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Social media and personnel resilience: Insights from the 2020 refugee crisis in Greece

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Abstract. The escalation of armed conflicts and economic instability has led to a significant surge in migration and refugee movements. Crisis communication via social media platforms and networking sites can significantly influence the perceptions of personnel directly involved in crisis management, such as security forces. Most research on crisis communication through social media focuses on the experiences of migrants and refugees, leaving the perspectives of security personnel relatively underexplored. The present study examines the impact of posts and messages received on security personnel's social media accounts on their organizational behavior. Specifically, it investigates how online social support and organizational identification contribute to enhancing employee resilience during the 2020 refugee crisis that unfolded along the southeastern EU borders, particularly in the Evros region. A structured questionnaire was administered to 237 Greek security personnel directly involved in border patrol operations. By analyzing the effects of social media interactions, this research aims to shed light on the mechanisms that help security personnel maintain resilience under challenging conditions. The findings underscore the critical role of online social support and organizational identification in strengthening resilience. The study also outlines both theoretical and practical implications and offers recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Social Media, Refugee Crisis, Greece.

1. Introduction

In a volatile geopolitical environment marked by escalating conflicts and economic uncertainty, migration flows remain a high priority on the European Union's agenda. Security personnel are operating under challenging, and sometimes divisive, conditions to secure Europe's borders (Stockemer et al., 2020). In these situations, social media often serves as a platform for public expression—whether in support of or opposition to these efforts—which can influence the

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perceptions of those involved. Therefore, it is crucial for public organizations, which bear the brunt of managing refugee crises, to develop and sustain resilience, particularly for employees working on the front lines. Despite the critical role of security forces in managing these crises, the perspectives of security personnel are underrepresented in the literature, with the majority of studies focusing on the experiences of refugees and immigrants.

According to the literature, employees are the backbone of any organization, significantly contributing to its success and sustainability. Employee resilience acts as a catalyst for organizational efficiency, cohesion, and long-term viability by enhancing satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (Cooke et al., 2019; Shin et al., 2012; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Resilience, as a psychological asset, increases employees' ability to buffer against volatile situations and mitigate stressors (Fredrickson et al., 2008). From an organizational perspective, resilience facilitates adaptability, enabling better management of resources during unpredictable work-related challenges (Stoverink et al., 2020). Employee resilience can be influenced by both internal and external factors, including leadership and social support (Cooke et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019; Yang & Lee, 2023). This becomes especially critical in times of refugee crises, where public organizations play a pivotal role in managing evolving situations.

When public service employees face prolonged exposure to challenging situations, the resulting stress can negatively impact their emotional stability (Mao et al., 2022). However, social support from public opinion can be beneficial in reducing stress and enhancing resilience (Zhao et al., 2021). Social networking sites play a decisive role in expressing this support, which can either protect or degrade the public image and external prestige of the involved public organization (Zhou et al., 2022). Security personnel, in particular, may confront ethical dilemmas, high stress, and public scrutiny (Walsh, 2019). The interaction, both physical and social mediated, between employees and stakeholders can strengthen their affiliation with the organization, especially when employees feel they are contributing to creating value in the community (Bose et al., 2020). Moreover, organizational identification acts as a psychological anchor during crises, helping individuals stay focused and committed despite the challenges they face (Jaspal & Nerlich, 2020). High levels of identification are associated with enhanced resilience, which promotes organizational goals and fosters a robust and supportive work environment (Peng et al., 2023).

Our study focuses on the refugee crisis that unfolded during February - March of 2020 in the Evros region. Large groups of migrants residing in Turkey, an officially recognized safe state, read online posts falsely claiming that the Greek-Turkish borders would be open, and that anyone wishing to enter an EU member state could approach the Kastanies area and cross into Greece via local customs (İşleyen & Karadağ, 2023). Additionally, tourist buses were departing from various Turkish cities near the western borders with Greece (Kotoulas & Pusztai, 2020). This type of fake news, circulating on social media platforms and websites, led to the mass mobilization of thousands of individuals to the border, where they repeatedly attempted to cross into Greece. In response, the Greek government mobilized security forces (armed forces, police, border patrol, and healthcare personnel) to prevent irregular immigration flows and to inform EU member states about the situation in the Evros region (Kotoulas & Pusztai, 2020). The situation gradually de-

escalated with the emergence of COVID-19 in late March 2020 and the steadfast stance of the Greek government back by the European Union, along with the security forces responsible for managing the crisis (Kotoulas & Pusztai, 2020).

