

*Group & Organization Management*

**Special Issue Call for Papers**

**Organizational Resilience: A Special Issue to Integrate and Broaden a Growing Literature Using Multi-Level Perspectives**

*Group & Organization Management (GOM)* will publish a special issue of the journal on the subject of resilience in organizations, specifically focused on using a multi-level perspective.

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**Background & Rationale for the Special Issue**

The competitive landscape that organizations operate within is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (Whittington, Pettigrew, Peck, Fenton, & Conyon, 1999). As a result, companies today are facing high demands and are frequently confronted with critical situations, many of which are unexpected and can potentially threaten their survival. In addition to the organizational-level impact of such challenges, the teams and individuals in these organizations are also affected when such challenges occur. In particular, these issues may result in additional pressure and adversity at lower levels of analysis. For example, Alliger, Cerasoli, Tannenbaum, & Vessey (2015) offered a list of potential team challenges in organizations and argue that they could exhaust teams' members and impair important team dynamics thus hindering team performance. Similarly, at the individual level of analysis, potential negative consequences of uncertainty and high demands in the workplace are well documented (Aronsson et al., 2017) and are reflected in increased mental health problems, absences and rising economic health costs (National Center for Health Statistics, 2017).

Given these challenges, organizations, their units, and members need to develop approaches to effectively deal with adversity and foster future success (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). Although there are numerous literature streams that apply to such phenomena, resilience is one of the more popular constructs that has been discussed in both academic- and practitioner-oriented outlets. Resilience is generally conceptualized as how effective a system deals with adversity or critical situations (Bhamra & Dani, 2011) and interest in the topic of resilience in organizations has grown rapidly in recent years. Although a great deal of theoretical attention and empirical work has emerged on this topic over the past two decades (e.g., Chapman et al., 2018; Linnenluecke, 2017; Stoverink, Kirkman, Mistry, & Rosen, 2018), significant gaps still exist in our understanding of resilience in organizations. This is because research on resilience in organizations across different disciplines and levels of analysis has developed in a rather silo-like fashion without serious attempts to synthesize the prevailing conceptualizations and the empirical evidence regarding both antecedents and outcomes of resilience.

Organizational resilience research at the individual level of analysis is the most established relative to unit and organizational levels, due to its inclusion in work in clinical and developmental psychology (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Emerging within organizational

science in the late 1980s with the seminal work on career resilience as an important resource in career management (London, 1983), research at this level of analysis has grown tremendously, advanced by investigations in the area of positive organizational behavior (e.g., Youssef & Luthans, 2007) as well as on occupations characterized by high or specific work demands, including healthcare professionals, social workers, teachers, military personnel, or police officers (e.g., Cornum, Matthews, & Seligman, 2011; Jackson, Firtko, & Edenboroug, 2007). Accordingly, in comparison to the other levels of analysis, research on individual resilience offers extensive empirical findings on antecedents, outcomes, mediators and moderators, as well as work focusing on the conceptualization and measurement of resilience. Yet, because of the many disciplines involved, results still differ widely, and the role of contextual differences (e.g., can findings from nursing science be transferred to employees in business organizations?) is hardly considered.

Since the mid-1990s resilience research also gained growing momentum at the organizational level of analysis, starting with early work on High Reliability Organizations (Weick, 1993), as well as research focusing on major catastrophes (e.g., 9/11) and global crises in the 2000s (e.g., Burke, 2005). While conceptualizations, methodologies, perspectives, and results of organizational resilience studies are heterogeneous, and thus difficult to compare, research at this level of analysis also developed quickly and broadened our understanding of resilience to include a greater emphasis on resilient processes and resilient capabilities (e.g., Duchek, 2019; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Yet, empirical results, and particularly quantitative studies, are still scant and often retrospective due to the complexity of measuring resilience at this higher level of analysis.

