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An assessment of the influence of job demands on employee creativity and affective states

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Abstract

Organisations have become increasingly aware of their employees' job demands due to intense market competition. Investigating the antecedents of banking sector employees' creativity is appropriate given the increased competitiveness of the sector, which is due to banks evolving into multi-service providers. This study aimed to determine the influence of job demands on Jordanian banking sector employees' creativity and affective states. Furthermore, the influence and modification of organisational design on certain aspects of employee behaviour were examined to enable employees' creativity to improve work-related performance. The hypotheses were examined using SmartPLS 4 and involved 175 Jordanian banking sector employees. The results demonstrated that job demands were positively related to employee creativity. Additionally, the results suggested that job demands positively influenced Affective states and created a conducive environment for employees' creative thinking, where unprecedented challenges enhanced employees' performance. The results are discussed to identify potential research directions.

Keywords: Job demands, Employee creativity, Affective states, Time pressure, Emotional demands, Physical demands

1. Introduction

Globalization has intensified global business competitiveness [1], [2] and improved organizational sustainability by driving innovations [3]. The absence of competitiveness and sustainability may result in economic collapse [4], [5]. The board and stakeholders have both rigorously charted the path of organizational creativity [6], [7]. Specifically, organizations and their stakeholders have benefited from organizational work

during the past two decades [8]. If needed, make a subdivision for each section as follows.

The implications of creative action on organizational structures and the conditions that define it as a dominant modern business force have been extensively studied [9], [10]. Various factors have been associated with employer-employee conflict [11], [12]. The literature demonstrates a pattern of creativity when investigating individual, group, and contextual characteristics and how these factors interact to inhibit or foster creativity [13].

Workplace stressor research has frequently been positively associated with work-related outcomes and selected job demands [14]. Research on the effects of job demands on employee creativity typically differentiates between job challenges and job hindrances, which are factors that limit employees and impede their goal achievement [15]. Employees' understanding and perception of work-related demands might differ based on the job demand categorization a priori [16]. The main theoretical flaw is the underlying assumption that all employees experience the same job demands [17]. Furthermore, employees' appraisal of a job demand has been suggested to determine whether they have understood the requirement [18], [19].

Understanding organizational creativity from an interactionist perspective requires that employees' disposition and context comprise most of their creative performance. As organizations undergo complex transformations, job demands are widely recognized as a factor that affects performance [20], [21], [15]. Several studies have examined the effects of organizational culture on employees' performance [22], [23], but the results were inconclusive [24].

Studies on job demands and characteristics have extensively examined employee creativity [25], [26]. The job demands model suggests that jobs significantly influence employee satisfaction and happiness [27], [28]. Job demands and motivation can significantly influence employee creativity [29]. Nevertheless, relatively few studies have examined this relationship [30-33]. The affective states of the relationship should not be considered in such cases. Different job demand matchings affect employee creativity and affective states differently, and examining the influence of job demand matchings is important.

Quality and delivery are important factors for financial organizations to meet their long-term goals and be competitive. Banking sector employees' behavior and emotions are the most important factors that determine their service quality to clients, which requires constant monitoring and behavior regulation. The Jordanian banking sector has been transformed and expanded over more than two decades. Bank financial services are vital to economic development in Jordan as they provide employees, businesses, and government agencies with a wide range of financial products. Jordan features a modern and sophisticated financial system that consists of an international central bank, several commercial banks, and specialized institutions. The banking industry must develop and receive due focus from banks and financial institutions to demonstrate the dynamic reality of the main economic interface. Bank administrations are competing to demonstrate the importance of the banking industry and how it contributes to bank prosperity. As banking develops and prospers, it leads to regulatory excellence [34]. This study examined how the three dimensions of job demands affect Jordanian banking sector employees' creativity and affective states.

1.1. Literature review and hypothesis development

1.1.1. Effect of job demands on employees' creativity

Job demands can greatly affect employee creativity positively or negatively [35], [32], [4]. An employee who has aligned their job demands with job objectives is likely to be extremely motivated to fulfil their duties [36], [37]. Job demands and employee creativity have a nonlinear relationship. Hence, higher job demands increase employee creativity, where employees become more creative as their jobs demand more from them. Conversely, a high level of job demands leads to an employee feeling that their work is more challenging, therefore causing stress. Employees who are unable to control their work cannot release psychological activation during normal work performance. Work demands stimulate employees, which can cause

psychological health issues. Long-term depression can lead to negative psychological and physiological outcomes [38], [39].

