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## Impact of Distance Power, Resilience and Psychological Empowerment on Police Performance in Peru

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### Abstract

*The study delves into how national culture, specifically the power distance dimension moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and resilience on the work performance of Peruvian Police officers. The research involved a sample of 337 senior officers. Interestingly, power distance itself did not have a significant influence on performance. In contrast, resilience was shown to positively influence performance ( $\beta = 0.284$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), and empowerment had a significant effect on performance as well ( $\beta = 0.426$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This research is groundbreaking in shedding light on how cultural factors moderate the relationship between resilience and job performance, moving beyond traditional mental health studies in police contexts. Based on these findings, we recommend that the institutional culture of the Peruvian National Police and its subcultures be professionally managed and updated in accordance with current global and digital values. Additionally, we suggest enhancing resilience and empowerment among police officers to achieve higher performance levels.*

**Keywords:** Power Distance, Psychological Empowerment, Resilience, Job Performance, Police Performance.

### Introduction

The global expansion of organized crime has generated economic damage to social structures and the stability of countries (Dugato & Aziani, 2020). In the fight against crime, police officers are exposed to serious events that negatively affect them, including their professional performance (Dhyandev & Fakhr, 2023). In recent years, there has been growing interest in supporting the well-being of police officers and consequent job performance (Lu & Petersen, 2023). Currently, Latin America is one of the most violent regions in the world (Rettberg, 2020), which negatively affects police officers' performance.

National culture influences human thoughts, shaping a nation's social processes and institutions (Scholl & Schermuly, 2020). Power distance as a dimension of national culture is expressed in Peru at a high level (Evan & Holý, 2023). Therefore, the orientation to high power distance would be more marked in public and hierarchical organizations, such as the police (Silvestri, 2017). Likewise, resilience and socially supportive behaviors, such as psychological empowerment, are important components in promoting the well-being, mental health, and performance of police officers (Dhyandev & Fakhr, 2023).

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According to Peccei & Van De Voorde (2019), there is still a “black box” in understanding how to promote job performance sustainably. In this context, having a deeper understanding of the role of national and institutional culture is crucial for improving job performance (Schein, 2010). There is a long tradition of studies that support the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance in many sectors (Arefin et al., 2019; Cudjoe et al., 2022; Fan et al., 2023; Kimpah & Ibrahim, 2020), except in the policing field. Similarly, there are studies confirming the positive impact of resilience on job performance (Hou et al., 2020; Kašpárková et al., 2018; Walpita & Arambepola, 2020). However, in a field as important as policing, most studies on resilience are limited to its relationship with mental health states and the ability to cope with stress in situations related to public safety and law enforcement (Janssens et al., 2021). In this sense, the present study is pioneering in its aim to shed light, with empirical arguments, on the complex relationship of national culture in its dimension of power distance, psychological empowerment, resilience, and job performance of police officers in Latin America.

One of the most widely accepted theoretical models of resilience is that of Connor and Davidson (2003), who defined it as a modifiable capacity composed of personal competence, high levels of demand and tenacity, trust in instincts, tolerance of negative affect and reinforcement of the effects of stress, positive acceptance of change and secure relationships, control, and spiritual influences. According to Feder et al. (2009), a resilient person faces adversity and knows how to adapt to cope with it correctly (Southwick & Charney, 2012). Resilience is one of the most important factors that help a person adapt to life’s difficulties (Alsheikh & Alqudah, 2023).

Regarding the positive impact of resilience on job performance, there are recent studies developed in a crisis context, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, that confirm the relationship (Hoşgör & Yaman, 2022; Wang et al., 2022). However, in police science, the lack of research on the relationship between self-reported levels of resilience and job performance is striking. Similarly, not enough studies assess whether resilience enables police officers to perform well in their roles and responsibilities during their work (Brunetto et al., 2023).

From the motivational approach proposed by Conger and Kanungo (1988), psychological empowerment is characterized as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy. For Spreitzer (1995), psychological empowerment is characterized by internal cognitive dimensions (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact). The literature reveals that multiple studies support the positive influence of psychological empowerment on job performance (Kundu et al., 2019; Putra et al., 2019; Ravello & Llaque, 2023). In addition, Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017) argued that psychological capital, including empowerment, consists of self-efficacy in the position. Brunetto et al. (2023) found a relationship between perceived organizational support and police officers’ commitment and job performance, enhanced by human resource development strategies such as psychological empowerment.