More recently, and in response to the increasing importance of teams in organizations, resilience has also gained interest at the team level of analysis (e.g., Blatt, 2009; West, Patera, & Carsten, 2009). Although research at this level of analysis is also growing, it is still in its infancy and there is still much work to do to more fully understand the complex construct, its sources, and consequences, due to the tightly coupled, highly interdependent exchanges among team members needed to gain team resilience (Raetze, forthcoming; Stoverink et al., 2018). Accordingly, many studies at this level of analysis lack a clear and level-appropriate conceptualization of resilience (Chapman et al., 2018), and empirical results are mainly occurring in very specific contexts, including elite sport teams, control room or emergency response teams (e.g., Gomes, Borges, Huber, & Carvalho, 2014; Morgan, Fletcher, & Sarkar, 2015). Moreover, research at the team level of analysis is embedded in other research topics that focus on similar phenomena, including team adaptation (Kennedy, Landon, & Maynard, 2016), and therefore more clarity is needed around these related, but distinct constructs.

In sum, the current state of the resilience literature represents a loose accumulation of heterogeneous and partly overlapping viewpoints and has thus produced inconsistent definitions, conceptualizations, measurements, as well as empirical evidence regarding both antecedents and outcomes of resilience. This has certainly hindered the development of a unified understanding of this field. Accordingly, and in order to prevent resilience from turning into a “quicksand term” (Britt et al., 2016), we have witnessed an ongoing call for more multi-level and cross-disciplinary research on resilience in organizational settings (e.g., Linnenluecke, 2017; Youssef & Luthans, 2005; Zellars et al., 2011). In fact, recently, King, Newman, and Luthans (2016) characterize resilience in the workplace as an important but severely under-researched construct within the Organizational Behavior (OB) literature. By revealing exemplary shortcomings of previous resilience research, they concluded that future research has to “adopt a multilevel approach when studying resilience at work” (p. 784) in order to develop a better and more harmonized understanding of this complex construct.

However, such calls have not resulted in much progress in this area. Against this background, this special issue of *Group & Organization Management* will focus on cross-level and interdisciplinary integration of organization-related resilience research. In particular, we hope to publish research that places a stronger emphasis on team resilience given its potential to link resilience relationships between organizational and individual levels of analysis.

### **Objectives of the Special Issue**

The aim of this special issue is to bring together cutting-edge conceptual, meta-analytical, review, and empirical research which provides a significant contribution to our understanding of multi- and cross-level resilience phenomena in organizational settings. Additionally, we aim to publish work that offers cross-disciplinary perspectives, and actively seeks to combine interdisciplinary and multi-method approaches and will include the following objectives:

- Provide insights on how the different resilience levels are linked to one another and how resilience can potentially be ‘scaled up’ (Linnenluecke, 2017); e.g., can resilient teams and organizations be developed by bringing together resilient individuals?
- Offer more detailed results on resilience at the team level of analysis as well as use team resilience as a potential linking pin to connect research at the individual and organizational levels of analysis.
- Focus more deeply on cross-level antecedents and outcomes, including analysis of factors that may shape resilience in individuals, teams, and organizations (e.g., human resource management practices, leadership approaches, interventions) in order to develop a comprehensive and overarching perspective of resilience within organizations and understand how managers can build this phenomenon in their organizations.
- Expand our current cross-level thinking by integrating interrelations and interactions to higher levels of analysis (e.g., inter-organizational or civic level of analysis).
- Compare and connect results across different disciplines in order to identify trans-contextual and context-specific resilience mechanisms and influencing factors at each level of analysis as well as to transfer best practices between different fields.
- Focus on major crises that occur: How is the resilience of external support units (e.g., emergency team, police, and firefighters) related to organizations and how can lessons from these contexts be used in other organizational settings?
- Include additional key theoretical perspectives to develop more appropriate conceptualizations of resilience at each level and across the different levels of analysis (King et al., 2016), including answers to the question of whether resilience can and should be conceptualized in the same way across different levels of analysis.
- Deepen our understanding of the role of triggers or events that give rise to the need for individuals, teams, and organizations to be resilient.
- Highlight various ways in which resilience can be measured, including how best to measure resilience from a multilevel perspective.
- Present lessons learned within the organizational resilience literature that are likewise relevant to numerous other contexts that are challenging through the existence of adversity and critical situations.
- More precisely differentiate resilience from related constructs, such as adaptability, flexibility, reflexivity, etc.

*GOM* will accept manuscripts to be considered for this special issue **beginning April 1, 2020, through May 15, 2020**. Manuscripts should not be submitted before or after this date. We anticipate publishing this special issue end 2021. **To submit a manuscript**, please visit the website <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/gom> (select “Special Issue Paper” as the manuscript type). Manuscripts should be formatted according to the *GOM* submission guidelines.

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