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The Effect of New Normal Leadership and Workplace Flexibility on Employee Burnout and Work-Life Balance During COVID-19 Era. The Role of Employee Resilience

By

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DEDICATION

To the loving memory of my father who dreamt of seeing me pursuing my studies and did not have the chance to see me graduate; "Papa" I did it!!

It is with sincere and utmost gratitude that I dedicate my work to:

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The Effect of New Normal Leadership and Workplace Flexibility on Employee Burnout and Work-Life Balance During COVID-19 Era. The Role of Employee Resilience

Hadil Abi Aad Attieh

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic created a "New Normal". Lockdown measures forced everyone to remain at home and compelled organizations to fully embrace flexible work arrangements in an effort to maintain sustainability. Overnight, work from home, previously considered as a luxury and conditionally applied by certain organizations, becomes the norm. Employees had to swiftly adapt to remote working lifestyle while juggling between home chores and home schooling and facing the uncertainties related to health and safety. This blurred the boundaries between home and work interfaces resulting in burnout and work-life balance disruption. Likewise, leadership realized that managing remote employees is quite challenging and requires specific set of skills and behaviors; hence the emergence of new normal leadership, that is people-oriented and characterized by its flexibility and resilience. Resilience becomes a vital characteristic of an organization during disturbances like the COVID-19. Furthermore, resilient employees will have the ability to strike a balance between work and home interfaces. Studies on employee resilience, although in its infancy, is progressing rapidly since resilient organizations rely on resilient employees to survive. Hence the aim of this thesis is to study the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee burnout and work life balance in the presence of employee resilience and new normal leadership. Particularly the roles that employee resilience and new normal leadership play in the relationship between flexible work arrangements and employee burnout and work-life balance will be investigated. The conceptual model is empirically tested through an online questionnaire circulated among employees working in the Lebanon and the region. The proposed relationships were supported by the findings generated by PLS-SEM equation modeling.

Keywords*:* Flexible Work Arrangements during COVID-19, New Normal Leadership, Employee Resilience, Employee Burnout, Work-Life Balance

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FWA: Flexible Work Arrangements

NNL: New Normal Leadership

ER: Employee Resilience

EO: Employee Burnout

WLB: Work-Life Balance

COR: Conservation of Resources

J-DR: Job-Demand Resources Theory

PLS-SEM: Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling

Chapter One

Scope of the Study

This chapter includes an introduction, the importance of this study, and the research questions that are to be addressed. Finally, this chapter concludes with the thesis statement.

1.1 Introduction

COVID-19 started as a mysterious pneumonia outbreak in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. On January 30, 2020, it is considered as a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern"; and by March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was declared a Global Pandemic. As of April 21, 2022, WHO registered 505,035,185 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,210,719 deaths. Consequently, and in an effort to control the outbreak and reduce exposure and infection, governments worldwide imposed complete lockdown measures; work from home became the new normal.

COVID-19 is considered as a global environmental jolt defined as "transient perturbations whose occurrences are difficult to foresee and whose impacts on organizations are disruptive and potentially inimical" (Meyer, 1982). Environmental jolts are characterized by exposing critical linkage, testing the resilience of leaders and organizations, surfacing values, and revealing adaptive mindsets (Osland et al., 2020).

Flexible work arrangements also known as telework (in all its facets: work from home, flextime, flexplace…) was mandatory and extensively in use during the COVID-

19 pandemic. To ensure business continuity, organizations were compelled to resort to telework despite being unprepared to implement it at all levels (management issues, ergonomic issues, communication issues,…). Hence arose the need to frame these flexible working arrangements and to investigate their effect on work-life balance and employee burnout. (ILO, 2021)

This unprecedent use of teleworking led to the emergence of a new normal leadership, highly needed to manage employee working from home by creating and sustaining an atmosphere of trust and enhanced communication (Ahern & Loh, 2020; Francisco & Nuqui, 2020). Furthermore, new normal leaders, in response to the rapid digitalization taking place because of the pandemic, should be able to adapt and adjust towards becoming a digital leader (Francisco & Nuqui, 2020). Consequently, the moderating effect of the new normal leadership (situational and digital) on employee burnout and work-life balance would be interesting to investigate.

Likewise, the lockdown measures put in place in response to the pandemic forced people to remain and work from home. Consequently, employees had to promptly embrace digital transformation and adapt to the new lifestyle of working from home while juggling between home choirs and home schooling in addition to all the stress related to health and safety, causing employee burnout, loneliness and work-life balance disruption (The World Health Organization, 2021).

Resilience becomes a vital characteristic of an organization during disturbances like the COVID-19 pandemic that changed how things are done quite suddenly and drastically (Chesak, 2020). In the business world, resilience refers to the intrinsic features of businesses that are able to respond swifter, recover faster, or establish more

innovative ways of doing business when they are under pressure (Sharma et al., 2020), and resilient organizations will be able to adapt quickly to change (Chesak, 2020). Studies on employee resilience, although in its infancy, is progressing rapidly since resilient organizations rely on resilient employees to survive (Näswall, 2019).

Furthermore, the quarantine experiences during COVID-19 coupled with health uncertainty fears affected employees' mental health by increasing their stress and frustration levels leading to depression and anxiety (Saleem et al., 2021). Resiliency strategies both at organizational and individual levels, were found to enhance employees physical and mental health and reduce their burnout levels (Baskin et al., 2021, Chesak et al., 2020, Aguiar-Quintana, 2021, Setiawati, 2021). Employee resilience was found to increase employee well-being and engagement while reducing their turnover intention.

Hence, the aim of this thesis is to investigate the influence of flexible work arrangements practiced during COVID-19 on employee resilience, work-life balance, and employee burnout. Furthermore, leadership contribution in the new normal, heavily based on remote working, needs to be examined especially that the boundaries between work and life are getting blurred and employees are experiencing loss of privacy and isolation at increasingly alarming rate. In fact, it is feared that the wide scale implementation of remote working might have exacerbated the drawbacks of flexible working arrangement. Finally, it is highly possible that some sort of remote working will remain practiced post-COVID, hence framing flexible working arrangements becomes a must to secure employee well-being and organizations' sustainability (ILO, 2021).

1.2 Importance of the Study

Flexible work arrangements were extensively studied, however not in the context of a pandemic where they are used at a high scale. In addition, recently the literature is rich of studies on the new normal leadership, yet they are mostly qualitative in nature while we propose a quantitative analysis. Also, while studies on organizational resilience are numerous, studies on employee resilience on the other hand are scarce. Likewise, studies on burnout and work-life balance and their effect on resilience are abundant; however, the impact of employee resilience on burnout and work-life balance are scant. The purpose of the thesis is to address this gap.

1.3 Research Questions

This thesis includes the following research questions that will be addressed after data collection and analysis:

RQ1: What is the relationship between Flexible Work Arrangements during COVID-19 and Employee Burnout and Employee Work-Life Balance?

RQ2: What role does Employee Resilience play in the relationship between Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Burnout and Employee Work-Life Balance?

RQ4: What role does New Normal Leadership play in the relationship between Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Resilience?

1.4 Thesis Statement

The remainder of the thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 consists of an overview of the five variables used in the study including flexible work arrangements during COVID-19, new normal leadership, employee resilience, work-life balance, and employee burnout. Chapter 3 includes the derived hypotheses in addition to the proposed conceptual model (Figure1). Chapter 4 provides the research methodology, the statistical analysis, and the findings. The fifth and last chapter discusses the implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the five variables used including new normal leadership (NNL), flexible work arrangements (FWA), Employee resilience (ER), work-life balance (WLB) and employee burnout (EB).

