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# CONTRIBUTIONS OF RESILIENT EMPLOYEES IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE IN ORGANIZATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*Organizational Resilience is the firm's ability to effectively absorb drastic changes in business environment, develop situation-specific responses and ultimately engage in transformative activities to capitalize on disruptive surprises that potentially threaten organization's survival. Building sustainable high performance in organizations require a resilient workforce competent to manage challenges through a compelling vision, dynamic leadership, and well-designed business strategy in an increasingly volatile, complex, and uncertain business world. Performing Employees with the Right Knowledge, Skill-set, Attitude and Behavior are the source of competitive advantage on whom organizations should invest to achieve the objective of increased organizational productivity. This Paper examines the different Human Resource Management Strategies to develop resilience in employees and makes an assessment of the contributions of resilient employees in building sustainable high performance in organizations. An exploratory and descriptive study was conducted with the help of secondary data analysis on relevant Literature about organizational resilience and Human Resource Management practices. The study reveals that Human Resource skills adjustment, building strong workplace culture, Organizational Development Interventions, implementing High-Performance Work Systems and organizational leadership are the human resource management strategies to develop resilience in employees. Increased employee productivity, employee engagement, strong organizational culture, workforce diversity management, creation of innovative and problem-solving teams and globalization of business are the contributions of resilient employees in building sustainable high performance in organizations. The study suggests that a sustainable practice that create and optimally utilize the knowledge, skills and capacities of employees facilitates the development of a resilient organization.*

## KEYWORDS

organizational resilience, organizational development interventions, employee engagement, competitive advantage.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations today encounter numerous challenges when functioning in a complicated business environment, placing employees in stressful work situation which is affecting their health. Here the role of Human Resource (HR) Manager is very crucial in providing a stress free and healthy work environment with full management and technical support to help them become resilient. Companies operate in a dynamic and competitive business environment which requires managers to proactively deal with them to consistently earn profits. Denyer (2017) defines Organizational Resilience as "The ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive and prosper". The potential for resilience within an organization can be increased by employing human resource management techniques which creates the ability to respond decisively to disruptions, changes, or shocks business environment gives. The Human Resource Departments are now focusing on resilience planning by improving knowledge, skills and competencies which infuse resilience within the workforce to mitigate the risk threatening the organization's survival. In this context the present paper aims to understand the role of Human Resource Management Strategies in developing resilient employees and evaluates the contributions of such employees in building sustainable high performance in companies today.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1. CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

In the view of McManus et al. (2008) the word "Resilience" originated from the field of science which describes the nature of a substance that has the capacity to return to its original form after undergoing a drastic physical or chemical change. Understanding the issue, managing the organization's limitations and having the ability to change are the three primary characteristics of a resilient organization (McManus et al. 2008). As a result, they viewed organizational resilience as a function of an organization's total situational awareness, its capacity to manage key vulnerabilities, capacity for adaptation and capacity for recovery. Organizational preparedness can be measured by how well they are able to absorb shock or build resilience in the face of anxiety and mental uneasiness employees go through due to these unprepared changes. In the context of organizations, Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011) defines the term Organizational Resilience as "The Capacity of an organization to respond in a manner that suited the situation and to make changes to reduce the impact of any surprises that may threaten the company existence." Companies adopt a variety of strategies to deal with uncertainty, including centralized control mechanisms, creative solutions, and new system adaptation.

Managers must be aware of the increasingly complex cultural, political, legal, regulatory, economic, technological environment in which they work and must keep an eye on important issues and trends that could have an impact on the organization's goals, performance as well as the perceptions and values of external stakeholders. Organizational performance is the effective and efficient use of resources by a firm for the accomplishment of its objectives, leading to an increase in profitability, share price, sales, and market share as well as successfully satisfying the expectations of its three main stakeholders, which include customers, employees and its owners.

### 2.2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING CAPACITY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

Schuler & Jackson (1987) prepared a list of Human Resource Management (HRM) procedures which included decisions for planning, staffing, evaluating, compensating, as well as training and development. Job enrichment (planning), socialization (staffing), employee participation (appraising), employment security (compensating), and quality of work life emphasis (training and development) are formal HRM practices. Fottler (2002) emphasized that when companies use Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) techniques, organizational resilience is increased. According to Lengnick-Hall (2011) organizational sustainability is regarded as the most significant matter of concern for organizations which requires managers to put into practice strategic human resource management techniques which increases employee performance.