While existing literature suggests that resilience can be influenced by external social support and the level of employees' organizational identification, empirical evidence in the context of public organizations, especially within security forces, is scarce (Kanapeckaitė & Bagdžiūnienė, 2024). Our study aims to address the gap by shedding light on the mechanisms that influence the resilience of security personnel during a refugee crisis. Specifically, this research explores the impact of online social support on the resilience of security personnel, as well as the mediating role of organizational identification, in the context of the 2020 refugee crisis unfolded at the Evros border between Greece and Turkey. To achieve this, we gathered insights from security personnel directly involved in the crisis management process, examining how their interactions with their social environment via social media shaped their perceptions of the social support they received. The paper proceeds with the literature review followed by the methodology. The next two sections highlight the study's results, providing a relevant discussion, and addressing the implications. The paper culminates in the conclusions, the relative limitations and suggestions for further studies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Employee Resilience

Employee resilience is the ability to adapt to the volatility of the surrounding environment (London, 1993) and recover from stressful and exhausting situations (Bani-Melhem et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022). Resilient employees are crucial to organizational success, as their adaptability allows them to navigate uncertainties, maintain their well-being, and foster a positive work environment. This not only helps individuals thrive but also bolsters the organization's overall resilience, contributing to its sustainability. Research supports the idea that resilience fortifies employees' psychology against adverse feelings (Al-Hawari et al., 2019) and plays a key role in the recovery phase following a crisis (Kim, 2020).

Despite the critical importance of employee resilience in organizational efficiency, the literature has not fully explored the factors that influence it (Peng et al., 2022). Since resilience is closely linked to employees' psychological state, it is particularly susceptible to the level of perceived social support they receive. In public organizations, where economic incentives are limited, employee psychology heavily depends on stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's value creation within the community. This social support acts as a buffer against stress, providing encouragement and a sense of belonging, which helps employees manage workplace challenges more effectively (Padmanabhanunni et al., 2023).

2.2. Emotional Online Social Support and Resilience

Given the high-stress nature of security personnel's work in the context of refugee crises, which often involves dealing with vulnerable populations under intense scrutiny, access to social support via digital platforms can be a vital source of psychological resilience (Kanapeckaitė & Bagdžiūnienė, 2024). Through social media and online communities, security personnel can connect with peers, family members, and the broader public, receiving emotional encouragement, empathy, and affirmation of their efforts.

According to the literature, individuals typically draw upon three main types of resources through social interaction: tangible, informational, and emotional support (Liu et al., 2018; Uchino, 2004). Social support helps alleviate the isolation and pressure that often arises from working in high-stress and demanding environments, while reinforcing their commitment to their duties and enhancing their ability to manage stress (Luo et al., 2022). In the context of this study, due to the operational demands of security forces personnel—who were deployed on the field and allowed to interact only at specific times each day—and the unique nature of the crisis situation, our focus was limited to emotional social support. Since both tangible and informational support were primarily provided by other organizational members in the field through direct interaction and communication, emotional support from external sources, such as family or social networks, became a key focus. This choice was made to better understand how this particular type of support influences their resilience and well-being in such constrained and challenging circumstances. By isolating emotional support in our analysis, we aimed to assess its unique contribution to helping these individuals manage stress and maintain their commitment under high-pressure conditions.

The pervasive presence of the internet and social media is a ground dimension that every military organization must embrace (Hellman et al., 2016). A significant percentage of the armed forces personnel engage in social media platforms systematically, whether for recreational purposes, information gathering, or staying connected with their social communities. Online interaction influences how employees consume, disseminate, and comment on content (Zhao et al., 2021).