2.1 Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangements also known as remote working, teleworking, telecommuting or distributed work is defined as "a work arrangement whereby workers work in locations, remote from their central offices or production facilities; the worker has no personal contact with co-workers but is able to communicate with them using technology" (Di Martino & Wirth, 1990). The main idea behind FWA was to transfer the work to employees in an effort to alleviate traffic difficulties and cut energy usage (Allen et al., 2015). Flexible Work Arrangements is not a new concept; during the mid 1970s in California an engineer, Jack Niles, invented the concept which grew in popularity in different "generations". However, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a small range of organizations in different countries implemented FWA despite its growing popularity and that on a part time and volunteering basis and in specific jobs that can be performed remotely using information and communication technologies (ICTs) (white collar jobs) (ILO, 2021). The increased implementation of flexible work arrangements was facilitated by the advancement in technology in addition to the

introduction of personal computers, laptops and phones and the increase in the bandwidth speed (Allen et al, 2015).

As originally applied, FWA provided employees with important benefits of which the reduced daily commute leading to a decreased carbon emission for societies and reduced operating costs for organizations (ILO, 2021), as well as enhanced opportunity to tap into global labor market (Wang et al., 2021). In addition, FWA enabled the concept of "time sovereignty" as it allows employees to work at times and locations that are most convenient for them; this can be a huge benefit: it allows people to fit their paid work activities around other personal and family obligations. However, FWA brings with it some important drawbacks such as social isolation and detachment from the organization and colleagues. Health issues related to ergonomic issues are an additional concern due to the absence of adequate office equipments (ILO, 2021).

COVID-19 pandemic unleashed an unprecedent use of FWA which became on a full-time basis and mandatory in nature. Organizations to secure their operations and safeguard jobs had to implement FWA on a full scale as a temporary measure. However, the temporary remained for more than a year and is slowly becoming the new normal (ILO, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic is thought to have exacerbated the negative effects of FWA due to its full-time and mandatory nature as not all workers were properly equipped to perform work remotely. Moreover, additional concerns were raised with respect to gender inequalities especially with the need to juggle between home chores, childcare, and work tasks which might add additional pressure on women (ILO, 2021).

Research on flexible work arrangements were abundant. However, Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, flexible work arrangements were considered as a luxury occasionally practiced by some of the organizations' employees. In contrast, as result of the pandemic, millions of workers were forced to work remotely resulting in de facto global experiment on flexible work arrangements which has become the "new normal". Hence previous research lacked the context that was provided during the pandemic era when remote working is no longer voluntary; consequently, research should shift from investigating "whether or not to implement flexible work arrangement" to investigating "how to get the most out of flexible work arrangement" (Wang et al., 2021). Researchers are currently compelled to study the opportunities vs. risks of FWA. The current crisis offers the opportunity to (1) investigate the resilience or vulnerability of FWA, and (2) investigate the crisis's short and long-term effects on working conditions, work motivations and behavior, job and career attitudes, career development, and personal health and well-being (Spurk, D., & Straub, C. 2020).

Many analysts believe that following COVID-19, remote working will become even more appealing (Hern, 2020) especially with the number of benefits linked to it. However, relying solely on previous research on flexible work arrangements might induce organizations and workers into error by overestimating the benefits of remote working on all types of workers. In fact, Wang et al., 2021 found that persons who are less disciplined face more obstacles when working from home, therefore flexible work arrangements may not be suited for them. Hence employees and employers must assess the match between flexible work arrangements and the worker as this fit will have an impact on the workers' performance and well-being (Wang et al., 2021).

Prior to the pandemic, research implied that a combination of onsite and remote working known during the pandemic as the hybrid model, was considered to be the best practice (ILO, 2021).

Yet, irrespective of the working model that will become dominant after the pandemic, there is an immense need to frame FWA so as to help workers and employers to use them appropriately and in an effective way (ILO, 2021).

2.2 New Normal Leadership

There is no universal definition of leadership; according to Akbari and Pratomo (2021), "leadership is a problem-solving process in the midst of challenges, either in internal or external organizations". While there is no consensus among scholars on what leadership is, almost all scholars agree that leadership is important, and that poor leadership has a negative impact on all stakeholders at all levels. Leadership is responsible for moving organizations to a desirable future state while not losing sight on those who will get them there; hence leadership should balance between organizational goals and employees' needs since it is employees who will guarantee the organizations' future (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018).

Since the early twentieth century, according to Buchanan (2013), the world has gone through many periods of leadership. Specifically, there was the "command-and-control" approach in the 1980s, which was followed by "empower-and-track" in the mid-2000s, and ultimately, "connect-and-nurture," which is the present strategy. Leadership styles were introduced to categorize leadership (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018) whereby a leadership style is "an intentional means by which a leader influences a group of people

in an organization to a widely understood future state that is different from the present one" (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016). Effectives leadership entails leaders having five key characteristics: (1) to lead by example, (2) to inspire a common vision, (3) to challenge existing processes, (4) to empower employees to take actions, and (5) to encourage the heart.

Prior to COVID-19 pandemic, leaders' main focus was to promote innovation, grow revenue, and increase market share. In a matter of few weeks, their focus shifted drastically; now they must make swift decisions to ensure organizational sustainability by controlling cost and maintaining liquidity. Many of these leaders will have to also face health and safety concerns, working from home, and supporting their families as the pandemic unfolds. This is not going to be a simple shift; a steep learning curve is to be expected especially that leaders will be tested in many complex and ambiguous new challenges (Nichols et al., 2020).

Leaders all over the world were compelled to manage in VUCA conditions (standing for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity), they were suddenly forced to adapt to distance and virtual leadership along to building and strengthening mutual trust and resolving conflict instantly from distance. Executives were suddenly faced with the complexity and unpredictability that comes with not being physically close to all of their people; they no longer have the benefit of face-to-face meetings, and they needed to adjust to a shift in the working hours (Osland et al., 2020). Hence the emergence of the New Normal Leadership characterized by (1) having adaptive abilities while staying faithful to one's commitment; (2) being an effective instructional decision-

maker; and (3) being a leader who is a good planner, vigilant, and initiator (Francisco & Nuqui, 2020).

The intricacy of the COVID-19 situation unfolded in a requirement for flexibility and a shift in working hours, thus the first quality for a new-normal leader is flexibility and resilience (Osland et al., 2020, Fleming & Millar, 2019). Furthermore, the pandemic compelled businesses to prioritize digitalization and digital transformation as a top priority (Bajaj, 2020; Accenture, 2020). Providing a remote infrastructure that can support a totally digital workforce has been one of the most significant components of this digitalization (Bajaj, 2020; Iansiti & Richards, 2020). Consequently, new normal leaders require significantly different skills and behaviors to manage their employees; technical skills are becoming increasingly valuable in addition to emotional and social intelligence, implying that leaders in the digital age must be both people-oriented and technically savvy (Murashkin & Tyrväinen, 2020). Furthermore, remote leaders need to acquire a "combination of digital and humanitarian skills" enabling them to efficiently communicate with remote subordinates using digital platforms in view of creating cohesion, promoting initiatives, altering attitudes, and rapidly handling complex problems (Cortellazzo et al., 2019).

Francisco & Nuqui (2020) described new normal leadership as a leadership that focus on people and human resources while emphasizing mentoring, learning, and healing emotions. A new normal leader never resorts to top-down management rather is a facilitator promoting healthy working environment characterized by respect, creativity, and exchange of ideas. A normal leader also instils trust, embraces equality, and promotes diversity while keeping a clear vision and commitment to the vision through

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talent, technology, and storytelling. Finally, a new normal leader focus on a "dynamic interplay between all stakeholders, employees, customers, investors, shareholders" (Francisco & Nuqui, 2020).

2.3 Employee Resilience

"When stress overpowers resilience, performance … can degrade" (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

Resilience can be defined as the ability to positively adapt to traumatic, adverse experiences or stressful situations in a recurrently changing environment (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, Chi et al, 2016, Hu et al., 2015; Niitsu et al., 2017) and the ability to overcome negative feelings. Some authors view it as an ability to "bounce back" while others view it as a process of recovery from hostile situations (Duncan, 2020).

Accordingly, Anasori et al. (2020) identified two schools of thought visualizing the concept of resilience. The first school view resilience as a personality trait allowing individuals to adapt and recover from stressful situations, while the second school view resilience as the consequence of a dynamic process affected by the interaction between individuals and the environment.

