need to be organized by employers.

Keywords: Employee performance, Perception of safety, Job insecurity, Work stress, Performance, Financial loss

1. Introduction

For employees to perform their tasks with effectiveness, many organizations face a major issue called stress. Stress is considered one of the most common challenges that employees experience in the workplace. In another word, stress can influence individuals' life and create an imbalance, which may also lead to depression. In addition, increased stress will have a bad impact on productivity and will cause loss of confidence and the ability to perform routine tasks.

Usually, stress occurs when individuals are overloaded with strain. This is evident especially during a crisis related to economic or public health and safety. In this situation, stress plays a role in decreasing organizational performance, employees' general performance, and increases error rates, poor quality of work, staff turnover, and absenteeism due to health problems such as emotional disorder, anxiety, depression, work-life imbalance, and other forms of ailments like obesity, cardiac arrests, and headaches (Mathis & Jackson, 2000).

On March 11, 2020, a global disease outbreak named Corona virus (Covid-19) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). To prevent the spread of infection, many governments have declared health emergencies by enforcing physical distancing, quarantine, and closure of nonessential businesses. Without preparation, some employees had to change their work style, while others must continue their usual work. Furthermore, reports of great fear, worry, and psychological stress increased, which could have the potential of causing low-quality performance by the employee.

As people suffer from the impact of the pandemic, the collective level of workplace stress, anxiety, and uncertainty that everyone is experiencing is infecting productivity, based on the statistics it has been recorded by Market watch. According to statistics, 70% of U.S. workers declared that this is the most stressful time of their professional lives and

94% of employees or workers reported losing one or more hours a day in productivity (Friedman, 2020). Mental clarity is crucial for productivity according to neuroscience expert Doctor Patrick Porter: "increased stress and anxiety surrounding Covid-19, has understandably caused work productivity to plummet because your emotional state is directly connected to your ability to focus".

According to studies and research, it has been noted that stress is hovering for many years by management did not consider it seriously until these days. The main dilemma resides that there is no dedicated and concrete study that clarifies the relation between stress that employees are experiencing during Corona virus in Lebanon and their work performance which is discussed in this paper as well as the correlation of job stressors (perception of safety, job insecurity, and financial loss) with employee performance.

Workplace performance, or job performance, is the standard by which employees are evaluated. The tool evaluates how successfully an employee does his work. However, as there are many facets to performance, a single description would be inadequate. (Jex, 2002) suggests that "performance" may be thought of as the sum of an employee's actions in the workplace. It might also mean the worker's performance on the job and the quality of their work. Job performance, as defined by (Kane and Lawler, 1978), is the documented evidence of the outcomes of repeated job practice across time. Conversely, (Schermerhorn, 1989) argues that job performance is defined as the quality and quantity of results achieved by a person or team in the course of performing a certain assignment. The Yerkes-Dodson law states that there is a threshold beyond which the benefits of mental or physiological stress no longer outweigh the costs in terms of performance. As stress levels rise over this threshold, performance begins to decline. In reality, in order to stay ahead of the competition, many businesses nowadays place heavy demands on their staff, leading to an increase in the prevalence of stress in the workplace. It's led to a buildup of pressures that makes working there difficult and frustrating. Stress in the workplace has been shown to have a detrimental effect on productivity (Ahmed and Ramzan, 2013). Workload, position ambiguity, role conflict, responsibility for others, and lack of feedback are the primary factors of stress that significantly reduce employees' performance.

2. Literature Review

It's only been around 50 years since stress was studied in a way that was radically different from now. One of the most studied and often discussed subjects in psychology is stress due to its pervasiveness in everyday life and its negative effects on people's mental and physical health (Robbins and Sanghi, 2006).

Covid-19 has attracted too much attention worldwide. This goes back to the nature of the disease, fast transmission pattern, and inadequate preparedness of health authorities to attack such an outbreak. The WHO declared it as a global pandemic and raised an international public emergency that poses a threat to physical and psychological public health. Covid-19 has been classified as a stressor since it has affected people's lives in various aspects especially in the workplace. Precedent studies on physical and psychological effects of earlier outbreaks of serious infectious diseases (like SARS), showcase increased stress, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress among the survivors (Gouliya et al, 2010). This review aims to explain stress, source of stress, job stressors related to Covid-19, with reference to job performance and relation with stress. But the researcher also tries to explain at the end that the worsening of the economic crisis in Lebanon with the Corona virus pandemic in Lebanon.

