



WORKPLACE RESILIENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE – A STUDY OF TEXTILE APPAREL INDUSTRY IN CHENNAI

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the antecedents that putatively underpin workplace resilience and analyze the influence of workplace resilience on the performance of the employees. This study was performed using a structured questionnaire and was primarily carried out to present the results of an exploratory study conducted on 400 employees working for Textile Apparel Industries in Chennai. The findings of this study clearly revealed that the employees were found to be highly resilient in the workplace and have ability to bounce back effectively after a setback in the working environment for improving their performances. The outcome of this present study also confirmed that the level of employee performance was significantly influenced by the employee resilience at the workplace. This study also disclosed a high degree of correlation existed between various facets of the workplace resilience and the employee performance.

Keywords: Employee Resilience, Workplace Resilience, Employee Performance, and Textile Apparel Industries.

Introduction

Today's workforce is coping with longer working hours, heavy workloads, increased pressures and constant change. Today, the employees described their day-to-day lives as highly stressful and highly stressed individuals identified work as their main source of stress. Persistently high level of workplace stress has become a challenge to today's organizations of all sizes. A stressed workforce means reduced productivity through absenteeism, errors, poor customer service, low morale, and increased short-term disability claims. This is why fostering employee resilience in the workplace has become the increasingly key strategy for the achievement of productive and conducive working environment in an organization.

Employee resilience is conceptualized herein as the capacity of employees, facilitated and supported by the organization, to utilize resources to positively cope, adapt and thrive in response to changing work circumstances. This definition incorporates Luthans (2002) description of resilience as being a "developable capacity" rather than a stable personality trait as suggested in earlier theories (Wagnild & Young, 1993).

Resilience is needed by staff in an organization to cope with daily stress as well as to adapt to large-scale organizational change. In today's fast-paced and ever-changing business environment, organizations must be resilient – able to confidently face challenges, embrace change and recover from disappointments and defeats. A resilient organization relies on a resilient workforce and managers play a vital role in fostering this essential trait within their teams (Masten, 2001; Windle, 2011).

It has been consistently observed that some individual workers across the work spectrum seem to manifest a capacity to cope with high work demands far more successfully than others. They are said to possess "high resilience." Surprisingly, there is no universal definition of such resilience (Gillespie, Chaboyer, & Wallis, 2007); nevertheless, most attempts to define resilience include at least two commonalities. First, resilience involves some form of adversity or challenge, and second, this is followed by some degree of positive adaptation (Earvolino-Ramirez, 2007; Grafton, Gillespie & Henderson, 2010; Windle, 2011). A conceptual review by Windle (2011) suggests:

Resilience is the process of negotiating, managing, and adapting to significant sources of stress or trauma. Assets and resources within the individual, their life and environment facilitate the capacity for adaptation and "bouncing back" in the face of adversity. Across the life course, the experience of resilience will vary.

Nevertheless, our conceptualization goes beyond the definition of resilience proposed by Luthans, which suggests that it is a recovery process in which one returns back to one's original state of equilibrium. Instead, our definition highlights the contemporary view of resilience as a transformational process in which individuals not only cope and successfully deal with change but also learn from it and adapt accordingly to thrive in the new environment (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2011; Richardson, 2002; Baird *et al.*, 2013). The development of this capacity means that employees can utilize past experiences with change and adversity to be more flexible and adaptable in the future (Avey, Luthans & Jensen, 2009; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), which in turn facilitates successful negotiation of challenges.



Both individuals and organizations might face stressful situation, setbacks or failures during their respective life cycles. Yet, people's responses to failures vary widely. Some bounce back after a brief period, while others descend into depression. Learning from setbacks or failures requires positive attitude, emotion and the ability that may ultimately lead to organizational as well as employee well-being (Cartwright and Cooper, 2009).

Studies show that resilient individuals with high positive emotions and the ability to manage negative emotions can find meaning and overcome stressful situations (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004; Cooper, 2013). Research indicates that resilient individuals are better equipped to deal with the stressful events or conditions at work (Avey, Luthans and Jensen, 2009). Positive psychological capital has been identified as antecedents of well-being (Higgs and Dulewicz, 2014), and mediator of the relationship between leadership and employee creative performance behaviors (Gupta and Singh, 2014). The extant research on employee resilience largely focuses on individual or personal resilience (Cooper *et al.*, 2013). Research is warranted to systematically investigate the consequences of resilience on employee performance.

Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003) explain the resilient employees are able to maintain positive performance under challenging conditions. Resilient employees actually thrive and become better in part because they faced and overcame serious challenges. Employee contributions that create contextual conditions ripe for resilience focus on employee actions and interactions that enrich social and resource networks within and beyond the organization. Specific, desired employee contributions include: (a) developing interpersonal connections and resource supply lines that lead to the ability to act quickly, (b) sharing information and knowledge widely, and (c) sharing decision making widely (Coutu, 2002).

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study attempts to explore the cutting-edge research that addresses the impact of employee resilience on enhancing employee performance in today's rapid changing workplace environment by focusing on its origins, manifestations and consequences.

Importantly, recent research suggests that an organization's capacity to build resilience, and indeed to successfully manage crises and transitions, is largely contingent on its ability to capitalize on, and skillfully integrate, core practices and procedures with employee contributions (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012). In essence, organizational resources and practices can be viewed as enabling conditions for the development of a resilient workforce (Shin *et al.*, 2012), which in turn determines organizational capacity to overcome challenges and, ideally, to create a competitive edge. This implies that achieving organizational resilience, and indeed understanding the factors that contribute to the development of this capacity, requires the identification of factors that foster employee resilience in the workplace (Luthans and Youssef, 2004).

Research on resilience in the workplace has shown its benefit: resilient people are less likely to become mentally or physically ill during adversity (Siebert, 2005); experience overall more hope, optimism and positivity, and so are better able to cope with job demands (Fredrickson, 2001); are better able to get through tough times, such as job loss and economic hardship (Brooks and Goldstein, 2004); and, are better able to learn new skills and knowledge when their existing set becomes outdated (Gorelick *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, when competing for a job or promotion, the more resilient person has a better chance of succeeding (Siebert, 2005). Resilient people are also best able to turn adversity into a growth experience, and to leverage it into new experiences and ways of working and living (Maddi and Khoshaba, 2005).

As suggested by researcher Tymon *et al.* (2011) that employees can improve their performance by balancing long-term and short-term goals, improving their competence, and communicating openly with their managers and colleagues. There are four factors as revealed by Rasdi *et al.* (2009) which have predictive potential on employees' performance are individual-related factors, organizational-related factors, managerial competencies-related factors, and the person-environment fit factor. Scott-Ladd and Marshall (2004) emphasized that participative decision-making contributes to performance effectiveness and led to greater gains in the workplace, whereas as reflected by researcher Ballout (2008) the individual-specific variables will be more likely to predict family-to-work conflict and employee performance, while work-specific variables will be more likely to predict work-to-family conflict and employee performance.

Statement of the Problem

The professional lives of the employees have been a prominent area of study over a couple of years. The relationship between workplace resilience and employee performance makes it imperative that the employees understand the importance of creating productive working environment in the organization. Though its roots can be traced back over a century, the organizations today recognized employees' workplace resilience as a key element in developing a productive workforce in



the workplace. There are social, mental, and physical consequences to the ability of the employees as and when they deal with their workplace.

The resilience at workplace is the key way the body, mind and soul of the employees can react either favourably or adversely to the productivity of the organization. The previous studies revealed that people with a high level of resilience at workplace were more successful, productive, healthier, happier, and enjoy better relationships with others. It has paved the way for the researchers to explore the antecedents that are associated with the resilience of employees at workplace and highlight its effect on the performance of the employees in the workplace.

Objectives & Hypotheses of the Study

Today, many organizations have realized that employee resilience is one of the key issues in developing a productive and healthy workforce in the workplace. To explore the influence of workplace resilience on the performance of employees in Chennai Textile Apparel Industries, the researchers have developed three main research objectives:

- 1) To explore the employee-specific antecedents which are oriented with the workplace resilience and the employee performance at Textile Apparel Industries, Chennai, India.
- 2) To assess the degree to which the performance of the employees influenced by the workplace resilience in an organization.

In this study, employee performance is a dependent variable and various facets of workplace resilience are independent variables. Thus, the following two hypotheses were framed to find out whether there is any significant relationship between the workplace resilience and employee performance.

- H₁: The employees, who tend to improve their performance, are likely to be oriented with various facets of workplace resilience.
- H₂: The level of employee performance was significantly influenced by the workplace resilience.

Methodology

The survey reported here was conducted among the employees of Textile Apparel Industries in Chennai, India. The development of the research instrument was mainly based on research scales of the workplace resilience and employee performance developed by (Windle, 2011; Wagnild & Young, 1993; Grafton, Gillespie & Henderson, 2010 and Cooper, Flint-Taylor & Pearn, 2013). However, and wherever possible, the researchers used validated measures that have been previously applied. The reliability and validity of the constructs and scale items used in the research instrument were tested through pilot survey and Cronbach's Alpha (Table 3).

