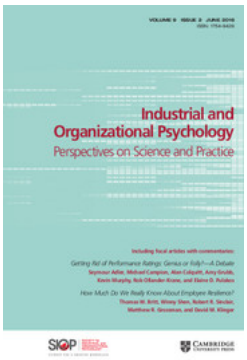

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Understanding resilience is important to creating and maintaining health in the workplace, and the focal article by Britt, Shen, Sinclair, Grossman, and Klieger (2016) raises valuable questions and recommendations for research in the field. In this commentary we consider several issues not discussed by Britt et al. but critical to understanding resilience in organizational settings. In particular, we discuss the utility of process-oriented models and, specifically, the role of self-regulatory processes as foundational mechanisms of resiliency. We agree with many of Britt et al.'s recommendations and provide additional perspectives and information based on recent research on resiliency in military personnel experiencing cross-cultural adversity, in executives experiencing unwanted career transitions, and in recent immigrants searching for employment.

Conceptualization of Resiliency: A Process-Oriented Explanatory Model

For many years, researchers in several domains of psychology have raised the issue of lack of conceptual clarity with respect to the notion of resilience (e.g., Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Richardson, 2002). Britt et al. discuss the need for explanatory—rather than descriptive—models of resilience, and a number of researchers in this field agree. The groundbreaking research on children's resilience (see Masten, 2014, for a review), which concerns the social and personal success of children experiencing various types of adversity (e.g., poverty, illness, and disability), provides important insights and perspectives that can inform our understanding of resilience in the workplace.

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A process-oriented perspective is common in this broader literature on resilience. Many researchers concur that resilience is a process, not simply a trait or outcome. For example, Masten (2001, 2014) asserted that resilience occurs through ordinary processes underlying human development and adaptation. Resilience is considered to be a dynamic process involving resources found in basic human adaptational systems, including the self-regulation of emotions, attachment to others, and effectance motivation or the desire to master aspects of the environment (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001). Early resilience researchers adopted a multifaceted conceptualization of resilience and pointed to the importance of neurobiological and psychosocial processes by which individuals are able to reduce the potential negative impact of adversity and demonstrate the achievement of positive outcomes despite challenging situations (e.g., Masten, 2001, 2014; Werner & Smith, 1992).

The workplace resilience literature also considers resilience to be more than personality traits. For example, Meredith, Sherbourne, and Gaillot (2011) described psychological resilience as a "process involving interaction among an individual, that individual's life experiences, and current life context" (p. xiii). Similarly, we view resilience as an "umbrella term" comprising multiple personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors, as well as adaptational processes (King & Rothstein, 2010). From this perspective, the key questions are these: How does the resilience process work? What are the main factors and mechanisms involved?

To provide a conceptual basis for research on workplace resilience, we proposed a comprehensive model of resiliency in the workplace (King & Rothstein, 2010). The word "resiliency" was chosen to emphasize a process-oriented perspective. Briefly, the model considers resiliency to reflect the combined interplay among a set of affective, behavioral, and cognitive protective factors and self-regulatory processes. Three types of self-regulatory processes are specified: affective processes involving emotional regulation, behavioral processes referring to strategies providing a sense of personal self-efficacy, and cognitive processes encompassing strategies providing a sense of meaning. Although all process models of resiliency include environmental factors and their interaction with individual characteristics and traits to explain adaptation to adversity and the development of resiliency, the notion of "process" has been conceptualized differently primarily with respect to time. For example, Masten (2014) and Meredith et al. (2011), in their extensive reviews, focus on social and human development processes and environmentally based experiences to explain the development of resiliency over the lifespan. Alternatively, King and Rothstein (2010) developed their process-oriented resiliency model to explain more immediate responses to perceived adversity in which affective, behavioral, and cognitive

self-regulatory processes contribute to recuperative functioning by providing a reduction of negative affect or distress, a sense of coherence or meaning, and personal control and self-efficacy following the adverse event.

The Role of Self-Regulation in a Process-Oriented Perspective on Resilience

Much of the resilience literature directly or indirectly points to the role of self-regulation, as the focus is on adaptation and on how one can marshal capacities, supports, and resources to "bounce back." For instance, Masten (2001, 2014) views resilience as a set of basic adaptational processes that include regulation of emotion and behavior, connections to others, and motivation for learning and engaging in the environment. A number of the major individual-level factors in Meredith et al.'s (2011) review of resilience in the military appear related to self-regulation—namely, positive affect, positive thinking, and behavioral control. The self-regulatory processes in the King and Rothstein (2010) model of resiliency describe the mechanisms of controlling emotions, thoughts, and behaviors as critical to facilitating an individual's efforts to experience less turmoil, make sense of troubling events, and gain self-efficacy to move forward. Self-regulation is also either implicit or directly referred to in the training models discussed by Britt et al. Because interventions should target the operative processes specified by the related theory, training is premature without knowing the key factors and processes operating in resiliency. Moreover, behavioral malleability must be assumed in training, and a process perspective on resiliency is more conceptually congruent than a trait perspective with respect to intervention programs (Meredith et al., 2011). Only by understanding the processes involved with resiliency can we ensure that training models will target the right change strategies (Kazdin, 2007).