#### 2.2.1. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

According to Aswathappa (2012) "Organizational Change is the process by which organizations move from their present state to some desired future state to increase their effectiveness." In order to sustain in this rapidly changing dynamic business environment, organizations have to undergo change and implement it in their working system and culture. Employees are the change targets as well as the change agents who can implement the change in the company. Emotionally strong, adaptable, broad minded, knowledgeable, skilled, and performing employees with the right attitude are the ones who can lead the organizational change process and implement it using the Organizational Development (OD) interventions. Organizational Development is a set of organizational change methods, planned and systematic process to create adaptive organizations, capable of transforming and reinvesting themselves, so as to remain effective.

There are four categories of OD Interventions:

#### 1 Human Process Interventions

- Sensitivity or T Group Training
- Team Building
- Grid Training

#### 2 Human Resource Management Interventions

- Recruitment and Selection
- Performance Appraisal
- Reward System
- Workforce Diversity Programmes

#### 3 Techno Structural Interventions

- Total Quality Management and
- Quality of Work Life Programmes for Employees

#### 4 Strategic Interventions

- SWOT Analysis
- Modification of Vision and Mission of company
- Designing a Strategic Change Plan and its Implementation with the full support of all Employees and Top Management

### 2.2.2. ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Organizational Learning is the process where all the employees learn and apply new knowledge, behaviours, skills, values and also include management of critical data to arrive at the best decisions for the company. According to Aggestam (2006) a learning organization has a culture that encourages both individual and organizational learning and innovation. A leader who embodies the learning organization's vision, is necessary for the first step in creating one. It is always desirable that both employees and organizations learn new developments in the business environment and together become resilient.

### 2.2.3 ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Walker et al. (2002) define Adaptive Capacity as "An aspect of resilience that reflects learning, flexibility to experiment and adopt novel solutions, and the development of generalized responses to broad classes of challenges." They further define adaptive capacity as being related to effective leadership and a culture that fosters open communication, positive working relationships, and an organizational goal that is shared by all members. McManus (2007) in her Relative Overall Resilience (ROR) Model provided the following Resilience Strategies

- Communications and Relationships
- Strategic Vision and Outcome Expectancy
- Information and Knowledge Management
- Leadership, Management and Governance Structures

### 2.2.4. DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

According to Teece, et al. (2010) "Dynamic Capabilities. is the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external skills to handle quickly changing contexts". Organizations and their staff members require the capacity to learn new skills rapidly and develop strategic assets. The company must integrate new resources including capability, technology, and customer feedback while reconfiguring its current strategic assets. He underlined the significance of corporate agility for the survival of businesses. It is the ability to recognize and respond to threats, to seize opportunities, and to sustain competitiveness by maximizing, merging, safeguarding, and, if required, reconfiguring the intangible and tangible assets of the corporate firm.

## 3. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The speed and pace with which firms are facing global business transformations, they need to invest on training of their employees on an urgent basis to avoid technological obsolescence. Employees swiftly take on new roles and use their abilities to make significant changes during shocks like economic recessions, fast shifting markets, and pandemics. All of these situations reveal the importance of employee resilience, which facilitates the sustainable high performance in the firm. Organizations that design their Human Resource Management Strategies provide ample opportunities to employees to adapt skills and develop capacity in new areas of knowledge and to build the collective resilience required to respond proactively to adversity.

## 4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Employee-friendly practices implemented by Management assists employees in maintaining their physical and mental well-being, which enables them to handle a variety of unforeseen business threats and makes them resilient and productive workforce. Resilient Employees stand as strong pillars for organizations, ready to face any kind of unpredictable business transformations. The present paper aims to assess the contributions of resilient employees in building sustainable high performance in Organizations.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Study the Importance of Human Resource Management in Developing Organizational Resilience.
2. To Study the Human Resource Management Strategies to Develop Resilience in Employees.
3. To Assess the Contributions of Resilient Employees in Building Sustainable High Performance in Organizations.

## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An Exploratory and Descriptive Study was conducted with the help of Secondary Data Analysis of Relevant Literature, Websites and Research Articles on Organizational Resilience and Human Resource Management Practices.