Early studies on resilience suggested that resilience will prevent diseases and counterproductive behaviors by promoting a high sense of well-being; this statement was supported by more recent studies that confirmed that resilience enable employees to maintain their physical and mental health by mitigating the negative effects of crisis (Aguiar-Quintana, 2021). Building personal resilience in healthcare providers was found

to be a necessity because resilience is considered as one of the cornerstones of excellent mental health (Duncan, 2020). In fact, according to a study, resilience can shield people against mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression (Setiawati, 2021). Furthermore, the negative relationship between resilience and burnout was clearly established in previous studies (Baskin & Bartlett, 2021).

The outcome of employee resilience are desired employee attitudes including job satisfaction, affective commitment and job engagement and lower levels turnover intentions. Furthermore, resilient employees exhibiting resilient behaviors such as proactive, adaptive, and network leveraging behaviors results in employees with favorable attitudes towards their jobs, and for organizations resulting in successful management of challenges and navigation of the workplace (Näswall et al., 2019).

Resilience is the mixture and interaction of personality and life experiences that results in the "ability to adapt positively". Personality traits include optimism, adaptability, self-confidence, positive self-image, empathy, and tolerance (Setiawati, 2021). McKinley et al. (2019) states that "resilience can be difficult to conceptualize and in his systematic review of what influences resilience levels in medical doctors, he proposes that resilience is affected by demographics (age, gender, marital status), personality traits (optimism and positive attitudes), organizational or environmental factors, social support, leisure activities, overcoming past adversity and difficulties, and interventions to improve resilience. Some experts believe that resilience can be developed through experience, learning and formal training as well as humor, altruism anticipation and self-observations (Setiawati, 2021).

During times of disturbances, like COVID-19 pandemic, resilience becomes a core characteristic in every organization. Resilient organizations are able to respond and recover faster in addition to being creative and innovative in doing business (Sharma et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic swiftly and drastically changed how organizations function especially by requiring effective digitalization and management of remote workforce. Resilient organizations, characterized by their adaptability, flexibility, and agility, will be able to effectively navigate these changes by responding efficiently to crises, maintaining core functions, and using the lessons learnt to reorganize while focusing on their goals and purpose (Sharma et al., 2020, Chesak, 2020).

Resilience provides organizations with competitive edge and allow their survival and effectiveness. Resilient organizations rely on resilient employees to survive; hence the interest in employee resilience and resilience development (Näswall, 2019). Although still in its infancy, the research on developing and promoting employee resilience is increasing. Näswall (2019) states that the traditional conceptualization of individual resilience as an ability fails to consider the workplace context that can promote or impede resilience and that there is a need to study the effect of work environment and leadership on resilience; he proposed a new measurement tool to evaluate resilience at the employee level in the working context.

Promoting employee resilience is a factor of sound leadership, a strong learning culture, and efficient social networks (Naswall, 2019). Resilience was found to increase employee engagement and reduce their turnover intentions while abusive supervision was found to be moderating the relationship between resilience and leaving intentions (Aguiar-Quintana, 2021). The success of workplace initiatives intended to promote

resilience was dependent not only on individuals' level of resilience but also on "key organizational features that support resilience development, including supportive leadership" (Näswall, 2019). Low levels of employee resilience must entice organizations to invest in leadership development towards a more supportive and people-oriented leadership as employees will not be able to behave in resilient manner unless they are surrounded by a supportive and enabling environment.

2.4 Work Life Balance

Haar (2013) defined Work Life Balance as "the extent to which individuals can adequately manage the multiple roles in their life, including work, family and other major responsibilities". According to Hayman (2009) three dimensions determine WLB: work-interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work/personal life enhancement. A new integrative definition of the work-life balance concept was given by Sirgy and Lee (2018) "as a high level of engagement in work life as well as nonwork life with minimal conflict between social roles in work and nonwork life".

The interest in work-life balance started following the Second World War II when an increasing number of women had to work outside their homes while maintaining their homemaker and childcare roles. In the 1970s, the focus extended to include the work-life balance of dual career couples when the concept of work-family crisis was introduced. By the beginning of the 21st century, the work-balance topic became more multidisciplinary with a "sprawling sphere of study involving academics from numerous disciplines and distinct theoretical viewpoints" (Perry Jenkins, Repetti,

& Crouter, 2000). In addition, more focus is placed on the effect of the information communication technologies and their role in blurring the boundaries between work and life, severely impacting work-life balance (Kelliher et al., 2019).

Hence the term "work-life balance" refers to the interaction between work and nonwork sides of people's lives; where "life" is considered to include all the non-work activities (including child care, hobbies, elderly caring, religious obligations…) and "work" is considered based on both traditional model and non-standard employments (including full-time jobs, part-time jobs, teleworking, "gig economy"…) (Kelliher et al., 2019).

WLB policies should be inclusive irrespective of the marital status of the employees as employees may engage in counterproductive work behaviors as a result of perceived inequity in access to work-life balance policies with possible repercussions on organizational performance (Beauregard 2014).

Different scholars define balance differently: Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw (2003) view balance as equal time between work and life, Reiter (2007) viewed balance as situational depending on the individual's situations while Kalliath and Brough (2008) favor the subjective stance whereby balance depends on individual's perception of their situation. According to Haar (2013), balance does not imply equal time, but rather how a person evaluates their success in balancing multiple roles. Other academics disagree with the concept of balance and favor the concept of integration or interaction between work and personal life as different people might have different priorities and balance them in different manners (Abendroth & Den Dulk, 2011).

Work-life balance is centered on engagement and involvement across various social roles in multiple life domains—the more engaged and committed an individual is to his or her various social roles, the more likely he or she is to experience positive behavioral outcomes such as life satisfaction. Highly engaged employees achieve WLB when positive affect and acquired skills and experiences are transferred between domains as well as when different life domains are integrated to facilitate the transfer (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Another requirement to achieve WLB is the minimal conflict among social roles in work and non-work life domains. Employees who sense a greater association and congruence between multiple roles are more likely to acquire and retain psychological resources (Sirgy & Lee, 2018; Haar, 2013).

WLB is linked to several positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. At the individual level the positive outcomes are viewed at three major categories: (1) work-related (job and career satisfaction, commitment, turnover and absenteeism, job performance), (2) non-work related (life satisfaction at all levels marital, family and leisure as well as family performance), and (3) stress-related (work and family related stress, psychological tension, emotional exhaustion, depression, substance abuse, burnout) (Sirgy & Lee, 2018, Haar & Brougham, 2020). Turnover, absenteeism, presenteeism, and work performance are all examples of organizational outcomes of disrupted WLB.

Various research deduced that work-life balance is influenced by various factors notably job characteristics, organizational support, stress, and well-being. Job characteristics namely (1) job demand and time pressure at work that affect the time allocated to non-work activities, (2) job autonomy that increase the perceived freedom in

own decision making leading to more engagement in both work and non-work activities, (3) role ambiguity i.e. the decreased uncertainty in role expectation leading to more engagement in work and non-work activities, and (4) scheduling flexibility allowing individuals to complete work at convenient time to them leading to a lower conflict between work and non-work roles (Sirgy & Lee, 2018).

Another factor is organizational support in the form of different programs, including flexible work arrangement, part time work, childcare assistance, parenting and eldercare resources, health programs, family leave policy and social support at work, all linked to less role conflict leading to more engagement in work and non-work activities (Sirgy & Lee, 2018).

Stress and well-being have opposing effects: stress leads to unhappy and discordant relationships resulting in lower work-life balance, while well-being leads to psychological and mental wellness resulting in work-life balance (Shagvaliyeva & Yazdanifard, 2014).

2.5 Burnout

Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976) were the first to introduce the notion of burnout into the psychosocial literature. They both developed the concept independently after seeing similar reactions among volunteers working with social problems among poor residents (Kristensen et al., 2005). However, it was Maslach who developed the scale Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), the most extensively used instrument to measure burnout (Dall'Ora et al., 2020). Burnout quickly evolved into a

metaphor for a number of serious psychosocial issues that affect those who do "people work" such as social and healthcare workers.

