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Antecedents of Women Managers' Resilience: Conceptual Discussion and Implications for HRM

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ABSTRACT

Purpose

This paper aims to provide a framework with the antecedents of women managers' resilience in SMEs.

Design/methodology/approach

This developmental study uses a comprehensive literature review, and a set of propositions to identify the antecedent of women managers' resilience and develops a conceptual framework for resilience.

Findings

The results indicate that in addition to personal resilience traits, interactive engagement with the work environment, career adaptability and positive HRM interventions are the main antecedents of women managers' resilience.

Research limitations/implications

This is a developmental study, and despite the strengths of the undertaken approach, there are a number of limitations due to the lack of empirical evidence. Therefore, future research activities should focus on validating the framework and determining any potential boundaries of this resilience framework.

Theoretical Implications

This paper contributes to theory by providing a new perspective on the study of resilience as a process at the organisational level and as a trait at personal level. It contributes to the women employee-centric resilience discussion in HRM literature and explores the relationship between resilience and women managers' career progression.

Practical implications

The study reveals a number of practical implications leading to a recommended resilience toolkit for HR managers of organisations in order to develop and promote resilience in their women managers and aspiring managers.

Social implications

The social implications of this study include the social relationships within the work-setting, better employee engagement and interaction with the work environment and flexible career progression pathways.

Originality/value

The paper is based on rich conceptual and theoretical discussion that identifies the key antecedents of women managers' resilience. The study also conceptually establishes the moderating relationship between women managers' resilience and work stress and burnout.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women managers face several challenges in organisations, from gender discrimination to the glass ceiling and gender stress gap. To deal with such challenges, “Resilience” or coping and bouncing back from experiences of failure (Carmeli and Markman, 2011; Carmeli and Schaubroeck, 2008; Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001) and adapting to adversity to endure job demands (Kossek and Perrigino, 2016) is essential for today’s women managers. This makes resilience to be considered even more as a characteristic advantage for women managers aiming to transform adversity into evolution and progress.

The persistent gender gap in management is considered an important issue globally. An increasing number of studies have indicated that gender inequalities extract high economic costs, leading to social inequities and environmental degradation around the world (e.g. Stevens, 2010; Beneria et al., 2015). Even though women are increasingly praised for having excellent skills for leadership, and leadership styles associated with effective performance as leaders (Eagly, H.A., 2007), the reason behind scarcity of women in leadership positions has been ascribed to traditional attitudes, the glass ceiling and the old boys’ network (Stevens, 2010).

Ragins et. al. (1998) argued that the persistence of barriers created by attitudinal and organisational prejudices which prevents women from senior executive positions known as the glass ceiling (Wirth, 2001), makes it difficult for organisations to hold on to their best and brightest women, who face both overt and subtle barriers to their advancement.

Some of the factors that contribute to creating the glass ceiling effect at workplaces are: gender stereotypes and discrimination (Mihail, 2006; Weyer, 2007); biased recruitment and promotion systems (Powell, 1987); gender segregation at work (Galanaki et al., 2009); and family responsibilities.

In particular in SMEs, women are often being patronised, stereotyped and sexualised through use of terms by the employers and are considered for recruitment at demoted positions (Woodhams and Lupton, 2009). For instance, Wyncarczyk (2007) suggested through a survey of 60 SMEs that women are particularly under-represented in managerial and senior positions. The findings

demonstrated only 25 per cent of all jobs were being held by women though 70 per cent of employees in the surveyed firms were women. The consequence of women not being visible in senior positions, does not create role models and has an impact on recruitment and retention of women employees (Wynarczyk, 2006).

Increasingly, individuals in many organisations are recognising the importance of breaking the glass ceiling and removing barriers that prevent women from achieving and utilising their full potential (Ragins et.al., 1998). Similarly, empowering women and promoting gender equality have become critical objectives for both emerging and developed nations, and they are priority goals in the third 'United Nations Millennium Development Goals' (KPMG, 2012).

Over the years, a significant increase in women's participation in the workforce has been observed globally and this year's update of the Women in Work Index shows that at least the OECD has continued its gradual progress towards greater women's economic empowerment and closing the gender pay gap (Women in Work Index, PWC 2017). In 2016, the percentage of women on FTSE 100 boards increased to 26 per cent, the percentage of women holding FTSE 100 non-executive directorships increased to 31.4%, and the percentage of women in executive directorships on FTSE 100 boards increased to 9.7% (Sealy et al., 2016). However, despite the measures that have been taken by countries worldwide and individual organisations to address gender inequality, and the efforts to appoint more women to the boards of big companies, men still dominate decision-making positions, the number of women leading boards still remains low globally, and the pace of change, both in terms of women leading boards and the gender pay gap, is slow (Women in Work Index PWC 2017; Sealy et al., 2016; IBR Thornton, 2015; Larkin et al., 2013, p. 132; Zahidi and Ibarra, 2010).

Studies on gender in management style tend to be located in certain fields such as human resource management, organisational behaviour and leadership (Broadbridge and Simpson 2011) and in particular the question of women in management has not been conceptualised as a problem that is getting solved. However, there are signs of a workforce in the process of shattering the glass ceiling and women developing their own strategies to get to senior management positions. Therefore, resilience in women managers could be key in enhancing these strategies and supporting their development and progression. In other words, the ability to withstand difficult situations and to

self-regulate at times of stress (Cooper, Flint-Taylor and Pearn, 2013) and the ability to break the glass ceiling (Smith et al., 2012), is particularly relevant for women in organisations. A large body of literature has tried to address different factors which hinder the career progression of women (e.g. Mihail, 2006; Weyer, 2007; Powell, 1987; Galanaki et al., 2009; Konrad and Karam, 2015; Rowley et al., 2016) but there is still limited research on the antecedents of women managers' resilience.