Previous research presents conflicting findings regarding the impact of online social support and generally online interaction, especially in armed forces. Some studies suggest that it may be associated with increased stress (Dam et al., 2017) and reduced work performance (Liu & Ma, 2019) as well as the possibility of increased risk in revealing sensitive information remain always in the scene. On the other hand, other studies have demonstrated that online interaction can positively influence employees psychological states, enhancing their ability to respond effectively to challenging situations (Galanis et al., 2022) as well as having beneficial effect on armed forces personnel psychology acting in stressful and demanding situations and environment such as peacekeeping operations or war zones Hellman et al., 2016; Hellman & Wagnsson, 2015). While online social support is recognized as a crucial factor in managing stress levels and maintaining mental well-being, there is a significant gap in empirical evidence specifically focused on security personnel. Public organizations, especially those in the security sector, depend heavily on public acceptance and community support, given their lack of profit-driven motives. Based on the aforementioned considerations, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The perceived emotional online social support of Greek security personnel is positively related to their resilience levels in the context of the refugee crisis of 2020.

2.3. Emotional Online Social Support and Organizational Identification

Online social support plays a crucial role in fostering connectedness and replenishing the positive emotions that may be depleted in employees facing challenging situations (Myrick et al., 2023). The digital environment offers opportunities to express empathy, encouragement, and support, particularly for security personnel who may be distant from friends and family, and in need of feeling heard and understood as individuals (Jin et al., 2014). However, social media can also become a platform for debates, arguments, and conflict, depending on the stance of participants and the nature of comments or posts (Opitz et al., 2018). In this study, we focused on the impact of supportive feedback and positive comments on security employees' actions. Such feedback can help security personnel align their self-concept with their organization's identity, fostering a deeper connection with the organization and function as a buffer to the crisis related stress enhancing their well-being (Zhao et al., 2021). Conversely, negative or critical comments may challenge this alignment, potentially impacting morale and aggravating their psychological condition (Belschak & Hartog, 2009). For public organizations, such as security providers, emotional support during crisis management is crucial for fostering a sense of contribution to the common good and creating value for the broader community (O'Keefe et al., 2019).

Haslam et al. (2005) and Wegge et al. (2012) have shown that employees with higher levels of identification report less stress and greater persistence in the face of adversity. Organizational members with strong identification are also more likely to receive social support, as they typically demonstrate active engagement with the evolving situation and a commitment to serving the common good (Levine et al., 2005). These employees are better psychologically prepared and more likely to be creative in achieving organizational goals compared to those with lower identification (Avanzi et al., 2015). Building on this foundation, we propose the following hypothesis for testing:

Hypothesis 2: The perceived emotional online social support of Greek security personnel is positively related to their organizational identification levels in the context of the refugee crisis of 2020.

2.4. Organizational Identification and Resilience

Organizational identification is defined as an individual's sense of unity with or connection to an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Individuals have an inherent desire to identify with groups perceived as significant and favorably compared to others, which boosts their self-esteem (Tyler, 1989). A review of the literature underscores the importance of organizational identification, linking it to various positive employee behaviors and attitudes. These include increased engagement, improved performance, enhanced socialization, and a stronger organizational image (van Knippenberg, 2000; Weisman et al., 2022). Furthermore, identification seems to be associated with resilience and sustainability, indicating a positive correlation between employees'

identification with their organization and their propensity to remain resilient in challenging situations (Fairfield, 2019; Peng et al., 2022). This underscores the pivotal value of organizational identification, particularly during times of crisis, when fostering a strong sense of belonging can be crucial to maintaining organizational stability and effectiveness (Woods & Watkins, 2022). However, most of this evidence comes from the private sector, leaving a significant gap in public organizations, where financial incentives or promotions tied to achieving organizational goals are not applicable. In this study we postulate that the members who strongly identify with their organization are more likely to develop a collective stance against evolving challenges. This sense of affiliation may enhance their ability to cope with stress, adapt to volatile situations, and remain focused and dedicated to achieving organizational goals, contributing in the promotion of sustained resilience (Mao et al., 2022). Therefore, based on the above, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Organizational identification of Greek security personnel is positively associated with their perception of resilience in the context of the refugee crisis of 2020.

