

The Impact of Managerial Psychological Capital on Export Performance: The Case of Agri-Food SMEs in Morocco

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Abstract: The globalization of trade and markets has disrupted the future of company. the relationships between economic actors, which makes the business environment uncertain, given the current context of global markets and growing exports, where competition is fierce in many different environments. Faced with this situation, large companies and multinationals have the know-how, networks and capacities to develop reflexes, strategic awareness necessary to detect changes in the environment and adapt them to their competitive strategies. On the other hand, SMEs and micro-enterprises encounter obstacles and barriers to easily internationalize due to many obstacles due to the lack of financial and human resources. This empirical study is based on conceptual and theoretical foundations that are the basis of our conceptual model of research. Indeed, after having treated the theoretical and conceptual framework related to the problem, we moved on to the empirical test of the conceptual model through the administration of a questionnaire, followed by processing and analysis of the results.

Keywords : Psychological capital, Manager, Export performance, SME, Agri-food

1. Introduction

Numerous studies and scientific research have demonstrated the relationship between the characteristics of the manager's profile and the competitiveness and performance of organizations and businesses. Indeed, each dimension strengthens the commitment to innovation, the creation of new products and services, and the search for new markets and outlets (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996 ; Miller, 1983 ; Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001 ; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005). This notion has been confirmed by the Schumpeterian view that innovative companies have exceptional performance and can be considered engines of economic development in countries (Schumpeter, 1934).

This research, whose objective is to study the relationship between the determinants of the manager's organizational capital and the SME's export performance, to solve our problem, we will first determine the conceptual and theoretical framework linked to the contribution in terms of organizational capital to the success of companies, then in the second step we will present the methodological framework of the research and finally move on to the empirical study.

1. SME Gouvernance

Regardless of its size or the sector of activity in which the company operates, the company's strategic decisions are influenced by a set of internal and external elements. As we have already seen, the great specificity of the SME is indeed the person of its owner-manager who plays a crucial role in the entire operation of his SME, particularly when it comes to making a strategic decision.

According to Paturel. R (1997), there are mainly three dimensions conditioning the SME's strategy and its strategic decisions : the owner-manager, the environment and the organizational characteristics. Detecting these internal and external factors requires a strategic diagnosis. It is thanks to this diagnosis that the choice of strategy can be made, in other words the strategic diagnosis is an essential prerequisite for managerial decision-making (strategic, tactical and operational) and the implementation of effective strategies, which aim to optimize the performance of existing activities or to successfully develop new activities (Franck Brulhart, 2009).

If SMEs are distinguished by their diversity, they nevertheless share an essential characteristic : the existence of a key figure, the Manager to whom an essential role is devolved, he is the basis, the foundation of the company and the condition of its existence, its survival and its growth (Wtterwulge. R, 2008). In addition, he is the sculptor of his organization's strategy, and the individual who assumes responsibility for strategic decisions (Varraut. N, 1998).

The manager can be defined as having the responsibility for an organization or one of its units (Mintzberg. H, 2005). For his part, Marchesnay. M (2004) defines the entrepreneur, or the owner-manager, as "the person who is able to make strategic decisions. In addition, when we speak of the manager of an SME, we generally refer to the one who has responsibility for an organization or a company, and often, he is the owner."

Filion describes the person of the manager. J (1997) as an "imaginative person, characterized by an ability to set and achieve goals, who maintains a high level of sensitivity in order to identify business opportunities, and makes moderately risky decisions that aim to innovate".

In this sense, the owner-manager designs, develops and realizes his visions based on his experience, his intuitions, his learnings and his cognition in order to discern the market variables that he identifies as success factors or threats.

