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Research Article

The Impact of Leadership Values on the Resilience of Employees in the New Normal

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Abstract
With Covid-19 impacting the way of living, employees and organizations had it tough in terms of survival. In order to combat the repercussions of this pandemic, resilience plays a very crucial role. Resilience talks about the coping mechanism of an individual. In troubled times, the ability of an individual to bounce back and fight through the adversities is known as resilience. This study aims to understand the impact of leadership on the resilience of the employees working in organizations. It further tries to understand the difference in the coping resilience within genders and different roles in the organisation. Using an online questionnaire, 308 respondents filled in the survey. A positive correlation was found between the coping resilience of employees and the leadership values of empathy, stability and communication. Also, the results showcased the male gender to be more resilient. Since a young age, Indian society pushes men to shoulder responsibility and they are expected to be strong during adverse situations. Executives displayed a lower resilience as compared to the managerial and senior management roles. Thus, leaders should possess the ability to be empathetic, should be able to communicate effectively to the employees and display behaviour to stabilize the organization during difficult times in order to build a resilient organization.

Key words- *Resilience, Leadership, Values, Organizational roles.*

Introduction

Covid-19 is one of the most difficult situations that the entire world has faced in the recent times. At work front, many employees lost their jobs. Many organizations struggled to deal with the Covid-19 impact, eventually leading to a shutdown of their businesses.

An integral part of an organization are its employees. Employees can make or break the organization. With their creativity, hard-work and consistent efforts, employees help in achieving the organizational goals. But this global situation, was like a testing time for both the employees and the organizations as

well. These difficult times required individuals to be emotionally and mentally strong, bringing into light the concept of 'Resilience'. Resilience can be defined as the "positive psychological capacity to rebound or to 'bounce back' from uncertainty, conflict, adversity, failure and even positive change, progress or increased duties and responsibilities" (Luthans, 2002, p. 702).

Resilient organizations indicate resilient employees. Resilient organizations were able to cope up with the situation and come up with innovative products and services. Strong leadership was an important aspect that pushed employees into giving their all instead of giving up.

In this study we aim to look at how organizational leaders displaying qualities like empathy, stability and effective communication, impact the resilience of the employees.

Review of Literature

The word Resilience originated from the Latin word 'resiliens', It refers to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance (R. R. Greene et al., 2002). Rutter (1987) stated that the term 'resilience' is used to describe the positive tone of individual differences in different people's response to adversity and stress. Janas (2002) defined the term 'resilience' as the ability to bounce back from adversity, misfortune and frustration.

Few researchers have attempted to define resilience as a process that finally leads to a resilient outcome (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003). As per them, resilience is a process of how organizations deal with adversity to achieve a resilient outcome (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003). Defining or Conceptualizing resilience as a process is slightly problematic for two key reasons: Firstly, recognising resilience as a process in itself seems to be a challenge looking its vastness and secondly the measurement of Resilience is also difficult post its implementation whether it was successful or not (Boin and van Eeten, 2013).

Resilience has been described by Masten (2007) as being able to develop well at times when high risks are involved and the ability to function well under adverse conditions. Southwick (2011) states that resilience is a process of progressive growth through the difficulties that form a part of one's life span. Resilience refers to the ability to adapt positively in the face of experiencing adversity and to be able to regain and maintain the mental health (Wald J., 2006).

In the field of human development, resiliency was defined as the ability to withstand or successfully cope with adversity (Werner; Smith, 2001). Resilience may change over time as a function of development and because of one's interaction with the environment (Kim-Cohen; Turkewitz, 2012). A resilient individual can adapt to stress, is able to recover from setbacks and can maintain a relatively stable path of healthy functioning by finding personal growth as a healthy adaptation to difficulties and harnessing the available resources to maintain the well-being (Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, and Yehuda, 2014).

It is imperative to understand resilience at an individual level to know more about organizational resilience. This implies that an organization can be only as resilient as its individuals are. (Coutu 2002; Horne 1997; Horne and Orr 1998; Mallak, 1998). Trying to understand an individual's resilience is a commencement to getting to know about organizational resilience, which further acts as an additional composite of an individual's actions and capabilities (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). McCoy and Elwood (2009) state that the way in which employees feel treated plays an important role in influencing organizational resilience. As a result, organizational resilience and individual resilience are linked to each other and influence each other (Riolli and Savicki, 2003).

Stability talks about the various abilities that target providing stability in times of an adversity (Hillmann, J. and Guenther, E., 2021) Stability is also about maintaining a positive mind frame in the

organization while undergoing a critical change or an event (Salanova et al. 2012; Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003). An organization can handle internal changes and external pressures and is successful in creating stability because of resilience (Hillmann, J. and Guenther, E., 2021).