The COVID-19 virus is an infectious illness brought on by the corona virus. Novel corona viruses are a type of virus that have not been seen in humans before, according to the World Health Organization. Cold and flu symptoms include high body temperature, dry cough, difficulty breathing, extreme fatigue with associated aches and pains, stuffy or runny nose, a sore throat, or even diarrhea (WHO, 2020).

People's reactions to learning about a potentially devastating new disease might range from mild concern to extreme panic. Adults and children alike may feel anxious during a pandemic of covid-19. Isolation may be traumatic for people, triggering a wide range of negative emotional and physiological responses. Actions taken for the public's health, such as isolation and quarantine, can exacerbate feelings of isolation and the accompanying stress and worry. Empirical study on this dread and anxiety over Covid-19, or "corona phobia," as it was termed by (Asmundson and Taylor, 2020), is still in its formative stages, but preliminary findings show that it plays a key role in people's psychological well-being. The demand for anti-anxiety medicine, for instance, has surged 34.1% from mid-February to mid-March in the year 2020,

indicating that more Americans are turning to prescription pharmaceuticals in order to deal with stress and worry (Digon, 2020).

Furthermore, many governments have declared health emergencies to prevent the spread of the infection, which has resulted in the implementation of measures such as physical separation, quarantine, travel restrictions, border closures, flight cancellations from and to countries with a high level of contamination (such as China, Italy, France, Spain, the United States, and Canada), and the closure of non-essential businesses. The global economy and society as a whole might be hit hard by the pandemic, in addition to the direct harm it would do to individuals, families, and children (MacIntyre, 2020). Covid-19 poses the greatest threat to the global economy since the financial crisis, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said in its most recent Interim Economic Outlook (2020). Economic growth is expected to slow to 2.4% in 2020 from 3.0% in 2019, which might have an adverse effect on business viability and job creation. (OECD, 2020) Therefore, this has resulted in staff reductions (World Economic Forum, 2020). Some workers have had to respond quickly and without warning to their employer's directive that they alter how they typically go about their jobs. Some employees are forced to stay in the office and keep up with their regular duties, while others may work from home. The performance of workers may decline as a result of this situation.

2.1 Covid-19 and Economical Crisis in Lebanon

Coronavirus crisis follows a series of crises that have plagued Lebanon in recent months. The economic crisis, which resulted from the sudden cessation of capital flows in late 2019 to the heavily indebted economy, was already devastating, and the crackdown added to the shock (Abouzi et al., 2021). While the economic crisis has mainly hit the formal sector, which relied heavily on banking and imports, the covid-19 crisis has extended the shock to the informal sector, where many workers and the poor are employed, due to the collapse of the food, retail, tourism, and transport sectors (The World Bank, 2021).

Companies and private enterprises are on the way to bankruptcy, the unemployment rate is rising, and both rising inflation (now estimated at 40% per annum) and the devaluation of the currency in the parallel market have sharply reduced actual wages (The World Bank, 2021). Within months, poverty had expanded dramatically, with the World Bank estimating it would reach 50% of the population by the end of 2020. The government has struggled to cover the cost of modernizing the health system, mitigating the impact of the shock on the poorest population (IFI, 2020).

Poverty, hunger, and unemployment have risen to record levels, as thousands of Lebanese have lost their jobs as a result of the decline in economic activity, which has fallen sharply in the last six months due to the monetary deterioration and the corona virus, which was seen as the final blow that brought the country to complete collapse after all institutions and companies closed their doors (The World Bank, 2021).

The suffering of employees and employees in Lebanon, which has been translated into popular and demand movements, varied in intensity according to the policy adopted by each company in the light of the economic crisis, there are those who lost their job permanently and sat at home unemployed, while some departments adopted a plan to settle up to 50% of the salaries of their employees in on the parallel market 7500 Lebanese Lira sometimes (Koffman, 2020), what I lose pensions more than Contracts signed by both sides sometimes pay salaries in dollars, but the argument of the departments and institutions is that there is no green currency in the country as a result of the restrictions placed by banks on dollar deposits(The World Bank, 2021).

Lebanon has witnessed in the past period economic, financial and political crises, which were added to it, with the uprising of 17 October, the monetary crisis, and then the level of severity of the crises increased with the spread of Corona and the closure of institutions, meaning that more than 200 thousand workers joined the unemployed (World Food Programme, 2020); thus, every level of financial instability among Lebanese employees was witnessed as being the main stressor in this period of the pandemic that was accompanied by the Lebanese financial crisis (IFI, 2020).