2- The Manager's Psychological Capital

According to De Angelo (1981), is the likelihood that the auditor will identify and disclose material Taking its scientific roots in positive psychology, psychological capital is characterized by Luthans et al. (2007) as a positive psychological developmental state of an individual, characterized by a strong self-confidence in producing the efforts necessary to successfully achieve the difficult goals he has set for himself. It is the ability to attribute positive value to present or future successes ; perseverance in achieving goals and redirecting them to achieve success. Indeed, in order to face problems or adversity, the actor must be able to support them, overcome them and even go beyond to achieve the goals. For some years now, researchers have been interested in a strategic resource that directly influences individual performance: psychological capital (Ardichvili, 2011; Zhu and Hirst 2014) in the source is the

Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007) who define psychological capital as a positive psychological state of individual development characterized by high degrees of self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience developed stream of positive organizational behavior, this concept.

From these characteristics, four components emerge: self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience; these components combine and enable individuals in whom they are found to succeed in efficiently executing the most delicate tasks in equally difficult conditions (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Several studies have shown that psychological capital is linked to better performance, positive work attitudes, and reduced turnover (Peterson et al. 2011).

In entrepreneurship, the influence of psychological capital can be investigated at all stages of the entrepreneurial process (De Hoe and Janssen, 2016), particularly when the company is in the development phase. The pursuit of an entrepreneurial career being influenced by the cognitions of managers (Yamakawa et al. 2015), it is thus that the development of psychological capital among the founding managers of a newly created company would be a fundamental resource for the survival and sustainability of these companies, it is therefore important to understand this influence of the manager's psychological capital on the performance of their young company through the four dimensions regularly studied. That is, self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience.

a. Self-efficacy

Inspired by Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), self-efficacy can be understood as an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the required course of action to produce desired results (Bandura, 1997), it is in fact the individual's judgment of their own abilities and their aptitude to effectively deal with difficult situations and to be able to overcome them successfully in order to achieve their goals.

Individuals with a sense of self-efficacy tend to set challenging goals for themselves. They persist in order to achieve their goals, even in difficult and stressful conditions. They recover quickly in the event of failure, even in unfavorable conditions.

In entrepreneurship, several studies have shown that managers have a high degree of self-efficacy (Hayek, 2012). They have confidence in their ability to succeed in a task. The manager is motivated to make the necessary efforts for the smooth running of his activity (Trevelyan, 2011).

Managers who have a strong perception of their self-efficacy display greater stability. Their success rate is high when faced with difficulties (Zimmerman, 2000). Thus, it is not at all surprising that managers with a high level of self-efficacy succeed in making their businesses viable and performing. Indeed, faced with difficulties, entrepreneurs who have a low level of self-efficacy may develop serious doubts about their abilities. They will reduce their efforts or completely abandon their project, while those who have a strong sense of self-efficacy will make a greater effort to not only maintain themselves, but above all to make their project viable.

b. Optimism

Conceptualized by Seligman (1998), optimism is understood as a cognitive attitude that consists of a

strong self-confidence in having improved and positive results, but a realistic and flexible confidence (Luthans et al. 2007), an individual with realistic and high optimism is more motivated to achieve the goals they have set for themselves (Peterson, 2000).

Optimistic individuals are those who expect to have positive experiences in the future, unlike pessimistic individuals who expect to have negative experiences (Carver et al., 2001). Similarly, optimistic people are more likely to adapt to the various changes that occur in their lives, to identify opportunities in the future and to focus on these opportunities even in difficult situations.

In the literature, some research has shown that there is a relationship between optimism and job performance (Brown and Marshall, 2001). In general, individuals who lack optimism lack motivation because they believe that at the end of their efforts. Failure awaits them inevitably. They tend to focus on negative events likely to lead to failure rather than positive events. This is why they achieve low performance (Hmieleski and Baron, 2009). On the other hand, individuals with excessive optimism lead to negative results.

c. Hope

Conceptualized by Snyder et al. (1991), hope refers to a positive emotional state based on an interaction between three components: The goal, agency (goal-oriented energy), and planning the means to achieve goals.

