Enhancing Workplace Well-being: The Mediating Role of Resilience in the Impact of Emotional Exhaustion on Rescue Workers' Psychological Health

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Abstract: When employees' well-being improves, productivity will be enhanced, specifically when the job is highly demanding and stressful. This study examined the relationship between psychological health and emotional exhaustion, with resilience acting as a mediating factor. For this correlational survey, 206 rescue workers were chosen as a sample through purposive sampling. The study was conducted in South Punjab, Pakistan, between May and July of 2023 and measured psychological well-being, resilience, and emotional exhaustion. The participants' average age was 27.26 ±4.77 years. Emotional exhaustion had a meaningful direct influence on psychological well-being (β = -.550, p <.001) and an indirect meaningful influence through resilience (β = -.062, SE=0.03, p <.001), according to the mediation analysis. The relationship between psychological well-being and emotional exhaustion was meaningfully mediated by resilience. The results showed that emotional exhaustion increased as a result of high job demands, which harmed rescue workers' psychological health. However, this detrimental effect can be somewhat mitigated if personal resources such as resilience mediate the relationship. These findings have significant implications for organizational policies and interventions aimed at enhancing employees' resources to lessen the effects of workplace demands and enhance their well-being.

Keywords: Rescue Workers, Psychological well-being, Organizational Psychology, Occupational Health, Exhaustion, Resilience.

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1. Introduction

The nature of work that involves rescue workers, who are paramedics, firefighters, and disaster relief workers, is extremely high in stress level and stakes involved, hence it poses an immense psychological and physical challenge. They often have to face life-threatening accidents, traumatic experiences, and have to work long hours, which may lead to emotional exhaustion, a long-lasting condition with a state of mental and physical failure. This fatigue can lead to a deterioration in their psychological health as they may experience anxiety or depression, or they may become less satisfied with life. Another mediating factor, resilience or compensating or adapting to adversity, comes into play. The aspect of resilience encourages coping mechanisms that enhance psychological well-being and reduce the ill effects of emotional inability [1]. To comprehend how to develop the interventions to help mental health and preserve its essential role in society, it is highly important to investigate the interplay of psychological well-being, resilience, and emotional exhaustion among the representatives of this demographic.

Because of their low emotional and physical resources, the state of long-standing stress is called emotional exhaustion, which is common in positions such as a rescue worker. It is essential to understand professional pressure among first responders as it undermines motivation and psychic well-being [2]. The impact of this is on the effectiveness of rescue workers and their well-being; this is manifested through fatigue and a lack of crisis control. Resilience is the ability to change constructively when faced with adversity, which serves as an adaptive agent against stressors. Emotional exhaustion has the potential to hinder the performance of rescue workers due to the effects of emotional fatigue, and resilience can be used to manage this aspect [3]. The psychological well-being of any person is the capacity to live a full life, and hence it encompasses their emotional health, psychological health, and also their social well-being. Psychological well-being of rescue personnel ensures that they will be able to cope with the demands of the job without compromising their professional duties and mental state [4].

Because rescuers are regularly subjected to extremely stressful work environments, and occupational stress as a factor has often been ignored in resilience-based intervention studies, the research is significant as it touches upon an increasing number of cases of emotional exhaustion in the community. Although peculiarities of psychological well-being and emotional exhaustion as the independent variables have already been studied, not much is known regarding the role of resilience as the mediator explaining the links between them in high-stakes occupations such as rescue work [5, 6]. The study has managed to fill this gap, which makes it possible to implement targeted programs to enhance the performance and overall well-being of rescue workers. The focus of the study is to research the mediation role of resilience in determining the relationship between the psychological welfare and emotional fatigue of the rescue personnel. By elucidating such connections, this research would contribute to developing evidence-based treatments that would enhance resilience, reduce emotional exhaustion, and facilitate well-being within the high-stress work setting. This provides a backdrop for a comprehensive analysis of the underlying concepts that provide a theoretical set-up of how to understand its linkages and implications [6].