2.2 Theoretical Background

An Individual's Interaction with Their Physical Setting One of the early interactional theories of job-related psychological discomfort, "fit theory" proposes that employees experience stress when there is a mismatch between their personal strengths and weaknesses and the demands of their job (Caplan, 1987).

The Job Demand-Control (JDC) theory, on the other hand, postulates that job-related stress can result from the interaction between a number of psychological job demands related to workloads, including cognitive and emotional demands, interpersonal conflict, and job control related to decision authority (agency to make work-related decisions) and skill discretion (breadth of skills used) (Karasek Jr, 1979). Workers who face high expectations but have little say over their work environment are more likely to feel stress and anxiety on the job, according to the Job Demands and Control (JDC) model, which attempts to predict the results of psychological strain (Beehr et al. 2001). However, in 1988, the notion of employment demand and control was broadened into the Demand Control Support (DCS) hypothesis, which describes how social support may also operate as a buffer during high-demand conditions (Johnson and Hall 1988). Another variant of the JDC theory was established to propose that those persons who face high demands together with limited control and weak support are more at risk of work-related psychological discomfort since social support as a coping strategy can buffer the negative affects of job stress (Van der Doef and Maes, 1999). However, Griffiths and Rial-González (2000) and Cox et al. (2000) recognize that the perceived job demands, and decision autonomy indicated in the JDC theory are critical determinants in determining the impacts and consequences of work on employees' health.

The stresses of work and life often overlap. That's why one comprehensive model of stress, called the Conservation of Resources (COR) Model, attempts to incorporate ideas from many stress theories, including those on the workplace, personal relationships, and other aspects of daily life (Hobfoll 1989). Loss or the potential for loss of resources causes stress, according to this hypothesis. This is due to the fact that people are always working to better themselves in order to secure the things they consider valuable. The availability of one's housing, wardrobe, sense of self-worth, romantic partners, free time, and/or money are all examples of such resources that might potentially cause stress. Conflicts between work and personal life can be stressful because of the drain on personal resources like time and energy (Hobfoll 2001).

During the pandemic period with was accompanied by a narrow financial crisis, it seemed that most of the stress was related to loss of resources. Different figures from different parts of the world have shown a numerous increase in financial loss in the worldwide economies. This, in turn, has impacted the Lebanese economy which was already suffering from a severe financial crisis. As discussed later, a numerous number of Lebanese employees' layoffs were witnessed during the pandemic and unemployment rates were increasing dramatically. Accordingly, the main stressors related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Lebanese labor market were mostly related to loss of resources including the financial loss and the job itself keeping in mind the safety issue that was the major concern for everyone across the globe.

In reviewing the literature, different job-related stressors related to the pandemic have been identified. For instance, Brooks et al. (2020) and Xiang et al. (2020) both discussed the main stressors of perception of safety, threat and risk of contagion, and stigma and exclusion. On the other side, Gao et al. (2020), Qui et al. (2020) identified quarantine and confinement. Lastly, Brooks et al, (2020) and Zhou et al. (2020) discussed financial loss and job insecurity as being another main stressor related to the pandemic. From this review in literature and adopting the Conservation of Resources (COR) model, the three main studies were adopted of this study: Perception of Safety, job insecurity, and financial loss.

2.3 Perception of Safety

Within the context of the pandemic, risk perception refers to the mental processes through which an individual evaluates his or her own likelihood of contracting the corona virus, the severity of the danger to his or her health, and the efficacy of any preventative measures now in place (Kinatader, Kulongoski, Reneke, Peacock 2015). There is empirical data suggesting that people's perceptions of health hazards contribute to the exacerbation of adverse health outcomes and influence their adoption of preventative strategies.

Medical activity risk perception was demonstrated to be an important predictor of epidemic preventive actions by Dionne and colleagues (Dionne, Desjardins, Lebeau, Messier, Dascal, 2018). So, if we underestimate how much we know about the pandemic, we could be less likely to take measures to isolate potentially infected people from the general population.

During a pandemic, widespread fear ensues. Anxiety levels may rise after the first death, and coverage in the media tends to rise in tandem with the emergence of further deaths (Rubin and Wessely, 2020). Concern for one's own health and the health of one's family members is understandable under these circumstances. Panic and terror might spread across the population as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic and the subsequent steps made to contain it. To provide an example, some Ebola patients with symptoms ran away from treatment institutions and hid sick family members at home out of

fear (Chan, 2014; Shultz et al., 2015). Some scholars claim that indicators of poor mental health include a sense of insecurity and fear of pandemics.