Hope is a cognitive or thought state by which an individual is able to set realistic but ambitious goals and expectations and to seek to achieve them through their energy, self-determination, and the perception of their internal control (Luthans et al. 2007). It thus allows people to set goals, examine the necessary tools, and seek the energy needed to achieve them. Hope is conceptualized as a targeted cognitive process that focuses on achieving clear goals following organized plans and clear processes and action paths.

Research has shown a positive relationship between hope and the satisfaction of managers with being a business owner, Hayek (2012), Jensen and Luthans, (2006), indeed, for entrepreneurs, hope is a source of creativity, innovation and resource mobilization within start-up companies that condition the other phases of the company's life cycle.

a. Resilience

Resilience refers to how individuals manage to tolerate hardships to bounce back to succeed or return to normal everyday life after facing difficulties or failures (Masten, 2001).

Resilience encompasses the skills and psychological strengths of everyday life that can be identified, measured, maintained, and improved at any age and in all psychological circumstances of an individual (Masten and Obradovic, 2006). Therefore, resilient people are not exceptional and rare people. However, low-resilience individuals are more vulnerable. They are easily upset, often unable to return to normal activities after a difficulty. While those with high resilience are less vulnerable and the negative effects do not persist for long in them (Martin-Krumm and Tarquinio, 2011).

Many studies have focused on human capital (its knowledge, abilities, skills and experience) and social capital, referring to contacts with the environment (our relationships and professional networks), while

leaving aside internal resources. According to Luthans and Avolio (2009), psychological capital plays a complementary role to these human and social capitals, because it is about who we are and what we become (Luthans, Vogelgesang, and Lester, 2006).

3- Export performance

Performance in general remains a polysemic concept, since it always presents a methodological problem for its evaluation. Many attempts have been made on a theoretical and empirical level to explain and define the concept of "performance", but its meaning and measurement remain a problem for the academic and scientific sphere (Goodman et al. 1983).

The concept of performance is sometimes linked to notions such as performance, productivity, economies of scale, efficiency, and effectiveness (more common notions). However, other notions are associated with performance (success, excellence, success, etc.) which makes the meaning of the concept more complex and can sometimes be justified by the choice of criteria retained by different stakeholders of the organization due to the role, status and expectations of individuals within it.

The export performance of a company is linked to the specific behavior of the company through the exploitation of its resources and capacities in an international context at a given time. The export performance of companies is considered one of the key indicators of the success of a company's export operations, as such many studies have been conducted in order to better understand the factors (specific to the company or to the environment) and behaviors (export strategy, characteristics of the manager's profile, etc.) that impact the company's export results.

Export performance is defined as the composite result of a company's international sales, including three sub-dimensions : export sales, export profitability and export growth (Soham, 1998 cited by Maurel 2010). This performance therefore reflects the result of a company's export activity.

According to Deshpande et al. (1993) and Alami (2013), three considerations for choosing the dimensions of export performance are essential :

- Export performance is multidimensional, according to theoretical and empirical contributions, this variety gives rise to objective and subjective measurement criteria
- Export performance measures are the results of the strategic behavior of any company, therefore the object of measurement of export performance remains without consensus.
- Export market structures affect export conditions, which in turn affect export performance.

In the literature, two types of indicators are used to evaluate export performance, namely, objective and subjective indicators (Sousa et al. 2008). Objective measures designate indicators that are mainly based on absolute values, such as export intensity, export sales volume and export market share. Conversely, subjective indicators measure perceived or behavioral performance, such as export success and perceived satisfaction with export sales (Sousa et al. 2008).

For our work, we have retained as export performance indicators, the variables measuring the perception of performance of the managers of agri-food SMEs, exporters in Morocco.

4- Leader's psychological capital and export performance

The resource-based theory of the firm has proven to be an extremely popular theoretical foundation for many studies seeking to explain the sources of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations, Acedo, Barroso and Galan, (2006), Newbert (2007). This popularity is justified when we examine evidence showing the positive relationship between strategic resources (i.e., those that are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate or replace) and performance (Crook, Ketchen Jr. Combs and Todd, 2008). Among the strategic resources that can contribute to a sustainable competitive advantage is psychological capital as a form of strategic resource.