As per Maslach, burnout results from excessive stress at work and is characterized by (1) Emotional Exhaustion (feeling emotionally drained with lack of emotional resources), (2) Depersonalization (loss of idealism and negative and detached interaction with people), and (3) reduced Personal Accomplishment (reduced feelings of competence and performance at work). The interaction between these three domains differentiate burnout from any other psychological conditions with similar symptoms such as depression and fatigue (Woo et al., 2020).

Hence burnout is a state resulting of a mismatch between a person and a minimum of one of the six dimensions of work: (1) workload (excessive demands, hence recovery is not achieved), (2) control (low control on resources needed to achieve the work), (3) reward (inadequate reward either financial or intrinsic), (4) community (perception of incomplete or negative connection with colleagues and managers resulting in frustration and reduced social support), (5) fairness (inequity in workload and work pay) and (6) values (conflict between employees and organization's values) (Dall'Ora et al., 2020). Consequently, in May 2019, the World Health Organization identified burnout as an "occupational phenomenon" resulting from "chronic workspace stress that has not been successfully managed" (Woo et al., 2020). Work overload and interpersonal tensions are the mostly listed stressors at work in addition to self-efficacy, job crafting, perceived organizational support, value congruence, control, sense of community and organizational culture that are less commonly listed (Ayachit & Chitta,

2022). Furthermore, it was found that work-family conflict can lead to burnout (Dodig, 2021).

Burnout theories after Maslach differ in one of two ways: they do not consider burnout as a solely work-related syndrome, and they see burnout as a process rather than a state (Dall'Ora et al., 2020). The job resources-demands model stipulates that burnout develops via two different pathways: (1) excessive job demands resulting in exhaustion and (2) insufficient job resources resulting in disengagement (Dall'Ora et al., 2020).

Initially, burnout was mainly studied in medical and psychiatry professions. Recently, burnout expended to other professions and was no longer limited to work situations but included life situations as well. In 2005, Kristensen et al. developed the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) scale conceptualizing burnout through three subdimensions: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client related burnout that cover any type of human doing any type of work and dealing with any type of client. According to CBI, fatigue and exhaustion are the core of burnout; this is in line with Schaufeli's recent definition of burnout "a state of physical, emotional, and mental weariness that arises from long-term involvement in emotionally taxing work settings (Kristensen et al., 2005).

Burnout result in various health and life problems that affect both work and personal life. Work related problems include low performance, absenteeism, low morale, turnover, low organizational commitment and decreased skill utilization. On the personal level, burnout leads to distress, lack of sound sleep, alcohol and drugs abuse as well as reduced well-being and life satisfaction (Ayachit & Chitta, 2022, Dyrbye et al., 2020).

Burnout has become a watchword in various sectors around the world since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, owing to organizations' need to cope with the New Normal. The pandemic has intensified burnout at workplace: increased workload coupled with emotional difficulty and feeling of unfairness are experienced daily by employees. More than ever employee wellness has become a major concern for organizations that should instill a culture that values and promotes mental health as well as concentrate on developing a resilient workforce and empowering employees with resources to facilitate and enhance self-care and well-being (Ayachit & Chitta, 2022).

Furthermore, burnout became a major global concern due to the enforced long-term remote work where employees (especially women) had to juggle between work responsibilities and childcare and house duties while coping with loneliness, health safety stress as well as managing their fear of unemployment and instability. Add to the above stressors was the issue of presenteeism and work intensification with employees "putting more discretionary effort, beyond job expectations, taking fewer breaks and in some cases working longer hours" (Gabriel and Aguinis, 2022, Maddox-Daines, 2021).

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework, Hypotheses, and Conceptual Model

This chapter includes the hypotheses proposed to govern the relationship between the variables flexible work arrangements (FWA), new normal leadership (NNL), employee resilience (ER), work-life balance (WLB), and employee burnout (EB); these hypotheses are governed by two theoretical frameworks: the conservation of resources theory and the job demand-resources theory. Finally, the derived relations are visualized by a conceptual model.

3.1 Theoretical Frameworks

Two theories were used to govern the relationships between the proposed variables: the conservation of resources theory and the job demand resources theory.

3.1.1 Conservation of Resources Theory

Conservation of resources theory (COR) starts with the tenet that individuals strive to protect their resources (conservations) and acquire new resources (acquisition) (Hobfoll, 1989) where resources are things valued by people including objects (car, tools for work), condition resources (employment, status, tenure), personal (key skills needed to accomplish tasks and personal traits such as self-efficacy, resilience, optimism), and energy resources (credit, knowledge, money)

(Hobfoll et al., 2018). COR is based on four principles: (1) loss of resources is disproportionately more salient than gain of resources, (2) individuals should invest in resources in order to protect against and recover from resources losses as well as gain resources, (3) resources gain in time of resources loss or threat of loss are more valuable, and (4) once resources are depleted individuals enter in defensive mode to preserve the self (Hobfoll, 2018). COR has also three corollaries: (1) resources availability is fundamental to vulnerability and resilience, hence people with more resources are less vulnerable to loss and more capable of gain, (2) loss of resources has a spiraling nature in the sense that they increase in impact and momentum, and (3) gain of resources are also spiraling in nature however to a lesser extent than loss (hobfoll, 2018). Loss of resources cause stress in general and at work can lead to burnout, depression in addition to other physiological outcomes (Halbesleben et al., 2014); however as per the second principle this loss can motivate people to engage in behaviors to avoid resources loss. Therefore, organizations have the obligation to foster resources gain through commitment to employees, adequate social support, and job enhancement opportunities to overcome work pressure, role conflict and heavy workload (Sun & Pan, 2008).

3.1.2 Job Demand Resources Theory

The job demands-resources theory (JD-R) stipulate that job factors are in two general categories job demands and job resources (Demerouti, 2001). Job demands include physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or

skills; hence they are linked with certain physiological and/or psychological costs

such as work pressure, work environment and demands. While resources include

physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either

essential in achieving work goal, reduce job demands and their consequent costs

(physiological and psychological) or enhance personal growth, learning and

development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources are found at different levels:

organizational (pay, career ladder, job security), interpersonal and social relations

(supervisors and coworkers support), work organization (role clarity and inclusion in

decision making) and task level (autonomy, skills, task identity and significance, and

performance feedback) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Personal resources (self-

efficacy, organizational-based, self-esteem, and optimism) were included in the JD-R

theory as they were found to predict exhaustion and work engagement. JD-R govern

two different processes; job demands are associated with strain (such as lack of energy

and health problems) and job resources are associated with motivation (such as

engagement/disengagement and commitment).

3.2 Hypotheses Development

This section of the chapter will include eleven hypotheses to be investigated and

discussed after the analysis. These six hypotheses are generated based on prior literature

review and two theoretical frameworks: the Conservation of Resources Theory and the

Job Demand-Resources Theory.

3.2.1 FWA during COVID-19 and Employee Resilience

Resilience is the ability of employees to adapt to challenges and keep a continuous development mindset; hence resilience is thought to be a developable trait depending on an enabling organizational context. Employees at organizations that encourage proactive, adaptive and support-seeking behaviors (i.e. organizations with positive learning culture), show resilient behavior (Näswall et al., 2019).

Furthermore, resilience is the ability to manage resources, personal and job related, and to respond instantly to change and uncertainty (Ojo, 2021). A key facet of resilience is flexibility (Sharma, 2020) as well as high degree of autonomy in addition to other attributes such as enthusiasm, optimism and hope, self-awareness and emotional literacy (Ojo, 2021).