On the other hand, it is important to give health and safety training to all employees during this pandemic in order to raise their level of concern for health and safety in the workplace. Previous research has shown that raising workers' knowledge of the pandemic's dangers might alter their outlooks and actions. The protective motive hypothesis suggests that appealing to people's irrational concerns might lead to positive changes in their conduct. Therefore, the perceived risk of COVID-19 among workers may be affected by workplace health and safety training sessions, which in turn affects employees' behavioral safety compliance and their perceived job insecurity (Chi et al., 2020).

2.4 Job Insecurity

The definition of job insecurity is the “overall concern about the continued existence of the job in the future” (Sverke, an Hellgren 2002). A primordial work-related stressor affects a big number of employees. It was also linked to several negative health outcomes specifically mental health. The economic consequences on a person after losing his/her job are serious. As matter of fact, workers who face the probability of job loss may also experience much ambiguity and uncertainty about losing their economic stability. Therefore, when workers face such uncertainties about their jobs, they may not be able to deal with the situation, which can potentially lead to higher levels of stress. To add on, job loss has less detrimental effect on an employee than job insecurity has (Lazarus and Folkman 1984).

Job insecurity is associated with distress and negative emotions and can be the most stressful experience an employee passes through. Given the rarity of such events, researchers have examined the possible psychological implications of job insecurity during pandemics. Some evidence has demonstrated marked increases in fear, anxiety and depressive symptomology related to experiencing job insecurity due to an epidemic. During a similar outbreak, the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), symptoms such as depressive and emotional stress increased from pre- to post-SARS outbreak, and job loss predicted greater increases. (Yu HYR, Ho SC, So KFE, Lo YL 2005).

But, during Covid-19 outbreak, after the forced lockdowns, the short working hours, staff lay-offs and redundancies were bound to happen. The real danger lies in the possibility of increasing poverty, with a felt effect for years to come. So, nations have to stop this jobs crisis from turning into a social crisis. In some countries, employees used job retention program to cut hours while employees keep their pay and jobs. In others, unemployment rates have skyrocketed, but many employees will take their jobs back or get new ones once the economics re-open and activity picks up. This increased percentage impacts negatively the psychological state of workers who are still employed, as they are afraid of losing their jobs at any moment, because of the high unemployment rate around the world.

Moreover, the effect of Covid-19 on businesses would significantly increase the person's feeling of job insecurity, which can harm the mental health of employees who are touched by the organizational reforms of closure and reduction of working hours during the pandemic. This negative impact of job insecurity has been explicitly registered and documented in literature on mental health in the workplace (Strazdins et al., 2004, Virtanen et al., 2002). In addition, greater job insecurity due to Covid-19 was related to greater depressive symptoms after accounting for demographic characteristics, health status, other Covid-19 experiences, and anxiety symptoms, which means that employers should aim to decrease job insecurity and financial concerns during the pandemic to attack the associated mental health issues and consequences (Wilson et al., 2020).

2.5 Financial Loss

Like job insecurity, due to the loss of income, the situation will hurt the individual's financial capacity because of the loss of income. It can also reach quarantined people since they are not able to work at all. Studies related to Covid-19 showed that people who stopped working due to the outbreak reported stress and poor mental health. Similarly, the study of Mihashi et al. (2005), in the case of SARS, highlighted that income reduction highly predicts psychological disorders. Furthermore, regardless of income levels, the economic crisis unleashed by the outbreak of Corona virus is hurtful for economies. So, as an afterthought, financial loss may be considered as a long-lasting stressor related to Covid-19.

“Undoubtedly, the counter-pandemic measures have had sudden and profound economic impacts. Given the coming recession, automatic stabilizers will provide a significant economic stimulus to those who needed it” (Ruiz Estrada et al., 2020). This is not a normal recession but rather a staggression. In the short period, so long as confinement and lockdown constraints are on, the potential output will remain much lower, and economic contraction is already on its way with

irreversible economic repercussions and consequences. In previous recessions, along with export subsidies, trade protectionism policies enabled businesses to recover in the medium term. But the current pandemic constitutes the traditional policy response irrelevant. Each government must preserve the country's productive capacity restoring consumer spending, business investment, and market expectations.

