

Employee Characteristics: Resilience and Self-Efficacy as Protective Factors

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Abstract

This study will explore the relationship between self-efficacy and resilience as they affect stress-related outcomes in the workplace. The study will first measure all participant's self-efficacy and resilience. The experimental group will then receive feedback mirroring that of a negative performance appraisal. The feedback will suggest the participant performed below average on a trivia test. Participants in the control group will receive neutral feedback on the same trivia test. Lastly, all participant's resilience will be measured a second time. This study will seek to recruit students from a local South-Eastern university. The results of this study will further clarify the relationship that exists between self-efficacy and resilience as well as further demonstrating the value of resilience as a protective factor.

Summary

Background

Research suggest levels of resilience may affect job performance, specifically in high risk and high stress positions, such as those in the medical field or protective forces (McCarty & Atkinson, 2012; Yimilaz, 2016). Regardless of position, many employees frequently encounter stress and obstacles in workplace. Previous literature suggest that self-efficacy and resilience are individual characteristics that act as protectors against stress (Kim & Windsor, 2015;). Further, individuals with higher self-efficacy will be more confident in their ability to overcome their stress-related situation (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001) and individuals with higher resilience will be more likely to view a stress-related incident positively (Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Kim & Windsor, 2015).

Resilience is defined as an individual's ability to undergo stress or adversity successfully. This definition suggests that the individual with positive situational perspective may have greater capacity to withstand emotional exhaustion or other negative outcomes (Yousef & Luthans, 2007; McCarty & Atkinson, 2008). Previous research has defined self-efficacy as a belief in one's capabilities to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy is also an underlying component of resilience (Southwick, Litz, Charney, & Freidman, 2011). Conclusively, the previous literature suggests that a strong relationship exists between self-efficacy and resilience.

Training focusing on boosting resilience has consistently demonstrated to be effective. For example, police officers who underwent resilience training developed better coping skills, experienced less depression, and were less like to make a brash decision when encountering a high-stress situation (McCarty & Atkinson, 2008; Ramey, Perkhounkova, Hein, Bohr, & Anderson, 2017).

This study will manipulate a minor negative encounter to measure a realistic work situation, such as, a negative performance appraisal or constructive feedback from a manager. This study seeks to solidify that positive relationship between self-efficacy and resilience by analyzing the two constructs as protective factors. Therefore, the hypotheses follow as:

H1: Self-efficacy will be positively related to resilience

H2: Resilience scores will increase after negative feedback

H3: Self-efficacy will predict higher levels of resilience after negative feedback

Participants

Participants will be students recruited from a South-Eastern university. Approximately 200 students will be recruited to participate in the study. Participants must be between the ages of 18 and 30 to participate.

Materials and Procedure

Participants will complete a survey in an on-campus laboratory. Generalized self-efficacy will be measured using the General Self-Efficacy scale (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). Resilience will be measured using the Brief Resiliency scale (Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008). After participants have completed both measures, they will then complete a trivia test. If the participant is in the experimental group, the researcher will give them negative feedback, suggesting they did below average. If the participant is in the control group, the researcher will give neutral feedback. In both cases, resilience will be measured once more. This situation is designed to recreate a similar situation to a negative performance appraisal.

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