## 7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 7.1. IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

- The HRM System that keeps the employees aligned to Corporate Vision and Mission in the continuously changing environment leads to organizational resilience building. Strategic Human Resources Management Practices are long term interventions, every organization must implement like management training, employee participation, organizational learning and effective leadership, performance-oriented appraisal, planning career opportunities, and developing adaptive capacities to make employees resilient.
- Well-designed HR Strategies will not only assist in promoting employee resilience and enhancing performance outcomes, but they will also help to build and sustain organizational values of fulfilling customer expectations and Corporate Social Responsibility. Employee Friendly Policies implemented by Human Resource Executive helps employees maintain their physical and mental health which makes employees face any kind of unpredictable business challenges making them resilient and effective performers in organizations.
- The phenomenon of SHRM practices involves adopting a set of critical human resource practices that improves employees' Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) helping organizations to achieve sustainable performance, which in turn generates revenue for the firm.

- According to the Firm's Resource-Based View (RBV) employees are the intangible resources of an organization, that are valued, uncommon, difficult to duplicate, and non-substitutable who contribute to organizational stability and long-term survival. Employees are the core of "Intellectual Capital" described as the reservoir of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities necessary to achieve profitability. Strategic HRM help employees become more resilient by improving their knowledge and skills inspiring them to contribute to the competitiveness and sustainability of the company, particularly during times of crisis.

## **7.2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP RESILIENCE IN EMPLOYEES**

Skilled and performing employees are the contributing factor for improving organizational performance and effectiveness, helping organizations to become resilient. Following are the strategies to be implemented to develop organizational resilience in employees.

### **7.2.1. WORKFORCE PLANNING AND HIRING OF EMPLOYEES**

When an organization makes the Workforce Planning, it should first decide the type of employees each department needs having the right kind of work attitude – readiness to learn new methods, adaptability, flexibility, team spirit, open mindedness, emotional stability and physical strength, and recruit them accordingly. This ensures entry of the resilient employees in the beginning itself, helping organizations to face any kind of adversities and business challenges, which indicates Strategic Human Resources Planning and Right Selection of employees in all organizations.

### **7.2.2. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES**

Developing resilience in employees is not a one-day task, but requires continuous efforts on part of the Management by providing behavioral training as the first step towards resilience building. Employees always prefer to work in comfort zone and will resist any kind of changes affecting their working style and relationship. Developing resilience first requires coming out of the comfort zone and accepting the changes in business environment learn the new methods of work and implement the changes throughout the organization. Making employees realize the importance of developing resilience requires the Human Resource Manager to orient and train all the employees in this regard through behavioral, conceptual and skill training sessions. Only training programmes will not suffice the efforts, but, mentoring, counseling, guidance and psychological support along with technical support will make the process of resilient building in employees much easier and faster.

### **7.2.3. HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS ADJUSTMENT**

When the Corona Virus outbreak spread over the world, several firms turned to downsizing as a survival strategy rather than Re- Skilling and upgrading their employees to accommodate the new drastic developments brought about by the pandemic. It would have been more appropriate for them to provide new training to employees as the key to sustainability in times of uncertainty, disruptions, economic dislocations, and transformation in technological tools caused by the covid-19 pandemic. Managers can use Up-Skilling and Re-Skilling as two Human Resource Skills Adjustment (HRSA) Dimensions in the workplace. Re- skilling is the process of retraining employees to assist them in adjusting to a new role that they have never held before. Up-Skilling is the process of teaching employees' new competencies; skills, abilities, and knowledge that they require to accomplish their current job. Retraining means learning a completely new (fresh) skill to execute a job that is different from the one the person was doing previously.

### **7.2.4. BUILD STRONG WORKPLACE CULTURE**

HR Managers are required to provide a wide-range of resilience training programmes to enhance the workforce skills in technical, time management, communication, decision making and stress management. HR Managers are required to build an interactive organizational culture with strong, consistent, open communication system to spread the teamwork spirit. A Spiritual Culture recognizes that employees have both a mind and a spirit which seeks to find meaning and purpose in their work and desire to connect with other employees and be an integral part of the company with the vision of product excellence and commitment to customer's needs. Companies can organize yoga training sessions on regular basis before official working hours for employees to help them focus and be stress free while working thus leading to their physical as well as emotional health.