Power distance, the term culture, comes from Latin and was used for the cultivation of land or tillage (Hofstede et al., 2010). Cicero (n.d.) was the first to refer to culture as the cultivation of the person through reflection and philosophy. A seminal definition of culture is attributed to Tyler (1871), who pointed out that culture is that complex whole that includes all the capacities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. According to Mulaomerovic et al. (2019), there is a relationship between national culture and work factors that may favor institutional goals. Hofstede et al. (2010) pointed out that national culture has five dimensions, including power distance. In the present study, power distance was analyzed as an expression of national

culture; it is worth mentioning that it is a concept widely validated by academia and plays a key role in the culture of nations (Tengler & Caldera-Gonzalez, 2018; Zhu & Ali, 2023).

Power Distance measures the degree to which the society accepts hierarchy differences among its members and their dependence levels (Hofstede et al., 2010). Employees in a society with a high-power distance orientation are more accepting of the norms of a hierarchical institution with a strong chain of command (Lee & Antonakis, 2014). Police officers work in a culture ruled by hierarchy and norms (Silvestri, 2017). As an instance, Cordner (2016) argued that in policing, chiefs often use their power and red tape to demand obedient behavior from subordinates.

Job performance is the result of outputs and activities carried out by a worker that have a direct link with the institution's performance (Jagannathan, 2014). According to Pandey (2018), it is a complex and multidimensional construct that is affected by various cultural, institutional, and psychological variables. It is difficult to explain integrally, so its permanent study is valuable for organizations and the academy.

## **Methodology**

We used a questionnaire composed of 24 items and four Likert scales, with options ranging from one to five, from strongly disagree to strongly agree for the psychological empowerment, power distance, and job performance variables, and from never to constantly for the resilience variable.

Statistical analysis was performed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is the most appropriate technique for studying constructs and evaluating the theoretical relationships between concepts represented by multiple variables, whether observable or latent, about which there is little theoretical development (Hair et al., 2018). A critical analysis of the literature was carried out to formulate hypotheses (Snyder, 2019).

**Hypothesis 1:** Resilience positively impacts police officers' job performance.

**Hypothesis 2:** Psychological empowerment positively impacts police officers' job performance.

**Hypothesis 3:** Power distance positively impacts police officers' job performance.

**Hypothesis 4:** Power distance moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and police officers' job performance.

**Hypothesis 5:** Power distance moderates the relationship between resilience and police officers' job performance.

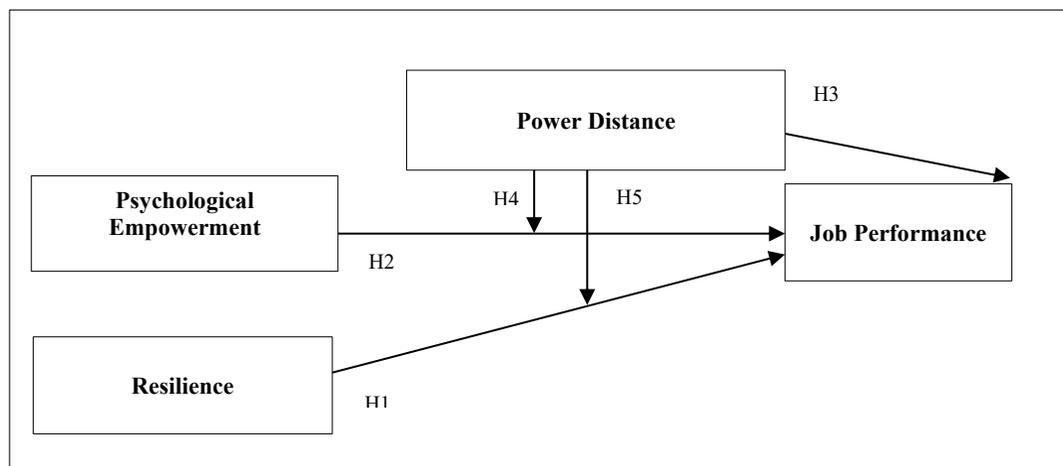


Figure 1

### Conceptual Model

The study population was made up of active career officials of the National Police of Peru with the rank of major and commander (the fourth and fifth degree at the professional policing career), men, or women. Method of random cluster sampling was used due to the size and dispersion of the population (Cochran, 1977). Due to the availability of official information, the finite population calculation method was used to calculate the sample size (Hernández et al., 2006). At the end of the year 2023, the population of career officers with the rank of major was 1 046 and commanders was 1 104, which gives a total of 2 150 nationwide (PNP Personnel Directorate, 2024). With 95% confidence and 5% error, the sample size had to be at least 325 observations. While final sample size was (n= 337). Table 1 shows demographic information.