All the items/statements in the structured questionnaire were being asked using 5-point Likert scale. The data required for the study were purely primary data collected by the means of structured questionnaires mailed to 650 employees. A sample size of 400 employees was drawn on the basis of area-cum-purposive sampling technique. This procedure resulted in 400 useful questionnaires or 61.5 % of overall response rate. Thus, the sample size of the study was confined to 400 employees only.

Data Analysis, Results & Discussions

The data analysis, survey results and conclusive discussions of the study are summarized in the following section.

Sample Characteristics

From the survey, it was observed that majority of the respondents were male (53.3%) and 46.7% were female. With respect to age groups, the mean age of the sample respondents was found to be 36.40 years with a standard deviation of 2.34 years. In terms of marital status, majority of the sample respondents were married (56.7%) and 43.3% were single. With regard to education level, 36.7% were under graduates, 33.3% have completed their post-graduation, and 30.0% were diploma holders.

Factor Analysis of the Research Variables

The crux of this research is to explore the determinants that are associated with workplace resilience and the degree to which the performance of the employees is influenced by the workplace resilience. The first hypothesis (H₁) of this study clearly indicated that the employees, who tend to improve their performance, are likely to be oriented with various determinants of workplace resilience. For this purpose, an exploratory factor analysis was performed using SPSS Statistic 20.

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used to identify the underlying factors that determine the workplace resilience and the performance of the employees of the Chennai Textile Apparel Industries. The 30 statements, that best reflect the views of the employees on workplace resilience and employee performance, have been subjected to a multivariate

data analysis technique (Factor Analysis) to reduce them to a few uncorrelated factors. First, all the 30 items were used for the factor analysis which extracted six factors. It was observed that some items were not loaded on any of the factors and some items were duplicating. Therefore, 7 items were deleted from the original list. Another factor analysis was done with 23 research items and four factors were obtained with eigenvalues greater than 1.

Table 1: Statistics for Construct Validity of Research Variables

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.847
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	14505.407
	df	253
	Sig.	0.000

Table 2: Total Variance Explained for the Research Variables

Factors	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.821	25.308	25.308	5.821	25.308	25.308	5.527	24.031	24.031
2	4.703	20.447	45.755	4.703	20.447	45.755	4.458	19.383	43.414
3	3.995	17.370	63.125	3.995	17.370	63.125	3.793	16.492	59.906
4	3.289	14.302	77.428	3.289	14.302	77.428	3.657	15.900	75.806
5	3.098	13.469	90.897	3.098	13.469	90.897	3.471	15.090	90.897

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

In order to test the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the correlation matrix was computed and examined. This revealed that there were enough correlations to go ahead with factor analysis. Anti image correlations were computed. These showed that partial correlations were low, indicating that true factors existed in the data. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) for individual variables was studied from the diagonals of partial correlation matrix. This was found to be sufficiently high for all variables. Overall MSA was calculated to find if the sample was good enough for sampling.

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was calculated to find whether the number of correlations among the variables is statistically significant or not. Overall Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin MSA was found to be 0.847 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant (Chi-Square = 14505.407, df =253, significance = 0.000) indicating the suitability of data for factor analysis. Thus, all of these examinations revealed that data was fit for factor analysis. Principal Component Analysis was employed for extracting factors. The number of factors to be extracted was finalized on the basis of 'Latent Root Criterion' (Table 2).

All factor loadings greater than 0.50 (ignoring signs) have been considered for the analysis. Guidelines for identifying significant factor loadings based on sample size suggest considering factor loading of 0.30 for sample size 350 or more. (Hair *et.al.*, 1998). The results of Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation for sample are shown in Table 2. It shows that five factors have been extracted which together accounted for 90.897% of the variance. Eigenvalues for the factors 1 to 5 are 5.821, 4.703, 3.995, 3.289 and 3.098 as revealed by the anti-penultimate row of the Table 2. The percentage of the variance explained by individual factors is shown in the penultimate row of the table. It is observed that the percentage of variance explained by factors 1 to 5 is 25.308, 20.447, 17.370, 14.302 and 13.469. The reliability of the research variables was assessed by the Cronbach's reliability coefficient. The internal consistency of the measurement scales is tested using the Cronbach's alpha for each research variable as well as for the complete construct. Internal consistency analysis was used to assess the reliability and validity of the measurements. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to analyze the internal consistency of the construct and its reliability (Table 3).

The recommended minimum Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978) was used to test the reliability and validity of each factor. The results are presented in Table 3. The reliability test was satisfied as the Cronbach's was found to be more than 0.70 for all the research variables. The alpha values for the extracted factors such as Employee Resilience, Employee EI, Employee Well-Being, and Employee Performance are 0.982, 0.989, 0.969, 0.949 and 0.968 respectively.

