

Resilient Employees, Resilient Society: From Academia to Impact

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Abstract

In an increasingly dynamic work environment, employee resilience has emerged as a critical capability for both organizations, in order to ensure sustainability, and for employees, in order to thrive at work. Employee resilience is seen as a personal resource, defined as the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity and to use organizational resources to ensure ongoing development and growth at work. As a capacity, it can be developed. The project »Building employee resilience through sustainable HRM for organizational transformation towards sustainability in context of environmental disruptions« aims to reveal the nature of adversities experienced by employees and how sustainable human resource management (HRM) practices applied by organizations impact employee resilience in terms of capacity and process. During the project, interviews with employees as well as HRM practitioners were conducted. In addition, a survey examining which HRM practices shape employee resilience was carried out. The results have strong practical implications in three main directions. First, as adversities at work are often induced by line managers, co-workers, and clients, leadership training and a culture of openness and cooperation are essential. Second, as employee resilience differs according to demographic characteristics (e.g., gender) and career-related factors (e.g., job tenure, sector), managers are advised to actively support employees belonging to less resilient groups. Third, sustainable HRM practices (e.g., decent work or a sustainable career climate) serve as important factors enhancing employee resilience. In summary, the recommendations based on the project results can serve as a practical tool for organizations in fostering resilience at work.

Keywords: employee resilience, societal impact, sustainability of project, adversity at work, sustainable HRM

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