Lebanon has been plagued by a series of crises that was followed by the pandemic outbreak. The economic crisis which relied heavily on banking and imports has mainly hit the formal sector while the pandemic has extended the shock to the informal sector, leading to the collapse of the food retail, tourism, and transport sectors, and that is where many workers especially the poor are employed, the government has struggled to cover the cost of modernizing the health system, mitigating the impact of the shock on the poorest population. As thousands of Lebanese have lost their jobs because of the decline in economic activity, (which has fallen sharply in the last six months due to the monetary deterioration and in parallel with the whole corona virus pandemic) poverty, hunger, and unemployment have risen to record levels.

The definition of unemployment for the International Labor Organization based on the three conditions must be met both with people who are in the working-age, i.e., between 15 at work, being classified as unemployed if they are looking for work, they are ready, able, and willing to work without finding an opportunity in this direction. In response to what was happening, the Central Statistics Department in Lebanon, funded by the European Union Commission Lebanon, launched the largest specialized survey for the labor force to identify living conditions of families in 2018-2019, and with technical assistance from the International Labor Organization (ILO), it was reported that the unemployment rate in the Metn district was 7.1% and 17.8% in the district of Minya.

The unemployment rate varies by sex, with 10% among men and 14% among women, and at the level of age groups, the calculation of the unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 shows that it reached the highest levels during 2018 and 2019, recording 23.3%. Coming the 17th of October 2019, Lebanon already started to witness economic, financial, and political crisis, then the severity level increased with the spread of Corona and the closure of institutions, which resulted in more than 200 thousand workers becoming unemployed.

3. Research Design

The study was primary research depending on quantitative data translated to numbers. The data was gathered and assembled specifically for the research project at hand while secondary data, was data that have been previously collected for some project other than the one at hand. A cross-sectional, one-time, online survey was conducted. The study used a deductive approach to show the impact of stress during Covid-19 on employees' performance in Lebanon. Data for the current study were collected by e-distribution where the researcher created the survey using the Google Form platform, then the survey link was circulated to employees around Lebanon randomly from October 12-29, 2021. There were four main variables, the employees' performance was considered as a dependent variable, and job stressors related to COVID-19 were the independent variables (Figure 1). The main hypothesis of the study was: Ha: There is a negative correlation between COVID-19 related stressors and Employees' Performance.

From the above hypothesis, three sub-hypotheses were deduced to include the independent variables related to COVID-19 stressors including the perception of safety, job insecurity, and financial loss, as follows:

Ha1: There is a negative correlation between perception of safety and employees' performance.

Ha2: There is a negative correlation between job insecurity and employees' performance.

Ha3: There is a negative correlation between financial loss and employees' performance.

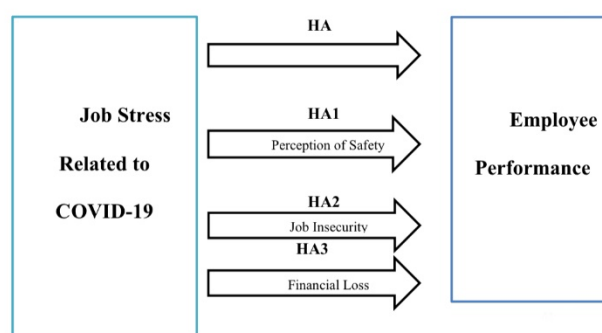


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

The survey was designed and powered by Google form, and it was administered and distributed online via WhatsApp and Facebook since it is a very popular and convenient way to reach all the participants. This survey consists of 32 questions distributed over five sections: Demographics, job stress, perception of safety, financial loss, and employee performance, using the Likert Scale (1=Strongly agree,2= agree,3= neutral,4= disagree, and 5= strongly disagree). The study included the demographic variables: gender, marital status, age, educational level, employment type, salary, COVID-19 infected cases in a family, and old aged members in the family, and it was done on 161 individuals. Reliability and validity were tested through pretesting of the questionnaire with a few participants and statistically using Alpha Cronbach (Table.1). For the demographic, social, and situational variables, the following were hypothesized.

Ha4: There is a statistically significant difference in stress levels among employees from different demographic groups including gender, marital status, age, educational level, employment level, and salary.

Ha5: There is a statistically significant difference in stress levels between employees who has a family member suffering from a chronic disease or a special medical case and those who don't.

