PROMOTING RESILIENCE THROUGH POSITIVE LEADERSHIP DURING TURMOIL

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Abstract

Ability to stand up to adversities, having the flexibility to solve problems in most meaningful ways and coming to a better situation compared to the starting point is regarded as resilience by organization researchers. Conditions that shapes organizational capacities in a flexible, storable and convertible way give rise to resilience in organizations and make them powerful in coping with problems, turmoil and crises. Without doubt, resilient individuals effect overall resilience of groups, especially in group level a resilient leadership is a prerequisite of resilient organizations. By resilient organizations we mean flexible and adaptive organizations that can positively cope with the unexpected or unwanted. Therefore, in this study positive psychology and positive organizational behavior literature are regarded as good guides for presenting a suitable leadership style for adaptive and resilient organizations. In this study, specifically, authentic leadership style, most prominent leadership type was under spotlight as one of the main sources of organizational resilience.

Keywords: Resilience, organizational resilience, positive leadership, authentic leadership

Introduction

Ensuring resilience in organizations has earned greater importance due to the developments regarding terrorism, crises, recessions, and other sociopolitical, economic trends and technological trends (Cameron and Dutton, 2013: 112). It is a big question to understand that why do some organizations survive and become successful in the face of high levels of stress and turmoil whereas others experience big problems and even lose their lives? It is important to notice that organizations are maintaining their lives in an interactively complex world and in this atmosphere things that are unexpected are omnipresent and things can turn into disasters very quickly (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001). In academic realm, researches regarding organizing in the face of adversity mostly focus on negativities. Thus, the kind of concepts such as such as recessions, breakdowns, downward spirals and bankruptcy that dominate management literature (Cameron and Dutton, 2003: 107). The term resilience, namely, the maintenance of positive adjustment under difficult and challenging situations, is significant in differentiating flexible and adaptive groups and individuals. That is organizations that thrive amidst adversity and unlucky and unsuccessful ones that cannot adapt itself in times of turmoil and bounce back after troubles.

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1.Resilience

During our daily lives most of us are confronted with painful or stressful event and periods such as death of a beloved one, loss of a relative or friend, illnesses, physical assaults or many other similar traumatic events. Although number and kinds of these problematic events are considerably high, only a relatively small segment of people experience important psychological illnesses due to this traumatic events (PTSD; American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

People's resistance to stress and their ways of recovering from stress may change from person to person (Davis, Zautra, and Smith, 2004; Ong, et al., 2006). With little exception (Zautra, Johnson, and Davis, 2005; Frederickson and Joiner, 2001, Fredrickson et al., 2003), there are few contradicting studies with the effects of positive emotions in stress management (Ong et al., 2006).

Resilience is, "adapting successfully to new events and situations in the face of disadvantage and adverse conditions" (Garmezy, 1993; Fin 1997) and can be defined as ensuring positive adjustment under challenging situations through which the organization results with more strengthened, powerful and resourceful structures. By the term "challenging conditions" all kinds of obstacles for survival such as unexpected situations, crises, discrete errors, scandals, bankruptcies, shocks, and disruptions of old routines are implied (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007). Resilience implies more than a commonplace adaptation. In fact, it is a kind of reservoir that increases probability of adaptation. There is no certainty but there is a high probability. This means that resilience during one period increases the probability of being resilient in the next (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007).

In the literature it is indicated that positive emotions increases abilities regarding problem solving (Frederickson, 2003; Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005; Ong vd., 2006) and different levels of psychological resilience in individuals may be the results of adaptive ways through which life stressors are handled, and managed (Ong vd., 2006). That is to say, thinking positively, results in reacting resiliently and coping with difficulties easily.

There is a significant between resilience and positive emotions of individuals. Resilient people are often more energetic in their lives and they are more prone to engage in new experiences (Masten, 2001; Tugade, vd. 2004). And they prefer to use positive emotions in coping with problems (Tugade, vd. 2004; Masten and Reed, 2002). Moreover, resilient people both cultivate positive emotions in themselves, and also transmit these emotions to other people thus creating a positive atmosphere (Tugade, vd., 2004). Furthermore, resilient individuals among an exposed population report little or no psychological problems (Bonanno, 2007), thus, contributing to a healthier society.