A high level of job demands will aid employees in decision-making regarding work planning, management, and completion. In addition to feeling more confident in their abilities, employees will also feel that the organization has high expectations for them [40], [41]. Companies provide ample learning and development opportunities to encourage employees' enthusiasm for creativity [42]. Employees' intrinsic motivation increases when they have more freedom and choice, which allows them to meet external demands [43]. Thus, employees are more likely to be proactive, which creates a positive working environment conducive to creativity and encourages employee loyalty, commitment, and engagement [44], [12].

High job control allows employees to meet high job demands by providing them with the required resources to improve their creativity. These resources also aid employees in resolving challenges and completing work tasks creatively [45], [46].

Employees with high motivation have the resources to succeed even when they encounter high job demands. This condition results in less hesitation and an increased willingness to take risks, which increases creativity [47]. Figure 1 depicts the hypothesized factors.

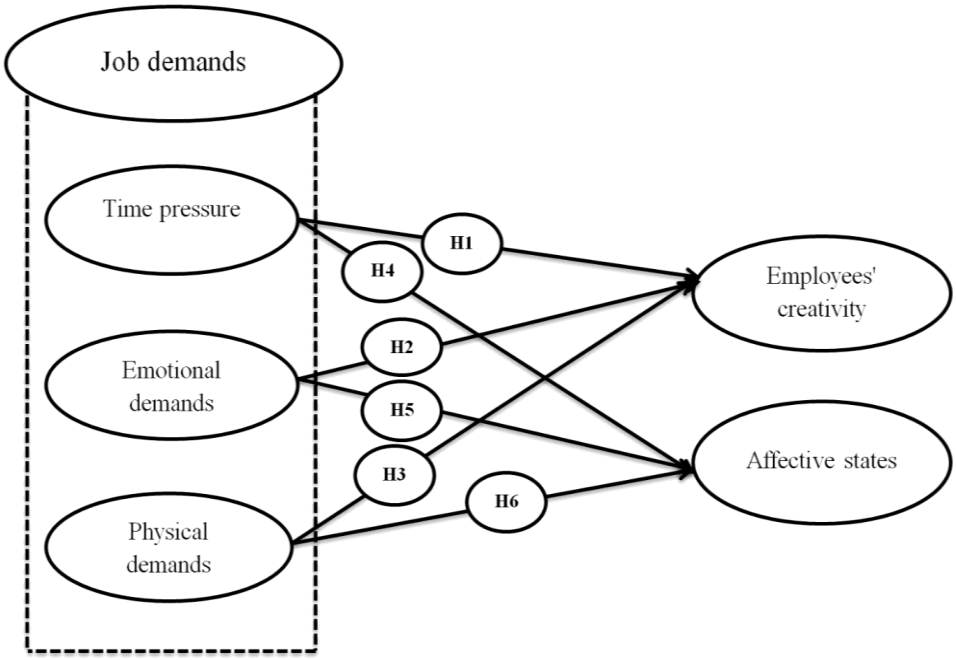

Figure 1. Hypothesized model

Low job demands and low creativity levels can easily result in employee inertia, which can lead to monotonous work tasks and low creativity [48], [49]. Limited opportunities to work independently and train in a training environment prevent employees with low expectations from recognizing and developing their skills [50], [51]. Hence, employees frequently act negatively and indifferently and are unmotivated. Employees who lack intrinsic motivation and competence are unlikely to participate in creative activities, which lead to low creativity [52], [53], [54]. People are less concerned about acquiring new resources than protecting their existing resources [55].

Employees with consistently low job demands will not exert much physical or mental energy to perform their duties. Furthermore, as proposing new ideas is risky, employees will require less energy and mental resources to succeed [32], [35]. Employees who strive to appear creative at work conserve creativity by reducing the processes related to it, as it does not make sense to be more creative immediately.

Employers with high job control have insufficient funding to meet their challenges. A lack of control at work may result in employees experiencing several work challenges without the ability to resolve them. An

environment that presents several challenges requires extensive mental energy from employees [56]. Low job demands negatively affect employee creativity and may even cause psychological and physical issues. Low job control does not supplement employee resources or allow employees to choose more reasonable task completion approaches, which results in poor performance and lower productivity [5]. Job demands can overwhelm and stress employees, while low job control levels can result in employees having a conflicted view of their organization, which results in workload [57] and reduced creativity [58], [31].