In theory, individuals who are rich in psychological capital have more resources to draw on to pursue goals (Hobfoll, 2002) and therefore may perform better than those who are low in psychological capital (Luthans, Avolio et al.2007, Luthans, Norman et al. 2008).

Hmieleski and Carr (2008) argued for the existence of a positive relationship between leaders' psychological capital and their new venture performance. They collected data from 216 US-based leaders. They came to the conclusion that psychological capital explains a considerably significant variance, beyond other forms of capital (human, social and financial) in the performance of their new ventures, they asserted that leaders generally engage in a dynamic environment full of risks, threats and uncertainties and which requires quick decision-making. They generally engage in a lack of conventional forms of capital such as human, social and financial capital, in these circumstances. Leaders must rely heavily on their own personal capabilities. Therefore, psychological capital, as a personal psychological resource, may prove to be an important element of their business, which can facilitate accomplishment and success and the achievement of superior performance.

As psychological capital is theoretically and empirically linked to performance, desirable attitudes and desirable behavior and negatively linked to undesirable attitudes and undesirable behavior. It therefore seems convincing to anticipate that psychological capital sharing the variance of hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy is a strong predictor of leaders' performance and growth intentions.

The analysis of the impact of the leader's profile on the strategic trajectory of the firm and particularly on growth has stimulated a lot of work in strategic management. Very early on, researchers were able to highlight socio-psychological links between the leader and the strategic trajectory of the firm. These links can be related to psychology (Selznick, 1957, Zaleznick, 1989, Noël, 1989, Lapierre, 1995), the leader's personality, often linked to his history (Smith, 1967), and finally the leader's motivations (Marchesnay, 1994; Saporta, 1989).

The role of leaders' psychological capital on firm performance has attracted the attention of many researchers. Digan et al. (2019) conducted a survey of 369 women leaders of small and medium-sized enterprises in western India. They found that women leaders can meet the challenges of self-employment through psychological capital in order to gain business advantages and autonomy... Baluku et al. (2018) studied the influence of psychological capital and autonomy on overall performance.

Drawing on self-determination theory and the literature on psychological capital, it was found that leaders were satisfied with the influence of psychological capital, autonomy and their interaction with engagement and that psychological capital had a significant influence on training and performance.

Prost et al. (2017) studied whether the "psychological capital" of top leadership composed of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism can mitigate the relationship between job insecurity and employee performance. The results showed that leaders with high psychological capital can reduce employee insecurity and improve organizational performance. Edwards and Rowe (2019) built a framework for the relationship between psychological capital, employee mental health, and organizational performance. They tested the role of this structure on employee mental health and job satisfaction. The results showed that leaders' psychological capital can be used as an intermediary to increase employee job satisfaction and mental health, so as to improve the development of organizational performance.

Numerous theoretical and empirical studies have proven that psychological capital has a consistent, positive, and significant impact on employee performance, as well as on work-related attitudes and behaviors.

In summary, the current analysis of the effect of leader psychological capital on firm performance is a hot topic and requires a thorough discussion of the relationship between leader psychological capital, creative innovation behavior, and firm performance, particularly SMEs.