On the one hand, resilience is more likely to occur incase there are enough level of high quality assets. In this point, human capital, social capital, emotional capital and material capital are the most important sources for a proper resilient environment. Secondly, resilience often occurs when people have enough experience to allow them build self-efficacy (Masten and Reed, 2002). Thus, resilience occurs when individuals have access to necessary capitals, competence/expertise, and self efficacy. Having the chance to master experiences that contribute to enhancing competencies and individual progress is

an important factor that contributes to resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001).

2. Organizational Resilience

Organizational systems are inclined toward entropy, chaos, and pathological cycles of behavior are undetermined, in these conditions how organizations experience adversity and successfully adjust and thrive is a big question mark. Without doubt resilience a power that enables continuous adaptability to attain desirable business results during difficult times (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003).

The term resilience attracts attention of a broad range of disciplines, for example; positive psychology (Luthans, Vogelgesang, and Lester 2006), ecological systems (McDaniels et al. 2008; Linnenluecke and Griffiths 2010), engineering (Riolli and Savicki 2003; Acquaah, Amoako-Gyampah, and Jayaram 2011), management (Mallak 1998; Hamel and Valikangas 2003) and supply chain management (Ross and Buffa 2009; Cabral, Grilo, and Cruz-Machado 2012), among others.

According to organization theory approach, we can talk about two prominent meanings of resilience: (1) the capacity to absorb strain and continue to function in spite of the existence of problems or (2) the capacity to get better and bounce back from unwanted events. Furthermore, with a developmental approach it does not merely occur after interruptions or jolts, but sometimes develops over time due to continuous risk handling and stress (Sutcliffe ve Vogus, 2003). On the one hand, organizational resilience is accepted as the capability to manage internal and external resources prosperously and thrive amidst turmoil.

In fact, it is possible to come across two main perspectives on the meaning of resilience. According to related literature some researchers suggests that organizational resilience is an ability to get over problems, recover from unexpected, and stressful events (Gittell et. al, 2006; Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003). This approach regarding resilience is quite similar to the resilience approach of physical sciences. According to a second approach regarding resilience, it is the development of new capabilities and abilities to create and catch new opportunities regarding risky situations (Freeman, et. al., 2004; Layne, 2001; Lengnick-Hall et. al, 2011). This second approach goes beyond returning to previous point and it is much more than bouncing back and it often results in an increased level of capabilities necessary for building a better future.

Organizational resilience theory provides a framework for organizations and individuals that contributes to achieve desirable outcomes despite important barriers to adaptation or progression (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007). A resilience perspective promotes a different approach to organizational survival compared to some deterministic perspectives in organization theory (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007). It is based on previous experiences and triggers future learning, nonetheless exists independent of learning activities namely it consists of broader store of adaptive capabilities.

In order to anticipate upcoming events, resilient organizations monitor their surroundings and try to detect unexpected situations. Simulating as well as monitoring are useful for an organization's capability to become aware of unexpected events more

rapidly and give time for easily correcting problematic points and for building capabilities for recovering from unexpected situations (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001).

Moreover, resilient organizations tend to find evidence for their assumptions about environmental risks and the overall order of their systems (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001). Resilient organizations also encourage people to participate in decisions and speak with the belief that people are not perfect organisms but they can better over time through experiences (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007: 3419).

Increasing an organization's overall competence is a prerequisite of resilient organizations. Increasing an organization's general capabilities and progress, enhances learning capabilities and make organizations learn from their mistakes, enhances their chance of getting quick feedbacks and rearranges processes to transfer information and resources. And increases organizations' capacities to deal with unwanted and unexpected events (Weick, et. al., 1999: 117). Having a developmental perspective, Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003), claimed that organizational resilience is closely related to positive adjustments amidst challenging and difficult conditions, and results in a developmental process (Caza and Milton, 2012). Routines, practices and values not only make organizations proper to bounce back from adversity, but it also creates new ways and drags the organization to a better point (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003).