Despite the fact that resilience in managers better prepares them to cope with unprecedented pressures and challenges (Whetten, Felin and King, 2009) academic studies so far have not specifically focused on the role of resilience in women managers' progression (at least to our knowledge). Similarly, Pangallo et al. (2015) confirmed there is a gap in the literature on investigating the core antecedents (adversity) and consequences (positive adaptation) of resilience. At the level of the employee, how HR practices support or undermine psychological, social or instrumental resources associated with resilience is also under-examined (Bardoel et al., 2014). Therefore, the aim of this paper is to study the antecedents of women managers' resilience and the implications from an HRM (Human Resource Management) perspective. This paper, by offering a behavioural framework of women employee-level resilience, aims to contribute to the women employee-centric resilience discussion in HRM literature. It also aims to study resilience in an occupational, gender specific context and consider it both as a trait and a process, adding to existing clinical stream studies (e.g. Alvord and Grados, 2005; Lee, Sudom and Zamorski, 2013; Wagnild and Young, 1993), trait-only-based studies (Avey et al., 2009) and process-only-based perspectives that attempted to link resilience to self-regulatory, protective and situational processes (King & Rothstein, 2010; McLarnon and Rothstein, 2013; Moenkemeyer et al., 2012).

By investigating HRM-based organisational antecedents of resilience, such as engagement with the work environment, career adaptability and positive HRM interventions, this paper stresses the importance in understanding the factors contributing to a resilient workforce. Moreover, this paper conceptually establishes and proposes moderating the relationship between women managers' resilience and work stress and burnout which according to Maslach et al., (1996) is usually defined as a syndrome of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy. Minimising stress at the workplace ultimately helps to reduce gender stress gap and strengthen the ability in women to

break the glass ceiling. Women were found to have a statistically higher rate than men for work-related stress. Dr. Mohring suggested that women face intense workplace pressure and stress such as having to prove that they are as good as men and cope with barriers such as not getting promoted, unequal pay, opinions not valued, lack of managerial support and company restructure (HSE, 2016). Therefore, this paper advances the HRM literature by focusing on women managers' resilience and identifying the main antecedents that could help women to overcome progression and retention barriers in the workplace and offers useful implications for both academic and managerial audience.

The study begins with a description of and argument for the variables selected to investigate the antecedents of women managers' resilience. Then, the paper proceeds as follows: - first, the theoretical background and the context are provided then a description is given of the main concepts involved in this paper and establishes the propositions. The conceptual framework is then presented. A discussion of propositions leads to the conclusions and limitations of the study, and finally avenues for future research.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND STUDY PROPOSITIONS

Conceptualisation of Women Managers' Resilience

Resilience has attracted academic interest for decades in a range of social and natural sciences. However, embracing the idea of resilience in organisations has only recently become an important topic of discussion, motivating researchers to undertake further research on resilience from a number of different perspectives (Coutu, 2002; Seville, 2009) including from a gender perspective. The concept of resilience originated in the mid-17th century, from the Latin verb "resilire" meaning "to leap back" (Soanes and Stevenson, 2006, p.1498), and remains in common use at the present time (Jackson et al., 2007). The term was initially used in science and mathematics (Geller et al., 2003); however, later its use was extended into different fields of natural and social sciences. Resilience as a concept emerged from the understanding that "failures are breakdowns in the normal adaptive processes necessary to cope with the complexity of the real world, and that success relates to organizations, groups and individuals who produce resilient systems that recognise and

adapt to variations, changes and surprises (Rasmussen et al., 1994; Cook et al., 2000; Woods and Shattuck, 2000; Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003)” (Carmeli et al., 2013, Patterson et al., 2007, p. 155).

Several key definitions have been reviewed and presented in the Table 1 which helped shape the definition of resilience for this paper [Table 1].

Author	Context	Definition
Block and Block (1980)	Individual	Resilience as a trait is defined as an accumulation of abilities and characteristics that enable individuals to adjust to the difficult situations, they experience
Egeland et al. (1993)	Individual	Resilience as the skill that is developed gradually through an interaction between individual and respective environments
Coutu (2002)	Individual	Resilient individuals possess three common characteristics. These include an acceptance of reality, a strong belief that life is meaningful and the ability to improvise
Connor and Davidson, 2003; Fredrickson, 2001; Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013	Individual	Resilience has been defined as the ability to ‘leap back’ from misfortune.
Cooper et al. (2013)	Individual	Resilience as being the ability to bounce back from hindrances combined with staying efficient in difficult situations and continuing to grow stronger in the process.
Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004)	Psychological	Resilience as the ability to go on with life, or to continue living a purposeful life, after hardship or adversity
Luthans et al. (2006)	Psychology	The developable capacity to rebound from adversity
Horne and Orr (1998)	Organisational	Resilience is the fundamental quality to respond productively to significant change that disrupts the expected pattern of event without introducing an extended period of regressive behaviour
Hamel and Valikangas (2003)	Organisational	Resilience refers to the capacity to continuous reconstruction
Sutcliffe and Vogus, (2003, p. 97)	Organisational	Resilience as “the capacity to rebound from adversity strengthened and more resourceful”.
McDonald (2006)	Organisational	Resilience conveys the properties of being able to adapt to the

		requirements of the environment and being able to manage the environments variability
Bustinza et al. (2016)	Organisational	Resilience is a desirable characteristic for an organisation and its members to possess when circumstances adversely change.
Bustinza et al., 2016; Bhamra, et al., 2011; King et al., 2016; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Linnios et al., 2014);	Organisational	Resilience as focusing on the organisation's ability to reinvent themselves or react in good time as a result of change
Kosseck and Perrigino (2016)	Organisational	Resilience is defined as the ability to adapt to adversity and endure job demands
Paton et al. (2000)	Disaster management	Resilience describes an active process of self-righting, learned resourcefulness and growth. The concept relates to the ability to function at a higher level psychologically given an individual's capabilities and previous experience
Bruneau et al. (2003)	Disaster management	The ability of social units to mitigate hazards, contain the effects of disasters when they occur and carry out recovery activities that minimise social disruption and mitigate the effects of future earthquakes
Carpenter et al. (2001)	Socio-ecological systems	The magnitude of disturbance that a system can tolerate before it transitions into a different state that is controlled by a different set of processes
Walker et al. (2002)	Socio-ecological systems	The ability to maintain the functionality of a system when it is perturbed or the ability to maintain the elements required to renew or reorganise if a disturbance alters the structure of function of a system
Holling (1973)	Ecological systems	The measure of the persistence of systems and of the ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between state variables
Tilman and Downing (1994)	Ecological system	The speed at which a system returns to a single equilibrium point following a disruption
Gunderson (2000)	Ecological system	The magnitude of disturbance that a system can absorb before its structure is redefined by changing the variables and processes that control behaviour