Emotional exhaustion is one of the major elements of burnout, where one is experiencing a lack of emotional resources due to a prolonged period of being exposed to workplace stressors [2]. This construct has been intensively studied in occupations that are of high demand and where stress is chronic, such as the case with healthcare, law enforcement, and rescue work. This construct has been well-tested when it comes to occupations that are in high demand and that

face the risk of chronic stress, such as healthcare, law enforcement, and rescue work. Emotional exhaustion has been linked to negative outcomes that include reduced psychological well-being, heightened turnover intent, and deteriorated job performance [7]. The intervention that seeks to deal with the mental health of rescue workers should also tackle the problem of emotional exhaustion that is compounded by the regular exposure of the rescue workers to horrific occurrences.

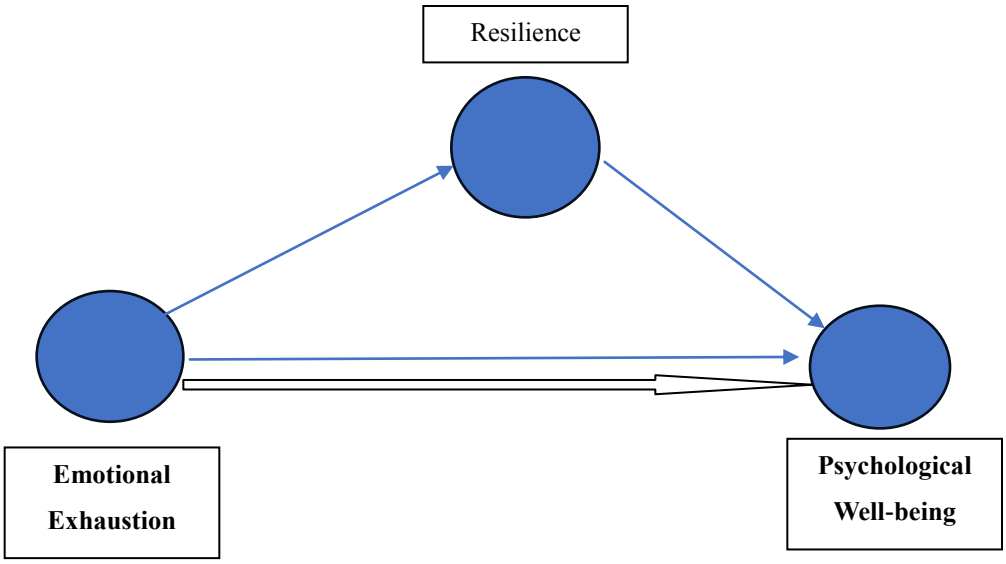
Resilience is the ability to adapt and bounce back positively in the wake of adversity [8, 9]. They stated that it is a process that varies with changes in life due to interactions and experiences [9]. Resilience affects mental, physical, and emotional well-being, including academic performance, and it is the essential element of health [9, 10]. It enables individuals to maintain or rebuild their mental health, regardless of what they are going through due to stress or difficulty. The resilience could be developed through adaptive actions, positive role models, and supportive connections [9]. Writing has been discovered to be an effective solution to building resilience, where individuals will be courageous enough to directly tackle challenges (Chavis, 2022). To alleviate the number of diverse issues, including physician burnout and social disasters, like COVID-19, one needs to understand the notion of resilience [8].

Ryff and Keyes [11] suggest that psychological well-being encompasses optimal functioning of an individual in emotional, psychological, and social levels. It includes such aspects as self-sufficiency, growth, positive relationships, and a sense of purpose in life. Rescue workers will have to make sure that they have good psychological well-being to enable them to retain job performance and ensure general mental health. Research defines resilience as enhancing psychological well-being by promoting process amplification of emotional virtuosity and dissimilarity of assessing levels of stress and establishment of coping strategies [12, 13].

The Job-Demand Resource (JD-R) Model provides a good theoretical framework for understanding the psychology of the associations among psychological well-being, resilience, and emotional weariness among rescue workers. The strategy separates the workplace factors into resources that boost well-being and facilitate coping and job strains that drain mental and physical resources [7]. Emotional fatigue is one of the primary manifestations of burnout, and it is a work requirement caused by the stressful and hazardous mission of rescue work. Resilience as a human resource serves as a buffer, you know, to help rescue personnel survive the aftermath of emotional depletion, which is reported to be quite negative [14]. Psychological well-being

quantifies the positive gains that are associated with ample resources in alleviating the pressures that the work demands place on an individual. The JD-R model is particularly applicable in this population because it highlights the dynamic nature of the interaction between demands and resources and demonstrates how one can help develop a resilience that can protect their psychological well-being in the face of high demands of rescue work [15, 16]. This paradigm throws weight on focused interventions as a means by which to increase resilience and other personal resources to help enhance the mental health and professional stewardship of rescue workers.