Ha6: There is a statistically significant difference in stress levels between employees having an old-aged family member and those who do not.

Table 1: Alpha Cronbach Reliability Testing for Questionnaire

Reliability Statistics		
	Cronbach Alpha	N of Items
Perception of safety	0.622	5
Job insecurity	0.617	5
Financial loss	0.730	5
Stress	0.796	15
Employees Performance	0.694	9
All the test	0.657	24

4. Result and Findings

The results for the level of stress on employee performance in terms of perception of safety showed that 83.3% of the participants chose to agree (strongly agree and agree), while 11.6% were neutral and 5.1% disagree (strongly disagree and disagree). On average, the weighted mean for the perception of safety is 1.83 (Table 2), which may be interpreted that there is agreement that the perception of safety has no impact on employee performance.

Table 2: Average Means for the Set of Questions on each Variable using Likert Scale

Variables	Average Means
Perception of safety	1.83
Job insecurity	2.32
Financial loss	2.44
Employees Performance	2.45

The results showed in terms of job insecurity that, in general, the average weighted mean of 2.32 explains the disagreement of the employees. The results from the five questions revealed the outcomes of the weighted mean of 2.23 (Table 2). It may be interpreted for the level of stress, as it may not be evident with job insecurity. Furthermore, the reason may be that, due to the mentality of the survey participants, their fear of losing their job leads them to prove that their performance is high and not affected by the covid-19 pandemic.

The results about the level of stress on employee performance with financial loss revealed that the average weighted mean of 2.44 (Table 2), which reflects that they disagree that financial loss affects employee performance. This might also mean that because employees are already facing an economic crisis in Lebanon since 2019.

The results showed that 62.9% of the employees chose to agree (strongly agree and agree), while 17.9% are neutral and 19.2% disagree (strongly disagree and disagree). The level of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic may not reflect its impact on employee performance. This can be interpreted that stress is normal and employees may not consider it as a big factor or to effect overall work performance. In addition, the mean is 2.45 (Table 2). Hence, it can be concluded that the relationship is neutral.

Using the Pearson correlation test, results showed that the significance level is greater than 0.05 in the case of the correlation between perception of safety and employees' performance, which showed that there was no significant correlation between the two variables (Table 3). In the other two cases of the independent sub-variables (job insecurity and financial loss) and the case of the independent variable (stress) and their correlation with the dependent variable (employee's performance) Sig. is less than 0.05, which means that there is a significant correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Looking at the negative value of Pearson correlation value ranged between 0.250 and 0.329, it means that the correlation is weak and inversely proportional between the independent sub-variables (job insecurity and financial loss) and the independent variable (stress) with the dependent variable (employees' performance).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Testing for Dependent vs. Dependent Variable

Correlations		
	Employees Performance	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pearson Correlation
Perception of safety	0.437	0.062
Job insecurity	0.003	-0.237
Financial loss	0.000	-0.329
Stress	0.001	-0.250

According to the results of the One-way ANOVA, the significance level is less than 0.05, in all cases except for Age, which means that marital status, educational level, employment type, and salary affects the level of stress, while there is no significance difference between the level of stress across age intervals (Table 4).

Table 4: ANOVA Testing for Differences of Level of Stress among Demographic Groups

ANOVA	
Stress	
	Sig.
Marital Status	0.000
Age	0.180
Educational Level	0.026
Employment Type	0.022
Salary	0.001

According to the T-test results, the Significance level is 0.001 less than 0.05 (Table 5), which means that there is a significance difference between the means of stress of the groups of who have a family member(s) that suffer from chronic diseases or have a special medical case and for those who did not have any. In the table above, the mean of those who have members suffering chronic diseases (2.05) is less than those who do not have (2.34), which means that respondents having a suffering member in the family have higher agreement levels for statements about stress, thus, higher stress levels.

Table 5: T-Test for Differences of Stress Levels between those who have a Family Member with a Chronic Disease and those who Don't

Group Statistics					
Do any of your family members suffer from chronic diseases or special medical case	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	
Stress	Yes	80	2.05	0.55	0.001
	No	80	2.34	0.49	

According to the T-test, the significance level is 0.021, which is less than 0.05 (Table 6), meaning that there is a significance difference between the means of stress of the groups who have an old-aged member(s) in their family and for those who do not. In the table below, the mean of those who have an old-aged member(s) (2.08) is less than those who do not have (2.28), which means that the respondents having an elderly in the family have a higher agreement level for statements about stress; thus, higher stress levels.

