

Navigating Workplace Challenges: Exploring Employee Resilience

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Abstract

In an increasingly dynamic business environment, the challenges employees are experiencing at work have been growing both in volume and variety. Therefore, in the face of adversity, building and maintaining strong employee resilience, which refers to the capacity of employees to utilise resources in order to continually adapt and flourish at work, even when faced with challenging circumstances, becomes a priority. Yet, the strategies employees use for enhancing their resilience are still under debate in the literature. The current paper aims to reveal the ways employees handle adversity to become more resilient. In doing this, a qualitative study was conducted, including 15 semi-structured interviews with employees. The results demonstrated that the most commonly mentioned types of adversity that employees experienced at work were related to actions of the organisation (low appreciation by the organisation or “idea stealing”), actions of colleagues (miscommunication between colleagues), or actions of customers (business partners unexpectedly changing agreements or unreasonably capricious customers). All the informants indicated individual resources, i.e., personality and personal qualities, as the main resources for dealing with adversity. Moreover, the family seems to serve as one of the more significant resources, while the human resource management (HRM) department plays a passive role. Finally, the outcomes of dealing with adversity, quitting the job, gaining new experience and competencies, or becoming more mature were mentioned. The findings encourage organisations to increase HRM involvement and contribute to employee resilience development.

Keywords: employee resilience, adversity, HRM, positive adaptation, HRM practices, resources.

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