Walker et al. (2004)	Ecological system	The capacity of a system to absorb a disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change while retaining the same function, structure, identity and feedback
Bodin and Wiman (2004)	Physical System	The speed at which a system returns to equilibrium after displacement, irrespective of oscillations indicates the elasticity (resilience)
Hollnagel et al. (2006)	Engineering	The ability to sense, recognise, adapt and absorb variations, changes, disturbances, disruptions and surprises

(Adapted from Bhamra et al., 2011)

Authors like Bhamra et al. (2011, p. 5375) emphasised the fact that the key concept of resilience is shown to remain essentially constant regardless of its field of enquiry and that the meaning remained closely related to the ability of an element to return to a state after a disruption. However, the focus of this paper is based on recent debates that imply on improving the position before disruption as Cooper et al. (2013) defined resilience as being the ability to bounce back from hindrances combined with staying efficient in difficult situations and continuing to grow stronger in the process. Similarly, Sutcliffe and Vogus, (2003) defined resilience as “the capacity to rebound from adversity strengthened and more resourceful” (p. 97), which is fundamental to human and organisational functioning and viability (Carmeli et al. 2012). Moreover, Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) defined resilience as the ability to go on with life, or to continue living a purposeful life, after hardship or adversity. Kossek and Perrigino’s (2016) argument that resilience is defined as the ability to adapt to adversity and endure job demands is growing in prominence in management literature, but with limited regard to occupational influences (See also Table 1 for a number of different definitions based on different contexts).

In addition, there is an emerging debate in the literature about whether resilience is a trait, a capacity, or a process (Windle, 2011; Kossek and Perrigino, 2016). In particular, Kossek and Perrigino (2016) suggest that specific occupational tasks and contextual demands imply different connotations of what exactly “resilience” means and how contexts may constrain or foster resiliency.

Resilience as a trait is defined as an accumulation of abilities and characteristics that enable individuals to adjust to the difficult situations they experience (Connor and Davidson, 2003). The idea of resilience being a trait was introduced by Block and Block (1980) using the term “ego resilience” and outlining resilience as a set of characteristics such as creativity, power of charisma and operational flexibility to fulfil various environmental demands. From an individual perspective, resilience has been defined as the ability to ‘leap back’ from misfortune (Connor and Davidson, 2003; Fredrickson, 2001; Fletcher and Sarkar, 2013).

According to Block and Block (1980) individuals possessing ego resilience are more likely to be positive, to be more analytical in their approach to problem solving and to possess different defensive skills, attributes and traits (Rutter, 1985). Rutter (1987) linked psychological resilience to the positive role of individual differences in people’s response to stress and adversity, due to several defensive factors such as hardiness (Bonanno, 2004), positive emotions (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), extroversion (Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006), self-efficacy (Gu & Day, 2007), spirituality (Bogar & Hulse-Killacky, 2006), self-esteem (Kidd & Shahar, 2008), and positive affect (Zautra, Johnson, & Davis, 2005).

On the other hand, several authors have argued that resilience is a process that varies across time. Egeland et al. (1993) defined resilience as the skill that is developed gradually through an interaction between individual and respective environments. Galli and Vealey (2008) defined resilience as a process of distress whereby individuals are found to use a number of coping or adjusting strategies in order to deal with a mixture of unfriendly sentiments and psychological clashes. These conceptualisations of resilience recognise that it is a capacity that develops over time in the context of person-environment interactions (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe, 1993).

Norris et al. (2008) defined resilience as a process that leads to adaptation and superior outcomes, rather than being an outcome in and of itself. The process of resilience in the context of women in management can include conscious awareness about the importance of human rights and gender equality, continuous strive for aspirational goals, ability to make decisions to solve problems during adverse circumstances, reflecting on own performance and mistakes, reframing stress into motivation, adapting to change over time and constant effort to growth (Brodsky et al., 2011).

In an organisational context, resilience has been used in a number of ways, for example, concentrating on organisations as entities (Hutchins, 2012); focusing on the organisation's ability to reinvent themselves or react in good time as a result of change (Bustinza et al., 2016; Bhamra, et al., 2011; King et al., 2016; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Limnios et al., 2014); focusing on the organisation's capacity to be vigorous under conditions of enormous pressure and change (Coutu 2002); on individuals within organisations (Smith and Charles, 2013); resilience of business processes such as supply chains (Ponomarov and Holcomb, 2009); and other organisational systems (Bovaird, 2013), as well as organisational resilience with territorial perspective (Dobson et al., 2015).

Organisational resilience is a subject of great interest to management and strategy scholars (Carmeli and Markman 2011), and according to Starbuck and Farjoun (2009) it is an underlying and complex variable that enables organisations to better face challenges, and it is one that can be cultivated through human resource practices. Bustinza et al. (2016) argued that resilience is a desirable characteristic for an organisation and its members to possess when circumstances adversely change. Similarly, Hueng et al. (2016) argued that resilience is a desirable characteristic to possess not only for an organisation, but also for its members, in order to deal with various types of adversity (see also Cartwright & Cooper, 2009; Cooper, 2013; Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

Organisations are always required to update or sharpen their resources and skills to have competitive advantage in the market. In this context, Sweetman et al. (2011) suggested that creativity usually being characterised by risk, change and uncertainty, is linked to resilience. A resilient individual aspires to indulge in risky and uncertain situations thus being creative in developing new ways of overcoming adverse situations (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Gonçalves and Brandão (2017) suggested that a team with high psychological capital such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience are willing to try new approaches, be more resourceful to overcome setbacks, have a positive attitude towards achieving success and develop further innovative behaviour.