In the study of emergency responders, the linkage between emotional fatigue and suicide is quite strong, and means of exhaustion may contribute greatly to the chances of suicidal behaviors [17]. It was recently identified that resilience and psychological distress are partial mediators in the association between employee workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion, whereas mindfulness has insignificant moderating effects, according to a study consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model [18]. It has been reported that psychological well-being has a positive effect on the grit of learners and that engagement and resilience lie in between them [20]. The concept of resilience has been identified as part of the vital elements in healthcare facilities in the management of family physician burnout [21]. Modern research has found that the emotional intelligence and resilient traits of character, namely perseverance, have a great influence on the psychological well-being of teachers [22]. According to the same study, female instructors are more resilient and emotionally intelligent than their male counterparts. These results emphasize how crucial it is to take into account both organizational and individual elements when fostering resilience and psychological well-being in a variety of professional circumstances.



Conceptual Framework of the Impact of Emotional Exhaustion on Psychological Well-Being with Resilience as Mediator

1.1 Hypotheses of the Study:

- Emotional exhaustion will have a significant negative impact on psychological well-being among rescue workers.
- Resilience will mediate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and psychological well-being, such that higher resilience will weaken the negative effect of emotional exhaustion on psychological well-being among rescue workers.

2. Method

From May 2023 to August 2023, a study using a correlational research design was carried out on rescue service providers, such as medical officers, computer operators, managers, administrators, firefighters, ambulance and cycle services, water rescuers, and leaders of fire rescues. Purposive convenience sampling was used to collect data from 206 rescue workers in South Punjab. Rescue workers in South Punjab between the ages of 20 and 40 met the inclusion requirements. Additionally, the study had a larger percentage of male participants (95%) because of the nature of the work.

Ethical guidelines were followed in the conduct of this research, and institutional review board approval was obtained (No./PSY:738/2023). Data were gathered from several rescue worker divisions by asking them to complete surveys and provide their consent. To fully represent the

range of job demands and resources encountered in the field, data from all departments of rescue workers had to be obtained.

2.1 Measures

This study employed self-report measures that, by theoretical background, offered the best operationalization of the study variables. It was guaranteed that there would be no issues with cross-cultural validation of the instruments employed in this study. Additionally, it will take into account the instruments' strong psychometric qualities.

2.1.1 The Emotional Exhaustion (EE) scale

Participants' emotional exhaustion was measured using the Emotional Exhaustion (EE) scale, a subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The nine components on this scale are intended to measure how emotionally exhausted and overextended one feels as a result of one's job. Higher scores indicate higher degrees of emotional weariness. Each item is assessed on a 6-point Likert scale, with 0 denoting never and 6 denoting every day. The evaluations for each item are added up to determine the final score, which can range from 0 to 54. With Cronbach's alpha scores generally exceeding 0.85, indicating great internal consistency, the scale has shown high dependability in a variety of occupational contexts. The EE scale and the MBI are well known for their strong psychometric qualities and have been verified in a variety of cultural and professional contexts [23].

2.1.2 WHO well-being scale

One of the most used measures of psychological well-being is the WHO-5 Well-Being index. It is composed of five questions that evaluate the subjective emotional state of an individual over the last two weeks. Using a 6-point Likert scale (0 to 5), the respondents can be asked about the degree of frequency with which they have experienced the given emotions: never, rarely, occasionally, frequently, very frequently, always. The sum of the answers to the five questions will be obtained as the final score, the maximum of which is 25, and the greater the value, the greater the psychological well-being. The WHO-5 is also supposed to provide a quick and precise measurement of well-being, and it has shown itself to be valid within the cultural settings and has internal consistency marked with excellent numbers (Cronbach's alpha 0.80-0.90). It is commonly applied in countering general mental health at both research and practice levels [24].

2.1.3 Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) was utilised to assess the level of resilience of the participants in the present study. This scale is composed of six items and measures the ability of an individual to recover or bounce back in case of stress. Each of such topics is scored using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 equals strongly disagree or 5 equals strongly agree. The best resilience is shown by higher scores. All the responses are summed to give the final score. Reporting a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91, the BRS has high internal consistency with the original research, which shows that it can be depended upon as a valid determinant of resilience [25].

