

Resilience and contextual performance

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Abstract

The present research study attempts to investigate the relationship between Resilience and contextual performance among employees. Using a non experimental, quantitative survey research design methodology, the primary data for the study was generated. Data analysis revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between resilience and contextual performance, suggesting the importance of resilience for improving the performance among the employees.

Keywords: resilience, contextual performance, positive psychology, organizational effectiveness

1. Introduction

Job performance is one of the important constructs in organizational behaviour literature. Research in organizational behaviour has regarded job performance as one of the important criterion variables. Several research studies have focussed on the issues and concerns in job performance research (Schmidt, & Hunter, 1992; Viswesvaran, & Ones, 2005; Smith, 1976) [26, 25]

Work performance in the management research is generally defined as quantifiable employee behaviours and outcomes that contribute to organizational goals (Viswesvaran, & Ones, 2005; Smith, 1976) [25]. The differences between behaviours, outcomes and organizational goals are made explicit in the literature (Smith, 1976) [25]. Behaviours and outcomes are regarded as causal factors for organizational goals. Campbell and colleagues (Campbell, 1990; Campbell, Gasser, & Oswald, 1996) [5, 6] while modelling the performance construct defined individual performance as particular behavior that can be observed and measured in terms of skills and abilities, subscribing to organizational outcomes. Thus, work performance is explained as behaviours, that are under individual control and can be observed and measured and are pertinent for organizational goals. In the literature performance is again explained in terms of task performance and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Borman, & Motowidlo, 1997) [3, 4]. Task performance refers to the prescribed role an employee should comply with in order to attain organizational goals. It can be defined as the efficacy with which the employee perform activities that contribute to the development of the organization's technical core. Task performance can be direct, including the application of a part of organizational technology, or indirect, providing materials or services needed to perform organizational technical processes (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993) [3]. Contextual performance on the other hand involves those behaviours not directly related to job tasks, but having a significant impact on organizational, social, and psychological contexts. These behaviours are also termed as citizenship performance (Borman and Motowidlo 1993) [3].

Contextual performance refers to work behaviours that contribute to the culture and climate of the organization. Volunteering for extra work, persisting with enthusiasm, helping and cooperating with others, following rules and procedures, and supporting or defending the organization are all examples of contextual performance behaviours (Motowidlo & Schmit, 1999) [18].

Borman & Motowidlo (1993) [3] introduced the term contextual performance into the literature. They defined contextual performance as behaviours that shape "the organizational, social, and psychological context that serve as a catalyst for task activities and processes" (p. 71). Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) [3] described contextual performance in detail by introducing taxonomy on contextual performance. According to this taxonomy, contextual performance consists of five dimensions: (a) persisting with enthusiasm and extra effort as necessary to complete own task activities successfully; (b) volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of own job; (c) helping and cooperating with others; (d) following organizational rules and procedures; and (e) endorsing, supporting, and defending organizational objectives.

Thus in contextual performance, the initiative, support, persistence and effort that employees display and demonstrate are more important than the technical skills and abilities required to work in an organization. (Poropat, 2002) [23] Contextual performance activities support and create the context or social environment in which the technical core of the organization must function, while task activities serve to support and create the technical core itself (Ployhart, Schneider, & Schmitt, 2006) [20].

In the era of globalisation and technological advancements, employees work in organizations under complex and diverse conditions, they face challenges and their work environment is stressful and challenging. Under these complex work conditions the employee's ability in coping with the stress, and the skills and competence in managing the difficult work conditions may determine the extent to which employees may display contextual performance at work. Thus the

psychological strengths and capacities would play a significant role in influencing the work performance of the employees. In the contemporary world of work, to compete effectively, companies not only must recruit the top talent, but must also inspire and enable employees to apply their full capabilities to their work (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011) [2]. Contemporary organizations need employees who are psychologically connected to their work; who are willing and able to invest themselves fully in their roles; who are proactive and are willing to work beyond their job description (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994) [21]. They need employees who feel energetic, and are committed to high quality performance standards (Bakker & Leiter, 2010) [1]. Much of the research on resilience among the employees has been carried out in the North American and European context. Very little research has been carried out in the Indian context. Resilience is the capacity in the personnel to withstand traumatic and stressful experiences. Resilience is the ability to thrive in the face of adversity; this is identified by a number of personal characteristics such as a meaningful belief system, a clear understanding of reality, good cognitive and problem solving skills, and high self-esteem (Connor & Davidson, 2003; Coutu, 2002; Dumont & Provost, 1999; Masten, 1999) [7, 8, 9, 16]. The present study attempts to investigate the relationship between resilience and contextual performance of employees working in organizations in India.

