Employee resilience and leadership styles: The moderating role of proactive personality and optimism

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Resilience has merited growing interest in psychology and management research, given its potential to drive important organisational outcomes. Yet, there is limited understanding of the individual and contextual factors that promote resilient behaviours in organisations. This study explored relationships between dispositional variables (proactive personality and optimism), leadership styles (empowering and contingent reward leadership) and employee resilience. Data were collected from a sample of 269 while-collar workers in New Zealand through an online survey. Results show that empowering leadership, proactive personality and optimism were significantly related to resilient behaviours. Moreover, optimism interacted with contingent reward leadership to predict employee resilience. The findings underscore the importance of measuring employee resilience as a contextualised, behavioural capability, and the need to investigate its nomological network considering the interplay of organisational enablers and dispositional variables.

Keywords: Leadership, employee resilience, proactive personality, optimism

Organisations operate in an increasingly competitive and dynamic context, and their success is a reflection not only of their capacity to survive, but also of their ability to continually adapt in challenging environments (Lampel, Bhalla, & Jha, 2014; Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2011). Growing evidence that resilient organisations are better able to recover from and even thrive following major crises has placed organisational resilience research in the limelight over the past decade (Fleming, 2012; Lampel et al., 2014; Linnenluecke, 2015). There is general consensus in recent scholarship with regards to the critical contribution of resilient employees to the organisation's capacity to engage in ongoing development, to survive major crises, and to thrive under uncertain circumstances (Carvalho & Areal, 2015; Southwick, Bonnano, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014; Van der Vegt, Essens, Wahlstrom, & George, 2015). This underscores the importance of contextualising employee resilience in occupational settings, and framing it as a capability that can be developed over time and as a function of person-organisation exchanges (Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar, & Curran, 2015; Shaw,

McLean, Taylor, & Swartout, 2016). Though a behavioural, contextualised approach to individual resilience has been advocated in review papers (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, Robertson et al., 2015), empirical research to date has largely measured resilience as a trait or a coping mechanism (Luthans & Church, 2002). Consequently, studies have thus far conceptualised employee resilience as an individual resource developed and manifested in response to adversity, rather than as a dynamic capability that signals and ensures innovation and preparedness for future crises (Linnenluecke, 2015). To address this gap, the present study adopts a behavioural and workplace-specific approach to employee resilience, which comprises a suite of learning-oriented and relationship-building workplace behaviours, supported by the organisation, that enhance organisational functioning (Näswall, Kuntz, Hodliffe & Malinen, 2015). Based on previous research suggesting that an organisation's capacity to build and maintain resilience capability among its employees is contingent upon its management of resilience-enabling practices and procedures (Bardoel, Pettit, De Cieri, & McMillan, 2014; Lengnick-Hall &

Beck, 2011; Shin, Taylor, & Seo, 2012), and that specific individual differences may account for greater likelihood that people exhibit adaptive and learning-oriented behaviours (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014; Thompson, 2005), we contend that resilient behaviours represent the upshot of both intrapersonal factors, and the availability of enabling organisational factors, including leadership.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it tests the unique effects of dispositional variables typically associated with resilience (i.e., proactive personality and optimism) and of enabling leadership styles (i.e., empowering and contingent reward leadership) on the degree to which employees enact resilient behaviours. Second, the study examines whether and how individual differences and perceived style of the leader interact and relate to employee resilience.

Employee Resilience

Individual resilience has largely been operationalised as a dispositional variable responsible for the psychological mechanisms that enable people to bounce back following crises or traumatic events (Bonanno, 2004; Shin et al., 2012; King & Rothstein, 2010; McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013; Moenkemeyer, Hoegl, & Weiss, 2012; Pipe et al., 2012; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Although in recent years the individual resilience research has expanded its scope from clinical and developmental foci to applications in occupational settings (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; King & Rothstein, 2010; Lee, Sudom, & McCreary, 2011; Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2011; Luthans, 2002), an overview of the recent literature reveals disparate conceptual and operational perspectives of the construct (Linnenluecke, 2015). The extant individual resilience literature largely