Empathy is not just a prerequisite for other forms of intervention but is considered to be a central therapeutic construct, it is not just a specific way of responding but forms a part of a whole attitude. (Bohart, 1997). Empathy is an important component of emotional intelligence that several researchers believe is essential to being an effective leader (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Gardner and Stough (2002) also stated that empathy is linked to transformational leadership. Their results suggested that empathy is one of the main components in emotional intelligence gives leaders the ability to handle disappointment, stress and frustration at work.

An integral part of resilience is the ability to communicate effectively which is also closely linked to empathy. An organization committed to building resilient employees will encourage openness in communication, encouragement of individual contributions, risk-taking and employee recognition and rewards (O'Leary, 1998). A good communication indicates how verbal and non-verbal messages are perceived by other individuals. The more effectively an individual can convey the feelings, thoughts and beliefs, the more successful and resilient that individual will be (Robert Brooks, 2013).

In an uncertain environment, managers tend to assume various risks and anticipate events by coming up with preventative actions (Smart and Vertinsky, 1984). Leaders who through their words and actions are able to effectively communicate the plan of action, lead to a high tolerance for difficulties and uncertainties thereby further encouraging perseverance in the possibility of threat (Southwick, Frederick & Martini, 2017).

Transformational leadership style was found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on perceived organizational resiliency. (Valero, Jesus & Jung, Kyujin & Andrew, Simon, 2015). Transformational leadership is associated with empathy because transformational leaders share vision, have good communication and have good relationships with their employees (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005).

Research Methodology

The study attempts to find the impact of values driven leadership on the coping resilience of employees. It also attempts to find the difference in the coping resilience within genders and different roles in the organisation.

Hypothesis

$H0_A$: *Leadership value of Empathy does not positively correlate to Coping resilience*.

$H0_B$: *Leadership value of Stability does not positively correlate to Coping resilience*.

$H0_C$: *Leadership value of Communication does not positively correlate to Coping resilience*.

$H0_D$: *There is no significant difference in coping resilience between the male and female employees.*

$H0_{E1}$: *There is no significant difference in coping resilience between the executive role and senior management role.*

$H0_{E2}$: *There is no significant difference in coping resilience between the executive and managerial role.*

$H0_{E3}$: *There is no significant difference in coping resilience between the managerial and senior management role.*

Sample and Setting

The respondents of the study were a sample of 308 employed individuals. The sample comprised of 142 males (46.1%) and 166 females (53.9%). The respondents were categorized into 4 age groups: 16-24, 25-40, 41-55, 56 and above. The respondents belonged to executive, managerial and senior management roles.

Measures

The Brief Resilience Coping Scale (Sinclair, V. G., & Wallston, K.A., 2004), was used to measure the degree of resilience in individuals. It comprised of 4 items. Responses were scored on a 6-point scale. Higher scores indicated a greater resilience coping in the respondents.

Values driven Leadership- A self-constructed questionnaire, comprising of 3 items was used to assess the parameters of values driven leadership like empathy, stability and communication. A 6-point scale was used to score the responses.

Data Analysis

The responses were subjected to consistency analysis using Cronbach's Alpha, and a value of 0.772 was obtained.

$H0_A$ states that Leadership value of Empathy does not positively correlate to Coping resilience. Data collected from responses show a significantly positive correlation between Leadership value of Empathy and coping resilience *(Table 1- BRCS and Empathy)*. This shows that employees are more resilient in organizations that have leaders with high empathy. The regression analysis of dependent variable coping resilience and independent variable empathy showed that empathy of leaders affected the resilience in employees with an R square of 0.075*(Table 2).*

The null hypothesis can thus be rejected, in favour of the alternate hypothesis: *Leadership value of Empathy positively correlates to Coping resilience.*

$H0_B$ states that Leadership value of Stability does not positively correlate to Coping resilience. Data collected from responses shows a significantly positive correlation between leadership value of stability and coping resilience *(Table 1- BRCS and Stability)*. This shows that employees are more resilient in organizations that have leaders showcasing high stability. The regression analysis of dependent variable coping resilience and independent variable stability showed that stability of leaders affected the resilience in employees with an R square of 0.065 *(Table 3).*

The null hypothesis can thus be rejected, in favour of the alternate hypothesis*: Leadership value of stability positively correlates to Coping resilience.*

$H0_C$ states that Leadership value of Communication does not positively correlate to Coping resilience. Data collected from responses shows a significantly positive correlation between leadership value of communication and coping resilience *(Table 1- BRCS and Communication)*. This shows that employees are more resilient in organizations that have leaders with good communication. The regression analysis of dependent variable coping resilience and independent variable communication showed that the effective communication of leaders affected the resilience in employees with an R square of 0.086 *(Table 4).*

The null hypothesis can thus be rejected, in favour of the alternate hypothesis: *Leadership value of communication positively correlates to Coping resilience.*

$H0_D$ states that there is no significant difference in coping resilience between the male and female employees. However, the data collected from responses shows that there is a significant difference between the resilience coping of male and female employees *(Table 5).* The data showed that the coping resilience in males is higher as compared to females.