Naming of Factors

The five extracted factors have been given appropriate names on the basis of variables represented in each case. The names of factors, the statement labels and factor loadings have been summarized in Table 3. The factors representing this study have been discussed below.

Table 3: Factor Loadings, Percentage of Variance Explained and Cronbach's Alpha for Extracted Factors for the Research Variables

Sl.No.	Factors	Statements	Factors Loadings	% of Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Social Coherence	D1. I can survive, grow and develop if I engage with others.	0.655	25.308	0.982
		D2. I can work with people in a collaborative way rather than competitive manner.	0.657		
		D3. I can interact easily with a diverse group of individuals in the workplace.	0.695		
		D4. I can adjust my behaviours to adapt to different situations, people and groups.	0.714		
2	Self-efficacy	D5. I can effectively adapt to change at the workplace.	0.839	20.447	0.989
		D6. It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.	0.851		
		D7. I can effectively respond to feedback even at criticism.	0.864		
		D8. I can bounce back quickly after a setback in the workplace	0.849		
		D9. I am able to survive and thrive in the face of uncertainty.	0.865		
3	Self-Awareness	D10. There is a purpose in my professional and personal lives.	0.667	17.370	0.969
		D11. I understand my moods and feelings in the workplace and family.	0.640		
		D12. I feel that I can handle many things at a time.	0.644		
		D13. I tend to find positives from most difficult situations at work.	0.662		
4	Empathy	D14. I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt.	0.646	14.302	0.949
		D15. I try to understand what other people feel and think.	0.628		
		D16. I deal sensitively with the emotional displays of others.	0.686		
		D17. I normally express my views honestly and thoughtfully without being pushy.	0.621		

Table 3 (Continued)

5	Employee Performance	D18. I learn from mistakes and improve the way I do my job.	0.946	13.469	0.968
		D19. I can accomplish my goals in spite of crises and distractions.	0.941		
		D20. I can deal with workplace bullying and seek to resolve conflicts fairly.	0.873		
		D21. I remain calm under pressures and rarely lose temper in workplace.	0.917		
		D22. I am clear about my own goals and values at workplace.	0.935		
		D23. I am flexible and willing to adapt to new conditions at workplace.	0.942		



Factor 1: Social Coherence

This factor has emerged as the most important factor explaining 25.308% out of the total variance. This factor has an eigenvalue of 5.821 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.982. In total, four statements load on to this factor. Highest loading is for the statement "I can adjust my behaviours to adapt to different situations, people and groups (0.714)". Followed by, "I can interact easily with a diverse group of individuals in the workplace (0.695)", "I can work with people in a collaborative way rather than competitive manner (0.657)", and "I can survive, grow and develop if I engage with others (0.655)" (Table 3).

Factor 2: Self-efficacy

The second factor explains 20.447% out of the total variance. This factor has an eigenvalue of 4.703 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.989. It is made up of five correlated statements. Highest loading is for the statement "I am able to survive and thrive in the face of uncertainty (0.865)". Linked to this, "I can effectively respond to feedback even at criticism (0.864)", "It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event (0.851)", "I can bounce back quickly after a setback in the workplace (0.849)", and "I can effectively adapt to change at the workplace (0.839)" (Table 3).

Factor 3: Self-awareness

The third factor explains 17.370% out of the total variance explained. This factor has an eigenvalue of 3.995 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.969. It is made up of four correlated statements. The highest loading is for the statement "There is a purpose in my professional and personal lives (0.667)". Followed by, "I tend to find positives from most difficult situations at work (0.662)", "I feel that I can handle many things at a time (0.644)", and "I understand my moods and feelings in the workplace and family (0.640)" (Table 3).

Factor 4: Empathy

Four highly correlated statements load on to this factor and explain 14.302% out of the total variance explained. This factor has an eigenvalue of 3.289 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.949. Highest loading in this factor is for the statement "I deal sensitively with the emotional displays of others (0.686)", Linked to this, "I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt (0.646)", "I try to understand what other people feel and think (0.628)", and "I normally express my views honestly and thoughtfully without being pushy (0.621)" (Table 3).

Factor 5: Employee Performance

Here, six highly correlated statements load on to this factor and explain 13.469% out of the total variance explained. This factor has an eigenvalue of 3.098 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.968. Highest loading in this factor is for the statement "I learn from mistakes and improve the way I do my job (0.946)", Linked to this, "I am flexible and willing to adapt to new conditions at workplace (0.942)", "I can accomplish my goals in spite of crises and distractions (0.941)", "I am clear about my own goals and values at workplace (0.935)", "I remain calm under pressures and rarely lose temper in workplace (0.917)", and "I can deal with workplace bullying and seek to resolve conflicts fairly (0.873)" (Table 3).