Variables	Category	Frequency	%
Sex	Male	304	90%
	Female	33	10%
		337	100%
Age	35 - 45	138	41%
	45 - 54	179	53%
	55 - 64	20	6%
		337	100%
Academic degree	Bachelor	253	75%
	Master	78	23%
	Doctor	6	2%
		337	100%

Table 1: Demographic Information

Researchers applied the questionnaires in person. Due to errors in their completion, 18 surveys had to be eliminated (Hair et al., 2017a), obtaining 337 valid observations.

## Results

### Measurement Model Evaluation

SmartPLS software (V4) was used to evaluate the whole research model. According to Hair et al. (2014), validity indicates the level at which a measurement scale represents the construct to be measured. While reliability refers to the relative absence of distortion or accuracy errors in a measuring instrument (Kerlinger & Lee, 2002). According to Hair et al. (2017a), convergent and discriminant validity should be evaluated. The general rule holds that factor loadings  $> 0.70$  are acceptable, and those  $< 0.40$  should be eliminated. Following the rule, only one indicator (Resili8 with 0.300) was removed, and indicators with loadings greater than 0.58 were kept, as described in Table 2.

To test internal reliability Cronbach's alpha must have a value  $> 0.70$ . While for the reliability of rho\_A and rho\_C the key value is  $> 0.70$  (Hair et al., 2017a). In the measurement model, all evaluations were acceptable. Discriminant validity (AVE) was tested using the rule of thumb for  $AVE \geq 0.50$  (Hair et al. 2017b), all constructs exceeded the threshold, except for the latent resilience variable, which presented a value of 0.48, slightly below the cut-off value. However, the resilience construct obtained adequate values in the other validity and reliability evaluations, as seen in Table 2.

Variable latente	Indicadores ítems	Cargas factoriales	Cronbach alpha	Confiabilidad compuesta Rho A	Confiabilidad compuesta Rho C	AVE
Psychological empowerment	Empow_1	0.891	0.907	0.911	0.934	0.781
	Empow_2	0.908				
	Empow_3	0.855				
	Empow_4	0.880				
Resilience	Resil_1	0.598	0.865	0.872	0.893	0.482
	Resil_2	0.755				
	Resil_3	0.662				
	Resil_4	0.781				
	Resil_5	0.617				
	Resil_6	0.681				
	Resil_7	0.754				
	Resil_9	0.663				
	Resil_10	0.716				

Power distance	PowDi_1	0.681	0.860	0.888	0.897	0.636
	PowDi_2	0.776				
	PowDi_3	0.867				
	PowDi_4	0.837				
	PowDi_5	0.813				
Job performance	JobPe_1	0.825	0.798	0.832	0.857	0.550
	JobPe_2	0.833				
	JobPe_3	0.661				
	JobPe_4	0.581				
	JobPe_5	0.776				

Table 2

### Evaluation of Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

Henseler et al. (2015) proposed the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) to examine discriminant validity. As a general rule of thumb, they pointed out that the ratio's value should be less than one. All values are below the threshold, as described in Table 3.

	Psy. Emp	Job_Per	Pow_Dis	Resilience		Pow_Dis x Res
Job_Per	0.644					
Pow_Dis	0.228	0.221				
Resilience	0.567	0.573	0.224			
Pow_Dis x Res	0.218	0.063	0.036	0.168		
Pow_Dis x Psy Emp	0.252	0.171	0.050	0.204		0.717

Table 3

### Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio

#### Structural Model Evaluation

According to Hair et al. (2017a), the most important test indicators are the statistical collinearity (VIF), the explained variance ( $R^2$ ), the predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and the significance of the coefficients of the structural model. The general rule of VIF value  $\leq 5$  = acceptable. In the structural model, there was no collinearity, as seen in Table 4.