Resilient organizations are resourceful in myriad of points. They contribute to competent, self efficient, and courageous employees in the organization and promote growth through behavioral processes (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld, 1999). Enhanced competencies, and mindfulness and alternative paths to develop and deploy new resources results in organizational resilience (Weick, et. al., 1999: 117).

Efficiency can be restored more quickly when organizations learn about events happening in the developing world, where norms, structures, and practices can change organizational members' diversity in the analytical perspectives of the organization's technology or production processes (Schulman, 1993). The conceptual gap increases the competence of an organization by increasing the number of different perspectives available to identify problems and contributes to efficiency and growth by providing a tendency to question existing information.

Organizational resilience has some properties such as flexibility, agility, and adaptability but differs from this concept at many other points. In fact, all these organizational properties stem from different factors and results in different organizational outcomes. First of all, need for resilience is often triggered by unexpected events. But in contrast flexibility and agility triggered by resilience lead to a process resulting in increased flexibility. Second, flexibility is an outward-looking process, whereas adaptability emphasizes the need for environmental compliance from an external perspective. Third, all the concepts including flexibility, improvisation, adaptation and agility have the potential to contribute to flexibility, but none is sufficient enough (Legninck, et. al., 2006).

According to Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2003, 2005) a unique mixture of organization-level behavioral, cognitive, and contextual capabilities can develop resilience and a shared mindset that makes an organization reach to a better point with flexibility. It is often created by an rigorous blend of experience, innovativeness, opportunism, and

decisiveness in spite of uncertainty (Legninck et. al, 2006: 246). Cognitive component of organizational capacity is a positive and constructive conceptual orientation by which a powerful sense of purpose and a meaningful use of language that ease problem solving occurs. On the other hand; learned resourcefulness, ingenuity, and the innovative use of resources are behavioral elements of organizational capacity and necessitates disciplined creativity necessary for solving unprecedented problems (Legninck et al., 2006) and lastly contextual elements regarding organizational resilience support resilience and facilitate meaningful responses in combatting with environmental complexities. And these conditions encompass four main phenomena: emotional safety, social capital, widely diffused power, high levels of accountability, and widely dispersed resource networks (Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2003, 2005).

Previous studies show that some organizational resources are very important in ensuring resilience in organizations. For example: Gittell's (2006) study showed that during September 11, 2001 financially powerful airline companies that had previously avoided high levels of debt (e.g., Southwest Airlines) were successful in bouncing back to and surpassing their previous performance levels without engaging in high levels of layoff. This was a proof that financial resources enable organizational resilience by increasing the potential to be resilient in times of crisis. Gittell's (2006) work also showed that on their own financial resources are not enough in ensuring resilience, relational resources such as financial resources, high quality Human resources or superior knowhow are also important. During September 11 events firms with high levels of cash on hand have also engaged in layoffs and were less able to regain profitability. Both the stocks of resources that determine resilience and deployment of these resources are equally important in ensuring resiliency. Resilient organizations tend to deploy more of their resources in response to upcoming threats and dangers (Gittell et al., 2006). Adding new perspectives to the organization is also a meaningful way of ensuring resilience, letting new people to participate in decision making processes, providing new ways for interaction across diverse groups as well as cross-checking processes and people in the organization make the organization more flexible toward unexpected events (Gittell et. al., 2006).

Organizational resilience is significant in the development of corporations in many fields. It increases innovative capacities of organizations by increasing use of ideas and information. Resilience also contributes to engagement in prosocial behaviors. Especially, prosocial behaviors contribute to conflict management and minimize the probability of psychological contract violation, and result in mutual benefits (Cameron, et. al., 2004). Resilience capacity also decreases the levels of organizational errors in production processes and activities. Learning from errors is important in reducing possible problems during innovation and new product development processes (Carroll, et.al 2002). To sum up, organizational resilience is helpful in understanding organization's main vulnerabilities and its complex and dynamic environment.

3. Resilience in Positive Psychology

Since organizations try to find ways to help their members understand and manage the ever-challenging and changing work environment, they give importance to positivity in business life and they focus on developing employee strengths, rather than concentrating on vulnerabilities and negativities (Avey, Luthans and Jensen, 2009).