2.5. The Mediating role of the Organizational Identification

Organizational identification is a crucial multi-dimensional factor forging employees' morale (Klimchak et al., 2019), their work engagement commitment to the organization and higher motivation (Weisman et al., 2022). Prior evidence has indicated that identification can be enhanced through social support, either stemming from co-workers, supervisors or the broader social environment since these expressions of acceptance and appreciation contribute in feeling valued and significant for the organization as well as creating value for the community (van Knippenberg, 2000; Weisman et al., 2022). When the individual is highly affiliated with the organization it is probable that the employee will demonstrate robustness, decisiveness and commitment in accomplishing the organizational goals (Mao et al., 2022). Especially in times of crisis when adaptability is a substantial requirement and the psychological deposits may start to fade away gradually, the identification can act as a potential antecedent of the employee resilience. Based upon the abovementioned we project the following hypothesis for testing:

Hypothesis 4: The organizational identification of the security personnel mediates the relationship between online social support and resilience in the context of the refugee crisis of 2020.

3. The Role of Social Media in Crisis Communication for Security Personnel

In recent years, social media platforms and networking sites have emerged as vital tools for public leadership in crisis communication. Beyond traditional methods of relaying information, these platforms enable real-time updates, live streaming, direct interaction with the public, and immediate feedback (Gupta, 2017). Public leaders use social media not only to broadcast critical crisis-related information but also to gauge public sentiment, monitor rumors, and address misinformation (Luo et al., 2015). Timely and systematic communication through these channels can significantly enhance transparency and build trust with the community, a factor that is crucial during times of crisis (Luo et al., 2015; Triantafillidou & Yannas, 2020).

In addition to the formal accounts many armies maintain worldwide, the use of social media by security personnel is subject to strict guidelines and limitations (Kalkman & Groenewegen, 2018). While social media platforms provide valuable opportunities for personal connections and expressions of support, security personnel are not authorized to share details about ongoing operations or crisis management efforts (Lawson, 2014; Olsson et al., 2016). They must exercise caution in their public posts, as unauthorized communication could compromise security, spread misinformation, or unintentionally escalate a situation (Lawson, 2014; Triantafillidou & Yannas, 2023). However, when used responsibly, social media allows security personnel to stay connected with their support networks, receive encouragement from friends and family, and share experiences that foster camaraderie (Soeters & Tresch, 2010).

4. Methodology

4.1. Sample and Procedure

In this study, we utilized a structured questionnaire, which was deemed the most suitable method for gathering and processing information to conduct statistical analysis and reveal both direct and indirect relationships between variables (Vogt et al., 2014). Additionally, this approach ensured the anonymity of the participants.

To collect data, we conducted a questionnaire survey targeting security personnel directly involved in managing the refugee crisis in the Evros region from February to April 2020. We employed the snowball sampling method, which enabled us to reach potential participants by utilizing our personal and professional networks both online and offline. This method allowed us to start with initial respondents, who were then asked to share the survey with colleagues and peers who also participated in the crisis management efforts (Patton, 2015). By encouraging this chain-referral process, we expanded our sample size and gathered insights from a diverse group of security personnel across various branches (army, police, border patrol), roles (including nurses), and levels of social media engagement. This included individuals who interacted on social network sites in different capacities—as content consumers, contributors, or creators—offering a broader perspective on how social media use influenced their experiences and resilience during the crisis. This layered approach provided rich data on the different ways personnel engaged with digital platforms and how this engagement varied based on their roles and responsibilities, contributing to a nuanced understanding of online interactions in a crisis setting.