The value of  $R^2 = 0.42$  (moderate) explains 42% of the variability in job performance. Furthermore, Henseler et al. (2009) recommended examining the  $Q^2$  indicator to evaluate the predictive relevance of the structural model. The  $Q^2 = 0.370$  describes a great predictive power, which is described in Table 4.

	VIF	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> adjusted	Q <sup>2</sup>
Psy Emp	1.42			
Pow Dis	1.05			
Resilience	1.36			
Pow Dis x Resilience	2.06			
Pow Dis x Psy Emp	2.10			
Job Performance		0.42	0.416	0.370

Table 4

Structural Model Evaluation

The next stage analyzed the structural model using the path coefficients and p-value (see Figure 2 and Table 5).

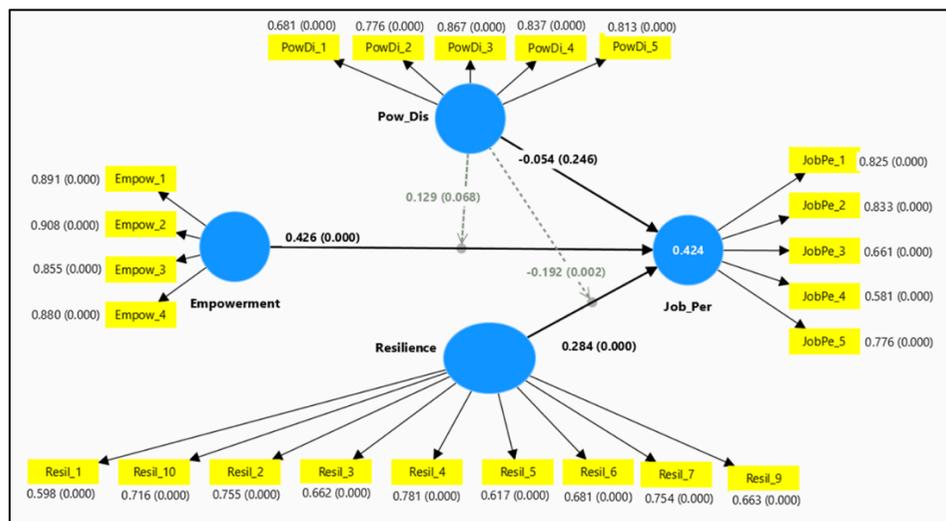


Figure 2

Explanatory Model

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient β	P value	Decision
H1	Resilience -> job performance	0.284	0.000***	Confirmed
H2	Psy. Emp -> job performance	0.426	0.000***	Confirmed
H3	Pow. Dis -> job performance	-0.054	0.246	Not confirmed
H4	Pow.Dis x Res -> Job Performance	-0.192	0.002**	Confirmed
H5	Pow.Dis x Psy. Emp -> Job Performance	0.129	0.068	Not confirmed

**Note:** \*\*\* $p < 0.001$  \*\* $p < 0.01$

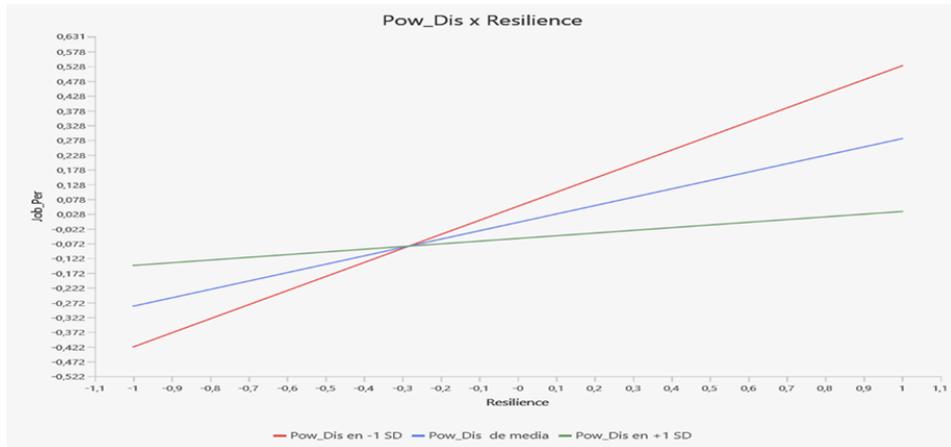


Figure 3

### Analysis of the Slope of the Moderating Effect of Power Distance in the Relationship Between Resilience and Job Performance

Figure 3 describes the moderating effect of power distance on the relationship between resilience and job performance. The three lines represent the relationships between resilience and performance. The blue line represents the relationship for medium levels of the moderating variable. The red line represents the relationship for low levels (average power distance value minus one standard deviation). The green line represents the relationship for high levels (average value of power distance plus one standard deviation). The relationship between resilience and performance is positive in all three lines. The red line represents a low level of power distance and has the steepest slope because the interaction effect is negative. In other words, although the levels of power distance are lower, the impact of resilience on performance is more significant.