Flexible work arrangements provide employees with flexibility and enhanced autonomy (ILO, 2021). Furthermore, it is believed that resilient behaviors are encouraged by organizations and at the same time, resilient behaviors enhance organization's performance as well as organization's support to its workforce (Näswall et al., 2019). Consequently, flexible work arrangements are believed to enhance employee resilience as FWA conserve employee resources; resources in the form of employee protection from hardships and conservation of employment during COVID pandemic (Bardoel et al., 2014). Based on the above the following hypothesis can be deduced:

H1: Flexible Work Arrangement have a direct positive influence on employee
   resilience

3.2.2 Employee Resilience and Employee Burnout and Work-Life

The literature on resilience proposes that most "life activities and tasks are life/energy enhancing or life/energy depleting" and the individual should thrive to increase the impact of enhancers and reduce that of depleters; flexible work arrangements are considered among the enhancers. Furthermore, improving on the enhancers will automatically mitigate the effect of depleters which will lead to work-life balance (Marques & Berry, 2021). Resilience is the "ability to maintain a stable balance"; hence resilience is crucial and vital to cope with stress and stay in balance (Setiawati et al., 2021, Ojo et al, 2021). Based on the above the following hypothesis can be deduced:

H2: Employee resilience have a direct negative influence on Work-Life

Balance specifically the Personal Interference in Job

Accordingly, H3 can be deduced from both H1 and H2

H3: Flexible Work Arrangements have an indirect negative influence on

Work-Life Balance (PIJ) through Employee Resilience

3.2.3 Employee Resilience and Burnout

In the field of psychology resilience is viewed as a personal resource allowing individuals to adapt to adverse conditions (Ojo, 2021). The negative relationship between resilience and mental health specifically burnout has long been established in several studies (Baskin and Bartlett, 2021, Setiawati, 2021, Duncan, 2020). Furthermore, resilient employees will preserve their physical and psychological health as resilience will allow them to avoid the negative effects created during crises times

hence reducing on their burnout (Aguiar-Quintana et al., 2021). Consequently, the following can be deduced:

H4: Employee Resilience has a direct positive influence on Employee Burnout (PBO)

H5: Employee Resilience has a direct positive influence on Employee Burnout (WBO)

H8: Employee Resilience has an indirect negative influence on Employee Burnout (PBO)

H9: Employee Resilience has an indirect negative influence on Employee Burnout (WBO)

3.2.4 Work-Life Balance and Burnout

Work-life balance was found to be influenced by job characteristics of which job autonomy and flexibility leading employees to complete their work and non-work responsibilities with more freedom and convenience as the interference between life and work domains is reduced (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Furthermore, autonomy is believed to reduce employee burnout by allowing them to take initiatives and make decisions (Dodig, 2021). Hence, based on the above the following can be deduced:

H6: Work-Life Balance (PIJ) have direct positive influence on Employee Burnout (PBO)

H7: Work-Life Balance (PIJ) have direct positive influence on Employee Burnout (WBO)

3.2.5 New Normal Leadership during COVID-19 and Employee Resilience

Managing flexible workers is different from managing workers in the workplace. Flexible workers and their manager will be facing challenges that if not managed properly will affect the working conditions pertaining to the working hours, break and rest periods, as well as the health and well-being of workers. Flexible working arrangements if not properly managed can result in long working hours leading to a blurred boundary between working hours and personal life (ILO, 2021).

In line with the job demand-resources theory, to face the COVID-19 pandemic, employee will be needing resources to create a balance between demands and resources. Leaders should provide these resources in the form of tangible resources (such as information on how to work from home and prevent disease transmission, counseling, therapy, and training) and psychological resources (through regular contact with employee to provide feedback, support, and inspiration) (Kniffin et al., 2021).

Furthermore, managers can lift employee productivity, well-being, and morale by reducing close monitoring and engaging in supportive management practices including transparent and motivational communication, building trust, and sharing information (Wang, 2021).

Resilient employee behaviors are dependent in part on personal resilience and on the other part on supportive organizational and sharing culture facilitated by its leadership (Näswall, 2019, Ngoc, 2021). Autonomy, empowerment, communication,

trust, low daily micromanagement, and learning culture are all considered as resilience-fostering resources (Sharma, 2020, Ngoc, 2021).

Hence, employees may regard demands less negatively when they believe they have leadership support to confront obstacles at work; this will boost their resilience and resolution to overcome challengers and learn from them (Näswall, 2019). Based on the above, the following hypothesis can be deduced:

H10: New Normal Leadership has a direct positive influence on Employee Resilience

H11: New Normal Leadership has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between Flexible Work Arrangement and Employee Resilience

3.3 The Conceptual Model

The above stated relationships are illustrated with the following conceptual model (figure 1):
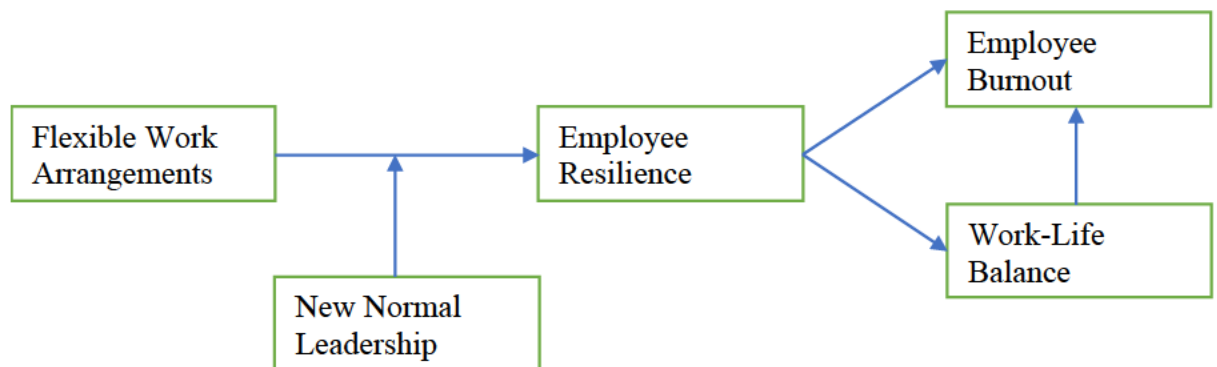

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Chapter Four

Research Methodology and Statistical Analysis

This chapter includes the description of our sample, the instruments used to test the

collected data, and the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. In addition, this

chapter includes the statistical analysis, findings, and discussion.

4.1 Research Methodology

4.1.1 Participants

A total of 142 participants completed the survey. The majority of the

respondents were from Lebanon.

4.1.2 Measures

An online questionnaire was sent to a sample population to collect data. The

online questionnaire is comprised of seven sections including the demographic

section. The survey was based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly

agree, almost always, outstanding or highly preferred) to 5 (strongly disagree, almost

never, poor, or strongly not preferred).

The demographic section included eight questions namely: age range, gender,

level of education, years of experience, company size, role in the organization, type

of industry the participant belongs to and location.

Flexible Work Arrangement was measured using Albion (2004) 13 items scale, labeled from FWA1 to FWA13.

Employee Resilience was measured using Näswall et al. (2019) 9 items scale, labeled from ER1 to ER9.

Employee Burnout was measured using two of the three subdimensions of Kristensen et al.'s (2005) Copenhagen Burnout Inventory. The subdimensions used were Personal Burnout consisting of 6 items labeled PBO1 to PBO6, and the Work-Related Burnout consisting of 7 items labeled WBO1 to WBO7.

Work-Life Balance was measured using is a 15-items scale adapted from an instrument developed and reported by Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003). The scale measures three dimensions: Work Interference in Personal Life (WIPL), Personal Life Interference in Work (PLIW) and Work/Personal Life Enhancement (WPLE).

The New Normal Leadership was measured using 5 items of Francisco et al. (2020) pertaining to New Normal Leadership Adaptability.

In addition, the participant were asked about their working mode preference (on site, hybrid, or remote) through three items.

4.1.3 Instrumentation

The latent constructs of the proposed conceptual model (Flexible Work Arrangements, New Normal Leadership, Employee Resilience, Work Life Balance, and Employee Burnout) were tested using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM 3) software. The results of the analysis are presented in the following section.