portrays the construct as a relatively stable disposition, related to self-efficacy, locus of control, and agreeableness (Lee et al., 2011; Wagnild & Young, 1993). Recent works have departed from that dispositional approach, and suggest that resilience comprises a more fruitful construct in organisational research if conceptualised as an individual capability that can be developed though interactions between people and their environment (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Despite this, the existing resilience measures appear to lag behind theoretical developments, and fail to capture the dynamic capability elements of the construct (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). One notable exception can be found in Kuntz, Naswall & Malinen (2016), who define employee resilience as "the capacity of employees, facilitated and supported by the organisation, to utilise resources to positively cope, adapt and thrive in response to changing work circumstances" (p. 3). Their approach to employee resilience is predicated on three core assumptions: (1) employee resilience is partly the upshot of, but operationally distinct from the dispositional factors that promote individual resilience, (2) employee resilience is a behaviour-based construct comprised of three underlying facets (learning, adaptability, and networking), and (3) resilient behaviours can be developed and sustained if the appropriate organisational systems are in place. Regarding the latter, recent research suggests that leadership represents a critical enabler of resilience development in organisations (Nilakant et al., 2016) and will therefore be selected as a focal variable in the present paper.

Leadership and Employee Resilience

While a number of organisational features have been advanced as enablers of resilience development, namely leadership behaviours aimed at clarifying goals and expectations, fostering employee growth and participation, and providing support for work and non-work demands, there is limited empirical evidence to substantiate these assertions (Bardoel et al., 2014; Harland et al., 2004; King & Rothstein, 2010; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Empowering

leadership behaviours have enjoyed growing research interest over the past decade due to their associations with change-related outcomes (Ahearne, Mathieu, & Rapp, 2005; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Empowering leaders develop subordinates' self-management skills through delegation of authority, participative decision-making, ensuring meaningful work, conveying confidence in subordinates' capacity to achieve results, and personal support (Ahearne et al., 2005; Dierendonck & Dijkstra, 2012; Mills & Ungson, 2003; Scott, Hui, & Elizabeth, 2013; Seibert, Wang, & Courtright, 2011). Empowering leadership behaviours target employee involvement with the organisation, skill development, autonomy, and encouragement of stretch goals, which map on the underlying facets of employee resilience (i.e., learning, adaptability, and networking). It is therefore expected that empowering leadership be positively associated with employee resilience.

H1: Empowering leadership will be positively associated with employee resilience

Defined as the "degree to which a leader administers positive reinforcers, such as recognition, acknowledgement, and commendations, contingent upon high performance" (p. 813) (Podsakoff, Todor, & Skov, 1982), contingent reward leadership consists of recognising effort, goals and milestone achievements (Camps & Torres, 2011). Although contingent reward leadership is often associated with the notion of inducements for contributions that characterises the transactional leadership framework, and typically considered less effective in relation to transformational leader behaviours (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Breevaart et al., 2014; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), research has uncovered positive links between contingent reward leadership and job performance, satisfaction, and approach-coping resilience (Harland et al., 2004; Podsakoff et al., 1982). Regarding the latter, the feedback component of recognition for effort and achievement may be the point where contingent reward leadership and resilient behaviours intersect. The timely recognition of effort and achievements provide employees with clear feedback on their performance, both throughout

the task and after its completion. Clear feedback enhances employees' awareness of their performance level, clarifies developmental needs (London, Larsen, & Thisted, 1999), and increases their motivation to set and achieve challenging goals, and to adjust their effort as needed. Leadership behaviours aimed at reinforcing high performance and goal achievement map on the learning facet of employee resilience, which involves feedback-seeking behaviours, learning from mistakes and continually re-evaluating performance (Näswall et al., 2015). Hence, contingent reward leadership is expected to positively relate to employee resilience.

H2: Contingent rewards leadership will be positively associated with employee resilience

Individual Differences and Employee Resilience

The extant research offers ample evidence for the relationship between resilience and individual differences, including optimism, self-efficacy, and proactive personality (e.g., Mache, Vitzthum, Wanke, Groneberg, Klapp, & Danzer, 2014; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014; Segovia, Moore, Linnville, Hoyt, & Hain, 2012; Smith, Tooley, Christopher, & Kay, 2010; Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004). However, the studies listed, even the ones conducted in occupational contexts, regard resilience a psychological coping mechanism, inviting further research into the potential for individual differences to drive resilient behaviours. Optimism is defined as a "generalised tendency to expect positive outcomes" (p. 220) (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Optimistic individuals tend to more accurately identify causes of, and correctly ascribe responsibility for, task success and failure (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). We argue that the capacity to accurately evaluate process and outcome performance issues that characterises optimistic individuals will likely drive resilient behaviours, namely the utilisation of error as springboard for learning and for fine-tuning performance. Empirical research linking optimism to commitment to change, ability to cope with changing work environments and positive workplace behaviours (Kool & Dierendonck, 2012; Youssef & Luthans, 2007) further suggests that higher levels

of optimism may be related to resilient behaviours, which encompass change adaptability. Hence, the following is hypothesized:

H3: Optimism will be positively associated with employee resilience

The link between proactive personality and resilience has merited far less attention and, not surprisingly given the dominant trait-based perspective of individual resilience, this personality trait has been viewed as comprising a higher-order resilience construct (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014). In organisations, proactive personality disposes individuals to change-oriented behaviours, and has been positively related to initiative in career management, seeking support from others at work, and leveraging workplace resources (Ashford & Black, 1996; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Thompson, 2005). As the capacity to utilise resources from the organisation is integral to the employee resilience construct adopted in this study (Näswall et al., 2015), we expect that proactive personality will be positively related to resilient employee behaviours.

H4: Proactive personality will be positively associated with employee resilience

The impact of leadership styles on employee outcomes has been extensively researched, both in relation to direct effects, and considering the moderating role of individual differences (e.g., Ehrhart & Klein, 2001; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005; Harland, Harrison, Jones, & Reiter-Palmon, 2004; Hetland, Sandal, & Johnsen, 2008; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011; Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009). For instance, employees who exhibit high self-esteem, achievement orientation and risk-taking propensity tend to respond to leaders' transformational behaviours with high performance (Ehrhart & Klein, 2001). Further, Big Five personality traits and learning orientation have shown to moderate the effect of transformational leadership behaviours on employee performance and engagement (Chi & Ho, 2014; Zhu et al., Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009). Considering the evidence outlined, while we posit that resilient behaviours can be fostered directly through enabling leadership behaviours, it is also plausible that the extent to and manner in which leader behaviours influence employee resilience

is affected by dispositional factors. With regards to empowering leadership, employees higher in the proactive trait may be more motivated to behave in ways that reflect empowering leadership aims (e.g., self-manage and take initiative at work), and more disposed to, and capable of, taking advantage of the resources offered by leaders. Therefore, the following is hypothesized:

H5: Empowering leadership will be more strongly related to resilient behaviours at higher levels of proactive personality

Given that contingent rewards leadership is characterised by acknowledgement of desirable behaviours and performance achievements, we suggest that individuals with high proactive trait – disposed to self-initiating action guided by environmental cues – will exhibit more frequent resilient behaviours when this leadership style is utilised. Finally, we propose that praise for achievement and timely provision of performance feedback through recognition interact with high scores in optimism (associated with tendency for performance re-evaluation and error utilisation behaviours) and are associated to higher levels of employee resilience.

H6: Contingent rewards leadership will be more strongly related to resilient behaviours at higher levels of proactive personality

H7: Contingent rewards leadership will be more strongly related to resilient behaviours at higher levels of optimism

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample for this study was comprised of 269 white-collar workers representing several industries, predominantly finance, healthcare and education. These participants were recruited through an invitation distributed to professional networks, including Human Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ) and LinkedIn. The invitation contained a link to an online survey. Of the 269 professionals who completed the survey, 61.5% were female and 85.1% worked full-time. The mean age was 42 years (SD = 11.93), mean tenure 6.71 years (SD = 7.73),

and mean length of working with their immediate supervisor was 3.18 years (SD = 3.78). The study was reviewed and approved by a Human Research Ethics Committee.

Measures

An online questionnaire was used in this study to cover the five variables of interest. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale. For employee resilience, the ratings ranged from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). For the remaining scales, ratings ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Employee resilience

Employee resilience was measured with the nine-item EmpRes scale developed by Näswall et al. (2015). Examples include "*I effectively collaborate with others to handle challenges at work*" and "*I learn from mistakes at work and improve the way I do my job*", where higher scores reflect higher employee resilience ($\alpha = .86$)

Empowering leadership

The ten-item Leadership Empowerment Behaviours scale (Ahearne et al., 2005) was used in the present study ($\alpha = .88$). The measure covers employee views regarding the extent to which their leader engages in four empowering behaviours: enhancing the meaningfulness of work, fostering participation in decision-making, expressing confidence in high performance, and providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (pp. 949). Examples of the items include "*My supervisor often consults me on strategic decisions*" and "*My supervisor believes in my ability to improve even when I make mistakes*".

Contingent reward leadership

The leader's contingent reward behaviours scale by Podsakoff et al. (1982) was used. This scale assesses employee perceptions of the extent to which a leader positively reinforces performance through recognition. Examples of the items are: "*My supervisor gives me special recognition when my work performance is especially good*" and "*My supervisor commends me when I do a better than average job*" ($\alpha = .93$).