### Discussion

The PLS-SEM analysis revealed that resilience and psychological empowerment are critical predictors of job performance among police officers, with both variables showing significant and positive direct effects on job performance. These findings underscore the importance of fostering individual resilience and empowering officers psychologically to enhance performance outcomes. However, power distance did not directly impact job performance, suggesting that hierarchical structures alone may not directly influence performance levels. Moderation analysis highlighted nuanced effects; power distance significantly moderated the resilience-job performance relationship, implying that resilience has a weaker effect on job performance in high-power distance contexts. Conversely, the moderating effect of power distance on the psychological empowerment-job performance link was not statistically significant. These results suggest that while power distance alters the dynamics between resilience and job performance, its role in the psychological empowerment context requires further exploration. The findings emphasize the multifaceted interplay of individual and cultural factors in shaping police performance.

This study helps us better understand the black box of job performance (Peccei & Van De

Voorde, 2019). Concerning the hypothesis regarding the relationship between resilience and Job Performance, the results corroborate the findings of Hosgör and Yaman (2021), who evidenced a positive relationship between resilience and job performance. Similarly, they confirm the predictive power of resilience on performance (Hou et al., 2020). In this sense, if organizations encourage workers to develop resilience, their employees can better handle work pressures, which translates into better job performance and benefits for organizations.

In the context of VUCA and the global expansion of organized crime (Dugato & Aziani, 2020), efforts to develop the resilience of police officers are a necessary investment due to the benefits that return to the institution and society. Workers with adequate levels of resilience contribute to a healthy organizational culture by adopting a proactive role and avoiding victimizing behaviors. They also look for culprits among co-workers, absenteeism to avoid stressful situations, and commitments to weaken colleagues or groups, which are interpreted as threatening. In contrast, workers with higher levels of resilience are more likely to develop assertive behaviors related to their work environment and coworkers.

Furthermore, the results reinforce the findings of Hesketh et al. (2019) and Zueger et al. (2023), who experimentally showed that resilience training positively impacted the performance of police and military maneuver exercises. In this sense, adequate levels of resilience allow police officers to more adequately manage the stress of a dangerous situation and, consequently, effectively execute high-risk tasks. Considering that police officers can often face life-or-death situations for themselves and civilian third parties, we reaffirm the imperative need to promote resilience as an institutional policy.

Regarding the hypothesis on the influence of psychological empowerment on job performance, we corroborated the findings that confirm the relationship in various sectors and latitudes (Kostopoulos, 2019; Al-Makhadmah et al, 2020; Mahmoud, 2021; Shi et al, 2022). Our study provides novel information on how the relationship between the variables of psychological empowerment and job performance behaves in the military-policing field. Evidence that, as in other areas, when police officers feel empowered, their work commitment increases, which translates into better job performance. Now, our assertion that the greater psychological empowerment, the greater job performance may seem contradictory in a hierarchical institution like the police. In a military institution, order compliance must be executed through discipline rather than the performer's psychological empowerment level.

Concerning what was stated in the previous paragraph, we must consider that the sample comprised high-ranking police officers who perform highly complex tasks in the institution. This situation may influence the level of psychological empowerment and expectations that high-ranking officials should receive from the institution and their superiors. The research carried out by Kostopoulos (2019) can shed light on our findings. This author demonstrated that the influence of empowerment on job performance is not linear but quadratic. Specifically, the relationship between empowerment and performance is quadratic in low-complexity services, as may be the case for low-ranking police officers. While for highly complex services, such as those developed by high-ranking police officers, the relationship would be positive and linear, as presented in our study.