Positive psychology especially organizational branch of it, that is positive organizational behavior necessitates a more positive framework compared to the dominant negative perspective in management literature. Bankruptcies; rapid changes in competitive pressures, failures, boring procedures; higher levels of job insecurity; and increasing customer demands contributes to a more stress-laden work atmosphere (Avey, Luthans and Jensen, 2009). Positive organizational scholarship give emphasis to positive states and processes that give rise to, or enhanced capabilities or strengths and optimal functioning (Dutton and Glynn, 2008: 693).

Empirical evidence suggests that positive organizational change is enabled by the dominance of the positive over the negative. When positive situations such as positive climate, positive relationships occur, heliotropic tendencies mitigate negative tendencies and results in positive change (Cameron, 2008). In this context positive change implies acts of change that are resilient, energizing, creative, optimistic, hopeful, and capacity-building changes.

Psychological Capital can be considered as one of the most prominent concepts of Positive Organizational Behavior. The synergic integration of hope, self efficacy, optimism resilience, forms the multidimensional construct of Psychological Capital, (Avey, Luthans and Yousseuf, 2010). Psychological capital can be defined as a psychological state which is characterized by: (1) high levels of confidence (self-efficacy) regarding achieving difficult tasks; (2) a general positive attribution (optimism) regarding tasks and life; (3) spending effort toward goals and, when needed, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to attain goals; and (4) sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to be successful when faced with problems (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007: 3). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) claimed that people often suffer stress if they are sure that they do not have the necessary resources to solve problems (Avey, Luthans and Jensen, 2009: 680).

The extend an individual has a Positive psychological state can be understood by: (1) his/her self confidence (self efficacy) to attain specific goals; (2) his/her positive attributions (optimism) about being successful now and in the future; (3) his/her tendency to persevere toward goals and, redirecting paths when necessary; and (4) his/her tendency to sustain and bounce back and go even beyond (Luthans, Youssef, et al., 2007: 3).

The concept of self efficacy is based on Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory. It can be described as "an individual's conviction about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation and to use cognitive strengths necessary for successful execution of a specific goal or task (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998, p. 66). Self efficacy is effective on individual's perceptions and interpretations of events and understanding the relationship between events. Low self efficacy in individuals result in the kind of feelings that are useful in handling difficult challenges. And high levels of efficacy help people to perceive challenges as surmountable (Bandura, 2008). On the other hand, in positive psychological capital literature the concept of hope is defined as the positive mood of individuals that is based on; (1) **agency** namely goal-directed energy of the individual and (2) **pathways** namely making plans to meet individual and organizational goals (Snyder, Irving, and Anderson, 1991, p. 287). Positive organizational behavior advocates a different form of optimism namely a realistic optimism. Realistic optimism

includes an objective assessment of what can be accomplished in a specific situation with present resources (Peterson, 2000).

4. Managing the Unexpected

Resilience is a latent capacity that should be available before crises come across and ensures positive adjustments within crises, and enables organizational learning and contributes to recovery (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003).

In fact, unexpected events seldom occur without warning. Their symptoms can be examined long before turmoil come across in small mistakes, or problems that are unnoticed, and subsequently escalate into crises or even into catastrophes (Sutcliffe and Christianson, 2013). Managing the unexpected requires being aware problems as they emerge, understanding the possible consequences of events, and adjusting ongoing actions and processes before things turn into a tragic situation. (Sutcliffe and Christianson, 2013).

Managing the unexpected in 7 steps:

1. Allocating Attention: Scanning the environment looking for potential problems, paying attention to risks (Kahn, Barton and Fellows, 2013).

2. Sense Making: Appreciating the importance of symptoms, in order to call some of them as a cue, weak signal, or discrepancy that should be taken into consideration. Developing an expertise and knowhow to understand cues as well as for deciphering their meaning.

3. Anomalizing: Becoming more alert regarding details, and giving enough importance to those details (Kahn, Barton and Fellows, 2013).

4. Updating: Modifying framework about a situation either due to the fact that conditions have changed or evolved over time (Kahn, Barton and Fellows, 2013).