In the framework of organisational change, Ravi Kumar & Kamalanabhan (2005) discussed about the usual level of stress raised among the employees during any changes in their work life stimulated their skills. Employees with a resilient personality are able to cope with stress and offer adequate help and support for successful execution of changes in organisations. According to Major et al. (1998) resilient personalities are formed with highly correlated variables such as self-esteem, optimism and perceived control. In this regard, as suggested by the cognitive adaptation theory, high levels of self-esteem or self-worth, highly positive outlook of life or optimism and perceived control are visible in individuals who maintain well-being even in stressful events (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Taylor & Brown, 1988).

In this paper, we see resilience as the capacity of individuals and in particular women to move forward having learned from negative experiences (Jackson et al., 2007), whilst retaining control in order to break the glass ceiling (Smith et al., 2012). We also see resilience as a process of moving forward after major setbacks, which is developed in women employees over time. Notably, we have identified engagement with the work environment, career adaptability and positive HRM interventions as main antecedents to women managers' resilience. The link between resilience and women is because resilience is an essential quality in a CEO (Bennis, 2003; Collins, 2001) which can reduce defencelessness (Jackson et al. 2007), even more so for women CEOs who have to overcome more barriers in their journey to achieve top leadership positions (Fitzsimmons et al., 2014).

The definitions of resilience (Table 1) irrespective of the fields of study determine how an individual or organisation responds to stressful experiences. However, the definitions lack or are limited in explaining the complex nature of resilience and different approaches required to develop and strengthen resilience skills in individuals in different circumstances. Previous studies have looked into different types of stresses or triggers which individuals are exposed to at some point in their lives (Norris et al., 2009; Furr et al., 2010; Masten and Osofsky, 2010; Eisenberg and Silver, 2011; Dimitry, 2012; Masten and Narayan, 2012; Osofsky and Osofsky, 2013; Tol et al., 2013) and also the consequences of stress (Southwick et al., 2005; Southwick et al., 2011; Russo et al., 2012; Karatoreos and McEwen, 2013). However, there is a lack of research and therefore, an increasing interest among researchers to learn about resilience in different fields and how different methods can help enhance resilience building (Southwick et al., 2014).

Resilience arises while managing dynamic circumstances through interactions of a dynamic system (Lerner, 2006). The discussion in this paper is grounded in the relational developmental systems theory where the theoretical assumptions holds that the capacity for individuals to respond to challenges successfully in a given time stems from the possibilities of various interactions the individuals have both within themselves and in the contexts that surround the individual at the given time (Lerner, 2006; Lerner & Overton, 2008; Overton, 2013). Nevertheless, this paper contributes to the theory taking a gendered perspective by demonstrating the antecedents of women managers' resilience building in the organisational context with inclusion of HR interventions.

Women's Experiences in Engagement with the Work Environment

Liberal feminists argue that women are frequently unable to maximise or reach their full potential due to discrimination or structural barriers (Vossenber, 2014) posed by governments, institutions and society, which deprives women of equal rights to pursue their own self-interest. Jaggar (1983) argued that women as a group are not allowed the same freedoms or opportunities granted to men; that a woman in a discriminatory situation does not receive the same consideration as an individual man; and that often a woman's interests and abilities are assumed to be limited in certain ways because of her sex (Jaggar, 1983, p. 176). From a different perspective, social feminism argues that discrimination and other such related barriers can be eliminated as they are socially constructed (Ahl, 2007; Brush et al., 2009; Marlow and McAdam, 2012). Importantly, it is through activities and processes that women's disadvantaged position can be changed or reversed (Clegg, 2006; Jackson, 2006; Calas et al., 2009; Rindova et al., 2009).

Both liberal and social feminism attribute women's disadvantaged position to their gender (Kariv, 2013; Vossenber, 2014). Notably, social feminism deals with power or hierarchical structures and relationships, which lead to women being placed in a subordinate position to men (Calas et al., 2009; Hannam, 2012).

Compared to men, women face greater challenges (Langowitz and Minniti, 2007; Marlow et al., 2008; Allen et al., 2008; Popescu, 2012). Ascription of certain traits as masculine or feminine determine the importance of one set over the other, with masculinity considered superior to

femininity (Hamilton, 2013), “which privileges masculinity as the dominant mode of thought, deed and action” (Ahl and Marlow, 2012, p. 556). The association of different attributes with a particular gender then acts to reinforce the dominance of one group over the other, as is the case where ‘masculine’ attributes are considered more important than ‘feminine’ ones when considering promotions to senior positions. Zahidi and Ibarra (2010) argue that women are starting their careers in business and management with the same level of intelligence, education, and commitment as men, but only very few manage to reach the top echelons, with most corporate boards having only a small minority of women directors, or only one (Torchia et al. 2011; Bilimoria et al. 2007). Therefore, as Talmud and Izraeli (1999) and Nieva and Gutek (1980) argued, boards’ decisions tend to be dominated by the majority vote of the men board members, with less weight given to women board members who are the minority and may, due to sex role stereotypes, be perceived only as tokens (Kanter, 1977).

The factors contributing to tokenism are discriminatory visibility, polarisation and assimilation (Bilimoria et al. 2007); according to Gatrell and Cooper (2007), women managers progressing to higher positions are more likely to experience stress associated with tokenism, with the first woman to progress into a given role experiencing discrimination and stereotyping from a male-dominated peer group. The contemporary stress and emotion theory best explains the role of resilience in the stress process. The theory proposes that as a result of operating in a stressful environment, individuals may respond in a constructive or destructive manner influenced by the processes of observation, evaluation and coping (Fletcher & Fletcher, 2005; Fletcher & Scott, 2010). Brodsky et al. (2011) suggested that stress is converted into a motivation to action in the process of resilience. In other words, the feeling or sadness of being discriminated against because of gender can turn into anger for women to perform better at workplace.

