Guest Editorial

Workplace Resilience

Some of the greatest achievements in science have occurred when a model or idea in one discipline has been used in another discipline. Witness the development of the Global Positioning System (GPS). The GPS on your phone or in your car is a result of scientists attempting to track the Soviet Sputnik spacecraft and an inquisitive manager asking if the process could be reversed to track a submarine from space [1]. This special issue is one step toward a better understanding of workplace resilience and of the several research approaches employed in the workplace. Many papers have been published on resilience concerning high-risk youth, military personnel suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and patients seeking mental health services [2–4]. The insights from those studies have been somewhat informative for researchers seeking to understand the role and behavior of resilience in the workplace. However, the generalizability and applicability of clinical findings to a nonclinical audience highlights the need for more focused research in the work settings where we wish to make changes in human and organizational performance.

Why investigate workplace resilience? Recent studies show that the U.S. alone suffers a $5 billion productivity loss because of stress and stress-related conditions [5]. But this research is not necessarily about money, it is about improving the quality of work life and producing better outcomes from our employees. This issue of WORK contains nine contributions covering several aspects of workplace resilience: tools to measure resilience, applications in military training, and resilience in the face of organizational decline and change.

The issue opens with a new tool for measuring workplace resilience. This tool updates work done earlier [6] to allow researchers and practitioners to investigate resilience in workplaces. Four factors of resilience were discovered in the current study. While bearing some similarities to the 1997 tool, there were decided differences in the 2016 tool. This first publication of results using the 2016 tool was based on a U.S. sample of healthcare workers. Future studies will extend the use of the tool to manufacturing and service organizations in the U.S. and to organizations throughout the developed world.

Military settings offer fertile ground for studying workplace resilience. Commander Frode Voll Mjelde of the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy (RNoNA) shares his applied research assessing military team performance in simulator training exercises and in live training exercises. The challenge in this naval environment is to balance teamwork and taskwork. Mjelde and colleague Kip Smith (also of the RNoNA) conducted the studies and found promising results from their simulator training exercises concerning the ability to produce relevant information to assess and train cadets in resilient behaviors. Mjelde and Smith share the details of the realistic training scenarios and what they learned concerning the design of simulator training exercises.

Ewart de Visser and his colleagues describe how to build resilience to stress in "Building Resilience with the Stress Resilience Training System: Design, Validation, and Applications." Their Stress Resilience Training System (SRTS) was originally developed for use with the U.S. military to apply the concept of training for stress to improve one's resilience to stress. De Visser and colleagues share their work with Heart Rate Variability (HRV) biofeedback as an intervention to improve physiological performance and, therefore, produce higher levels of resilience. They discuss the experience and outcomes of using SRTS in applications such as law enforcement, athletics, personal fitness, and healthcare.

In "Personal Resilience and Coping with Implications for Work," Valerie Rice and Boaxia Liu report on their work investigating resilience and coping among active duty service members and veterans in the U.S. Army. Part I of their work shares an extensive literature review concerning resilience and coping. Interestingly, the U.S. military has a resilience training program for soldiers, but coping strategies are neither included nor tied back to resilience. Rice and

Liu work through the differences between resilience and coping and the implications of the underlying research on the understanding of resilience among active-duty and veteran personnel. In Part II of their work, Rice and Liu reveal the results of their study of active-duty and veteran Army soldiers on the constructs of resilience and coping. Veterans performed different behaviors than active-duty soldiers when it came to coping and individual resilience. The authors share their recommendations for improving resilience training in the military and in the broader workplace.

Hope Witmer and Marcella Mellinger's "Organizational Resilience: Nonprofit Organizations' Response to Change" gives the reader insights for improving workplace resilience in nonprofits as they face funding changes. Their context is behavioral health organizations in the U.S., a particularly challenging environment because of how the care is funded. Six characteristics emerged from their study to support the role of resilience in how these organizations adapt effectively in the face of change. These characteristics relate very closely with the responsibilities of top leadership and have implications for managing nonprofits beyond the behavioral health context of their current study. Responding effectively to change and adversity is one of the key contributions of workplace resilience.

The phenomenon of organizational decline surfaces as an application area for resilience research. Three of this issue's articles concern varying forms of organizational decline and the role of resilience. Kathy Frisbie investigated how six factors of resilience were related to enrollment fluctuations in for-profit higher education institutions. In her work, she differentiates between the factors that the leader can influence or control and those that the leader cannot. Two of the six resilience factors provided insights to future leadership in for-profit higher education on how to better manage their organizations. Several of Frisbie's findings provide the basis for investigation of the role of resilience and decline in other organizational settings.

From the academic treatment of for-profit higher education, we move to the practitioner treatment. Ken Moran, an administrator in a higher education institution, studied how small, private, nonprofit colleges can cope effectively with organizational decline considering the roles of resilience and threat rigidity. The symptoms of organizational decline included decreased access to capital markets because of downgraded credit ratings, declining student enrollment, and disruptions of internal resources. Moran found

that a resilient response during organizational decline resulted in positive organizational outcomes and shares recommendations on how leaders can address adverse business conditions with behaviors anchored in resilience.

Declining organizational performance can ultimately force a firm into bankruptcy proceedings. Robert Wilson investigates the role of resilience as a firm enters bankruptcy. Specifically, Wilson shares a case study of an electrical firm facing bankruptcy and how a human capital strategy deploying resilient behaviors can help it more effectively face stressful situations and difficult decisions. Like Ken Moran, Wilson also deploys threat-rigidity to provide contrast with resilience, and uses established principles of workplace resilience to analyze the case, particularly the expansion of decision-making boundaries.

Engaging these authors on workplace resilience and consolidating their works in this special issue is a solid first step toward discovering the resilience roles and behaviors outside the clinical domain. In the course of guest editing this special issue, I pulled together all the authors on a conference call so we can start building a community of research and researchers on workplace resilience. Although a small start, some of the greatest changes in our history have begun with a small, yet strategic, focus on a specific problem. My hope is that the articles in this special issue spark many further studies and conversations to improve the resilience of people and workplaces in our world.

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