5. Interacting and Communicating: Analyzing too many data that should be assembled and consolidated before being understood and communicating these information with the related parts (Kahn, Barton and Fellows, 2013).

6. Containing the Unexpected: After unexpected situations break through, people respond to them by: 1) continuing with pre-existing routines 2) modifying existing routines or 3) innovating a completely new routine for the new situation (Kahn, Barton and Fellows, 2013).

7. Resilience and the Unexpected: The capability to withstand crises and bounce back from adversities and unanticipated surprises is very important. Resilience contributes to this flexibility and capacity of organizations to bounce back from unanticipated events and reach to a better point compared to the previous position (Kahn, Barton and Fellows, 2013).

5. Leadership Amidst Turmoil

The ability of organizations to continue their operations in amidst crises is an important factor in the recovery process (McManus, et. al., 2008: 81). Particularly in unpredictable and risky environments, relationships among organization members are highly important. However, relationships can only result in improved outcomes and

performance, when they are directed by shared information, goals, and mutual respect (Gittell, 2003; Douglass, 2014) and this shared intangible assets can only be possible as a result of a perfect crisis leadership. The quality of leadership and the degree of empowerment resulting from this high quality leadership is a critical component of an adaptive organization's culture (Sheffi, 2006). In times of adversity or turmoil, these leaders will promote a positive organizational culture, by focusing on strengths of the organization and by creating strong employee relationships and, they will build a reservoir of goodwill that can buffer bad news and events (French and Holden, 2012).

Moreover, perceptions of leaders about negative events is an important factor that designates their future after experiencing a negative evet, crisis or turmoil. According to Dutton and Jackson (1987), decision makers' ability to cognitively understand and transform complicated organizational issues as in the example of crises is directly proportional to their perceptions about the nature of the crisis namely, considering as a threat or opportunity. According to leadership literature the role of the chief executive officer (CEO), is very important, in making the organization overcome adversities and crisis (Lucero, Kwang and Pang, 2009). Besides setting the direction for the organization, the leader re-establishes confidence among organization members (Lucero, Kwang and Pang, 2009). During crisis and turmoil leaders have five critical tasks; sense-making of the crisis, making decisions regarding crisis, communicating the necessary information to stakeholders, terminating the crisis and ensuring learning process from the crisis (Lucero, Kwang and Pang, 2009).

Crisis are the times people find themselves in risky conditions. In fact people perceiving psychological safety are more prone to take these risks. Since organizational resilience requires taking interpersonal risks, psychological safety climate is a prerequisite to make people eager to take risks (Legninck et. al., 2010). Moreover, respectful interactions in organizations give birth to deep social capital. And similarly diffused power and accountability on all over the organization also creates resilience (Legninck et. al., 2010). Resilient organizations often do not have hierarchical orders, in contrast, they rely on self-organization, empowerment and, accountability (Morgan, 1997) that necessitate a proper kind of leadership appreciating, and empowering followers. This leadership. This leadership should also be an authentic kind of leadership that makes followers trust their leaders too which is a prerequisite of trust climate in an organization. Without doubt, authentic leadership is quite compatible with the necessities of a resilient organization, especially with its participative, empowering and trustworthy style. Thus from then on we will continue with discussing authentic leadership style.

6. Authentic Leadership vs. Resilience

Being affected from positive psychology framework authenticity can be described as owning one's personal experiences, emotions, thoughts, needs, preferences, and processes that help individuals know themselves (Harter, 2002). Thus, the term authenticity includes both owning one's own experiences, values, and emotions and also behaving in congruent with one's true self, namely expressing what one really think and behave accordingly with his thoughts (Gardner, et al., 2005: 345).

Luthans and Avolio (2003, p. 243) define authentic leadership as a special kind of leadership that has its roots in positive psychological capacities that result in sophisticated organizational atmosphere. And high levels of self-awareness and self-regulate creation stems from authentic leadership result in positive organizational atmospheres on the part of both leaders and associates, thus contributing to positive self-development.

