PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AT WORK

INTRODUCTION

Changing conditions can affect individuals and organizations on many issues such as performance, compliance, and productivity. However, this does not always have to be a negative effect. Changing conditions can turn into opportunities in organizations where employees are supported and systems for problems exist. Psychological capital, which has been given as much importance as financial capital in recent years, is an important resource that protects employees and organizations against crises and changing conditions. The International Labor Organization (ILO) recommended being prepared for crises and working on this issue to prevent the development and continuity of the business world with the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2021 World Occupational Health and Safety Day Report, psychosocial risks are among the areas that need to be regulated.

Psychological capital is the characteristics of individuals that enable them to build and maintain their psychological well-being. People perceive the difficulties they face as "surmountable" with the skills, positive emotions, and beliefs they have, they think solution-oriented rather than problem-oriented, and see difficulties as opportunities for development. Under the title of psychological capital, there is a commitment to work, optimism, self-efficacy, belief in success, determination, courage, and the ability to forgive. According to the "Broaden and Build Theory", which explains the concept of psychological capital, positive beliefs, and emotions of a person increase one's performance and potential in work and daily life.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Another title under the name of psychological capital is psychological resilience. Resilience is a word of Latin origin (re-salire) and means "jump". In its simplest definition, a person can recover in the face of difficult conditions. In the organizational context, it is defined as flexibility that enables one to adapt to the uncertainty, failure, increasing responsibility, conflict, and stress that may occur in the work environment and to take a position for these situations. Psychological resilience is not the absence of difficulties or success in one's normal life. To speak of resilience, there must be a challenge, and one must be able to accept and adapt to that challenge without ignoring or avoiding it.

Resilience consists of three dimensions: control, commitment, and challenge (See Figure 1). Psychologically resilient people are those who have these three characteristics. These people feel that they can control and influence problems and can take action; They do not accept to remain passive in the face of problems. They also have a sense of commitment. They do not close themselves in the face of problems and continue to maintain their social relations. They see all challenges as part of life and accept this as an opportunity for change. As a result of all these features and efforts, development and success continue for these people and their organizations.

Figure 1: Components of Psychological Resilience
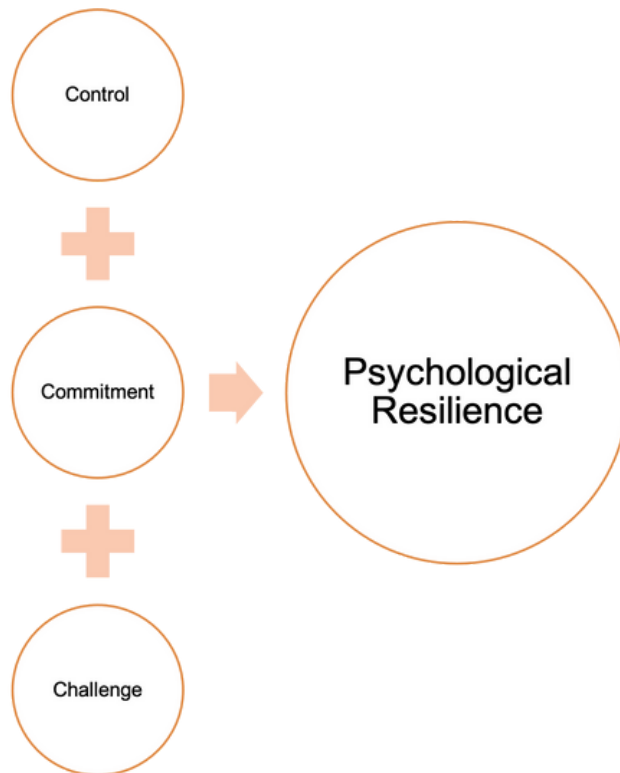
When the concept of resilience first emerged, it was seen as a biological feature. However, this point of view hinders development and renders people passive. Subsequent studies have shown that external factors are effective in the emergence of psychological resilience.