Employee creativity may balance out the job demand level as long as the job demands do not stimulate employees' enthusiasm. Thus, employees will not spend excessively on their tasks, whereas the job control level presents employees with more resources [52], [53], [54]. Creativity can result in employees being able to obtain more resources by improving processes and identifying innovative solutions. Hence, employees would be encouraged to participate in creativity-related activities, such as energy and time, when the condition is low–high to improve creativity. Generally, employees are more motivated to perform their jobs when there is more demand, and employers are less motivated to provide them. Nonetheless, any study of this topic indicates that demand intensity must be considered when examining the relationship between demand and creativity [18]. Therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Time pressure and employees' creativity are positively correlated.
H2: Emotional demands and employees' creativity are positively correlated.
H3: Physical demands and employees' creativity are positively correlated.

1.1.2. Effect of job demands on affective states

In its most basic form, an affective state is an automatic and subjective collection of emotions, moods, or feelings [59]. Individuals' affective states significantly influence their well-being [60] and social interactions [61]. Emotional states can be perceived as valuable or not and can have important implications for well-being. Employees' affective states are influenced by their management of their feelings to meet the emotional demands of their jobs. As employees progress through emotional labor to meet organizational expectations, they develop and experience emotions asymmetrically [62].

Researchers have recently disagreed over the terminology used to study emotions and affect. Academicians may view affect as a broad construct encompassing mood, emotions, and traits [63], [64]. Other theories define mood and emotions as distinct affective states and treat trait affect differently [65]. Several studies have used "mood" and "emotions" interchangeably and distinguished between them and emotional traits [66], [67], [68], [69].

Feelings influence whether a person is satisfied or dissatisfied with their life. Individual affect is generally defined as feeling satisfied or dissatisfied with life [70]. Both negative and positive effects of a positive emotional state have been described, such as increased activity, enthusiasm, and alertness [60]. During a negative effect, a person feels sad and subjectively distressed. Conversely, an individual with high positive affect exhibits high energy, focus, and pleasure, while an individual with high negative affect exhibits negative emotional states such as anger, anxiety, fear, and nervousness [60].

The literature has recorded considerable interchange between affective states and emotions. Employees' affective states are one of the most crucial variables when analyzing the consequences of different performance-related outcomes influenced by job demands. In organizational productivity, affective states are considered an important antecedent of employee performance [71], [72]. Emotional factors can aid in improving job performance and employee satisfaction, while a negative emotional state can lead to increased turnover [73], [74]. Positive emotions can enhance performance, while negative emotions can hurt performance [66], [67], [75], [67]. In the workplace, influence is widespread and does not focus on a single person, event, behavior, or thing [76]. Researchers have investigated whether job demands affect psychological health [77], [78], [57]. Despite this reliance, little is known about whether job demands, in

addition to job factors, contribute significantly to predicting affective states. This study proposed the following hypotheses to investigate whether employees' job demands are predictive of their emotional states:

H4: Time pressure and affective states are positively correlated.
H5: Emotional demands and affective states are positively correlated.
H6: Physical demands and affective states are positively correlated.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample and procedure

Modern society requires employees in almost all industries to demonstrate creativity in their work. Thus, clearly identifying the industries or occupational fields of individual employees in organizations is not possible. Hence, official results should not be released before a formal survey is conducted. A preliminary study involving Jordanian bank trainees was conducted to verify the measurement accuracy. This study used paper questionnaires, where 70 questionnaires were mailed by hand and 45 valid questionnaires were returned (effective response rate: 64.28%). A few items in the initial questionnaire were modified and examined after the initial survey to ensure the scientific validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

The formal survey involved distributing questionnaires to 230 employees. An employee–employee dyad survey was administered to 208 employees. After excluding invalid responses, there were 175 responses (effective response rate: 84.1%), which indicated that the survey could be considered measurable. This study involved 98 men (56%) and 77 women (44%), with 29% of the respondents working less than four years, 64% working more than four years and less than 10 years, and 7% working more than 10 years. Among the participants, the most common banking sector jobs were administrative, banking credit, exchange, and reception.