Proactive personality

This dispositional variable was

measured using the ten-item Proactive Personality scale developed by Seibert et al. (1999) (α = .86). Examples of this scale include: "*I excel at identifying opportunities*" and "*Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change*".

Optimism

Optimism was measured with the revised Life Orientation Test (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994). Some examples are "*In uncertain times, I usually expect the best*" and "*I'm always optimistic about my future*". Higher ratings reflect higher levels of optimism (α = .70).

Results

Table 1 illustrates descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and reliability estimate (italicized) for each scale. Overall, all scales showed adequate reliability estimates in this study, with coefficients ranging from .72 to .94. Employee resilience was positively and significantly associated with the leadership styles and dispositional variables investigated. While the correlations between predictors and outcomes did not exceed .37, it should be noted that the correlations between the two leadership styles was .69. An exploratory factor analysis (principal axis factoring, direct oblimin rotation) was conducted to ascertain whether these leadership scales represent distinct variables. The 2-factor solution obtained and the correlation between factors (.58) supported the consideration of separate leadership styles. A discriminant validity test was also conducted to assess whether employee resilience is empirically distinct from personality traits to which the construct has previously been associated (Avey et al., 2009). Results from factor analysis revealed that the items used to measure employee resilience, optimism and proactive personality load onto separate factors, consistent with their respective scales, which suggests that employee resilience is operationally distinct from the personality traits assessed in this study.

Moderated Multiple Regression

Moderated multiple regression analyses were performed to examine main effects and potential interactions between leadership styles, proactive

Table 1. *Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Coefficient Alphas (Diagonal)*

	M	SD	1	2	4	5	6
1. Empowering Leadership	3.62	.63	(.88)				
2. Contingent Reward Leadership	3.37	.83	.69**	(.94)			
3. Proactive Personality	3.65	.54	.09	-.05	(.87)		
4. Optimism	3.52	.63	.33**	.17**	.43**	(.79)	
5. Employee Resilience	4.03	.40	.37**	.24**	.29**	.35**	(.72)

Note: n=269; ** *p*< .01

personality and optimism. Collinearity statistics were computed and tolerance values for all variables ranged from .49 to .92, above .10, suggesting no notable issue with multicollinearity (Hair, 1998; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The predictor variables were centred prior to conducting regression analyses. Results of regression analyses are depicted in Table 2. In the first model, the total variance in employee resilience explained by leadership styles was 14%, with empowering leadership accounting for the significant variance in this outcome (F(1,266) = 20.10, *p* <

31.59, *p* < .01). These findings indicate that empowering leader behaviours and dispositional variables contribute uniquely to employee resilience

The third model included the interaction terms contingent rewards x proactive personality, contingent rewards x optimism, and empowering leadership x proactive personality proposed. The inclusion of these interaction terms explained an additional 3% of the variance in employee resilience (F(3, 260) = 2.58, *p* < .05). There was a significant interaction effect between contingent rewards leadership and optimism (*β*=-.16,

Table 2. *Regression Analyses (DV: Employee Resilience)*

		Employee Resilience β
Model 1		
Contingent Reward Leadership (CR)		-.02
Empowering Leadership (EL)		.39**
	ΔR²	.14**
Model 2		
Contingent Reward Leadership (CR)		.06
Empowering Leadership (EL)		.25**
Proactive Personality		.25**
Optimism		.19**
	ΔR²	.13**
Model 3		
Contingent Reward Leadership (CR)		.05
Empowering Leadership (EL)		.22**
Proactive Personality		.25**
Optimism		.19**
CR*Proactive		.15†
CR*Optimism		-.16**
EL*Proactive		.05
	ΔR²	.03*
	Total R²	.30**

Note. n=269. † *p*<.10, * *p*<.05, ** *p*<.01.

.01). When proactive personality and optimism were added to the model, this explained a further 13% of the variance in employee resilience (F(1,263) =

p < .01). As depicted in Figure 1, at low levels of contingent reward leadership, employees with high optimism scores exhibited significantly greater resilience

than individuals with low optimism scores. This suggests that although contingent reward leadership behaviours do not enhance employee resilience for optimistic individuals, optimism may serve as a protective factor when leaders fail to recognise performance and effort. While non-significant at the p < .05 cut-off, the interaction effect between contingent rewards leadership and proactive personality is also noteworthy considering a less stringent cut-off (β=.15, p= .09). At high levels of perceived contingent reward leadership, employees with higher proactive personality scores displayed greater resilience than employees with lower proactive personality scores. These results are consistent with the expected relationship: when leaders provide feedback on performance and other desirable behaviours in the form of recognition, employees with higher proactive personality will feel encouraged to engage in the exploratory learning and performance re-evaluation behaviours consistent with this trait.