In light of these developments and the fact that the four dimensions interact for a satisfied level of psychological capital, we formulate our four research hypotheses as follows :

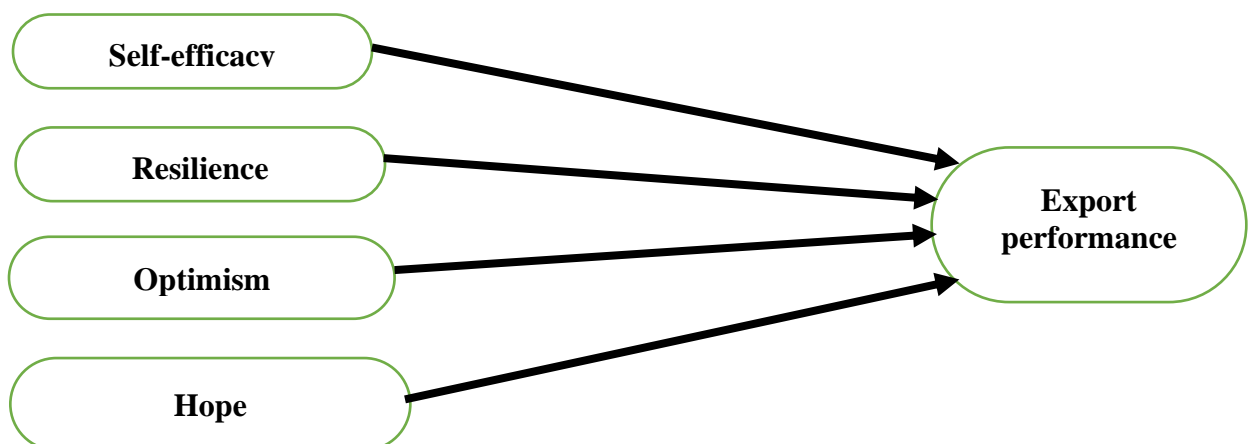
H1 : Leader self-efficacy has a positive influence on SME export performance.

H2 : Leader hope has a positive influence on SME export performance.

H3 : Leader resilience has a positive influence on SME export performance.

H4: Leader optimism has a positive influence on SME export performance.

Figure 1. The conceptual research model



5- Research methodology

To carry out our work and answer our research question, we followed a hypothetico-deductive approach, after having identified the different variables of the model and the research hypotheses.

After having developed and administered a questionnaire to 120 managers of agri-food SMEs in Morocco (from October 2020 to March 2021), we used descriptive analyzes to characterize the companies forming the sample and factorial analyzes to verify the unidimensionality of each construct and to refine the measurement scales (Igalens and Roussel, 1998), the multiple linear regression method was used to test the research hypotheses.

For analysis and performance measurement reasons, in our sample, we retained agri-food SMEs that have more than three years of experience in exporting. The basis of our sample is the Kerix-export database, which is a database of exporting companies in Morocco. Our choice of the agri-food sector is justified by the predominance of the sector in Morocco as a country with an agricultural and rural tradition, as well as the importance given to the sector by the public authorities and its contribution to GDP.

For the measurement of the variables and concerning the components of the manager's human capital, which represent the independent variables, we used a five-point Likert scale (ranging from totally disagree "1" to totally agree "5").

To approach our research, we refer to the definition given by Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007), Ardichvili, 2011 ; Zhu and Hirst 2014 who define psychological capital as a positive psychological state of individual development characterized by high degrees of self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience.

For the items of each component of psychological capital, we opted for those retained by Meca and Martinez (2007), Luthans et al. (2007), Jensen and Luthans (2006), Larson and Luthans, (2006), Luthans

et al. (2005), Peterson and Luthans (2003), Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007), Parker (1998). Snyder et al. (1996), Gualberto A. Magdaraog Jr. (2015).

For the items of export performance, we chose the subjective criteria of measurement (Lages and Lages, 2004). Our position is part of a perspective that the SME manager sets his export objectives based on his satisfaction as a reliable indicator of determining export performance. Indeed, the review of the literature in international marketing reveals the use of a wide range of performance measurement tools such as objective, subjective and composite measures of export performance (Zou and Stan, 1998 ; Sapienza, Smith and Gannon, 1988 ; Gauzente, 2002 ; Lages and Jap, 2003). In the same context, Sousa (2004) stipulates that export performance is essentially measured by three major dimensions such as economic, strategic and subjective performance.