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix was performed to test the second hypothesis (H₂) of this study. The second hypothesis (H₂) of this research was exclusively framed to explore whether there is a significant correlation between the research variables such as social coherence, self-efficacy, self-awareness, empathy & employee performance and the degree to which the employee performance is significantly influenced by the workplace resilience in Textile Apparel Industries, Chennai. The results obtained in this regard are summarized in the following Table 4.

One of the purposes of this study was to replicate the significant correlations between the major study variables. Table 4 presents the correlations between all variables included. As expected, the employee performance of the Textile Apparel Industries, Chennai was highly positively correlated with the social coherence ($r = 0.898$, $P < 0.01$), self-efficacy ($r = 0.894$, $P < 0.01$), empathy ($r = 0.841$, $P = 0.728$) and self-awareness ($r = 0.823$, $P < 0.01$). It was also found from the Table that social coherence of the employees was highly positively correlated with the empathy ($r = 0.798$, $P < 0.01$), self-efficacy ($r = 0.742$, $P < 0.01$) and self-awareness ($r = 0.706$, $P < 0.01$).

The self-efficacy was also highly positively correlated with the self-awareness ($r = 0.789$, $P < 0.01$), social coherence ($r = 0.742$, $P < 0.01$) and empathy ($r = 0.728$, $P < 0.01$). The self-awareness was also highly positively correlated with the empathy ($r = 0.803$, $P < 0.01$), self-efficacy ($r = 0.789$, $P < 0.01$) and social coherence ($r = 0.706$, $P < 0.01$). Further, it was clear from the Table 4 that the empathy was highly positively correlated with the self-awareness ($r = 0.803$, $P < 0.01$), social coherence ($r = 0.798$, $P < 0.01$) and Self-efficacy ($r = 0.728$, $P < 0.01$). These findings were absolutely consistent with the results of the factor analysis.

Table 4: Pearson correlations between major study variables

Research Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Social coherence	1	0.742*	0.706*	0.798*	0.898*
2. Self-efficacy	0.742*	1	0.789*	0.728*	0.894*
3. Self-awareness	0.706*	0.789*	1	0.803*	0.823*
4. Empathy	0.798*	0.728*	0.803*	1	0.841*
5. Employee performance	0.898*	0.894*	0.823*	0.841*	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), N = 400

Conclusion And Research Implications

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing business environment, employees must be resilient at the workplace to confidently face challenges, embrace change and recover from setbacks. An organization relies on the resilient employees in fostering productive, efficient and effective work environment. A resilient workforce is one that performs well under pressures and deals quickly and effectively with change in the working environment.

Employees don't dwell on failures or roadblocks. Instead they move on and look to the future. They are able to deal with uncertainty and maintain their productivity and good humour despite the frustrations of routine work life. A resilient working environment is one in which the employees have a shared sense of purpose and connectedness. They work effectively together without displaying anger or negative behaviours and support each other during tough periods. Team spirit can be built through social activities, group trainings, celebrating individual and group achievements, regular informal team get-togethers and creating a culture of mutual trust and respect in the workplace.

It was concluded from the outcomes of this exploratory study that the employees were found to be highly resilient and have the ability to bounce back after a setback in the workplace, effectively sense and manage their performances and take care of their personal as well as professional lives. It was also evident from the factor analysis that the dimensions of the workplace resilience concerning social coherence, self-efficacy, self-awareness, and empathy were observed to be significant and have a direct bearing on the employee performance. The outcome of this study clearly indicated that the performance of the employees was significantly influenced by the various facets of employee resilience at the workplace. It was also apparent from the study that a high degree of correlation existed between various dimensions of workplace resilience and employee performance.

Direction For Future Research

Despite its strengths, this study has a number of limitations which will restrict the generalization of the results. It is also important to view this study in the context of its limitations. First, the outcome of the survey was confined to only 400 employees in Textile Apparel Industries sampled from important areas of Chennai, India. Clearly, there is a need to replicate the results of the study to other parts of India and abroad as well. Another limitation worth mentioning here was that due to the paucity of resources and time, it has not been possible to explore the possibilities of changes in the perceptions of the sample respondents over time. Furthermore, more research needed to study how the perceived importance of these proposed research variables may differ across different organizations, provinces and countries. Finally, these findings cannot be generalized to the employees of other Textile Apparel Industries located in other provinces of India, which were not included in this study.

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