Discussion

The present study proposed to uncover the relationships between leadership styles (empowering and contingent reward leadership),

dispositional variables (proactive personality and optimism) and resilient employee behaviours. Importantly, this study addressed recent calls for departure from a dispositional perspective of resilience in occupational settings (e.g., King & Rothstein, 2010), and adopted a behaviour-based framework to empirically test the role of leadership style and personality factors associated with dispositional resilience on resilient employee behaviours. The results indicate that employee resilience is related to, but operationally distinct from, dispositional variables typically associated with the resilience construct (i.e., proactive personality and optimism) (Alvord & Grados, 2005; Avey et al., 2009). Further, the findings suggest that resilient employee behaviours were significantly related to leadership behaviours. Given the well-established relationships between empowering leadership and readiness for change (Ahearne et al., 2005; Pearce & Sims, 2002), it was not surprising that leadership behaviours aimed at fostering self-management skills and supporting staff with new challenges at work emerged as a key predictor of resilient behaviours (Fleming, 2012; Luthans, 2002; Seville et al., 2006).

Despite the significant correlation between contingent reward leadership employee resilience, this leadership style

did not significantly predict resilience when empowering leadership was added to the regression model. The suppression effect of empowering leadership on contingent rewards leadership can be explained by some practical similarities between the two styles. Clarification of goals and performance expectations through recognition comprise important feedback behaviours that promote intrinsic motivation and facilitate continuous learning and adaptive capacity (Cameron, Pierce, Banko, & Gear, 2005; Heerey, 2014; Näswall et al., 2015). While the utilisation of recognition behaviours as a feedback tool signifies a contingent leadership approach, these behaviours can be subsumed, implicitly and explicitly, by the empowering leadership framework utilised in this study. The items used to assess empowering leadership covered clarification of work goals and of the links between these goals and organisational direction, expressions of belief in employee competence, and management of day-to-day operations to facilitate employee performance. This may have accounted for the suppression effect, and underscores the need to ensure items within leadership style measures are sufficiently distinct to operationally discriminate between leadership approaches.

Proactive personality emerged as a significant predictor of employee resilience. This finding are consistent with previous research suggesting a positive relationship between proactive personality, and network-building and feedback-seeking behaviours (Chiaburu, Baker, & Pitariu, 2006; Thompson, 2005), both facets of the employee resilience construct considered in this study. Further, proactive personality has been associated with actively seeking for and identifying opportunities in times of change (Bateman & Crant, 1993), consistent with the adaptive facet of the construct. Optimism also contributed significantly to the prediction of resilient behaviours. Aligned with previous research linking optimism with an adaptive stance and with resilience from a coping perspective (Kool & Dierendonck, 2012; Lee et al., 2011), optimistic employees enacted resilient behaviours more frequently.

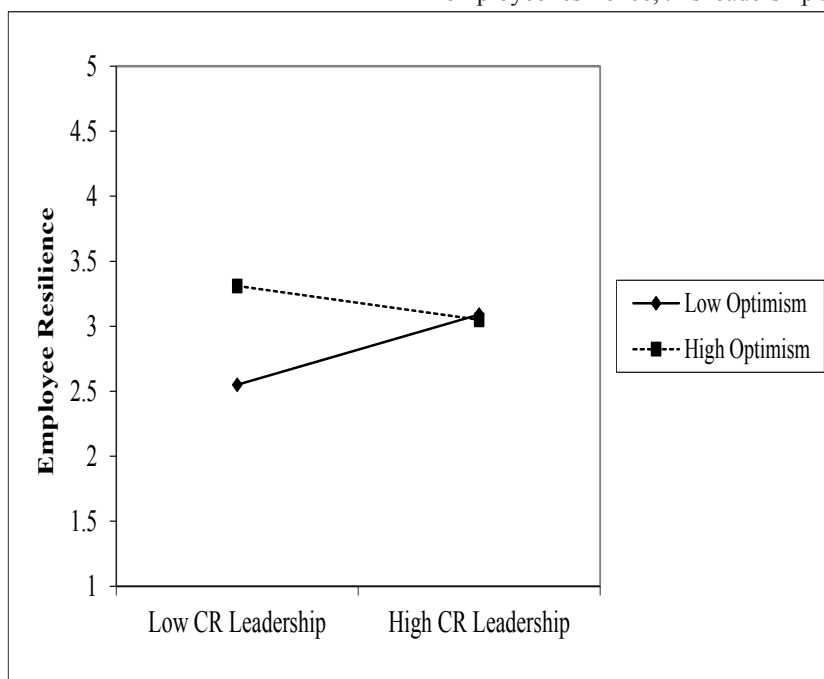With respect to interaction effects, the

Figure 1: *Interaction of contingent reward leadership and optimism in predicting employee resilience.*