2.2 Analysis

SPSS 26.0 was used to perform the analysis. The first stage of the study included the descriptive and correlational analysis. After that, PROCESS MACRO, which was based on model 4, was used to analyze the data in order to look at how emotional tiredness directly affects psychological well-being and how psychological capital functions as a mediator. Significant results were defined as a p-value of 0.05 or below.

3. Results

Following the data collection process, SPSS version 27 was used to enter the data and perform additional analysis. Cronbach's alpha, as well as mean, standard deviation, ranges, skewness, and kurtosis, were utilized to examine the psychometric qualities and descriptive statistics of assessment measures used to evaluate psychological well-being, emotional weariness, and resilience among rescue workers. Table 1 shows the values that were desired.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Psychometric Properties of Emotional Exhaustion, Resilience, and Psychological Well-Being

Variable	K	M	SD	Actual Range	Potential Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	9	27.43	6.22	13 - 43	9 - 54	0.34	-0.56
Resilience (BRS)	6	3.78	0.69	1.52 - 5.00	1 - 5	-0.48	-0.85
Psychological Well-Being (WHO-5)	5	17.21	4.12	6 - 30	5 - 30	-0.31	-0.17

Note: K= Number of items; M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation, EE= Emotional Exhaustion, BRS= Brief Resilience Scale, WHO= Psychological Well-Being

The Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Resilience (BRS), and Psychological Well-Being (WHO-5) scales' descriptive statistics and psychometric qualities are shown in Table 1 for the sample of 206 participants. Each scale's skewness, kurtosis, actual range, prospective range, mean, standard deviation, and number of elements (K) are given. For this scale, the skewness and kurtosis values showed a comparatively typical distribution. Overall, the data indicate that all three scales have good psychometric qualities, indicating that they are appropriate for evaluating the corresponding components in this sample.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix for Emotional Exhaustion, Resilience, and Psychological Well-Being (N = 206)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	—	-.26**	-.60**
2. Resilience (BRS)	—	—	.37**
3. Psychological Well-Being (WHO-5)	—	—	—

Note: Acceptable range of coefficient of alpha is 0.6-0.8 (Klein, 1999), **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). BRS=resilience, PWB=psychological well-being, EE=emotional exhaustion (burnout inventory).

The correlation matrix for psychological well-being (WHO-5), resilience (BRS), and emotional exhaustion (EE) is shown in Table 2. High emotional exhaustion is linked to low resilience and psychological well-being, according to the results, which also show a significant negative correlation between EE and both Resilience (BRS) (r = -.26**) and Psychological Well-Being (WHO-5) (r = -.60**). Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between Resilience (BRS) and Psychological Well-Being (WHO-5) (r =.37**), indicating that more resilient people also typically report higher psychological well-being. At the p <.01 level, every correlation is statistically significant.

Table 4: Mediation Analysis of Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Resilience (R), and Psychological Well-Being (PWB)

Path	Coefficient (b)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval (CI)
EE → R	-0.1484	0.0383	-3.8797	< .001	[-0.2239, -0.0730]
EE → PWB (Direct Effect)	-0.5500	0.0565	-9.7290	< .001	[-0.6614, -0.4385]
R → PWB	0.4193	0.0998	4.2006	< .001	[0.2225, 0.6161]
Indirect Effect (EE → PWB via R)	-0.0622	0.0343			[-0.1418, -0.0101]

Note. EE = Emotional Exhaustion; R = Resilience; PWB = Psychological Well-Being. All coefficients are unstandardized. The table presents coefficients, standard errors, t-values, p-values, and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for each path in the mediation model. All paths are statistically significant at p < .001.

The findings of the mediation analysis analyzing the connections among psychological well-being (PWB), resilience (R), and emotional exhaustion (EE) are displayed in Table 4. Resilience (RT) (b = -0.1484, p <.001) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) (b = -0.5500, p <.001) were substantially predicted by Emotional Exhaustion (EE). Psychological Well-Being (PWB) was positively predicted by Resilience (R) (b = 0.4193, p <.001). With a confidence interval spanning from -0.1418 to -0.0101, the indirect impact of Emotional Exhaustion (EE) on Psychological Well-Being (PWB) via Resilience (R) was significant (b = -0.0622, p <.001). These findings imply that the association between psychological well-being (PWB) and emotional exhaustion (EE) is partially mediated by resilience (R).