For our study, we based ourselves on the work of Madsen (1998), Lages and Lages (2004) who propose the STEP scale which is designed to measure the perception of improvement in short-term export performance. This scale is purely subjective and dynamic and revolves around the dimensions "Satisfaction with the improvement of short-term performance", "improvement of the intensity of short-term export activity" and "expected improvement of short-term performance"

6. Presentation and analysis of results

According to the results of the empirical study, it appears that most of the SMEs in our sample are located in the two regions of Morocco (Souss-Massa and Greater Casablanca), their legal form is mainly the SARL or 98%. The dominant branch of activity is vegetables, fruits and seafood, while the preferred export mode for SMEs is direct export.

The measurement scale that we mobilized in the empirical study presents good statistical stability, since the Cronbach's alpha level is equal to (0.925), reflecting a better psychometric quality of the construct.

For the factorial analysis, the scale of the variable the variable "Hope" is measured using four items. The KMO index is of the order (0.717) and the Bartlett sphericity test is significant ($p < 0.05$). We can therefore reject the null hypothesis. Indeed, it can be deduced that our data come from a population for which the matrix would be an identity matrix. The correlations are therefore not all equal to zero and we can therefore continue the analysis.

Alternatively, the variable "Self-efficacy" measured by four items, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkinou KMO criterion is equal to 0.325, which indicates the very low quality of factorization of the data collected for the variable in question. However, Bartlett's sphericity test is significant at the 1% threshold, ensuring data factorization.

The factorial analysis of the third variable "Optimism", measured by three items, shows a KMO index of the order of 0.607, showing a factorization of the data collected in relation to our variable, for Bartlett's sphericity test, it is significant at the 1% threshold, ensuring data factorization.

The last variable "Resilience" measured by three items, has a representative KMO of the order of (0.707) in addition, a zero probability of Bartlett's sphericity test, which confirms the possibility of factorizing this latent variable.

Table 1. Quality of fit of the regression model

Modèl	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	Standard error of the estimate
1	,910	,828	,821	3,613477026

The summary of the obtained model shows that:

R-squared adjusted is equal to 0.821. This means that 82.1% of the export performance variable is explained by the four independent variables (hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism).

Therefore, after having tested the significance and reliability of our analysis model, we move on to the next step which is the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test our hypotheses.

Table 2. ANOVA Results

Mode l		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Si g
1	Régression	7169,339	4	1433,8 68	109,8 1	,00 0
	Résidual	1488,523	115			
	Total	8657,861	119	13,507		

Dependent variable : expper

Predictors : constant, hope, resilience, optim, self-eff

The table above shows a Fisher statistic equal to 109.81 and the F quantum ($p, n-p, \alpha$) = $F(4,115) = 2.69$. So, systematically the obtained value is largely higher than the value of the Fisher Table ($F = 53.360 > F = 2.69$). Therefore, we can say that our regression model is well specified since the Fisher statistic is significant at the 1% threshold.

The export performance of the company, which is measured using the ten items, the inter-item correlations measuring the export performance of agri-food SMEs are positive.

The exploratory factor analysis carried out for this scale shows that the items are well factorizable (KMO = 0.824), the Bartlett test is significant ($0.000 < 0.05$). The scale is unidimensional, since a single factor explains 76.63% of the total variance of the ten items forming the export performance scale of agri-food SMEs.

Similarly, the scale has good statistical stability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.971), reflecting a good psychometric quality of the construct.

With regard to the results of the regression analyses, we recall that our model includes four explanatory variables (hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism) and one dependent variable (export performance).