2.2. Measures

The scales in this study were translated into Arabic using translation and back-translation. The time pressure and emotional demands of the Job were measured using an eight-item scale [79], [80], [81]. Physical demands were measured using the DISC questionnaire, which is a four-item scale [35], [82-85]. Employee creativity was measured based on a four-item scale [86], [5]. This study used a similar approach to that of previous studies [87-90]. Affective states were measured using several four-item scales [78], [57], [91]. The participants were asked to indicate their experiences with specific emotional states at work and how generally they felt.

2.3. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using partial least squares (PLS) modelling with SmartPLS 4 [92]. Measurement and structural models were examined. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling, where the analysis involved two steps: 1) the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model was determined, and 2) hypothesis testing using the structural model.

The convergent validity in SmartPLS was used to ensure that the latent construct indicators were highly correlated and measured the same concept [93]. Convergent validity included the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). The factor loadings were tested to ensure that the threshold was at least 0.5, the minimum AVE value was 0.5, and the minimum CR value was 0.7 [93].

3. Results

Table 1 and Figure 2 demonstrate that the factor loading values for each variable exceeded the recommended value of 0.5 [93]. Table 2 demonstrates that the AVE and CR values were consistent with the recommended values [93].

Table 1. Factor loading

	AS	EC	ED	PD	TP
AS1	0.904				
AS2	0.865				
AS3	0.882				
AS4	0.897				
AS5	0.897				
EC1		0.793			
EC2		0.868			
EC3		0.899			
EC4		0.913			
EC5		0.918			
ED1			0.875		
ED2			0.777		
ED3			0.899		
ED4			0.947		
ED5			0.937		
PD1				0.906	
PD2				0.772	
PD3				0.867	
PD4				0.933	
PD5				0.921	
TP1					0.885
TP2					0.791
TP3					0.865
TP4					0.947
TP5					0.925

*AS: affective states, EC: employee creativity, ED: Emotional demands, PD: Physical demands, TP: Time pressure.

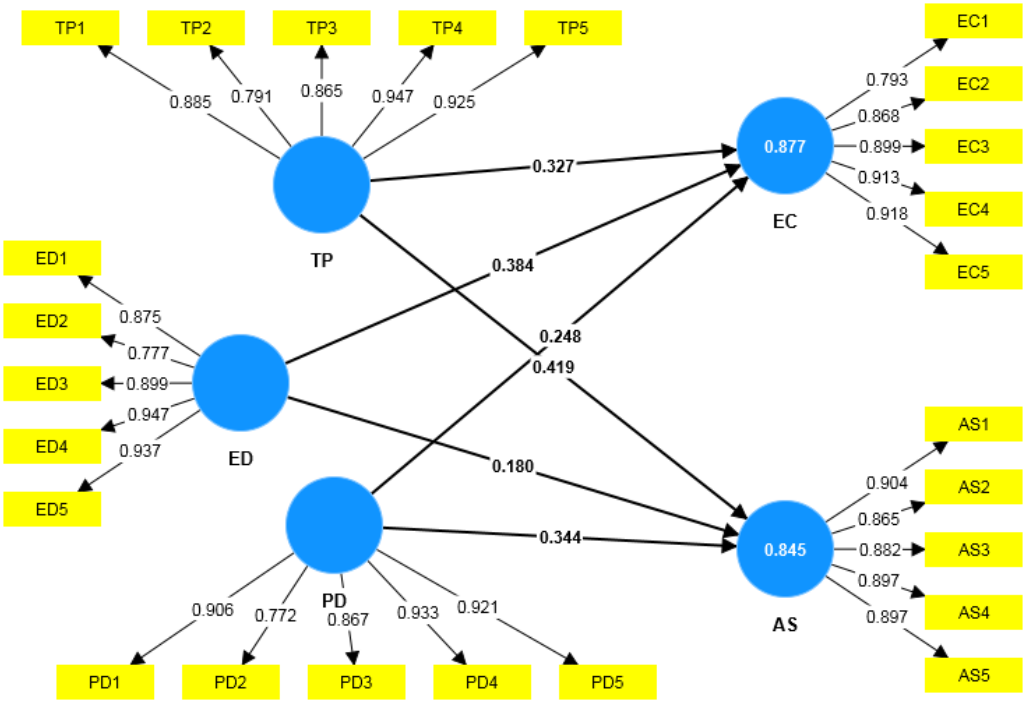

Figure 2. Factor loadings

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha, CR, and AVE

	Cronbach's alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
AS	0.934	0.937	0.950	0.791
EC	0.926	0.928	0.944	0.773
ED	0.932	0.938	0.949	0.790
PD	0.927	0.933	0.945	0.777
TP	0.929	0.933	0.947	0.782