Other aspects that may explain the results of psychological empowerment on job performance in our study are the effect of globalization and the acceleration of social media use in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. As background, Corder (2016) pointed out that police chiefs used their power to generate excessive bureaucratic procedures and formalities to handle information

at their convenience and demand obedience. Today, due to unlimited and immediate access to information, it is much more difficult for police chiefs to manage information and orders according to their convenience.

Furthermore, different subcultures and generations coexist within the police force (Mendoza et al., 2020). Therefore, the current context inevitably favors information handled more efficiently by younger subordinates through social networks. That is why trying to manage information and bureaucracy according to one's convenience is currently unproductive and generates distrust and demotivation among police officers. In summary, the current context of hyperconnectivity and a greater appreciation of cultural diversity has forced institutions to make their policies and practices more flexible, favoring the psychological empowerment of workers, including police agents.

Regarding the hypothesis about the influence of power distance on the job performance of police officers, surprisingly, we found that power distance shows a low level; this finding contradicts the *status quo* of the academy on the magnitude of power distance. Power in Peru. Various studies maintain that Peruvian society has a high power distance (Owusu & Louw, 2019; Chen & Biswas, 2022; Evan & Holý, 2023). It is important to mention that the police are one of the largest public institutions and recruit their agents from all geographic regions, so the sample reflects the diversity of the different subcultures of the country.

Second, taking into account that the police is a hierarchical institution (Silvestri, 2017) and that the National Police of Peru is a hierarchical organization by law (Legislative Decree 1267: Law of the National Police of Peru), the results are novel and can be explained through the subcultural approach (Wind & Douglas, 1983). That is the existence of different subcultures in Generations, educational levels, and information technology management, among other variables, which, in their interaction, would influence the management and expectations of the institutional culture and the power distance in military and police institutions. Third, the results indicate that power distance does not influence on job performance, an unexpected finding in a hierarchical institution like the police (Silvestri, 2017). Our results contradict the evidence of Richard et al. (2021), who argued that congruence in the orientation on power distance between supervisors and subordinates favors job performance by reducing tension between them.

Regarding the hypothesis that power distance moderates the relationship between resilience and job performance, the results showed that power distance moderates the relationship. The study's results contradict the findings of Ravello and Llaque (2023), who did not find evidence of the moderating role in the telecommunications sector of Peru and Costa Rica. The findings are relevant due to the limited research on the relationship between variables. This is a pioneering study in empirically proving that power distance negatively and significantly moderates the relationship between resilience and job performance.

Whether police officers can give their opinions and participate in decisions in their work, their ability to manage work stress favorably would increase and consequently improve their performance. It is important to mention that police officers are aware that, on many occasions, they must act in critical or urgent situations that do not always favor the discussion of each decision. Therefore, the results would indicate that police officers want to be treated with respect by their superiors in the strategic decision-making process, such as transfers, promotions, and professional development opportunities, among others, without neglecting to consider that an optimal level of power distance consistent with the nature of the organization makes it easier for institutions to make decisions and act efficiently.

Regarding the hypothesis that poses the moderation of the power distance in the relationship between psychological empowerment and work performance, no evidence was found to support the relationship. The study's findings corroborate the findings of Ravello and Llaque (2023), who found no evidence of moderating roles in the telecommunications sector. In other words, different levels of power distance do not influence whether job performance worsens or improves significantly with less or greater psychological empowerment. The evidence indicates that beliefs about the meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact of job responsibilities and roles are primarily individual decisions and do not depend much on cultural aspects such as power distance.

## Conclusions

The study concludes that fostering resilience and psychological empowerment is essential for improving police performance in Peru, particularly within the nuanced cultural context characterized by varying levels of power distance. Resilience emerges as a vital predictor of job performance, with its positive impact moderated by power distance, suggesting that excessive hierarchy can dilute its benefits. While psychological empowerment strongly predicts job performance, its relationship with power distance remains complex, particularly in a hierarchical institution like the police. The findings challenge traditional assumptions about power distance in Peruvian society and the police force, highlighting the dynamic influence of national culture on organizational outcomes. The research underscores the need for institutional reforms that align with contemporary global trends, promoting intercultural coexistence, transparent meritocracy, and the strategic development of resilience and empowerment through targeted training and recognition programs. Ultimately, the study advocates for a redefined organizational culture within the Peruvian Police that balances hierarchical efficiency with the empowerment and well-being of its officers, aimed at enhancing both individual and institutional performance.

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