Resilience

Research on resilience of employees is an emerging field of research. Resilience is the ability of an individual to come back or bounce back to normalcy when faced with a traumatic or adverse condition or situation. Resiliency is described as the psychological strength of the individual. Resilience theory and research has been largely drawn from research done in clinical psychology. Resilience indicates how people cope and adapt in face of adversity and risky situation. Research on resilience gained prominence in the literature with the emergence of positive psychology. From the organizational behaviour perspective, in the context of work situation, Luthans (2002) [10] defined resiliency as the "positive psychological capacity to rebound to 'bounce back' from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility (p. 702). The concept of resilience was introduced in the literature by Luthar and colleagues (Luthar, 2006; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000) [12, 13, 14], since then, the concept of resilience has attracted considerable attention and discussion in the literature.

Luthans (2002) [10] considers resilience as the positive psychological capacity of overcoming adversities or conflicts. A resilient employee is likely to behave as a socially competent person that satisfies optimally the need of affection, respect, and social life; in turn, handles power better, achieves goals, makes better decisions and can easily procure a happy, productive, and healthy life (Salgado, 2005) [24]. They are likely to take both proactive and reactive measures in the face of adversity. Resilient employees are likely to help their colleagues with problems, promote a positive work climate, tolerate inconveniences without complaint, and protect organization resources (Witt, 1991) [28]. Resilient employees

are likely to display contextual performance at work. The present research study is undertaken to examine how the psychological capacities and strengths of the employees in the form resilience influence their contextual performance.

Scant research studies exist in the literature that has examined the resilience of employees working in Indian organizations. Very few research studies exist in the literature that has examined the resilience of employees in relation to their contextual performance. There is a need for rigorous research to be conducted on resilience of employees, and how it impacts their job performance more importantly their contextual performance. The present study makes an attempt in this direction and examines how the resilience of employees has an influence on their contextual performance.

Method

Research Design

The present research study is designed on a quantitative research framework which utilized a descriptive research perspective. No variable were manipulated in this study, and is a non experimental research study in nature. This study adopted a descriptive survey research methodology in which instruments-questionnaires were used to collect primary data from employees working in organizations

Sample

A cross sectional study was used in the present study. The sample for the present study comprised of 352 executives selected from three organizations. Their age range varied from 32 to 49 years.

Measures

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC): This scale developed by Connor & Davidson (2003) [7] was used in the study. This scale comprises of 25 items and has a five point Likert type response format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The cronbach's alpha for this scale in the present study was found to be 0.88. This scale has demonstrated adequate internal consistency and constructs validity in the literature. The mean of the 25 items were taken as the measure of the resilience in this study.

Contextual Performance: To measure contextual performance, the sixteen items contextual performance scale developed by Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) [19] was used in the present study. Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) [19] used Borman and Motowidlo's (1993) [3] conceptualisation of contextual performance in developing this scale. This scale has five point Likert type response format ranging from 1 = not at all likely, 2 = not likely, 3 = somewhat likely, 4 = likely, to 5 = extremely likely. Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) [19] established the reliability and validity of the scale. Cronbach's alpha of this scale in the present study was found to be 0.85. The mean of the sixteen items formed the contextual performance score in the present study.

Procedure

The two questionnaires along with the covering letter were distributed to the sampled executives, after establishing initial rapport with them, they were briefly explained about the

purpose of the study and were told how to respond to the items in the scale. They were encouraged to give frank and honest responses to the items in both the questionnaires.

Results and Discussion

To examine the relationship between resilience and contextual performance, the product moment correlation coefficient is computed and presented in table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients between Resilience and Contextual Performance

Variable	Mean	SD	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Resilience	3.21	1.024	0.684	.000
Contextual Performance	4.12	0.971		

From table 1 it can be observed that the correlation coefficient computed between resilience and contextual performance is positive and found to be significant ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that there is significant positive relationship between resilience and contextual performance.

The significant and positive correlation found between resilience and contextual performance indicates that resilience of employees influences their contextual performance.

Conclusion

The results of the present study suggest that resilience is significantly correlated with contextual performance. This suggests the importance of resilience in employees in enhancing their performance. Scant research studies exist in the literatures that have examined the direct effect of the influence of resilience of employees on their contextual performance. In the present study the ability of the employees to deal with stressful conditions and the ability to cope with the stressful situation, and the ability to bounce back to normalcy, in case of hardships and adverse conditions is found to be related with their contextual performance. Employees high on resilience are found to be better on contextual performance. The present study observed that resilience of employees is positively related to their contextual performance. This makes resilience an important construct for employees working for the organizations Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. Resilience involves behaviours, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Resilience is tremendously influenced by their environment. There is an important need for resilience training of employees. Luthans and his team have found that resilience can be developed in employees with a two to three hour intervention (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007) ^[11]. Coutu (2002) ^[8] observes that resilience can be learned and developed in an individual. Coutu (2002) ^[8] further observes that more than education, more than training, a person's resilience will determine who succeeds and who fails. Thus resilience in employees will may develop sufficient competence in them to take up the challenges of globalization and enhance their contextual performance resulting in increased human resource development for the organization, and also increased performance from the employees. Human resource managers may also assess the resilience and may include it as one of the criterion during the selection process

of the personnel. Further studies may be carried out by conducting an intervention, to enhance the resilience of employees. Longitudinal studies may also be carried out to examine how resilience of employees would have an influence on their contextual performance over a period of time.

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