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## A SURVEY ON ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE IN IRANIAN RESTAURANTS DURING COVID-19

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** The COVID-19 Pandemic influenced and damaged many small and medium businesses. Business resilience in any organization represents the strength and tolerance of that organization in times of crisis. In this study, a general picture of the quality of restaurant management in Iran is examined from the lens of business resilience related constructs adopted from Organizational Resilience HealthCheck, a free self-assessment tool from the Organizational Resilience web site of Dept. of Home Affairs of Australian government.

**Methodology-** HealthCheck examines and provides benchmarks about the flexibility of the organization and the business to adapt and evolve in global markets to contain and address short-term shocks and long-term crises or challenges. The SMEs covered in this research include 52 restaurants in three major cities in Iran. The organizational resilience and the experiences accumulated from the COVID-19 outbreak have been investigated against independent variables, such as: leadership and decision making, network and social capital, situational awareness, and the employee's engagements within the organization. These questions examine and review the components of leadership in the organization under critical conditions and organizational experiences in the crisis.

**Findings-** The data and findings have shown that decision making related indicators, are correlated with indicators of business resilience. In the issue of Employee Engagement that represents the lack of employee's engagement, there is a mild correlation with the problems of the organization and business. In other words, the lack of empathic environment. The existence of an administrative system helps to better prepare a business to identify crises and to behavioral readiness to face them. This approach in the administrative system will lead to more coherent decisions to allocate resources to face crises. There is a relatively strong correlation between familiarity with risk management and the ability to predict crises.

**Conclusion-** The findings illustrate that management skills, knowledge, and awareness lead to the ability of anticipating crises before the occur. It has also been observed that familiarity with crisis management and risk will lead to the creation of guidelines and protocols to face risks. A strong parallel between behavioral readiness for crises in business and the ability to respond to the crisis means that by raising the awareness and pre-awareness of the crisis, the response is much faster in the event of a crisis. Behavioral readiness in the organization for crises is capable of identifying crises. In Iran, due to the lack of governmental support for this business, there were more severe problems, and the situation even forced many activists and investors in the field to invest in other markets and industries. The lack of governmental and businesses readiness for such crises can also be another reason for failing to succeed.

**Keywords:** Organizational resilience, resilience, hospitality industry, restaurant industry, SMEs, crisis, Covid-19

**JEL Codes:** G12, G14, C22

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