One of the most important factors that contributes to authentic leadership development is the leader's self-awareness, namely, leader's personal insight. In authentic leadership gaining self-awareness is understanding leader's capacity to attribute meaning to the world around him. Furthermore, an other significant component in authentic leadership development is self-regulation. The regulatory system of authentic leader is internally driven by the leader's intrinsic as opposed to external forces or expectations. An other important component of authentic leadership is balanced processing, namely unbiased interpretation of self-related information. It hinders the leader from distorting, exaggerating or ignoring external and internal evaluations of the self. Finally, relational transparency, can be regarded as the component of authentic leadership that contributes to openness, self-disclosure and trust in leader's relationships with others (Gardner, et al., 2005: 347).

Authentic leader's primary duty is building followers' self-efficacy, according to Luthans and Avolio's point of view, self confidence of authentic leader him to truly understand himself and act accordingly with his convictions. By expressing confidence his trust in his followers', authentic leader makes them understand their strong sides and superiorities. And provide ensures their further development (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004). The second important duty of authentic leader is creating hope in the organization. According to Luthans, hope triggers progress and goal attainment, adaptation, cooperation, and stability in terms of emotions. Luthans claims that followers working with more hopeful leaders contribute to higher profits in their organizations, feel more satisfied regarding their jobs and workplaces, and have lower turnover ratios (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004). On the other hand, similarly, resilient organization are also important in creating hopeful individuals due to high levels of confidence stemming from realistic appraisal of the challenges in their environment and capabilities (Groopman, 2004). Thus they promote hope among organization members that may be easily established by the help of authentic leadership. The third duty of the authentic leader is creating an optimistic atmosphere. A two-step mechanism is applied authentic leaders in order to influence followers' optimism. First of all they evoke positive emotions of their followers (Avolio et. al., 2004: 814), by building their relationships with followers with a positive perspective. And secondly, due to the fact that optimism can be acquired through modeling (Peterson, 2000), authentic leaders have the potential to influence other organization members' optimism by positively effecting their identification, thus leading to realistic optimism, which in turn fosters positive attitudes regarding the organization and high levels of individual performance (Avolio et. al., 2004; Luthans and Avolio, 2003). The fourth task of the authentic leader is increasing resilience power of individuals and the overall organization. Authentic leaders contribute to followers' resilience by giving the support they need to (1) recover from crises adversities, and (2) thrive when faced with

shocking positive change. Authentic leaders often have the potential to quickly anticipate potential adversities or problems, they can make contingency plans to support and help employees cope with these difficulties, and they are always available and responsive when their followers try to reach out to them (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004).

7. Conclusion

In Authentic leadership being yourself; namely being the person you were created to be rather than developing the image of a leader or trying to resembling other idealized leaders is the way to restore confidence in business organizations (Sparrowe, 2005: 420). Relying on sincerity and authenticity of their leaders, followers under authentic leadership feel themselves in a safe zone and do not afraid of using strengths and fighting in challenging situations with these strengths in the face of difficulties. In fact, resiliency necessitates courage and self confidence. Authentic leaders help their followers acquire these courage and self confidence by empowering them and by securing a democratic and authentic workplace.

Youssef and Luthans (2005) claims that resilient managers as authentic leaders have the capacity to be perfect role models for employees due to their optimistic and self efficient structures, that help employees recover from initial failures and, over time, they themselves also become resilient. Resiliency of the leaders is a contagious strength of the organization. It disseminates all over the organization in time. When followers are exposed to a resilient leader for a meaningful time period, the themselves start to adopt resilient mindset and behavioral framework. And when followers witness their colleagues' resiliency they feel more courageous in reacting resiliently in times of crises. Prevalent resilient behavior effects the overall organization and makes it a resilient atmosphere. Positive culture effected by the resiliency of leaders and founders of the organization contributes to pervasiveness of resiliency.

To sum up, benefiting from authentic leadership is one of the best ways in establishing resilient organizations for organizational adjustment and adaptation in a world where organizations are exposed to a remarkably complex and rapidly changing environment. Authentic leaders' reliance on their followers, their authentic character that gives sufficient information to their followers and their tendency to empower people and encourage to engage in challenging attempts make organization members and organizations more resilient and adaptive in times of turmoil.

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