4.2 Statistical Analysis

4.2.1 Descriptive Statistics

A total of 142 responses were collected. Out of the 142 respondents, 97 were females (68%) and 45 were males (32%). The results are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution by Gender

Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Female	97	68%
Male	45	45%
Total	**142**	**100**

Out of the 142 respondents, 27 (19%) respondents were aged between 18 and 24of age, 49 (34.5%) respondents were aged between 18 and 24 of age, 43 (30.3%) were between 35 and 44 of age, 22 (15.5%) were aged between 45 and 64 of age, and one respondent did not specify. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2:Distribution by Age

Age		
	Frequency	Percent
18-24	27	19.0%
25-34	49	34.5%
35-44	43	30.3%
45-65	22	15.5%
Other	1	0.7%
Total	**142**	**100**

The majority of the sample respondents worked in middle management positions making a total of 32.4%, while the remaining roles had the percentage of

6.3% for upper management levels, 16.9% for junior managerial level positions, 12.7% for administrative staff positions, 6.3% for support staff, 10.6% for part-time employees, and 14.8% for other positions. Our respondents are also classified according to their accumulated years of experience as follows: 34.5% have been working for more than 15 years, 17.6% between 10 and 15 years of work experience , 14.1% between 5 and 9 years of work experience, 14.8% from 3 to 5 years of work experience, and 19% less than 3 years of work experience. The results are summarized in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Distribution by Role at the Organization

Role at the Organization		
	Frequency	Percent
Upper Management	9	6.3%
Middle Management	46	32.4%
Junior Management	24	16.9%
Administrative Staff	18	12.7%
Support Staff	9	6.3%
Researcher	6	4.2%
Consultant	6	4.2%
Trained Professional	1	0.7%
Skilled Laborer	1	0.7%
Part-time Employee	15	10.6%
Self Employed/Partner	7	4.9%
Total	**142**	**100**

Table 4: Distribution by Years of Experience

Years of Experience		
	Frequency	Percent
Above 15 years	49	34.5
From 10 to 15 years	25	17.6
From 5 to 9 years	20	14.1
From 3 to 5 years	21	14.8
Less than 3 years	27	19.0
Total	142	100

The sample was also classified according to the different industries with the highest percentages are of 28.9% coming from the educational sector, 15.5% coming from the banking, finance and audit sector, 10.6% from the information and communication technology sector, 9.2% from the management of companies and enterprises sector, 7.7% from the retail and wholesale trade sector, while 28.2% belonged to other industries. The results can be summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Distribution by Industry

Industry		
	Frequency	Percent
Banking & Finance / Audit	22	15.5%
Education	41	28.9%
Information and Communication Technology	15	10.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	13	9.2%
Retail / Wholesale Trade	11	7.7%
Others	40	28.1%
Total	**142**	**100**

Additional demographic questions were also used in the online questionnaire, namely the company size of the respondents as well as the highest level of education the respondents have reached. The respondents' results are summarized in Table 6 and Table 7 below.

Table 6: Distribution by Company Size

Company Size		
	Frequency	Percent
Less than 50 employees	40	28.2%
50 to 199 employees	18	12.7%
200 to 499 employees	15	10.6%
500 or more employees	69	48.6%
Total	**142**	**100**

Table 7: Distribution by Level of Education

Level of Education				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Has a high school Diploma	2	1.4	24.5	24.5
Has a Bachelor's Degree	38	26.8	1.8	26.4
Pursuing a Master's Degree	43	30.3	42.7	69.1
Has completed a Master's Degree or a Ph.D. Degree	59	41.5	30.9	100
Total	**142**	**100**	**100**	

4.2.2 Measurement Model

The relationships of the proposed conceptual model depicted in Figure 1 are tested using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The two phases of the PLS-SEM method are assessment of the measurement model phase and the calculation of the path coefficient phase. The measurement model is assessed by demonstrating the validity and reliability of the scale and by determining the values and significance of the outer loadings (El-Kassar, 2022). The assessment of the measurement model is shown in Figure 2.

The reliability of the constructs is demonstrated by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha values, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). The Smart PLS results presented in Table 8 below indicate high scale reliability as the composite reliability of all constructs are above the least required value of 0.7. Also, the Cronbach's Alpha for the constructs ER, NNL, PBO, PIJ, WBO are way higher than the minimum value of 0.7, while the FWA, had an acceptable Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.776. In addition, the results revealed that the AVE for the constructs NNL, PBO, and PIJ are well above the suggested value of 0.5, while the ER, FWA, and WBO constructs had an AVE value of 0.524, 0.530 and 0.556 respectively. These borderline

values are contributed to the small sample size and the fact that the FWA scale is new. This limitation can be addressed by increasing the sample size and conducting further studies on the validation of the scale.

Table 8: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Construct Reliability and Validity		
	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ER	0.869	0.897	0.524
FWA	0.776	0.846	0.530
NNL	0.934	0.946	0.779
PBO	0.919	0.937	0.712
PIJ	0.843	0.894	0.679
WBO	0.811	0.872	0.556

The discriminant validity was demonstrated as the square root of the average variance extracted of any construct exceeded its correlation with any other construct, see Table 9.

Table 9: Discriminant Validity

	Discriminant Validity					
	ER	FWA	NNL	PBO	PIJ	WBO
ER	0.724					
FWA	0.302	0.728				
NNL	0.180	0.003	0.882			
PBO	0.125	0.178	-0.003	0.844		
PIJ	-0.210	0.031	-0.098	0.368	0.824	
WBO	0.005	0.159	-0.112	0.748	0.568	0.746

The factor loadings shown in Table 10 reveal that most of the factor loadings are above the minimum required value of 0.7. Bootstrapping with 2000 iterations of resampling demonstrated the high significance of the factor loadings, as all p-values were less than 0.001 (except for WBO4). These results provide strong evidence of high scale validity and reliability.

Table 10: Factor Loadings

|		Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Factor Loadings					
ER	ER2	0.561	0.096	5.824	0.000
	ER3	0.715	0.063	11.324	0.000
	ER4	0.691	0.103	6.734	0.000
	ER5	0.823	0.053	15.484	0.000
	ER6	0.730	0.063	11.648	0.000
	ER7	0.749	0.048	15.474	0.000
	ER8	0.752	0.069	10.867	0.000
	ER9	0.743	0.061	12.177	0.000
FWA	FWA1	0.733	0.081	9.050	0.000
	FWA5	0.603	0.142	4.249	0.000
	FWA6	0.850	0.078	10.864	0.000
	FWA7	0.835	0.071	11.847	0.000
	FWA8	0.572	0.134	4.279	0.000
NNL	NNL1	0.850	0.183	4.634	0.000
	NNL2	0.892	0.182	4.900	0.000
	NNL3	0.888	0.193	4.611	0.000
	NNL4	0.882	0.195	4.529	0.000
	NNL5	0.899	0.170	5.299	0.000
PBO	PBO1	0.805	0.047	16.955	0.000
	PBO2	0.860	0.028	30.874	0.000
	PBO3	0.837	0.027	31.360	0.000
	PBO4	0.874	0.026	34.069	0.000
	PBO5	0.874	0.023	37.645	0.000
	PBO6	0.809	0.032	25.560	0.000
WBO	WBO1	0.736	0.052	14.107	0.000
	WBO2	0.811	0.032	25.113	0.000
	WBO3	0.833	0.032	25.866	0.000
	WBO4	-0.202	0.127	1.584	0.113
	WBO5	0.756	0.052	14.565	0.000
	WBO6	0.813	0.041	19.707	0.000
	WBO7	0.852	0.028	30.201	0.000
PIJ	WLBPIJ10	0.810	0.030	27.227	0.000
	WLBPIJ11	0.851	0.044	19.241	0.000
	WLBPIJ12	0.858	0.034	25.235	0.000
	WLBPIJ13	0.775	0.058	13.261	0.000
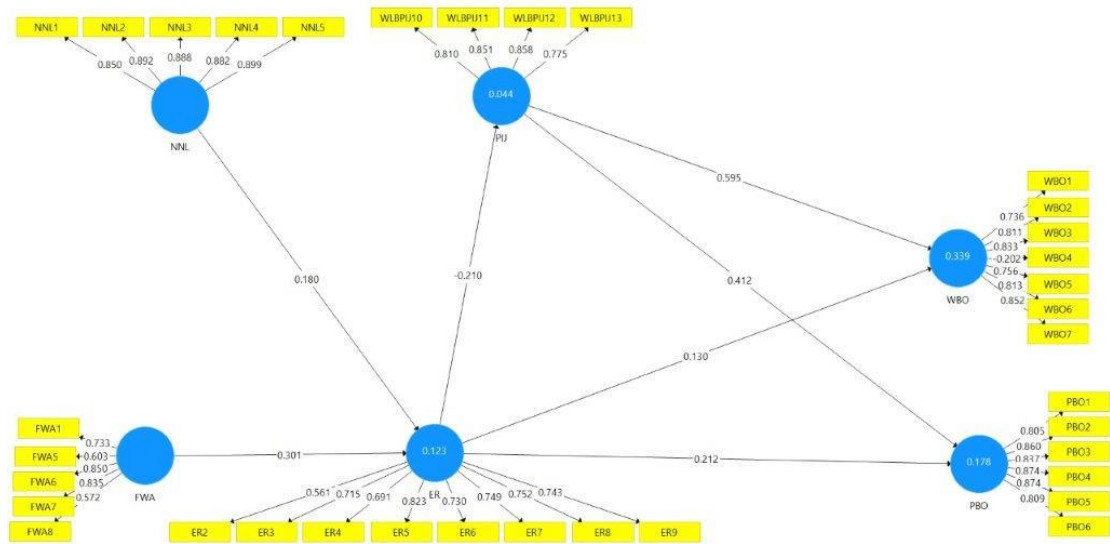
Figure 2: Measurement Model Assessment