The null hypothesis can thus be rejected, in favour of the alternate hypothesis: *There is a significant difference in coping resilience between the male and female employees.*

$H0_{E1}$ states that there is no significant difference in coping resilience between the executive role and senior management role. However, the data collected from responses shows that there is a significant difference between the resilience coping of the executive and the senior management role. *(Table 6).* The data showed that the coping resilience of senior management is higher as compared to the executive role.

The null hypothesis can thus be rejected, in favour of the alternate hypothesis: *There is a significant difference in coping resilience between the executive role and senior management role.*

$H0_{E2}$ states that there is no significant difference in coping resilience between the executive and managerial role. However, the data collected from responses shows that there is a significant difference between the resilience coping of the executive and the managerial role *(Table 6).* The data showed that the coping resilience of managerial role is higher as compared to the executive role.

The null hypothesis can thus be rejected, in favour of the alternate hypothesis: *There is a significant difference in coping resilience between the executive and managerial role.*

$H0_{E3}$ states that there is no significant difference in coping resilience between the managerial and senior management role. The data collected from responses confirms that there is no significant difference between the resilience coping of managerial role and senior management role *(Table 6).*

Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted: *There is no significant difference in coping resilience between the managerial and senior management role*.

Limitations and Suggestions

Based on prior studies women were found to be more resilient than men. However, our study shows that men had a higher resilience. The reason behind this could be that the sample had more females in executive roles as compared to males. Males dominated the managerial and senior management roles. Thus, the reason for higher resilience could be attributed to the role in the organization rather than the gender.

Following are the suggestions for future studies.

- More leadership values could be included for future studies.
- For a more diverse sample, the sample size and demographics can be widened.
- Other factors that lead to resilience in employees can be explored.

Findings and Conclusion

Leadership values such as empathy, stability and communication positively co-related to coping resilience. Thus, leaders who are able to walk compassionately in the shoes of the employees, who are able to stabilize the organization in the times of crises and who are able to communicate and be transparent about the existing realities lead to better coping resilience in the employees.

Resilience in males was found to be higher than in females. One of the reasons for this could be the patriarchal mind-set of the Indian society that expects men to be the head of the family thus placing a huge responsibility on the male gender since a very young age. As the male gender goes through various hardships, his ability to cope up from such turbulences might improve.

Most of the respondents were found to have a good coping resilience. The average resilience of the respondents for the executive role was 19.25 out of 24. The average resilience for managerial role and

senior management role was found to be 19.27 and 19.30 respectively. The senior management and managerial roles were found to be more resilient as compared to the executive role. Senior management and managerial roles are leadership roles. These roles demand taking up responsibility for their teams. The process makes them go through a number of obstacles. Leaders need to fight these obstacles and be prepared for more challenges. This makes leaders more flexible and adaptable to changing situations. Thus, they are more resilient and are able to bounce back from the drawbacks.

Leaders need to be empathetic of the employees' difficulties and needs in order to make the employees feel valued, so that employees can cope up with turbulent times. Leaders need to display behaviours that can help stabilize the organization. The top-down communication should be clear. Policies and strategies should be understood by all for the better functioning of the organization. The pandemic came with its share of challenges for the organizations. One of the major reasons why certain organizations could survive in these tough times could be attributed to the good leadership displayed by the management.

Annexure

Table 1

		BRCS	Empathy	Stability	Communication
BRCS	Pearson Correlation	1	.273**	.255**	.293**
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.273**	1	.820**	.733**
Stability	Pearson Correlation	.255**	.820**	1	.815**
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.293**	.733**	.815**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.273[a]	.075	.072	.61490

a. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.335	1	9.335	24.689	.000[b]
	Residual	115.698	306	.378		
	Total	125.032	307			

a. Dependent Variable: BRCS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy

Table 3

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.255[a]	.065	.062	.61802

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stability

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.157	1	8.157	21.356	.000[b]
	Residual	116.876	306	.382		
	Total	125.032	307			

a. Dependent Variable: BRCS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stability

Table 4

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.293[a]	.086	.083	.61111

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.755	1	10.755	28.800	.000[b]
	Residual	114.277	306	.373		
	Total	125.032	307			

a. Dependent Variable: BRCS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication

Table 5

Group Statistics

Gender code		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BRCS	0	166	4.7229	.61053	.04739
	1	142	4.9437	.65124	.05465

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
BRCS	Equal variances assumed	.040	.841	-3.068	306	.002	-.22077	.07197	-.36239	-.07915

Table 6

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable				Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
BRCS	Tukey HSD	1	2	-.43232*	.09841	.000	-.6641	-.2006
			3	-.47771*	.08456	.000	-.6769	-.2785
		2	1	.43232*	.09841	.000	.2006	.6641
			3	-.04540	.11455	.917	-.3152	.2244
		3	1	.47771*	.08456	.000	.2785	.6769
			2	.04540	.11455	.917	-.2244	.3152

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

1- Executive, 2- Managerial, 3- Senior Management.

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