The disadvantaged position of women in the workplace can be changed through activities and processes (Clegg, 2006; Jackson, 2006; Calas et al., 2009; Rindova et al., 2009). In other words, engaging with the work environment can benefit from reduced stress, increased connectivity among their colleagues, better performance and be better equipped to break the glass ceiling. Among others, networking, following positive role models, coaching and exercising reflective learning can be useful in building resilience in women.

It is not unnoticed that the efficacy of women usually gets constrained due to stereotypes (Kray & Shirako, 2011) and these prejudices hamper their leadership performances in organisations (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). Networking plays a significant role in establishing and increasing connectivity among members of networks. Women getting involved in networking can benefit from cooperation, mutuality, trust and personal opinions that are established through networks (Robinson and Stubberud, 2010). Connecting with a homogenous group of people thus, increases the possibility of having one's potential recognised as Burt (1998) examined the networks of managerial women and claimed that women were better off by borrowing social capital from higher level contacts such as powerful sponsors or mentors due to their legitimacy problem. Connected members (managers) are likely to reduce the biased stereotype against women's efficiency.

The key aspects that drive positive organisational behaviour can either be supported or destroyed by the physical state of the workplace (Cameron and Caza, 2004). For example, the positive psychological capabilities such as resilience, self-efficacy, job satisfaction and commitment are affected by the physical state of the workplace (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). The interaction among employees can become easier and more frequent when operating in an open-office work environment and this can help build trust among the employees within the organisation (Zagenczyk et al., 2008).

Positive role models can transform an individual or team. The experiences of role models can help to challenge followers' presumptions and validate what is possible. As Westfall (2015) suggested in order to become focused, confident and resilient, it is essential that women should have role models to follow in organisations. Role models in organisations can be leaders whom subordinates would like to follow. Leaders demonstrating transformational behaviours are stated to have a positive and constructive self-image (Masi et al., 2000) which in turn can have significant impact on subordinates' or followers' behaviour. Subordinates are found to report high satisfaction and motivation when following transformational leaders (Hater and Bass, 1988).

Resilience building is not an individual but a collective approach within an organisation. The leaders and team members are expected to contribute to the development of resilience through both individually and collectively being respectful to each other, being trustworthy, sharing problems

and concerns without hesitation, developing social capital to help handle stressful situations more effectively and seeking help when facing challenges (Luthans and Youssef, 2007).

It is crucial in the process of resilience building to reflect on experiences, to appreciate the successes individuals achieve and believe in themselves that they can do even better in future (Brodsky et al., 2011). Boyd and Fales (1983, p. 100) defined reflection as “the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and which results in a changed conceptual perspective”. Therefore, individuals and particularly women can benefit from reflective learning workshops in organisations.

Coaching can prove to be beneficial in increasing managers’ resilience. Sherlock-Storey et al. (2013) suggested that an execution of coaching programme with middle-managers improved managers’ resilience. Similarly, a solution focused coaching programme was found to have enhanced manager resilience (Grant et al., 2009). Thus, women managers could enhance their resilience skills by undertaking coaching programmes within organisations.

It has been also mentioned that a number of personal and situational characteristics such as self-esteem (Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1995) and self-efficacy (Schaubroeck and Merritt, 1997) play a role in regulating such continual and dynamic processes within the work environment.

From the perspective of resource-based theories, workers were more “resilient” when they were able to maintain higher levels of resources and work engagement (Bickerton, et al., 2014; McGonagle, et al., 2014) which is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) argue that engaged workers possess personal resources, including optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem, resilience, and an active coping style, that help them to control and impact upon their work environment successfully, and to achieve career success (see also Luthans et al., 2008; Hobfoll, 2001).

A number of authors argue that resilience, rather than being rare and extraordinary, emerges from relatively ordinary processes that result from unique and unexpected dynamics (Masten, 2001;

Sutcliff and Vogus, 2003), can be learned over time and with experience (Bullough et.al. 2014), increases with work engagement (Bickerton et al., 2014; McGonagle et al., 2014) and depends on a number of personal and situational characteristics (Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1995; Schaubroeck and Merritt, 1997). In line with this view, we propose that:

Proposition 1: Engagement with the work environment positively influences women managers' resilience in an organisation.

Career Adaptability:

Some of the barriers to the career development of women are linked to a number of personal and situational characteristics (Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1995; Schaubroeck and Merritt, 1997) high rates of despair, anxiety, and stress (Figley, 2002; Bride et al., 2007), the glass ceiling (Wirth, 2001) and tokenism (Bilimoria et al., 2007).

Rickwood (2002) and Rickwood et al. (2004) proposed a conceptual framework for the career development of women that combines resiliency and career adaptability. Career adaptability is defined as the ability to adjust oneself to fit new and changed circumstances in one's career by planning, exploring and making decisions about one's future (Brown and Associates, 2002; Savickas, 1997).

Career counselling enables resilience building in women to become more career adaptable. The activities involved in career counselling help people learn how to deal with career-related challenges. Women are often found to have work-related stress and this ultimately affects their accustomed lifestyle as well. The opportunity to access career-counselling in organisations for women could enhance resilience development enabling them to better deal with career-related stress (Bimrose and Hearne, 2012). Similarly, mentorship programmes can also influence and help in developing career resilience in women in workplaces (Arora and Rangnekar, 2014).

In the process of resilience, the ability to be flexible and adaptive to change grows more robust. In order to survive in the workplace, it is essential for women to practise flexibility as they deal with unpredictable challenges. Adaptability in times of crisis or change in an organisation requires

making serious and challenging decisions that may not otherwise be considered (Brodsky et al., 2011).