The process began in January 2024, with participants being informed about the study's purpose and provided with online informed consent. They were also encouraged to share the survey with other employees who had direct involvement in the 2020 crisis. We assured participants that their responses would remain anonymous and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. A total of 248 responses were collected, and after excluding 11 invalid questionnaires, the final sample consisted of 237 security personnel. This group included members of the armed forces, police, firefighters, border patrol officers, and nurses, many of whom were serving in different units. The demographic and online activity characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Variables	Categories	N	Percentages
Gender	Male	209	88.11%
	Female	28	11.89%
Profession	Armed Forces Personnel	188	79.32%
	Police Personnel	27	11.39%
	Firefighters	7	2.95%
	Border Patrol Personnel	10	4.22%
	Nurses	5	2.21%
Age	22 – 35	98	41.35%
	36 – 45	112	47.26%
	46 – 55	27	11.39%
Social Network Site	Facebook	225	94.94%
	Instagram	174	73.41%
	Tik Tok	23	09.70%
	LinkedIn	102	43.04%
	X (Twitter)	98	41.35%
	Viber	233	98.31%
	Messenger	195	82.27%
	Whatsapp	189	79.75%
	Signal	84	35.44%
Visit Social Media Platforms	Very Frequently (4times/day and more)	64	27.00%
	Frequently (1-3times/day)	125	52.74%
	Occasionally (1 every 2 days)	20	08.44%
	Rarely (1 per week)	28	11.81%
Content Consumers			
Type of activities "consumers" engage in	Watching videos or reading posts without interacting	162	68.35%
	Watching images or stories without interacting		
	Checking updates from friends or brands without interacting		
Content Contributors			
Type of activities "contributors" engage in	Watching videos or reading posts and commenting/ interacting	64	27.01%
	Watching images or stories and commenting/ interacting		
	Checking updates from friends or brands and commenting/ interacting		
Content Creators			
	Posting original videos or photos	11	4.64%

Type of activities "creators" engage in	Writing and sharing personal thoughts, opinions or commenting on everyday issues.		

4.1. Measures

To measure the Emotional Online Social Support (EOSS) variable, we used the 10-item scale developed by Nick et al. (2018). The Organizational Identification (OI) level of participants was assessed using the six-question scale from Mael and Ashforth (1992). For Employee Resilience (ER), we employed a 9-item scale previously utilized by Näswall et al. (2015). The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to rate the independent variables (EOSS and OI) and the dependent variable (ER).

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The results indicate that security forces personnel felt they received support from their social environment during that period (EOSS, M= 3.41, SD=1.08). Additionally, their level of organizational identification was found to be strong and positively related to their connection with the organization and its goals (OI: M = 3.88, SD = 0.99). Regarding the third variable, the findings show that security personnel felt highly resilient and adaptable to the challenging circumstances of the crisis period (ER: M = 4.39, SD = 1.03).

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha, Mean and Standard Diviation.

Variables	a	M	SD
1. Emotional Online Social Support	0.89	3.41	1.08
2. Organizational Identification	0.91	3.88	0.99
3. Employee Resilience	0.85	4.39	1.03

**Table 3**. Total, Direct and Indirect effects of the paths, and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals

Hypothesis	Path	Correlation	LLCI	ULCI	T	
H1	EOSS → ER	0.221**	0.084	0.337	4.101	
H2	EOSS → OI	0.197**	0.055	0.298	3.602	
H3	OI → ER	0.288**	0.101	0.382	4.924	
H4	EOSS → OI → ER	0.176**	0.041	0.204	3.256	

**p<0.001

Table 4 Standardized Factor Loadings for Items Assessing the Three Theoretical Constructs.