4.2.3 Calculation of the Path Coefficients

The relationships of the proposed conceptual model depicted in Figure 1 are tested using the PLS-SEM technique implemented on the Smart PLS software. First, the mediation model relating Flexible Work Arrangements during COVID-19, Employee Resilience, Employee Burnout and Work-Life Balance is tested.

The path calculation results of the direct and indirect effects are shown in Table XI and depicted in Figure 3. In addition, the significance of the path coefficients is presented in Table 11 based on bootstrapping with 2000 iterations of resampling.

The data analysis results indicate that Flexible Work Arrangements during COVID-19 has a significant direct positive effect on Employee Resilience as the value of the path coefficient is 0.301 and a corresponding p-value of 0.000. This provides evidence supporting hypothesis H1.

The results also indicate that Employee Resilience has a significant direct positive effect on Personal-Related Burnout as the path coefficient is 0.212 and a corresponding p-value of 0.014; thus, supporting H4. Furthermore, the results show a relationship between Employee Resilience and Work-Related Burnout as the path coefficient is 0.130, however the relationship is not significant since the p-value is 0.114; thus, H5 is not supported. Still, the results indicates that Employee Resilience has a significant indirect negative effect on both construct of Employee Burnout (PBO and WBO), as the value of the path coefficient of ER and PBO is -0.086 and a corresponding p-value of 0.049 (which is less than the recommended 0.05) and the value of the path coefficient of ER and WBO is -0.125 and a corresponding p-value of 0.032 (which is less than the recommended 0.05); so H8 and H9 are supported. In addition, the results indicates that Employee Resilience has a significant direct negative effect on Personal-life Interference with Work (PIJ) construct as the value of the path coefficient is -0.210 and a corresponding p-value of 0.022 (<0.05), supporting H2. The results also indicate that PIJ has a significant direct positive effect on PBO as the path coefficient is 0.412 with a p-value of 0.000 (which is less than the recommended 0.05), and on WBO as the path coefficient is 0.595 with the p-value of 0.000 (which is less than the recommended 0.05) supporting H6 and H7. Consequently, it can be deduced the PIJ affects the relationship between ER and both Burnout constructs (PBO and WBO).

Furthermore, Flexible Work Arrangements has a significant indirect negative relationship with Work-Life Balance (PIJ) as the value of the path coefficient is -0.063 with a corresponding p-value of 0.039 (<0.05); so H3 is supported.

Finally, the path coefficient analysis also indicate that New Normal Leadership (NNL) has a direct positive relationship with ER as the path coefficient is 0.180 with a corresponding p-values of 0.041 (which is less than the recommended 0.05); hence H10 is supported.

Table 11: Significance of the Path Coefficients

| Significance of Path Coefficients				
Direct Effect	Path Coefficients	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
ER -> PBO (H4)	0.212	0.086	2.454	0.014
ER -> PIJ (H2)	-0.210	0.092	2.284	0.022
ER -> WBO (H5)	0.130	0.082	1.579	0.114
FWA -> ER (H1)	0.301	0.072	4.166	0.000
NNL -> ER (H10)	0.180	0.088	2.041	0.041
PIJ -> PBO (H6)	0.412	0.077	5.347	0.000
PIJ -> WBO (H7)	0.595	0.064	9.307	0.000
Indirect Effect	Path Coefficients	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
ER -> PBO (H8)	-0.086	0.044	1.965	0.049
ER -> WBO (H9)	-0.125	0.058	2.141	0.032
FWA -> PIJ (H3)	-0.063	0.031	2.064	0.039
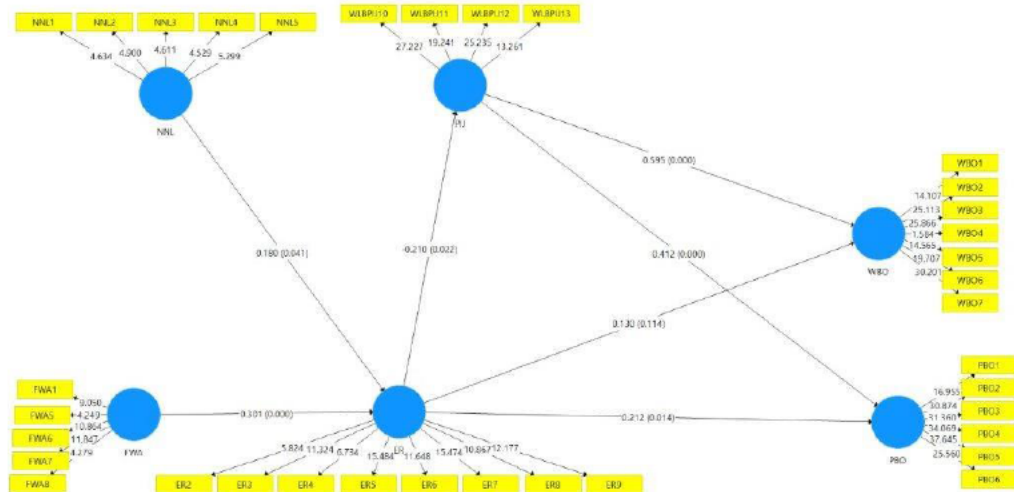
Figure 3: Path Coefficients Analysis

4.2.4 Cluster Analysis

Next, the moderating effect of New Normal Leadership was tested. Cluster analysis was conducted to segment respondents based on similarities in their perception of NNL (El-Kassar, 2021). K-means clustering was used to assign respondents to clusters in terms of NNL level. The ANOVA tests results and the cluster distribution are depicted in tables 12, 13 and 14. The variance analysis revealed a significant difference in each of the five items measuring NNL items and helped in differentiating the two clusters as the p-value <0.001. One cluster labeled Low NNL, consisting of 77 respondents, appeared to have the lowest mean scores on the NNL importance items, while a second cluster labeled high NNL, consisting of 65 respondents appeared to have the highest mean scores on the five NNL importance items implying that this group values more NNL.

