

THE INFLUENCE OF WORK CULTURE ON EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR IN ENHANCING MSME RESILIENCE DURING CRISIS PERIODS

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Abstract

The resilience of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) during crises is significantly influenced by work culture and employee behavior. This article aims to examine the impact of work culture on employee behavior in supporting MSME resilience amidst crisis conditions, such as pandemics and economic uncertainty. Using a literature review methodology, this study analyzes literature discussing the correlation between a strong work culture and employee responses to challenging situations. The findings indicate that an inclusive, adaptive, and supportive work culture can influence employee behavior to remain committed, proactive, and flexible, ultimately enhancing MSME resilience. The study also highlights that employees working in a positive organizational culture tend to exhibit higher levels of loyalty and cooperation, which are key factors in helping MSMEs quickly adapt to changes in the business environment. This article provides insights into the importance of cultivating a conducive work culture in MSMEs as part of a strategy to enhance organizational resilience. Future research is suggested to explore the application of specific work cultures in different crisis contexts for a more comprehensive understanding.

Keyword: *Work Culture, Employee Behavior, MSME Resilience, Economic Crisis, Organizational Adaptation*

A. INTRODUCTION

The resilience of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) plays a critical role in maintaining economic stability, particularly during times of crisis. MSMEs, being the backbone of many economies worldwide, are disproportionately affected by economic disruptions such as financial crises, pandemics, and political instability (Coad, 2020). These enterprises often face significant challenges in managing operations, securing financial resources, and adapting to rapidly changing environments (Kraus et al., 2020). While much has been studied about MSME survival strategies, the role of organizational culture in shaping employee behavior during crises remains underexplored (Schein, 2017). Research suggests that a strong work culture, characterized by adaptability and support, fosters a resilient workforce capable of navigating uncertainties (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). In this context, work culture influences how employees respond to pressure, maintain productivity, and collaborate in the face of adversity (Tarique & Schuler, 2018). During a crisis, employees in organizations with positive work cultures tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment and proactivity, which are essential for organizational resilience (Britt et al., 2020). Understanding the correlation between work culture and employee behavior in MSMEs can provide valuable insights for improving their crisis management strategies (Hitt et al., 2016). This research aims to bridge the gap by investigating how specific work culture attributes can support employee behavior that enhances MSME resilience during crises. By focusing on the relationship between work culture and employee behavior, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on organizational resilience and crisis management in MSMEs.

Despite the growing recognition of MSMEs' critical role in economies, especially during crises, the factors that influence their resilience remain underexplored. While much literature has focused on the structural and financial elements that affect MSME survival (El-Masry et al., 2020), limited attention has been given to the internal organizational factors, such as work culture, that shape employee behavior in these challenging times (Bierly et al., 2019). Crises, whether economic, political, or health-related, require organizations to adapt rapidly, yet it remains unclear how different aspects of work culture contribute to fostering this adaptability within MSMEs (Rehman et al., 2020). Furthermore, while many studies highlight the importance of leadership in times of crisis, few address how employee behavior, as influenced by organizational culture, can impact the overall resilience of MSMEs (Eisenbeiss et al., 2015). The lack of empirical research on this topic presents a significant gap in understanding how MSMEs can strategically leverage internal cultural attributes to enhance employee response and resilience in times of crisis. This gap is especially relevant when considering the unprecedented nature of modern crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the vulnerability of MSMEs (Bartik et al., 2020). Consequently, there is a pressing need to explore the intricate relationship between work culture, employee behavior, and MSME resilience to provide actionable insights for organizations striving for long-term sustainability during crises. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of work culture on employee behavior, specifically within MSMEs, during periods of economic or societal disruptions.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the influence of work culture on employee behavior, specifically in enhancing the resilience of MSMEs during periods of crisis. By focusing on the internal dynamics of MSMEs, this study seeks to explore how different work culture attributes, such as inclusiveness, adaptability, and support, shape employee behaviors that contribute to organizational resilience (Meyer et al., 2020). Previous studies suggest that a positive work culture can significantly enhance employees' commitment and proactivity, especially in response to external challenges (Schein, 2017). However, the specific ways in which work culture influences employee behavior in MSMEs during crises remain insufficiently explored (Goh & Lim, 2020). The study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the impact of organizational culture on employee behavior, focusing on how these behaviors affect MSME resilience when faced with disruptions (Yang & Wang, 2020). Furthermore, this research will examine the interplay between work culture and employee flexibility, highlighting the ways in which a supportive and adaptive culture can enhance employees' ability to navigate crisis situations. A second objective is to identify the specific cultural traits that are most beneficial for fostering resilience among employees during crises, such as open communication, trust, and shared values (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Ultimately, the goal of this research is to provide valuable insights for MSME leaders seeking to strengthen their organizational culture and improve employee responses during times of economic uncertainty.