### **7.2.5. HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS (HPWS)**

High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) are intended to improve employees' knowledge, abilities, dedication and behaviour in such a way that they become a source of competitive advantage. HPWS are a collection of HR Practices that support flexible work arrangements and skill diversity, such as selective staffing, investment in training and development, performance-based reward systems, employee involvement, teamwork, and employee-oriented job design.

### **7.2.6. ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Leadership is a crucial Management Function that helps to bring about the desired change, motivate employee to perform, foster team spirit and create Future Leaders, and encourage a learning culture. Building organizational resilience requires an effective and strong situational leadership from the Managers who can instill the spirit of resilience in all the employees to face any challenge.

## **7.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF RESILIENT EMPLOYEES IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE IN ORGANIZATIONS**

In a Corporate environment that is becoming more unpredictable, complicated, and uncertain, organizational resilience is recognized as a crucial component for an organization's success. As resilient employees play a key role in ensuring the survival and the effective functioning of the organization in this extremely competitive environment, nurturing the employees' performance generates many favorable outcomes for the organization. Following are the contributions of resilient employees in building sustainable high performance in organizations.

### **INCREASED PROFITABILITY AND MARKET SHARE**

The primary objective of every business venture is profitability which helps organizations to survive in the long run. Companies that invest on appropriate training of their employees and makes them resilient, ensures long term profitability for sustainable growth and development. Resilient, performing and committed employees will definitely contribute to both increasing profitability and market share for the company.

### **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

Employees not only show attitude by how well or how poorly they do their job, but also by how engaged they are with the company. Employee Engagement is the degree to which an employee is connected to all aspects of the company and works to help the organization. Resilient employees not only show commitment towards their work, but are also aware of the happenings in the workplace and are always connected, actively involved in company affairs and issues. They always come forward to help the company in solving any critical issue taking initiative on their own. This attitude of employees helps organizations to solve complex problems easily and correct decisions is taken in time with effective leadership.

### **INCREASED EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AND TEAM EFFECTIVENESS**

Happy, confident and performing employees contribute to increased employee productivity and organizational profitability. Emotionally strong employees excel in all kinds of tasks and exhibit leadership capabilities required to handle all kinds of complex projects. Resilient employees are very efficient in controlling their own emotions and controlling the behavior and performance of their team members. They are very good in negotiation skills and can turn obstacles into opportunity through their calm, going with the flow and flexible approach and effective communication skills while dealing with tough and rigid people inside and outside the organization. They know which leadership style to apply according to the situation which increases team effectiveness and performance.

### **DEVELOPING STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

Resilient employees help in building a strong and healthy workplace culture which is evident in the attitude and behavior of all the employees. Commitment towards work and working on customer needs and expectations without delay, disciplined workforce, employee showing ethical behavior, upholding and practicing values, morals and principles, energetic and enthusiastic employees taking responsibilities and being accountable for their work are some of the signs of strong and healthy organizational culture which is possible when all employees are resilient.

### **WORKFORCE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT**

Organizations today recruit and select employees from diverse social, economic political, cultural, educational backgrounds with different mindset, attitudes, personality traits, perception and outlook which are now a big challenge for Human Resource Manager to handle effectively. New employees enter a company with their own set of expectations and anxiety and it is the duty of the HR Manager to remove that fear and anxiety by providing them a stress free work environment where there is always scope for improvement, encouragement and active support from supervisor and peers and Management in carrying out day today

functions. This reduces their anxiety to a great extent and helps them accept the new company culture with open heart. Encouraging participation from all employees irrespective of their background helps manage workforce diversity much better. When a company is successful in handling diverse workforce by empowering them in all aspects, it makes the employees and the organization resilient and always ready to face any kind of business challenge. Diverse workforce has the potential to contribute multi-faceted skills, knowledge, competencies which are required today to remain competitive.

#### **MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITALIZATION**

Resilient workforce is always agile, active, and flexible with a learning attitude to adapt to any technological changes to be implemented in company. They never resist change but accept it with a "Let's Do It Attitude" and become the Change Agent to implement the new technology in the whole organization with effective leadership. Business environment is unpredictable and technology working today can become obsolete tomorrow, so business leaders need resilient workforce to implement the new change at a fastest rate to retain their present customers because using obsolete technology has direct impact on product quality which today's customers will never accept.