The Role of Self-Regulation: Findings Regarding Outcomes in Varied Populations

Here we consider the question of the predictive power of self-regulation over trait-related resilience constructs. We also comment on recommendations in the Britt et al. article concerning the need to study varied populations, the nature of important outcomes, and the definition and measurement of adversity.

The Workplace Resiliency Inventory (WRI) is a comprehensive, multidimensional measure of the components in a dynamic, process-based model of resiliency (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). The WRI measures personal characteristics (traits); social support; initial responses to a significant and life changing event (adversity); and affective, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulatory processes. The WRI has demonstrated good psychometric prop-

erties, significant relations with measures of well-being, and incremental validity in predicting relevant resiliency-related outcomes above and beyond the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) questionnaire (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). More important, three subsequent studies, briefly mentioned below, consistently support a process-based model of resiliency by demonstrating the incremental validity of self-regulatory processes over trait-based resiliency measures in predicting relevant resiliency-related outcomes.

Britt et al. recommend that researchers conduct more research studies looking at populations other than the military and first responders. Using the WRI, we have studied fired executives seeking reemployment (McLarnon, Oswald, Rothstein, & King, 2015), recent immigrants experiencing adversity while engaged in job searches (Medianu, Rothstein, & Kisinger, 2015), and military personnel experiencing adverse cross-cultural incidents (Matthews, McLarnon, Klafehn, & Rothstein, 2015). Findings from these studies address Britt et al.'s recommendation that studies should examine the incremental validity of resilience measures over and above personality inventories. Preliminary results from this research have consistently indicated that measures of affective, behavioral, and cognitive self-regulatory processes, as measured by the WRI, account for incremental validity above and beyond personality-related trait-based scales (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2015).

This work has also pointed to the general importance of context. The nature of the self-regulatory processes involved (affective, behavioral, and/or cognitive) depends on the nature of the outcome being examined. Resiliency-related outcomes must also be relevant to the nature of situational adversity experienced (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013). We have found different relationships among different types of self-regulatory processes and outcomes (e.g., soldier effectiveness, job search self-efficacy, well-being), suggesting that different self-regulatory processes are triggered by different types of adversity experiences (i.e., the notion of situational specificity). In other words, resiliency (the notion of bouncing back) may take on different forms, depending on context. This research strongly supports Masten's (2014) observation (based on decades of longitudinal research on at-risk children) that numerous trajectories to resilience may exist. These trajectories are considered to depend on the nature of the adversity, the experiential processes that occur after the adversity, and the nature of the outcomes that are designated as evidence that resilience has been demonstrated.

Another recommendation by Britt et al. is that significant adversity needs to be demonstrated in resilience research. It is important, however, to provide clear criteria for significant or substantial levels of adversity, as a generally considered adverse event (such as being fired) may not always

be experienced or perceived as such. The "experience" or perception of the significance of the adversity needs to be established in research studies, as there are wide individual differences in how people perceive or experience adversity. This was demonstrated in a recent study of adverse cross-cultural military experiences by examining narratives provided by military personnel, self-ratings of impact, and the nature of the emotions triggered by soldiers' experiences (Tarraf, King, Klafehn, & McLarnon, 2015). The findings indicated that different types of adversity were associated with different relationships among emotions and the self-regulatory processes associated with resiliency.

Last, we agree strongly with Britt et al. that resiliency research should adopt longitudinal designs and use multiple measures of positive adaptation at multiple time points. This research paradigm has been used very effectively by Masten (2014) to study at-risk children and has the potential to be equally effective in the study of employee resiliency. The WRI has been used longitudinally in just this way. Using time-lagged and multisource data, findings from a preliminary study on career transitions demonstrated positive relations between resiliency and well-being and job search self-efficacy (McLarnon, Rothstein, King, & Oswald, 2016). Rather than taking a snapshot of resilience at one point in time, there is much to be gained by using advanced analytical techniques to look at changes in key variables and the resiliency processes over time.

Britt et al. have provided a useful critique concerning the lack of conceptual clarity of the construct of resilience and the potential value of better research designs to study employee resiliency. The explanatory model they propose, however, is fundamentally based on individual differences and traits and does not adequately acknowledge the important role of developmental and self-regulatory processes that contribute to resiliency. We add that theoretical models in other spheres of resiliency research, as well as in recent research in work settings, point to the need to understand the self-regulatory processes that occur between the experience of significant adversity and outcomes considered to be indicators of resiliency to that adversity. The model of resiliency proposed by King and Rothstein (2010) addresses Britt et al.'s recommendations for conceptual clarity and more emphasis on the measurement of adversity and appropriate outcomes. Moreover, the King and Rothstein model provides a theoretical basis for predicting contextually appropriate resiliency outcomes as a function of the perceived extent of adversity, individual and social protective factors, and most important, the nature of the self-regulatory processes used by individuals to attain their desired outcome.

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