Table 3 demonstrates the discriminant validity results, which were assessed using the HTMT criterion [94]. The HTMT values should be ≤ 0.90 [94]. Table 3 demonstrates that the HTMT values were ≤ 0.90, which indicates that the respondents understood that the five variables were distinct.

Table 3. Discriminant validity (HTMT)

	AS	EC	ED	PD	TP
AS					
EC	0.743				
ED	0.644	0.692			
PD	0.752	0.581	0.622		
TP	0.534	0.670	0.543	0.530	

3.1. Structural model

The final stage in the analysis involved the structural model, where the hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping. Table 4 and Figure 3 illustrate the structural model results. Emotional demands significantly and positively affected the Affective states (t = 2.716) and employees' creativity (t = 4.242). Physical demands significantly and positively affected the Affective states (t = 3.741) and employees' creativity (t = 3.032). Time pressure also significantly and positively affected the Affective states (t = 6.373) and employees' creativity (t = 5.079).

Table 4. Direct hypothesis testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	*p*-value
ED → AS	0.180	0.176	0.066	2.716	0.007
ED → EC	0.384	0.386	0.091	4.242	0.000
PD → AS	0.344	0.350	0.092	3.741	0.000
PD → EC	0.248	0.251	0.082	3.032	0.002
TP → AS	0.419	0.417	0.066	6.373	0.000
TP → EC	0.327	0.323	0.064	5.079	0.000

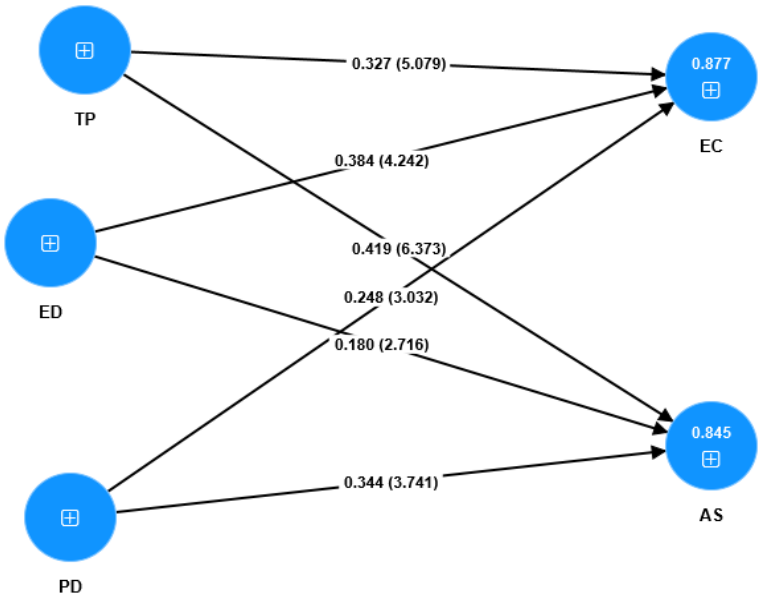

Figure 3. Structural model

4. Discussion

The hypothesis testing determined that employee creativity was highest when job demands had "high–high" congruence, which empirically proved that active employees are more creative and motivated. The results confirmed previous research results, such as the observation by [95] that job resources enhanced work engagement when job demands were high. Researchers [96] empirically proved that employment resources can be used to improve task enjoyment and organizational commitment. Working conditions can be demanding, such as High workloads and emotional demands. While resources are crucial when job demands are high, this study also demonstrated the importance of aligning job demands with employee creativity.

Senior employees are challenged and require high levels of effort, and high job demands demonstrate confidence and recognition of their potential once they have a high degree of work control. Observational studies have demonstrated that employees benefit from organizational interest and trust and a positive and inspiring work environment [97]. Alternatively, leaders' trust and appreciation may also increase the available resources over time due to their trust and appreciation [5]. Additionally, employees with high job demands can meet lower job demands, have more control over how their work can be completed, and can be more creative.

