

Resilience Across Different Length of Service in the Assam Civil Service Officers

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ABSTRACT

Every human being strives to land into the job of their dreams, and for many of those aspirants, civil service is that dream job. However, over the years, there has been a fundamental transformation in the public services, which has exposed civil service officers to new demands and obligations of the changing time. It is seen that between the government and the public, the civil service employees act as a connecting link. The civil services recruit a large number of candidates each year. In relation to the job, they have a lot of hopes, feelings, and expectations before getting into the job. But the harsh realities of the job makes the civil service officers undergo a lot of stress. Here comes the role of resilience, the capacity to bounce back in adverse circumstances. Human beings have varied capacity to deal with stressful situation thus different levels of resilience. Similarly the Assam Civil Service officers develop resilience over the period of service. The purpose of the present study is to study resilience in the civil service officers of Assam serving at different hierarchies based on the length of the service. A sample of 210 participants was taken for the study. Resilience was measured using a psychometric tool. The results highlighted that Resilience varied across hierarchy such that overall Resilience is significant at 1 % level with the mean score (112.92) of Senior Group I being the highest followed by the mean score of Senior Group II (111.89) followed by mean score of 107.38 of the Junior Group which is the lowest. The difference in the dimension of Perseverance is significant at 1% level as the mean score (27.73) of Junior grade is less than the other two groups. The dimension of Compassion is significant at 1 % level as compassion is less in the Junior Grade as compared to Senior Grade I and Senior Grade II. Finally, few intervention techniques have been suggested along with implications to enable further research.

Keywords: Resilience, Civil service officers, Hierarchies

INTRODUCTION

Resilience is usually described as the capacity of an individual to adopt well in the face of adversity, or trauma. Whenever an individual comes across a tragic incident, or a threat to physical or psychological well-being, or any other significant sources of stress, there can be a damaging impact. However, an individual who is resilient would fare better than others at handling such stressors. Rutter (1987) has defined resilience as “a buffering factor that protects individuals from psychotic disorders” and described resilient individuals as “possessing self-esteem, belief in one’s own self-efficacy, a repertoire of problem-solving skills, and satisfying interpersonal relationships”. Druss and Douglas (1988) described resilient individuals “as having unusual courage and optimism in the face of death, illness, and congenital disability”. These are the individuals who “believed in their invincibility and focused on

positive aspects of their situations”. Thus, resilience is the ability to face these challenges with grit and determination. It has been conceptualized as the ability of an individual to “bounce back” from an adversity and to be able to readjust well into the normal course of life after going through the traumatic event. These events could present themselves in the form of any personal trauma, such as death of a loved one, family and relationship problems, or it could be serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. People exhibiting resilience essentially retain their physical and cognitive functioning even after facing extraordinary life challenges.

Significance of the study

The present study aims to see resilience in the civil service officers of Assam serving at different hierarchies based on the length of the service. The multifaceted and uncertain pattern of work leaves them under lot of stress thus affecting their level of wellbeing. The variation of officers of facing the challenging situation and in dealing with the situation depends on one’s resilience or the capacity to cope with adversities. Unfortunately, not many studies have been done on Resilience on Assam Civil Service Officers. The study will highlight on the resilience level of the civil service officers of Assam which has an implication on overall productivity of the organisation thus leading to a better workforce and effective performance.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the present study are Assam Civil Service Officers. Total sample size taken for this study is 210 comprising of 90 Junior grade officers, 80 Senior grade II officers and 40 Senior grade I officers. Probability Sampling Method was used for the study. Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used.

Research design

The present study is exploratory research where a study is done to see the level of resilience in the different hierarchies of civil service officers depending on the length of the service. Psychological questionnaires were used to assess the level of Resilience.

Tools Used

Data collection was done using Questionnaires. Personal Information Schedule (PIS) was prepared to collect information related to demographic variables such as name, age, gender, service, batch, cadre, place of posting, department, designation etc. It is a self-designed information schedule. Resilience Scale by Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi & Dr. Shruti Narain (2017) was used. It consists of 30 items and has four dimensions- Perseverance, Composure, Self-reliance and Faith. It is a Five-point Likert type scale. The test-retest reliability was calculated and found to be 0.87 and split half reliability found to be 0.84. Validity was found to be 0.86

Procedure

The participants were selected all over Assam through Probability Random sampling method. Personal interview was conducted and Questionnaires were administered to the participants. Sample size comprised of 210 participants. For data collection the investigator explained the purpose of the study to the participants. Data was collected through personal meeting. The investigator assured them that their responses would be kept strictly confidential and would be utilized for the research purpose only after

which the data was collected individually and was analysed later. Data was analysed using statistical analysis. Hypothesis was formulated as mentioned below:

HO: There is a significant difference in the Resilience levels of civil service officers of Assam serving at three different levels of hierarchy based on the length of the service.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis was done on the data obtained. The raw scores obtained from the data was entered into the excel sheet and SPSS-16 version software was thereafter used for Statistical Analysis. Then on, inferential statistics was used for comparison of means across different lengths of service through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). In addition, the qualitative data generated was analysed using coding and thematic analysis.

RESULTS

The comparison of Resilience across three lengths of service using One -way analysis of variance ANOVA yielded a significant difference between the mean score of officers belonging to each of the three hierarchies as depicted in the table below:

TABLE 1: Comparison on the basis of length of service: Resilience

Variable	Length of Service	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value	Sig
Resilience	Junior Grade	90	107.38	4.713	26.314	.000**
	Senior Grade II	80	111.89	4.269		
	Senior Grade I	40	112.92	6.128		
	Total	210	110.15	5.413		

**Significant level is at 1%,

The above Table 1 shows that the difference of overall Resilience is significant at 1 % level with the mean score (112.92) of Senior Group I being the highest followed by the mean score of Senior Group II (111.89) followed by mean score of 107.38 of the Junior Group which is the lowest.