#### **CREATING INNOVATIVE TEAMS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING TEAMS**

Resilient employees are innovative and good in problem solving and decision making in turbulent times. They are broad minded, aware of their immediate surroundings, flexible with a "We Can Do" Approach. Resilient employees have the ability to solve any problem with unconventional way and never fear to try new methods of doing things. This quality should be used by HR Managers to include them in Quality Circle Teams, Total Quality Management Teams, New Product Development Teams and Problem-Solving Teams where they can suggest unique methods to solve any complex issues.

#### **GLOBALIZATION OF BUSINESS**

Twenty First century Business Leaders cannot survive in this globalized business environment if they don't have a resilient workforce to work with. A resilient workforce is strength for all companies today who can handle foreign clients and business efficiently and finalize business deals in less time with their negotiation skills and business acumen. An organization having resilient employees will always be ready to send their employees to foreign assignments because they know their employees can handle any situations abroad and complete the assignment successfully.

#### **STRATEGY FORMULATION**

Resilient employees are good in strategy formulations as they are strong in market intelligence, always up to date with latest business changes and competitors move, their strength and weakness. They are open minded, always in a learning mode and ready to accept changes so they can develop business strategy which is flexible enough to allow changes to be incorporated when need arises. This is fundamental to sustainable high performance in organization. They design and implement business strategy to offer best quality goods and services to their customers at the best price.

#### **INCREASED CUSTOMER FOOTFALL AND ENHANCED CORPORATE IMAGE IN THE MARKET**

Providing best quality goods and services to the customers at the best price, committed after sales service, excellent customer service and modifying the products as per feedback given by customers immediately by employees, ensures increased customer footfall and loyalty and enhanced corporate image in the market.

#### **SUPPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS OF THE COMPANY**

Committed, well trained, well-mannered professional employees are in high demand today all over the world. Investors, suppliers, creditors, Banks and the Government all expect a resilient Workforce in a company which can withstand any challenge, adversity and also be committed in their working relationship with them, fulfilling all formalities and obligations. The company which is successful in doing so due to its employees always gets the full support of its stakeholders in times of need.

#### **BUILDING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Human Resources are the living assets of a company and the reservoir of knowledge, skills and talent which has to be utilized in an efficient way to increase the organizational productivity. Performing employees with the right knowledge, right attitude and right behavior having a vision and commitment to excel, is the competitive advantage all organizations are searching for, but very hard to find. Resilient employees are the new source of competitive advantage for all companies today standing as the strongest pillar of support in the face of adversities and upcoming business challenges.

### **8. FINDINGS**

- Surviving in a service driven economy requires employees to be agile, proactive and responsive to business transformations and always possess a customer centric approach to satisfy their customers with their best product in the market. Only a Human Resource Manager can make it possible by developing its employees to manage and satisfy their customers in highly competitive business environment.
- Workforce Planning and Hiring of employees, Human Resource Skills Adjustment, Building Strong Workplace Culture, Training and Development of employees, Organizational Learning, Organizational Development Interventions, Developing Adaptive Capacity and Dynamic Capabilities, Implementing High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), and Organizational Leadership are the Human Resource Management Strategies to develop Resilience in Employees.
- Increased profitability, employee engagement and participation, increased employee productivity and team effectiveness, developing strong organizational culture, workforce diversity management, modern technology and digitalization, creation of innovative and problem solving teams, globalization of business, strategy formulation, increased customer footfall and enhanced corporate image, support from stakeholders of the company, and building competitive advantage are the contributions of resilient employees in building sustainable high performance in organizations.

### **9. SUGGESTIONS**

Organizations need to shift the focus on developing capabilities first and then skills. In organizations where capabilities are cultivated and nurtured first, employees can Re- Skill and reinvent quickly. In the turbulent environment, firms must create Performance Management System that rewards employees and motivates them to continuously learn, adapt, and improve. The rewards can be based on capability development, rather than solely on work output. To promote a spirit of cooperation, HR Managers must create an engaging company culture with effective communication system across the organization.

### **10. CONCLUSION**

The Human Resource Management System that keeps the employee's talents aligned to its dynamic Corporate Strategy contributes to organizational resilience development. Strategic Human Resource Management System that successfully manages the talent and competencies of employees is the most integral element for developing a resilient organization to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. The Study highlights the important role of Human Resource Manager and their employees in successfully implementing the Resilience Building Techniques to achieve Sustainable High Performance in organizations.

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