regression findings support the assertion that the extent to which employees enact resilient behaviours is predicated on enabling factors, including leadership (Bardoel et al., 2014; Harland et al., 2004; King & Rothstein, 2010), but that in some instances individual differences influence this relationship. Empowering leadership accounted for significant variance in employee resilience beyond and independently from the effect of individual differences. However, the significant impact of contingent reward leadership on resilient behaviours depended upon optimism, where high levels of optimism seemed to compensate for low levels of leader recognition in relation to resilient behaviours.

Implications for Research and Practice

The present study contributes to the growing body of workplace resilience literature by empirically testing the unique contributions of dispositional variables and leadership styles to resilient employee behaviours. Clinical and developmental approaches to resilience have dominated the psychology literature (e.g. Alvord & Grados, 2005; Lee, Sudom, & Zamorski, 2013; Wagnild & Young, 1993), framing resilience as a dispositional variable linked to positive self-regulatory and coping functions (King & Rothstein, 2010; McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013; Moenkemeyer et al., 2012). Notwithstanding its dispositional foundations, we argue that a useful conceptualisation and operationalization of employee resilience should rely on a behavioural framework contextualised in an occupational setting. Assessing resilience as a developable employee capability allows practitioners to capitalise on resilient behaviours to enhance performance, identify areas of intervention to ensure alignment between organisational practices and systems (resilience enablers) and human capital, and foster a positive work environment where employees can learn and thrive.

Past research suggests that the development of resilience in the workplace is founded on a dynamic process wherein individual and contextual factors interact (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; King & Rothstein, 2010; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Moenkemeyer et al., 2012). The findings

obtained in this study, highlighting the direct and moderated effects among leadership styles, dispositional variables and employee resilience, offer support for this assertion, and invite further research into additional organisational enablers, intrapersonal factors, and outcomes of resilient behaviours. Variables of interest for future studies include learning culture, wellbeing and regulatory focus (Nilakant et al., 2016). Individual resilience has been associated with positive workplace behaviours and attitudes such as commitment towards change, job satisfaction, engagement, reduced stress, and decision-making quality (Shin et al., 2012; Wanberg & Banas, 2000; Xing & Sun, 2013). Further empirical enquiry is needed to substantiate these linkages considering a contextualised, behavioural approach to employee resilience.

On a practical note, this study emphasises that the same leadership approach may result in disparate degrees of employee resilience, as a result of the interplay of leadership behaviours and individual differences. In addition to the consideration of dispositional variables in leaders' efforts to develop resilience capability, the present study also highlights the importance of providing autonomy (e.g. decision-making discretion), clear direction on performance, and feedback on achievements in the form of recognition (Ahearne et al., 2005). Understanding the unique and combined influence of leader behaviours and dispositional variables in the development of employee resilience will inform the development of workplace resilience training programmes (Bardoel et al., 2014; Kumar, Adhish, & Deoki, 2014; McElroy & Stark, 1992).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite its notable contributions to research and practice, the present study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design, where predictor and outcome data were collected simultaneously, render the findings susceptible to common method variance, and preclude any robust inferences with regards to the causality nexus (Spector, 1994). The relation between leadership styles and employee resilience is expected to change over time, and

between leadership styles, suggesting the need to select longitudinal designs in future studies. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design was suitable to a first attempt to explore individual and contextual predictors of resilient behaviours. The self-report nature of the study represents another limitation, where social desirability bias may have influenced the results obtained (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002; Spector, 1994). Social desirability refers to respondents' motivation to portray themselves and others (leaders) in a positive light (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002; Lievens, Geit, & Coetsier, 1997). Future research can mitigate this source of bias by collecting measures from multiple sources and examining agreement among raters (Lievens et al., 1997; Spector, 1994). Overall, we propose that further empirical enquiry is needed to test the proposed relationships within organisations and teams, considering the context in which they are embedded, to allow for an in-depth, culture-bound understanding of leader-employee dynamics in the development of resilience capability in both stable and uncertain times.

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