This study seeks to address several key research questions that will guide the investigation into the influence of work culture on employee behavior in MSMEs during crisis periods. First, how does work culture in MSMEs affect employee behavior in times of crisis? Previous research suggests that the organizational environment and culture significantly impact employee performance and decision-making during crises (Fleming et al., 2017). Second, what specific cultural traits, such as inclusiveness, adaptability, and support, influence employee resilience and commitment in MSMEs during times of economic or societal disruption? Literature indicates that these cultural dimensions are essential in shaping employees' responses to uncertainty and adversity (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Third, how do employees, when working in a positive and adaptive work culture, demonstrate behaviors that enhance MSME resilience? Research has shown that behaviors such as proactivity, commitment, and flexibility are critical for MSME survival during challenging times (Kraus et al., 2020). Finally, how can MSME leaders leverage work culture to strengthen employee behavior and improve organizational resilience during crises? Understanding this dynamic can provide valuable insights into effective leadership and management practices during times of disruption (Zhang & Wang, 2019). These research questions will serve as the foundation for analyzing how MSMEs can utilize work culture as a strategic asset to improve their ability to respond and adapt during crises.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into how work culture influences employee behavior in enhancing MSME resilience, particularly during crises. As MSMEs are highly vulnerable to external disruptions, understanding the internal factors that drive resilience is critical for their long-term survival and adaptability (Hosseini & Ghaffari, 2019). By focusing on work culture, this research contributes to the body of knowledge on organizational resilience by highlighting the role of cultural attributes in shaping employee behavior during challenging times (Goh & Lim, 2020). The findings from this study are particularly relevant for MSME leaders who seek to strengthen their organizations' capacity to withstand and recover from crises by fostering a supportive and adaptive work environment (Hitt et al., 2016). In addition, this research provides practical implications for policy-makers who are interested in promoting MSME development through cultural initiatives that can enhance resilience (Bartik et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study offers a foundation for future research on organizational culture and crisis management in MSMEs, which has received limited attention in existing literature (Yang & Wang, 2020). By addressing these gaps, this study is expected to inform both academic discussions and practical strategies for MSME sustainability in the face of unforeseen disruptions.

The structure of this paper is organized to provide a comprehensive analysis of the influence of work culture on employee behavior and MSME resilience during crises. Following this introduction, the next section presents a detailed literature review that explores existing research on work culture, organizational resilience, and employee behavior in the context of MSMEs during crises (Schein, 2017). This is followed by a discussion of the research methodology, outlining the approach used to analyze the literature and address the research questions (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). The subsequent section presents the findings of the literature review, synthesizing key insights regarding the relationship between work culture and employee behavior in MSMEs during crisis periods (Yang & Wang, 2020). The discussion section examines the implications of these findings for MSME managers and policymakers, emphasizing strategies for enhancing resilience through work culture (Bierly et al., 2019). Finally, the paper concludes with recommendations for future research and a summary of the key contributions of the study to the understanding of MSME resilience in crisis contexts.

B. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach through a comprehensive literature review to explore the influence of work culture on employee behavior and MSME resilience during crisis periods. The literature search involved the identification and analysis of peer-reviewed articles, books, and industry reports published in the last two decades, ensuring the inclusion of the most relevant and recent sources. Key databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Scopus were utilized to gather studies focusing on work culture, organizational behavior, and crisis management in MSMEs. The selected studies were critically evaluated based on their relevance, methodological rigor, and findings related to work culture's impact on employee behavior during crises. The review process followed systematic procedures, including the coding and categorization of key themes, such as inclusiveness, adaptability, and support within organizational cultures. Studies were then synthesized to highlight the commonalities and discrepancies in findings, offering a well-rounded understanding of how work culture influences employee resilience in MSMEs. Moreover, the literature was analyzed with a particular focus on the contextual factors that affect MSME resilience in economic downturns and other crises. This methodology provides a robust framework for understanding the relationship between work culture and employee behavior, while also addressing gaps in the existing literature. The findings will offer practical implications for MSME leaders seeking to enhance their organizational resilience through strategic management of work culture. The use of a literature review method enables the integration of diverse perspectives and contributes to a holistic understanding of the research topic.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. *The Impact of Inclusive and Supportive Work Culture on Employee Behavior*

The study reveals that an inclusive and supportive work culture has a profound impact on employee behavior, fostering commitment, proactive engagement, and flexibility. Employees in organizations that prioritize inclusivity and support are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of loyalty and cooperation, essential for sustaining MSME resilience during crises. A culture that encourages inclusivity leads to an environment where employees feel valued and recognized, which enhances their motivation to contribute positively to the organization. Furthermore, employees in supportive work cultures are more inclined to remain engaged and adaptable, even in times of adversity, thus ensuring the stability and continuity of MSMEs. This behavior is crucial during crises, where employees need to exhibit resilience and flexibility to overcome challenges. The research highlights that a positive work environment not only strengthens employee morale but also fosters stronger teamwork, enabling MSMEs to respond effectively to external disruptions. The findings emphasize the importance of leadership in cultivating a culture that nurtures inclusivity and support, which in turn drives better organizational performance. Additionally, such cultures encourage employees to take ownership of their roles, be proactive in problem-solving, and collaborate across different functions to enhance overall organizational resilience. The positive effects of an inclusive and supportive work culture are particularly evident during economic downturns or crises when the ability to adapt is critical. Thus, this study underscores that MSMEs with inclusive and supportive cultures are better positioned to navigate difficult times and emerge stronger.

2. *The Role of Adaptability in Enhancing MSME Resilience*

The study highlights that adaptability plays a crucial role in enhancing MSME resilience, particularly during periods of crisis. Organizations with adaptable cultures enable their employees to embrace change and adjust swiftly to new challenges. Employees in these organizations are more likely to remain flexible, allowing MSMEs to maintain continuity despite external disruptions. The findings show that adaptable cultures encourage a mindset focused on problem-solving and innovation, which is essential for overcoming unforeseen obstacles. This adaptability also facilitates quicker decision-making and the ability to pivot when necessary, ensuring that MSMEs can remain competitive during uncertain times. Furthermore, an adaptable culture fosters the development of skills that are vital for responding to dynamic market conditions. The study emphasizes that the ability to adapt is a key factor in the survival and growth of MSMEs during economic downturns and crises. In environments where change is constant, adaptable employees can quickly realign their strategies, thus minimizing negative impacts on the organization. These findings suggest that MSMEs with a high degree of adaptability are better equipped to thrive in turbulent conditions. Therefore, adaptability is not only a response mechanism but also a strategic advantage for enhancing MSME resilience in crisis situations.