Table 6: T-Test for Differences of Stress Levels for those who have an Old Family Member and those who don't

Group Statistics					
Do you have old aged member (70 and above) in the family		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Stress	Yes	67	2.08	0.62	0.021
	No	93	2.28	0.46	

5. Conclusion

The economic effects and job losses caused by the COVID-19 epidemic are extraordinary. It encompasses the wide range of difficulties that employees encountered and still experience in Covid-19, such as rising rates of stress and financial worries related to job instability. Researchers at Ohio State University have shown that Covid-19 has an impact on employees' motivation and productivity in the workplace, in addition to their mental health and general well-being. Researchers also highlighted that some people would begin to worry about their own health and well-being in the wake of a worldwide epidemic, which would naturally increase their levels of stress and decrease their motivation at work.

Some studies revealed that a manager who helps employees feel less stressed and works to increase their engagement through a variety of pro-social actions towards the team can help mitigate the negative effects of these risks and obstacles. According to the study's abstract, "enterprise leaders who are attentive to their employees' emotional needs and unify them around a shared cause made a positive influence," which in turn kept people invested in their jobs and their communities.

This study is sought to determine the relationship between job stress related to the Covid-19 pandemic and employees' performance in Lebanon. 161 participants were surveyed through a list of 32 questionnaires distributed over five sections. Section one included 8 demographic questions addressing the participant's gender, age, marital status, educational level, employment status, monthly salary, and whether he/she lives with an elderly family member. Section 2,3,4 consists of 15 direct questions related to COVID-related stressors. The first category focused on the perception of safety (knowledge, fear, and health risks), the second category focused on job insecurity (working hours, promotions, unemployment), the third category focused on financial loss (salary, social benefits, and financial concerns). The last section consisted of 9 questions that focused on dimensions that included quality, quantity, time, support, engagement, commitment, and communication. The participants were random employees in Lebanon.

The findings revealed that when evaluating the level of stress in the workplace on employee performance, the majority of the responses indicated positive remarks. However, numerous responses also reflected the likelihood of agreement with the impact of stress on employee performance. Results from the correlation indicated that there is a correlation of job stress on employee performance. Findings from the regression results implied that there is a significance relationship between job insecurity ($0.003 < 0.05$), financial loss ($.000 < 0.05$), and employee performance, while the perception of safety has no significant relationship with $p=0.437$.

The correlation between the three main dimensions or determinants of job stress that were chosen for this study were all anticipated except for the perception of safety. These findings contradicted the literature that was studied including (Chan, 2014; Shultz et al., 2015; Chi et al.2020), the claim that the importance of perception of safety in elevating the level of stress. The absence of the relationship within the Lebanese society may have different explanations. For instance, it can be related to the lack of having enough information about the fatality of the virus, which was different from previous studies about COVID-19 among the Lebanese population that showed that there is a lack of valid information and high levels of misconception related to the virus among the Lebanese (Awwad et al., 2021). Moreover, the Lebanese culture is mainly a religious one where destiny, illness, and death are mostly related to the will of GOD (Aghacy, 2004); thus, the safety dimension is ignored by employees as a leading factor for job stress.

Recommendations

It is not surprising that employee stress and anxiety are the resulting stressors during the pandemic. Ongoing uncertainties coupled with complex family needs and potential financial strains present a unique challenge for everyone. Businesses

and HR leaders across the globe must revisit their strategies for ensuring business continuity and employee satisfaction, where reassuring employees is of paramount importance. There must exist valid techniques that can boost every employee's performance, along with tips to handle covid-19 related fear and family care issues. Even further, ensuring business continuity through remote working and using technology has facilitated this transition. Furthermore, it is very important to provide more information about the virus and its consequences, so all employees understand the precautionary measures that they should be taking. Since the perception of safety seems was not considered important for stress levels, this implies that employees will be more prone to transmitting the virus. Lebanese institutions need to enhance the employees' knowledge about the virus and work on educating their employees about the perception of safety during this pandemic.

Despite all these efforts, we are all vulnerable to contracting the Covid-19 virus. Culture and management practices can be tested by the need to effectively communicate, plan for, and assist employees in this situation. This research, however, acknowledges that certain limitations exist due to the small sample size, narrow focus, and limited set of factors. Therefore, it is recommended that more studies be carried out, ideally with a bigger sample size, a broader focus, and the inclusion of additional factors as necessary.

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