Table 3. Results of regression tests

Modèle	unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	sig
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
Constant	-5,732	2,342		-2,448	0,16
Hope	,789	,111	,435	7,082	,000
Resilience	,074	,093	,067	,794	,429
Self-efficacy	-,516	,077	-,457	-6,731	,000
Optimism	,052	,064	,047	,822	,413

Dependent variable : expper

Confirmation/invalidation of hypotheses

As for the analysis of confirmation or invalidation of the three hypotheses from our conceptual research model, the following main findings emerge from the results of the statistical tests :

The t-Student and the self-efficacy variable:

For self-efficacy, the absolute value of the calculated t-Student is (- 6.731) which is lower than the t of the Student's table (1.96) and the Beta coefficient is - 0.457. These results show that self-efficacy negatively impacts export performance. It can be deduced that hypothesis H1 is not validated.

The level of self-efficacy of the manager has a negative influence on the export performance of agri-food SMEs.

The t-Student and the hope variable:

The calculated t-Student for the hope variable is of the order of 7.082, a value that is higher than the standard t of the Student's table, which is equal to 1.96. The standardized Beta coefficient that measures the intensity of the relationship between the two variables, hope and export performance, is equal to 0.435. These results attest that the manager's hope variable explains export performance. In other words, the relationship between the manager's hope variable and export performance is positive and significant. This leads us to validate hypothesis H2.

The t-Student and the resilience variable:

The calculated t-Student of the resilience variable is 6.794 exceeds the t of the Student's table (1.96) and the Beta coefficient is 0.567. These results attest that the resilience variable of the manager of the agri-food SME explains export performance. In other words, the relationship between the manager's human capital and export performance is strong. This leads us to confirm hypothesis H3.

The t-Student and the optimism variable:

The calculated t-Student of optimism is (0.822) which is lower than the t of the Student's table (1,96) and the Beta coefficient is 0.047. These results show that the optimism component of the manager's psychological capital does not explain export performance. These results confirm hypothesis H4 as invalid.

Table 4. Results of the research hypothesis tests

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis Statement	Result
H1	The manager's self-efficacy has a positive influence on the export performance of SMEs.	Invalidated
H2	The manager's hope has a positive influence on the export performance of SMEs.	Validated
H3	The manager's resilience has a positive influence on the export performance of SMEs.	Validated
H4	The manager's optimism has a positive influence on the export performance of SMEs.	Invalidated

Conclusion contributions and limits

Throughout this work, we have tried to examine the effect or impact of the components of the manager's psychological capital ("self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience") on export performance within agri-food SMEs in Morocco.

This paper/research can be seen as a contribution to the literature on the determinants of export performance, in an emerging country where the theme of export performance is still in its infancy.

From a managerial point of view, the analysis of the results has shown that resilience among managers is an important component of psychological capital, impacting the competitiveness and performance of their companies. This can be explained by the study coinciding with the period of the corona virus - covid 19 - where organizational resilience is high and reaches thresholds of vigilance and strategic awareness among the different components of society, whether private or public. In addition, the significant impact of resilience observed among SME managers can be explained by the preponderance of the manager's personality within the SME and the attachment to the company's heritage, which remains his personal heritage.

Hope, another component of the manager's psychological capital, has shown its contribution to the export performance of SMEs. Indeed, the explanation is that most of the managers interviewed have an Islamic conviction, which motivates them not to lose hope and that only God can offer good things. Not to mention that hope as an important determinant can be explained by the personality of the SME manager, characterized by sacrifice, autonomy, charisma, and leadership.

The results of our study indicate the existence of a positive relationship between the characteristics of the manager's profile, mainly resilience and hope, on the one hand, and the export performance of agri-food SMEs in Morocco on the other. Indeed, the study has shown that the quality of managers of agri-food SMEs in Morocco is strongly influenced by their resilience and hope, which in turn influences their competitiveness and export performance.

Despite the importance of the results obtained, this research has some limitations, related to the choice of variables, the structure of the causal model, the characteristics of the sample, and the field of investigation. For the four explanatory variables retained in our research model, they represent a choice that does not reflect the overall profile of the SME manager. Similarly, for the export performance variable, it must be measured by both subjective and objective criteria. Another limitation lies in the external validity of the study, which stipulates that it should be tested on a larger and more representative sample.

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