Variable	Coding	Question	Extraction
Emotional Online Social Support	EOSS1	People show that they care about me online.	0,675
	EOSS2	Online, people say or do things that make me feel good about myself.	0,688
	EOSS3	People encourage me when I'm online.	0,650
	EOSS4	People pay attention to me online.	0,435
	EOSS5	I get likes, favorites, upvotes, views, etc. online.	0,621
	EOSS6	I get positive comments online	0,678
	EOSS7	When I'm online, people tell me they like the things I say or do.	0,583
	EOSS8	Online, people are interested in me as a person.	0,721
	EOSS9	People support me online.	0,788
	EOSS10	When I'm online, people make me feel good about myself.	0,719
Organizational Identification	OI1	When someone criticizes my Organization, it feels like a personal insult.	0,832
	OI2	I am very interested in what others think about the my Organization	0,815
	OI3	When I talk about the my Organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'	0,794
	OI4	The Organization's successes are my successes	0,684
	OI5	When someone praises my Organization , it feels like a personal compliment	0,612
	OI6	If a story in the media criticized the my Organization, I would feel embarrassed	0,734
Employee Resilience	ER1	I effectively collaborate with others to handle unexpected challenges at work	0,699
	ER2	I successfully manage a high workload for long periods of time	0,701
	ER3	I resolve crises competently at work	0,822
	ER4	I learn from mistakes at work and improve the way I do my job	0,673
	ER5	I re-evaluate my performance and continually improve the way I do my work	0,726
	ER6	I effectively respond to feedback at work, even criticism	0,756
	ER7	I seek assistance to work when I need specific resources	0,711
	ER8	I approach managers when I need their support	0,800
	ER9	I use change at work as an opportunity for growth	0,817

Figure 1. The proposed research model.
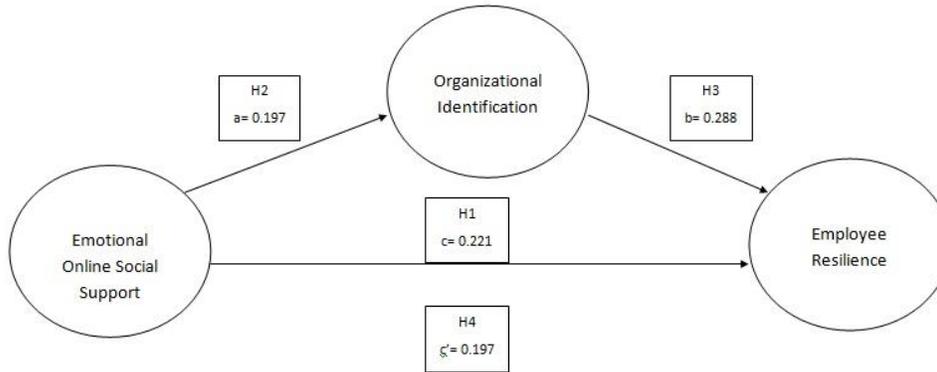
5.2. Data Analysis

To test the proposed model we conducted a series of analyses using PROCESS 4.2 macro for SPSS Statistics developed by Hayes (2017), specifically model 4 for mediation analysis. Based on 5,000 bootstrapped resamples, PROCESS can provide 95% confidence intervals (CI) for total effects, direct effects, and indirect effects. If the CI excludes zero, the effect is significant. Therefore, it is suitable for testing mediation effects (Cheng et al., 2022). To ensure the robustness of the model, we ran additional analyses incorporating gender, and the engagement level (content consumers, contributors, and creators) stationing as covariates (Pugliese et al., 2023), yielding the same results as presented in table 3.

The statistical analysis shows a strong positive relationship between **EOSS** and **ER** (c = 0.221, T = 4.101, p < .001). We then examined the effect of **EOSS** on **OI**, which was also positive and significant (a = 0.197, T = 3.602, p < .001), as well as the relationship between **OI** and **ER** (b = 0.288, T = 4.924, p < .001), which was similarly strong and positive. The total correlation of the variables, considering the mediating effect, revealed a significant positive relationship (c' = 0.176, T = 3.256, p < .001). Next, we analyzed the indirect effect of **EOSS** on **ER** through **OI**, focusing on the confidence interval limits [BootLLCI (.0410) – BootULCI (0.204)] and found that the value of 0 was not included. This finding suggests that **OI** partially mediates the relationship between **EOSS** and **ER.**

6. Discussion

In this paper, we investigated the relationship between emotional online social support and security personnel resilience, with a focus on the mediating effect of organizational identification, within the context of the refugee crisis of 2020. We gained insights from security forces personnel and considered the role of social networking interactions. Previous research has explored social support and employee resilience primarily within the health services sector (Mao et al., 2023; Shahwan et al., 2024). This study aimed to elucidate the underlying mechanisms affecting security personnel resilience, a crucial factor for public organizational effectiveness during crisis management. The

results revealed that both social support received through social media platforms and organizational identification are significant predictors of the security personnel resilience in challenging times. Furthermore, online social support positively contributes to security forces resilience through the sequential mediation effect of organizational identification. These findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between these concepts.

The analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between emotional online social support and personnel resilience (H1). Security personnel who receive support through social networking sites tend to experience improved psychological well-being and demonstrate greater resilience during difficult times. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which highlights the beneficial impact of social support on employee resilience (Galanis et al., 2022; Mao et al., 2022; Shahwan et al., 2024). However, existing research has predominantly focused on the health services sector, particularly in the context of COVID-19. This study extends the applicability of these relationships to new sectors, broadening the discussion to various public organizations.

Regarding the effect of emotional online social support on security personnel organizational identification (H2), the findings revealed a strong and positive relationship. In other words, security personnel who receive positive feedback and comments are more likely to develop a stronger affiliation with their organization's goals. One possible explanation is that employees perceive that their organization adds value to the community, benefiting its members, and thus feel that they are actively participating in this process through their membership. Previous research supports this finding (Ng & Sorensen, 2008; Poulsen et al., 2016), indicating that social support from various sources—such as friends, family, co-workers, supervisors, and online networks—can enhance employees' organizational identification.

Similarly, the relationship between the organizational identification of the security personnel and their resilience levels was found to be strong and positive (H3). This suggests that in uniform employees who align closely with the organization's identity and invest effort in achieving its goals and upholding its values are more resilient during critical times. Having higher identification is a crucial factor that enables them to handle pressure and contribute to the organization's sustainability. This insight is consistent with prior research that highlights the beneficial role of organizational identification in enhancing sustainability and performance (Fairfield, 2019; Mao et al., 2022; Peng et al., 2022).

In reference to the proposed mediating role of organizational identification between emotional online social support and employee resilience, the results supported our hypothesis (H4). The findings indicate that security personnel who received positive feedback from their online social environment exhibited higher resilience when they felt a strong sense of belonging to their organization. This suggests that organizational identification plays a crucial role in enhancing employee resilience, a factor that should be considered from a managerial perspective. To date literature has highlighted the role of organizational identification as a significant factor that improves employee's and, consequently, organizational performance in general (Mao et al., 2023; van Knippenberg et al., 2007).

This study represents, to the best of our knowledge, the first effort to explore the relationship between emotional online social support and security personnel resilience, with a focus on the mediating role of organizational identification. While there has been previous researches on these concepts in various academic fields, public organizations members perspective during refugee crises, which play a critical role in crisis management, have been underrepresented. The insights gained from examining the relationships between these three concepts offer valuable implications for theory and practice, particularly from managerial, human resources, and communication perspectives.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study significantly advances the literature on online social support and in uniform employees' resilience by uncovering the mediating role of organizational identification in crisis contexts. While previous research has explored the impact of social support on employees' psychological well-being during challenging situations with a special focus on COVID-19 crisis (Mao et al., 2023; Shahwan et al., 2024), this study focuses on social media use and organizational identification, areas that have been largely overlooked.

Additionally, this research extends the discussion to public organizations, highlighting mechanisms that can enhance security personnel resilience, which, in turn, contributes to organizational resilience and sustainability. The study underscores the importance of online social support in overcoming physical barriers, especially in high-stress situations where employees' professionalism, humanity, and sense of duty are under public scrutiny. In such demanding contexts, the support provided through online channels becomes crucial for fostering resilience amidst stress and anxiety (Morgan, 2023; Shahwan et al., 2024).

Our study also expands social support theories by incorporating the digital dimension of networking as a crucial factor in building resilience among security personnel. In an era where online interactions increasingly shape organizational dynamics, this research shows how digital platforms can serve as vital channels for providing emotional support during crises to the most valuable asset in public organizations' crisis management efforts—uniformed personnel. This digital aspect introduces a new layer to traditional social support frameworks, emphasizing the role of virtual communities in fostering resilience, particularly when physical barriers or widespread disruptions hinder face-to-face interactions. This aligns with the calls for further investigation made by Myrick et al. (2023), and Näswall et al. (2015), who urged researchers to explore the evolving role of digital networks in enhancing employee and organizational resilience.