The results indicated that employees frequently exhibit high creativity levels that reflect their high job demands (low to high) [5]. People with access to resources are not required to address challenging jobs as they do not experience the loss of resources and tend to increase their resources where possible [5]. Developing creativity is an improvement position that managers always recognize, which indicates that employees can accordingly receive more managerial support, rewards, and feedback.

The job demand matching process can enhance employee creativity by fostering workplace innovation. Creative self-efficacy may mediate the work environment and employee creativity [98-102]. For example, creative self-efficacy was higher when job demands and creativity aligned, and vice versa. Furthermore, the low–high condition had higher creative self-efficacy than the high–low condition. Employees with high expectations possibly enhanced their self-confidence, thus resulting in high creative competence, although acceptable creative competence levels were reported in both high and low emotional states. Despite high expectations of employees, the trust gained by leaders encouraged employees to exceed their boundaries. While employee creativity was not very high in this high–low condition, perhaps another variable was involved in addition to creative self-efficacy in motivating employee creativity.

5. Conclusion

This study made several contributions to the field of human resource management. The contributions included extending the job demand model to include creative behaviors and providing a detailed understanding of job demand models and employee creativity and affective states. Little empirical research in the area of creativity and affective states has examined the job demands model [5], as previous studies focused on economics, public health, and work situations [103], [104] rather than creativity and affective states. Job characteristics significantly affect creativity [105-107]. Nonetheless, employees frequently have different job demands at different times in their careers in practice. Rather than focusing on and studying the effects of a single job demand type on employee creativity, the effect of job demand fits on creativity and employee creativity should be examined.

Constantly focusing organizational administrators' attention on employee management is more effective. The results demonstrated that diverse job demands directly and indirectly influenced employees' creativity and affective states. The results also presented organizations with new perspectives on how employee creativity can be improved through a job design optimized for employee creativity. Employee creativity can be encouraged by allowing employees to have a large degree of job control. Providing job control to employees can facilitate new thinking in the workplace by presenting something novel [48]. Therefore, companies should ensure that their employees have more control over their work to increase workplace creativity. In particular, companies should establish deadlines for task completion and allow employees to prioritize their work and organize it at their own pace. Furthermore, organizations may provide employees with the option of choosing and modifying how they conduct their tasks so that they can decide how they want to accomplish them.

This study proposed a job analysis model where companies provide appropriate job requirements to motivate employees. In particular, organisations can increase employee workloads and work efficiency when designing a job to increase employees' time pressure. Job control and job flexibility should be balanced so that employees have the flexibility to handle challenging work and learn appropriate new processes as they complete tasks while maintaining high job control. Organisations can benefit from development when employees are encouraged to leverage their resources, while encouraging employees' creativity by aiding their understanding of these high demands [108], [5].

This study determined that employees with increased job demands demonstrate self-efficacy, which enables them to be more creative, thereby improving creativity and affective state well-being. The employees believed that they would be able to cope with challenges by using creative methods, but resource constraints prevented them from succeeding. Despite the high functional requirements and lack of job control, several other conditions and requirements should be considered. The study also highlighted the danger of organisations increasing job demands thoughtlessly to compel employees to develop new ideas.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: Asaad Alsakarneh, Bilal Eneizan; methodology: Abdelwahhab Allozi, Ahmad Wasfi Mohammad Albdour; Software: Mohannad Mohammad Mosa Ebbini, Haitham M. Alzoubi; Validation: Bilal Sakarneh, Bilal Eneizan; Formal analysis: Asaad Alsakarneh and Abdelwahhab Allozi; Investigation: Abdelwahhab Allozi; Resources: Mohannad Mohammad Mosa Ebbini, Bilal Sakarneh; Data curation: Bilal Eneizan, Ahmad Wasfi Mohammad Albdour; Writing—original draft preparation: Abdelwahhab Allozi, Ahmad Wasfi Mohammad Albdour; Writing—review and editing: Asaad Alsakarneh; Visualization: Bilal Eneizan and Bilal Sakarneh; Supervision: Haitham M. Alzoubi, Bilal Eneizan; Project administration: Mohannad Mohammad Mosa Ebbini, Haitham M. Alzoubi; Funding acquisition: Asaad Alsakarneh.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known financial or non-financial competing interests in any material discussed in this paper.

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