Table 12: Cluster Analysis

	ANOVA					
	Cluster		Error			
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df	F	Sig.
NNL1	85.583	1	.680	140	125.839	.000
NNL2	121.774	1	.712	140	171.048	.000
NNL3	122.534	1	.664	140	184.598	.000
NNL4	129.133	1	.511	140	252.797	.000
NNL5	94.910	1	.787	140	120.641	.000

Table 13: NNL Clusters

Final Cluster Centers		
	Cluster	
	1	2
NNL1	3	2
NNL2	4	2
NNL3	4	2
NNL4	4	2
NNL5	3	2

Cluster	1	65.000
	2	77.000
Valid		142.000
Missing		.000

4.2.5 Multigroup Analysis

The last step of the analysis is to compare the result from the model among high and low NNL groups (El-Kassar, 2021). Multigroup analyses were conducted using Smart PLS 3.2 software. Bootstrap sampling techniques were deployed to generate the p-values. The results are shown in table 14 and in figure 4. The difference in the influence of FWA on ER between the high and low NNL groups is 0.076 indicating a stronger influence for high NNL group (implying that whenever there is New Normal Leadership, FWA effect on ER becomes stronger). However, that effect is insignificant since the p-value is of 0.565; this is attributed to the small sample size of 65 for the high group and 77 for the low group; hence H11 is supported. This implies that employees applying flexible work arrangements and managed by New Normal Leaders will exhibit higher resilience which in turn will lead to a better work life balance and lesser burnout.

Table 14: Multigroup Analysis

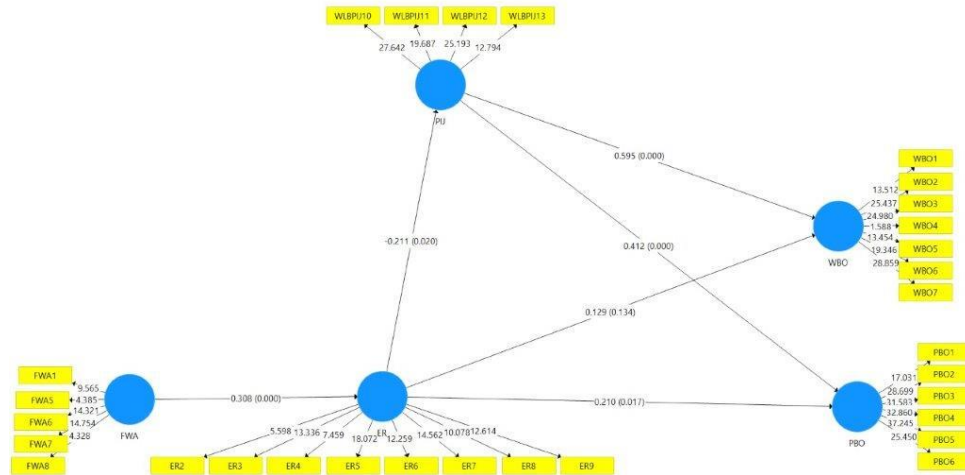| Significance of Path Coefficients			
	Path Coefficients-diff (High NNL - Low NNL)	p-Value original 1-tailed (High NNL vs Low NNL)	p-Value new (High NNL vs Low NNL)
ER -> PBO	0.276	0.068	0.136
ER -> PIJ	0.245	0.097	0.193
ER -> WBO	0.133	0.194	0.388
FWA -> ER	0.076	0.283	0.565
PIJ -> PBO	-0.162	0.857	0.287
PIJ -> WBO	-0.264	0.987	0.027

Figure 4: Multigroup Analysis

4.3 Discussion

The aim of this study is to test the conceptual model presented in figure 1 linking Flexible Work Arrangements during COVID-19 to New Normal Leadership, Employee Resilience, Work-life Balance, and Employee Burnout by collecting and analyzing data using the PLS-SEM technique implemented on the Smart PLS software (El-Kassar, 2021, El-Kassar, 2022). The results of the analysis show that Flexible Work Arrangements have a direct relationship with Employee Resilience; supporting H1. Hence, the flexibility and autonomy provided by properly implemented FWA will enhance Employee Resilience. This finding is consistent with Ngoc Su (2021) and El-Kassar (2022) stating that HR practices including flexible work arrangements lead to positive employee outcome such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), commitment and resilience. Furthermore, results show that Employee Resilience negatively affected Employee Burnout through Work-life Balance that is based on low personal life interference in work. Hence, in line with previous studies (Baskin &

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Bartlett, 2021) resilient employee will be able to better balance between work and life interfaces, this by itself will reduce employee burnout; supporting H4, H8, and H9 while H5 was no directly supported. Likewise, results highlighted the indirect effect of Flexible Work Arrangements on Work Life Balance in the presence of Employee Resilience hence supporting H3 stating that Employee Resilience mediates the relationship between Flexible Work Arrangements and Work-Life Balance. In addition, data analysis highlighted the positive relationship between Work-Life Balance (namely personal interference with work) with Employee Burnout (both constructs PBO and WBO), hence supporting H6 and H7. Consequently, as established in previous studies (Soomro, 2018, Dodig, 2021) a better work-life balance will reduce burnout due to the low interference among work and life domains. Finally, data analysis showed that New Normal Leadership moderates the relationship between Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Resilience (supporting H11); however, insignificantly most probably due to the small sample size. So it can be deduced that supportive, flexible and digital leadership that instill trust and provides employees with autonomy will mitigate the negative side of Flexible Work Arrangements namely employee isolation, presenteeism and work overload. This finding is in line with Wang (2021) stating that designing high-quality remote work can help managers increase remote workers' productivity and well-being.

Chapter Five

Implications, Limitations, and Recommendations

This chapter presents the study's implications, as well as the limitations and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Implications

Flexible work arrangements during COVID-19, when applied in organizations whose leadership endorsed the new normal by being supportive and people orientated, enhanced employee resilience. This finding aligns with Sing (2019 and 2020) that states that employees' outcomes including self-leadership, innovative work behaviors and resilience are affected by leadership practices such as supportive and socially responsible behaviors. Resilient employees will quickly adapt to change and balance their life and work needs and ultimately reduce interference between both interfaces; this will in turn result in healthier and burnout free staff. Sreih (2018) states that "training and innovative capabilities" affect performance; Abi Aad (2021) states that robust, flexible and resilient environment will reduce the effect of abusive leadership; and Liu (2021) established that "other-focused" mentoring oriented towards employee protégé will lead to beneficial organizational outcomes. As such Organizations, implementing resilience enhancing strategies such as initiating resiliency training, supporting effective communication and extensive information sharing, and fostering supportive and healthy work environment in addition to nurturing a learning culture, will boost their employee resilience and consequently ensure their sustainability. Furthermore, new normal

leadership, that is people oriented and characterized by flexibility, resilience, empathy and innovation while embracing change, will moderate the negative effect of flexible work arrangements. Mahseredjian, Karkoulian, & Messarra (2011) found that leadership style affects organizational learning culture. Furthermore, successfully managing different generations rely on leadership practices based on communication skills and conflict resolution skills (Messarra et al., 2016). As such organizations need to effectively train their leaders in view of acquiring the necessary soft skills required to boost organizational learning culture and to manage remote employees (Maddox-Daines, 2021). Leaders rather than micromanaging through strict monitoring mechanisms, should instill a culture of mutual trust among employees (Ayachit & Chitta, 2022), and thrive in upskilling their employees to adapt well to remote working. Leaders should also increase employees autonomy and flexibility by allowing and encouraging job crafting (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022). Finally, leaders should provide employee with the tools such as platforms to stay connected to an online community allowing employees to discuss and share their personal and professional interests and concerns.

5.2 Limitations and Recommendations

This research is constrained by a number of limitations that should be addressed for future research. These limitations include the sample size that consists of 142 responses which is considered relatively small. Therefore, future research should include a relatively a larger sample of the population for better representation. An additional limitation would be the sample representation that is mainly Lebanon. Hence future research could benefit from expanding data collection to include different cultures for better data representation. Furthermore, the gender of the respondents (mainly females)

can be considered as a limitation since it could have skewed the results. Finally, another limitation is the partial use of the burnout out and work-life balance scales pertaining to specific constructs. This limitation can be addressed by increasing the sample size and conducting further studies including complete scales.

As a recommendation, it would be interesting to investigate the flexible work arrangement within generations especially the millennials and within gender especially with respect to women since in most cultures they are still considered as the family care giver. Furthermore, the hybrid working mode is the most appealing mode based on the responses received regarding the preferred working mode (online, onsite or hybrid); hence it would be highly recommended to further investigate the employee preferences regarding work arrangement post-covid and their impact on performance and well-being. And finally, another aspect to investigate would be the effect of the COVID pandemic on the future of working models.

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