This shows that externally supported people can gain resilience. People can be psychologically resilient with the right support and development mechanisms.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AT WORK

Psychological resilience has an important place in work life. Employees may encounter many positive and negative situations during long working hours. Various studies are carried out around the world, especially on work-related stress, and it is known that when stress cannot be managed, the psychological well-being and performance of employees are adversely affected. Any negativity that employees are exposed to, affects organizations in the same way. The flexibility and adaptability of employees in the face of difficulties such as stress, high tempo, and workload also make organizations resilient. In particular, the selection of executive teams from people who are psychologically resilient both ensures that possible crises are easily overcome and increases the resilience of other employees.

Protective factors that enable employees to be psychologically resilient can be examined in two parts. These are individual characteristics and job-related characteristics. Firstly, the individual characteristics and resources of employees increase their flexibility and adaptability. According to studies, it has been observed that people who have strong social relations and are sociable (extroverted), open to development, and able to express themselves, adapt more easily in the face of problems. The quality of social relations of employees and their support by their relatives are other factors that support psychological resilience. A person's self-esteem and self-efficacy level also affect their resilience.

The more confident and contented a person is with himself, the more realistically he can perceive the situation he is in and adapt to current conditions. For these characteristics, called self-evaluation, to be reflected in work life, the person's self-evaluation of the skills and abilities required for the job must be positive. He should be confident and satisfied with his performance.

Organizations are limited in terms of individual characteristics. Individual characteristics are mostly shaped by the employee's own private life and personal history. Organizations can only support individual characteristics by providing personal development opportunities that can contribute to the development of the employee. However, when job-related characteristics are examined, it is seen that there are many ways to have psychologically resilient employees. This shows that it is necessary to pay attention to the recruitment processes and the importance of the compatibility of the competencies required by the job and the characteristics of the person. It has been observed that psychologically resilient employees are satisfied with their positions, have positive thoughts about their jobs, are satisfied with their colleagues, and trust their colleagues. Thinking that they are supported by their managers, the presence of people who are appreciated and who can get help when they need it to increase the psychological resilience of the employees. The perception of organizational justice also affects the psychological resilience of employees. Employees who think that their organization makes a fair wage, is transparent in the workflow, and that all employees treat other employees with respect and courtesy in the decision-making processes in the flow have high adaptability skills in the face of difficulties and crises.

Considering the individual and job-related characteristics, many factors affect the resilience of the employees. With the studies to be carried out on these factors, it can be ensured that the employees are more resilient. The work of human resources employees in this field will be valuable for both the employees and the organization.

DISCUSSION

Psychological resilience can be an indispensable source of efficiency and performance for businesses by transforming into work performance. Psychologically resilient employees enable organizations to be sustainable, adapt easily to changes, and turn changes into opportunities. For this reason, organizations; It is critically important for the leaders of resilience to develop measurement systems, support, and intervention mechanisms that will identify and increase the resilience of employees. In the new business world where the importance of psychological health and safety is understood, organizations that can improve the well-being of their employees will be one step ahead.

HOW CAN EMPLOYEES BE SUPPORTED?
WAYS TO BUILD PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

Psychological resilience is a trait that can be developed. For this reason, it is important for organizations to carry out studies and develop mechanisms to support their employees. Some of the studies that human resources can do on this subject are as follows:

- Prepare personal development programs for employees.
- Develop systems that can identify psychologically vulnerable people.
- Increase solidarity and communication among employees.
- Create spaces where employees can share their professional experiences.
- Inform employees about work-life balance.
- Develop programs to increase employees' emotional capacities and stress management skills.
- Develop recognition mechanisms.
- Be transparent about workflow, tasks, and recognition mechanisms.
- Get the opinions of the employees about their workplaces at regular intervals. Do surveys.
- Be aware of gender risks and prepare specific solutions for women employees against these risks.
- Develop team leaders' empathy and communication skills.
- Develop workplace mechanisms where employees can get support on special issues.
- Organize "breaks" where employees can have a pleasant time outside of work and/or work hours.

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