The difference in the dimension of Perseverance is significant at 1% level as the mean score (27.73) of Junior grade is less than the other two groups. The dimension of Compassion is significant at 1 % level as compassion is less in the Junior Grade as compared to Senior Grade I and Senior Grade II. As can be seen in the following Table 2

Table 2 Post Hoc Analysis

Dependent Variable	Hierarchy (I)	Hierarchy(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std Error	Sig
Perseverance	Junior Grade	Senior Grade II	-1.504	.297	.000**
		Senior Grade I	-1.817	.367	.000**

Composure	Junior Grade	Senior Grade – II	-2.519	.386	.000**
		Senior Grade I	-3.019	.477	.000**
TOTAL_RESILIENCE	Junior Grade	Senior Grade – II	-4.510	.746	.000**
		Senior Grade I	-5.547	.923	.000**

**Significant level is at 1%,

Table 2 shows the post hoc analysis of Resilience amongst the three hierarchies. In the post Hoc analysis it is found that there is significant difference at 1 % level in junior grade with senior grade I and Senior Grade II. Also, significant difference is seen between Senior Grade II and Senior Grade I at 1 % level.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study is to see the difference in the resilience levels of civil service officers of Assam serving at three different levels of hierarchy based on the length of the service. The hypothesis was made on the premise that as the officers’ progress in the hierarchies there would be difference in the level of Resilience as found reflected in our study. It is found that there is a significant difference in the mean score of officers belonging to each of the three categories such that Senior grade I (more than 20 years) have the highest level of Resilience as compared to the Senior Grade II (less than 20 years) and Junior Grade (less than 10 years) officers. This could be because the Senior Grade I officers have served for long tenure (more than 20 years) in the service which has led to increased sense of resilience due to increased experience and heightened sense of recognition over time. They have become well acquainted with the varied adverse situations over the period of time and have simultaneously learned to bounce back rather deal with the adverse situation with positive attitude as compared to the other two groups namely Junior Grade and Senior Grade II. This could be because the senior group I have the highest capacity to adapt to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional and behavioural flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands acquired over time. As one progresses in the hierarchy they are used to the system and the way it functions and hence the capacity to bounce back increases. Moreover, power and autonomy further increase as one reaches higher position in the service. With higher position comes heightened sense of fulfilment as they experience better work force coordination as compared to officers belonging to Senior Grade II and Junior Grade I level of hierarchy who are in a lower position comparatively. Resilience exhibited by medium and short service officers was significantly lower than the long service officers. It could be reasoned that there are a number of problems and challenges faced by the civil servants, especially at the junior and medium level and the capacity to cope with it also is less as compared to the long service officers. This could be interpreted as Resilience of Senior grade I is the highest because of Work experience and their capacity to regain levels of functioning after difficult life experiences as compared to the other two groups of officers as confirmed by studies such as Strumpfer in 2003, studied the relationship between resilience and burnout. The central argument offered by the researcher in this article is that “there are psychological variables, subsumed here under the generic heading of resilience, that advance fortigenesis and thus create tendencies contrary to those that produce burnout, or favourable to its antipode of engagement”. The researcher presented five theoretical variables in the literature review. These included: “engagement, meaningfulness, subjective well-being, positive emotions, and proactive coping, as well as five somewhat practical suggestions: personal strategic planning, restorative places,

optimal experience (flow), interpersonal flourishing, and Balint groups”. This research, therefore, indicates how being resilient enables an individual to fight against stressful situations.

Resilience has been reported to be an individualized response to traumatic experiences. Degree of resilience exhibited differs from one individual to another. Individual differences are usually depicted in resilience to an appreciable extent. People differ in the manner in which they react to various kinds of adversities. While some individuals show resilience when faced with certain kinds of difficulties, they might not respond with resilience to other incidents. On similar note, researchers have found that people found to be resilient under one kind of circumstances may fail to be equally resilient under different circumstances. Wyman, Sandler, Wolchik, & Nelson (2000) explored the relevance of resilience in acting as a protection against stress and reported that resilience in fact acts as a protection against stress and as a competence promotion mechanism. Thus increased resilience indicated better wellbeing thus increasing performance and overall boost in the outcome of the organisation.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study has revealed a number of important findings with regard to the complex and challenging nature of Job profile of the bureaucrats. The study dealt with how levels of resilience vary in the civil service officers of Assam depending on the length of service. The results have thrown light on the fact that resilience varies with the level of hierarchy in the service. It has highlighted on how increased hierarchy leads to higher resilience. The varied factors responsible for the increase in resilience in the senior Grade I is because of more experience, expertise in facing adverse situation over the period of time heightened sense of recognition, status, power and sense of belonging as compared to the junior grade officers. Factors such as technological advancement, information overload, demands for increased productivity, severe rivalry, and an unclear future, the workplace has turned into a cause of extreme stress. So as to keep pace with this competitive world, employees in the work place spend most of their time striving to meet their job obligations hence ignoring the “stressors” that have adverse effects on their domestic, social and personal life. The demands of the workplace may be detrimental to the employee's physical and mental health. Numerous studies have demonstrated that experiencing occupational stress can have a variety of detrimental effects on both the individual and the company thus affecting one's resilience and over all wellbeing. This study will be useful in finding out the resilience helps to deal with various adverse and challenging nature of the job of bureaucrats. The study will also help in finding out the measures of reducing occupational stress and enhancing their wellbeing which would ultimately result in a better job performance in the future.

Limitations

The study consisted of only Assam Civil Service officers. Intervention programs were not used for this study.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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