A number of studies have been undertaken to address resilience in the workplace (Grunberg et al., 2008; Demerouti et al., 2012; Shin et al., 2012; Bimrose and Hearne, 2012; Stephen et al., 2013) and have demonstrated the interrelationship between the concepts of resilience and career adaptability. Bimrose and Hearne (2012) also found that career counselling has a distinct role in building career resilience and career adaptability in individuals. According to Carmeli et al. (2012), resilience requires the capacity for adaptability and positive adjustment in the face of difficulty (Carver, 1998; Masten and Reed, 2002; Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003). Therefore, based on a number of studies reviewed in this paper, we argue that linking career adaptability to resiliency may be more favorable in strengthening women managers' position in organisations than focusing on risk factors, barriers associated with career progression, and career-related skill deficiencies (see Perrin & Dorman, 2003; Klaw, 2008). Therefore, we are proposing that:

Proposition 2: Career adaptability positively influences women managers' resilience in an organisation.

Positive HRM and HRD Interventions:

Bustinza et al. (2016) define human resource (HR) resilience as those capabilities developed through specific human resource practices (HRPs) that enhance the organisation's ability to impact performance by instilling in the workforce the capacity to overcome uncertainty (see Cooper, Liu, & Tarba, 2014). Furthermore, organisational resilience can be promoted through HRPs that enhance individual employees' well-being and ability to cope with adversity (Huang et al. 2016). Employees are often exposed to multiple HRPs simultaneously (Jiang, et al., 2012), but not all are useful for enhancing capabilities such as resilience which contribute towards improving organisational effectiveness (Bustinza et al., 2016).

The need for women specifically to be resilient has become more noticeable due to the scarce representation of women in leadership positions. Leadership is found to be a male privilege in corporate, political, military and other sectors of society. Women have remained quite rare as elite

leaders and top executives, despite reaching more supervisory and middle management positions (Eagly and Karau, 2002). As Ridgeway (2001) argued, gender stereotypes contain status beliefs regarding women's abilities and competencies, whereby women are assumed to lack leadership skills and assertive ability and to be less competent compared to men.

Liu (2013) found that women managers following the path to achieve leadership positions in order to shatter glass ceilings and overcome barriers have to work hard and work smart, letting their inner strength develop, with continuous learning and family support. Similarly, a number of studies have suggested different interventions including work site training (Waite and Richardson, 2004) in order to build or increase resiliency.

Couper et al. (2015) also found that resilience training can improve personal resilience and is a useful means of developing mental health and subjective well-being in employees (see also Arnetz et al., 2009; Grant et al., 2009; Pipe et al., 2012). Moreover, Couper et al., (2015) found that resilience training has a number of wider benefits that include enhanced psychosocial functioning, increases in goal attainment and productivity, and improved performance (see also Grant et al., 2009, Pipe et al., 2012, Arnetz et al., 2009). Similarly, McDonald et al. (2013) identified personal and professional gains as results of work-based educational intervention and initiatives to promote personal resilience.

Hitt and Ireland (2002) suggested that to confirm effective development of capabilities of employees, managers should take dynamic steps. The managers of high performing companies are likely to have a clearer idea of the requirement for skills development than low performing companies and prepare and develop training programs to enhance the knowledge and skills of their employees. They are usually more active in monitoring and controlling their dynamic capabilities as they believe that such capabilities are crucial for the success of their organisations. Active initiatives are taken by Managing Directors through participation in training courses to enhance necessary capabilities of employees (Schlemmer and Webb, 2008).

As Bustinza et al., (2016) found, resilience is a capability that can be developed (Bardoel et al., 2014) and enhanced through HRPs. Moreover, self-development and training are key to

strengthening the personal resilience (Giordano, 1997) that enables women to deal with gender stereotyping and the glass ceiling at workplaces. Based on this discussion, we propose that:

Proposition 3: Positive HRM interventions positively influence women managers' resilience in an organisation.

Work-related stress adversely affects the performance of individuals at work and disrupts their mental well-being (Rees et al., 2015). Notably, work stress and burnout affect more women than it does men (Melin et al., 1999; Rosenthal and Alter, 2012; Rees et al., 2015; Otsuka et al., 2015). Stress in the workplace poses a major problem for both the organisation and its employees, as it negatively affects the employees' psychological and physical well-being, organisational performance, and results in high staff turnover (Spangler et al., 2012; Bridger et al., 2013; Snow et al., 2003). Individuals are often stated to suffer from high rates of despair, anxiety, traumatic stress and compassionate exhaustion due to occupational stress (Figley, 2002; Bride et al., 2007). In addition, a number of studies have found that stressful working conditions lead to absenteeism, mood disorders, tardiness and intentions to quit amongst women employees (Snow et al., 2003; Sandmark and Renstig, 2010). Moreover, a unique source of stress for women managers comes from prejudiced attitudes to their performance voiced by their male colleagues (Nair, 2011). Therefore, women managers, are often coping with work-related stress and burnout originating from multiple sources.

Research has indicated that psychological resilience enables individuals to respond positively to a potentially stressful situation and protects individuals from the potential negative effect of stressors (Jackson et al., 2007; Fetcher and Sarkar, 2013; Rees et al., 2015). Similarly, recent studies have shown that the psychological resilience of employees can play a positive role in a competitive and busy work environment, where stress and burnout are often present (e.g. Shin et al., 2012). Similarly, Hao et al. (2015) suggested that resilience plays an important role in relieving work stress, as a result, preventing the development of burnout. Resilience could serve as a barrier to alleviate the adverse effects of work stress caused due to the prejudice of the glass ceiling. Therefore, it can be argued that resilience can work as a moderator between work stress and burnout, thus, strengthening the ability of women to break the glass ceiling in organisations. Based on this discussion, we propose that:

Proposition 4: Women managers' resilience positively influences the ability towards breaking the glass ceiling in organisations.

Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) suggest that everyone has resilience potential, but its level is determined by individual experiences, qualities, the environment and by each person's balance of risk- and protective factors.

Focusing on women managers' resilience, based on the propositions presented in this paper, the following conceptual framework (see figure 1) has been developed. The antecedents or factors such as career adaptability, engagement with the work environment and positive HRM interventions are directly related to women managers' resilience development in organisations and women manager's resilience directly has an impact on strengthening the ability to break the glass ceiling. Other factors considered are environments internal and external to the organisations. The dotted lines show that the factors such as external environment and internal environment have a moderating effect on women managers' resilience. Here, variables such as organisational environment, organisational structure, organisational culture, organisational change such as mergers and acquisitions and takeovers or management change, crisis in organisation are considered as internal environment. The environment external to the organisation such as government legislation can have a moderating impact on organisations and women managers' resilience. The external environment variables consisting of culture, religion and family issues can also have an impact on women managers' resilience building process.

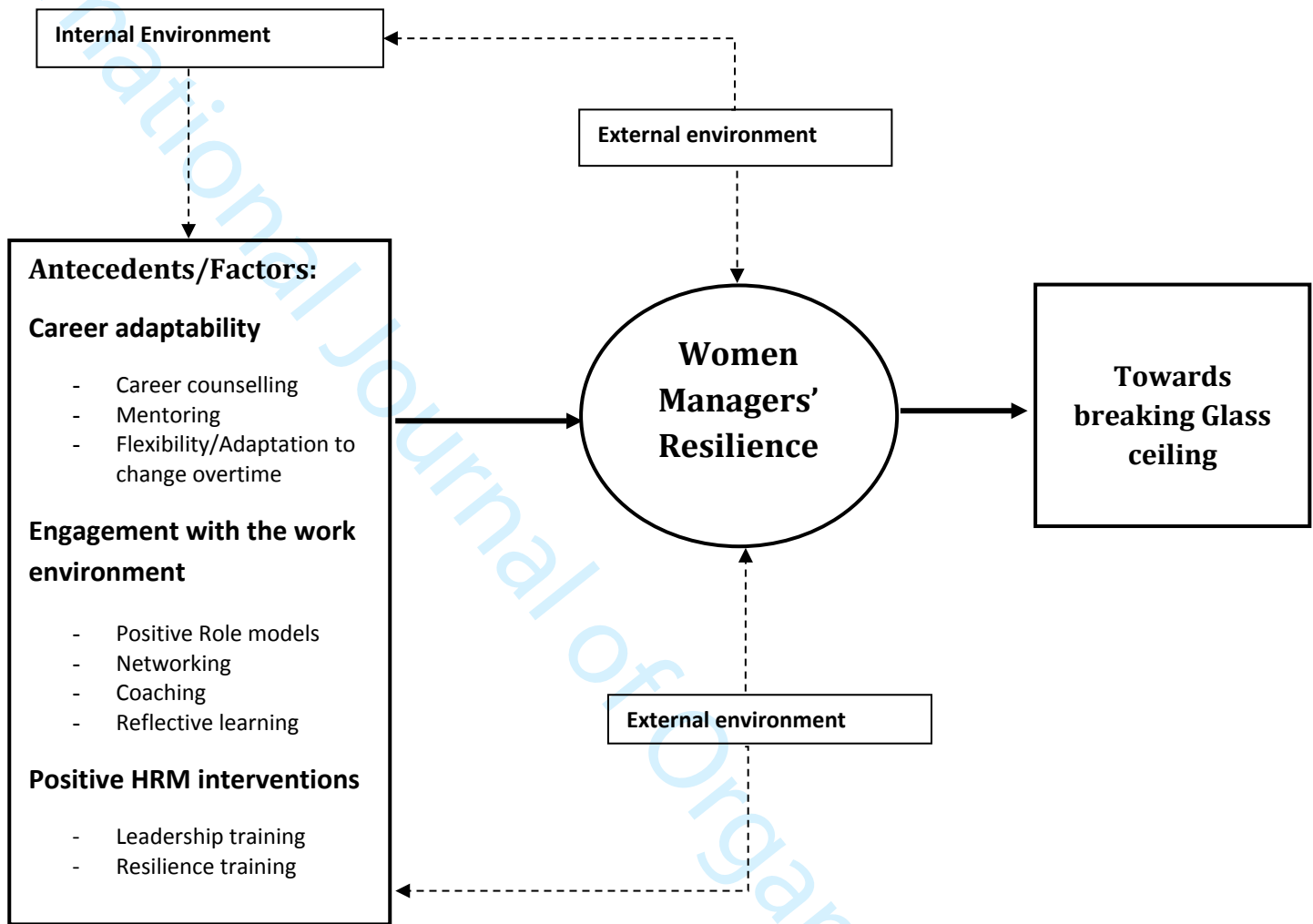


Figure1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Note: a dashed arrow -----> indicates moderating influences

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The current conceptual paper offers rich conceptual and theoretical discussion leading to identification of engagement with the work environment, career adaptability and positive HRM interventions being identified as key antecedents. The study also conceptually established the moderating relationship between women managers' resilience and work stress and burnout. The

study offers both theoretical as well as practical implications. The key theoretical implication of this study emerges from conceptually addressing resilience, its antecedents and its moderating influences.

This article contributes to theory by providing a new perspective on the study of resilience as a process at organisational level and as a trait at personal level. In addition, it contributes to the women employee-centric resilience discussion in HRM literature. The current study also contributes to understanding the relationship between resilience and women managers' career progression. Moreover, this paper contributes to understanding the relationship antecedents of women managers' resilience capabilities and shows how resilience could be a moderator to work related stress and burnout.