Furthermore, by examining the mediating role of organizational identification, our study bridges crisis management with social identity theory, offering a nuanced understanding of how employees' sense of belonging to their organization can affect the effectiveness of crisis management efforts. Organizational identification emerges as a crucial factor that not only strengthens security personnel resilience but also enhances their commitment to the organization's

goals during a crisis. This interplay between identity and crisis response suggests that cultivating a strong organizational identity can be a strategic tool in managing crises, as it indirectly boosts the organization's ability to navigate and recover from challenging situations (Mao et al., 2023; Peng et al., 2022).

6.2. Practical Implications

This study offers valuable contributions to management and public relations, particularly within the context of crisis management. Based on our findings, we recommend that organizational leaders actively encourage employees to develop and expand their social networks, both in physical settings and online. By fostering a robust social network, employees can enhance their presence on social media platforms, increasing their visibility and opening up opportunities for receiving greater support and constructive feedback from peers and the broader community. This support can, in turn, bolster their resilience and ability to cope with stress during challenging times (Huang & Liu, 2017; Zhou et al., 2022).

Moreover, our research highlights the critical role of organizational identification, particularly in high-pressure situations. Leaders should focus on strengthening employees' sense of belonging and alignment with the organization's values and mission. This approach helps create a more cohesive and supportive work environment where employees feel connected, valued, and motivated to contribute positively to the organization's goals, even in the face of adversity.

Leadership should also prioritize boosting employees' self-esteem and empowerment by demonstrating trust and confidence in them. Building this foundation of trust is essential for fostering a resilient and motivated workforce. Leaders can adopt a two-way communication style that encourages open dialogue and feedback, allowing employees to feel that their opinions are valued and that they play an active role in the decision-making process. This inclusive approach enhances employees' sense of belonging and identification with the organization. When employees feel more connected and appreciated, they are more likely to support and engage with organizational initiatives that promote openness and transparency (Bose et al. 2020; Mao et al., 2023). Employees who exhibit a high level of organizational identification are also more inclined to share and promote beneficial initiatives, helping to disseminate key messages and showcase the organization's high morale and cohesion.

7. Conclusions, Limitations and suggestions for future research

In summary, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature regarding the role of online crisis communication through security personnel's social media accounts and how their resilience is influenced by these interactions. Specifically, we examined the impact of emotional online social support on personnel resilience and organizational identification. The findings highlight the critical role social media plays in such situations, not only as a tool for external communication but also as a source of support for those directly involved in crisis management. This underscores the necessity for leadership to actively foster security personnel's self-esteem and strengthen their

identification with the organization, which in turn fortifies their resilience in managing crises. By cultivating a sense of belonging and providing emotional reinforcement through online channels, organizations can enhance the ability of their personnel to withstand and adapt to high-pressure situations. This study ultimately calls for more attention to the integration of social media as a strategic asset in crisis communication and resilience-building efforts.

Several limitations of the current study highlight potential avenues for future research. The sample, limited to Greek security forces personnel, may restrict the generalizability of the findings. We also set to explore only the refugee crisis in 2020 at the region of Evros. Moreover, we centered our focus on emotional online social support as a significant factor affecting the perceptions of the personnel in involved in such situations.

To enhance the robustness of future studies, incorporating perspectives from personnel in international organizations such as FRONTEX would provide valuable insights. Additionally, conducting cross-country research in diverse contexts, such as Spain, Italy, or the USA, would help understand how different environments and organizational settings impact organizational identification and resilience. Longitudinal studies could further track changes in these variables over time, while comparative studies could examine experiences in countries facing varying levels of security challenges. Investigating the influence of technological advancements, including social media, on emotional support and resilience could also offer new dimensions. Moreover, including perspectives from other stakeholders, like non-governmental organizations or community leaders, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing organizational dynamics.

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