4. Discussion

With resilience (RT) acting as a mediator, the current study sought to inquire about the relationship between emotional fatigue and psychological well-being. The mediation analysis's findings show that psychological well-being is impacted by emotional tiredness both directly and indirectly, with resilience acting as a major mediating factor in this relationship.

High emotional exhaustion was linked to poor psychological well-being, as evidenced by the significant direct influence of emotional exhaustion on psychological well-being (β = -0.55). According to research, psychological health and life happiness are greatly impacted by emotional weariness. According to long-term research of nursing students, the most significant aspect of academic burnout in predicting psychological well-being was emotional weariness [26]. Similarly, emotional weariness mediated the association between bullying and psychological well-being loss in a study on workplace bullying [27]. Psychological detachment was found to moderate the negative association between work intensity and life satisfaction through emotional tiredness [28]. According to Chen and Hsu [29], emotional weariness brought on by job expectations and resources had a detrimental effect on bus drivers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn had an effect on their life satisfaction and intention to leave their jobs. These results underline how crucial it is to address emotional depletion in workplace interventions since they repeatedly show how important it is in determining psychological well-being and life satisfaction in a variety of occupational situations.

Apart from the direct impact, emotional tiredness also exhibited a substantial indirect effect (β = -0.0622) on psychological well-being through resilience. This implies that the association between psychological well-being and emotional weariness is partially mediated by resilience. In particular, a higher level of emotional tiredness results in a lower level of resilience, which ultimately leads to a lower level of psychological well-being. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) paradigm, which contends that high job demands (such as emotional weariness) can cause burnout and deplete personal resources like resilience, eventually impacting well-being, is consistent with this finding [7].

The complex connections among psychological well-being, resilience, and emotional weariness in diverse work environments have been the subject of recent research. According to research, emotional weariness is highly predicted by workplace bullying, and this relationship is partially mediated by psychological distress and resilience [18]. Resilience mitigates the associations between secondary trauma and mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, among employees who have experienced secondary trauma [30]. Both directly and indirectly, through emotional weariness, work-family conflict has a detrimental impact on nurses' subjective well-being [32]. Resilience has a favorable correlation with psychological well-being in medical students, whereas academic burnout has a negative correlation. Crucially, the substantial negative

impacts of academic burnout on psychological health are mitigated by resilience [33]. These results demonstrate how important resilience is in reducing the detrimental effects of varied stressors on psychological health across a range of work environments.

The study's findings have significant practical ramifications, especially in workplace environments where emotional weariness is common. Organizations should place a high priority on staff stress and burnout reduction measures since emotional weariness has a substantial negative influence on psychological well-being. To lessen the effects of high demands, this includes interventions that focus on work-life balance, workload management, and providing sufficient organizational and social support [34]. Additionally, encouraging resilience as a personal asset can improve workers' capacity to manage pressures and lower the risk of burnout [35].

Including resilience training in workplace wellness initiatives may help maintain psychological well-being and act as a successful burnout prevention strategy. In high-stress industries like healthcare, where workers are frequently at risk for emotional tiredness and burnout, such programs may be especially helpful [36].

5. Limitations and Future Directions

It is possible to mention several limitations, even though it is clear that this research contributes to a better understanding of interconnectedness between psychological well-being, resilience, and emotional weariness. To start with, insights on causation linkages between the variables are not possible through the cross-sectional nature of the study. The longitudinal dynamics of these interactions could be revealed in the future using longitudinal approaches in long-term research. In addition, the research was only conducted in South Punjab, and this would have restricted the generalizability of the findings to the rest of the demographics or other cultures. Future research on the study would be useful by conducting the research under different situations to determine whether such associations generated in this study are true in most contexts. Suggestion that further potential mediators, like coping strategies or support, should also be explored can also be seen as a step towards a better understanding of the mechanisms through which emotional tiredness can affect wellbeing.

6. Conclusion

The present research finds that emotional exhaustion is a key factor in reducing the level of psychological well-being, and the factor that mediates the relationship is resilience. Such

findings suggest that resilience and emotion-exhaustion-based therapies could be pivotal to developing a healthy psychological state, particularly in stressful working environments. Further research is necessary to examine other mediators and moderators of this relationship, and the prolonged consequences of these effects on the mental health outcomes of people.

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