HRM literature in recent years has been stressing the importance of resilience for women managers to progress in their careers and break the glass ceiling. By identifying the key antecedents of resilience, the current study has not only enriched the HRM literature theoretically but also paved the way for future studies to go further in-depth and address these antecedents in different organisational, industrial, institutional and macro contexts. Moreover, although the current paper established that women managers' resilience moderates the influences of work stress and burnout, this is an area that requires further in-depth analysis by HRM researchers. This aspect can be further researched by analysing which antecedent plays a more significant role in moderating stress and burnout in different contexts. Future research can focus on analysing the impact of each internal and external environment on women managers' resilience.

This study provided insightful knowledge and a useful toolkit to practitioners. This study suggests that the antecedents of resilience are engagement with the work environment, career adaptability and positive HRM interventions. Therefore, managers need to implement mechanisms for ensuring firms develop good practices in HRM and HRD talent management, encourage employee engagement with the work environment and provide flexible career progression pathways. Despite the resources required for the resilience development toolkit it is suggested that all firms can obtain organisational benefits from building resilience, in particular women managers.

The practical implications of this paper come from the discussion offered earlier concerning resilience, its antecedents and its influences, leading to a recommended resilience toolkit for HR managers of organisations in order to develop and promote resilience in their women managers and aspiring managers:

- Offer Career Counselling: Organisations should offer counselling to build resilience among women in the workforce to help their career adaptability and career progression. The impact and potential of career counselling has been argued as a means to enhance career adaptability and facilitate individuals to be resilient so as to gain competency in supporting themselves (Bimrose and Hearne, 2012) and their career progression. Organisations should offer career counselling to women employees, which could enhance resilience in individuals, enabling them to better deal with career-related stress (Bimrose and Hearne, 2012). Life events, be it promotion or redundancy or gender discrimination at work, affect individuals' accustomed lifestyle and this highlights the need for career counselling to help individuals develop strategies like resilience and career adaptability, so that they can better navigate volatile labour markets (Savickas et al., 2009; Sultana, 2011).
- Offer Mentorship: We recommend that resilience-building be incorporated into, and that professional support should be encouraged through, mentorship programmes. Several authors have mentioned that the presence of mentoring functions was found to be positively related to resilience (Kao et al., 2014; Arora and Rangnekar, 2014). Similarly, the study by Arora and Rangnekar (2014) reiterated the significant contribution of mentoring in influencing career outcomes such as career resilience.
- Develop strong networks and support groups of women: Jackson et al. (2007) suggested that individuals can actively participate in the development and strengthening of their own personal resilience to reduce their vulnerability to workplace adversity. Thus, women being discriminated against and stereotyped as vulnerable in the workplace should focus on participating in development to build and strengthen their psychological resilience so they can support themselves against gender discrimination at work. It is important to develop networks with people outside the work area for guidance and support when needed.

Sometimes, individuals might get exposed to unnecessary vulnerability seeking support within their own workplace. Building positive and nurturing professional relationships, maintaining positivity, developing confidence and becoming more reflective can be achieved through professional networks (Robinson and Stubberud, 2010) and increases the likelihood of having one's competencies recognised (Burt, 1998).

- Provide positive role models: Organisations should provide positive role models to women leaders to help them become more focused, confident, positive, resilient and successful. Women in workplaces are usually perceived as emotional, illogical and intuitive decision makers (Green and Casell, 1996). Such beliefs about women in the workplace cause stereotypical perceptions. Women being considered as intuitive decision makers is consistent with the expectancy-driven model of behavioural confirmation effects (self-fulfilling prophecies) outlined by Chen and Bargh (1997), whereby perceivers cause others to confirm their preconceived biases. Self-fulfilling prophecies occur when people hold beliefs and expectations which lead them to change their behaviour and in turn cause the expected behaviours to be exhibited by people who are targets of the expectancies (Hilton and Von Hippel, 1996). Women should have positive role models to follow to be resilient in dealing with gender stereotyping in the workplace (Westfall, 2015, pp. 76-78).
- Offer Reflective learning workshops: Women face many hurdles attempting to achieve their goals. "Reflection is part of learning and thinking. Reflection is key in the process of developing resilience in women (Brodsky et al., 2011). We reflect in order to learn something or we learn as a result of reflecting and the term 'reflective learning' emphasises the intention to learn from current or prior experience" (Moon 2004). Reflective learning enables to view experiences as opportunities for learning instead of viewing the happenings in life simply as the experiences they are. Reflective learning workshops can help build resilience in women in workplaces to deal with several challenges women face.
- Offer Coaching: Coaching plays an important role in building resilience in women managers. Organisations should offer coaching programmes for women leaders to help build resilience. Manager's resilience is reported to increase post coaching (Sherlock-

Storey et al., 2013; Grant et al., 2009). Research suggested the significance of the supportive coaching relationship during times of challenge where resilience was required. Coaching was found to be beneficial for leaders to reclaim their self-belief, contributed to their learning, helped them see the wider perspective and provided a supportive relationship and thinking space (Smith, 2015).

- Offer Resilience Training: Research has suggested the significance of resilience in organisations for employee well-being. Organisations should offer resilience training interventions to improve mental-health and subjective well-being outcomes and enhance psychosocial functioning, physical outcomes and performance outcomes of employees at workplace. Provision of one-to-one training and support depending on individual needs would be recommended (Robertson et al., 2015).

Like all academic endeavours, the current study has certain limitations. Firstly, the current paper is conceptual, and hence the developed propositions are not tested empirically. However, future studies can build on our work to empirically analyse these propositions and test their validity in different contexts. The factors constraining women's progression and resilience have been not addressed. Moreover, this paper addressed resilience at a rather general level taking insights from research focused on both private- and public-sector organisations. However, due to the different nature of these organisations, it is important to go one step further, and research the relative importance of particular factors in particular organisational contexts. Finally, culture (national as well as organisational) has been shown to significantly influence a range of organisational HRM strategies. Therefore, it could be interesting for future studies to bring in this aspect to the discussion surrounding resilience, and empirically analyse women managers' resilience, their antecedents and influences in a cross-cultural comparative context.

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