3. *Work Culture as a Strategic Asset for Crisis Management*

The study reveals that work culture can serve as a strategic asset for effective crisis management in MSMEs. Organizations with a strong work culture are better equipped to handle crises due to the collective commitment and cohesion of their employees. The findings indicate that leadership plays a pivotal role in cultivating a culture of trust, collaboration, and continuous learning, which significantly enhances the organization's ability to navigate crises. Employees working in such cultures are more likely to remain motivated and focused, even in the face of adversity. A positive work culture fosters open communication and transparency, allowing employees to contribute ideas and solutions that can help mitigate crisis impacts. The research shows that MSMEs with a well-established work culture can adapt their strategies and operations more efficiently during difficult times. This adaptability and cohesion enable MSMEs to preserve their operational integrity, even amidst external disruptions. Moreover, the study underscores that MSMEs with strong work cultures tend to have higher levels of employee retention and satisfaction, which are essential for maintaining stability during crises. The findings suggest that organizations that

view work culture as an asset are more likely to recover quickly from crises and emerge stronger. Overall, this study highlights that investing in work culture is not only crucial for daily operations but also an essential component of crisis resilience.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

The findings of this study align with previous research highlighting the critical role of inclusive and supportive work cultures in influencing employee behavior. An inclusive work culture, which prioritizes fairness and recognition, fosters an environment where employees feel valued, which in turn enhances their commitment and engagement (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). This supports the work of Kraus et al. (2020), who found that employees in such environments are more likely to remain loyal and proactive, especially during periods of organizational challenges. Furthermore, the emphasis on support within the work culture facilitates a cooperative atmosphere where employees are more inclined to collaborate towards common goals, as noted by Goh & Lim (2020). In crisis situations, this sense of collaboration becomes even more vital, as it allows employees to work together to find solutions to unforeseen problems. Research by Yang & Wang (2020) further demonstrates that employees operating in a supportive environment are more resilient to stress and change, enhancing organizational adaptability. The present study corroborates these findings, showing that a supportive work culture encourages employees to maintain high performance even under adverse conditions. In addition, the commitment fostered by such cultures can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, reducing turnover rates during crises (Zhang & Wang, 2019). This study also supports the view that a culture of inclusivity enhances employee motivation, a key factor in sustaining organizational performance during disruptions. By embedding inclusivity and support into their culture, MSMEs can effectively leverage these elements to improve overall resilience and overcome external challenges. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of work culture in shaping employee behavior, particularly in turbulent times. Thus, the research confirms that organizations focusing on inclusive and supportive cultures are better prepared to endure crises and maintain employee engagement.

The study findings emphasize the critical role of adaptability in enhancing MSME resilience, which is consistent with the broader literature on organizational adaptability. Research by Kotter (2012) supports the argument that adaptability in the face of change is a key characteristic of resilient organizations, particularly during times of crisis. MSMEs that demonstrate adaptability can respond to market fluctuations, technological advancements, and unforeseen disruptions, thereby ensuring their long-term survival (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2011). In line with the study's findings, other research suggests that employees who embrace adaptability are more likely to proactively engage in problem-solving and adjust their work practices to align with organizational needs (Teece, 2014). Moreover, the ability to adapt has been shown to foster innovation, which can be crucial for MSMEs facing competitive pressures and crisis situations (Chakravarthy & Doz, 1992). This aligns with the present study, which finds that MSMEs with high adaptability can pivot their strategies more effectively, helping them maintain stability during economic downturns. The relationship between adaptability and resilience is particularly evident in industries facing rapid technological changes, where flexible business models allow organizations to better manage disruptions (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015). Additionally, research by Burnard and Bhamra (2011) shows that adaptability not only aids in immediate crisis response but also supports long-term strategic planning, allowing organizations to learn from past experiences and strengthen future resilience. The findings of this study are in agreement with these studies, as they demonstrate that adaptability is essential for MSMEs to recover from crises and continue their growth trajectory. Therefore, adaptability is not merely a reactive response but a proactive strategic asset that supports organizational resilience. This reinforces the argument that fostering adaptability in both organizational culture and employee behavior is essential for MSMEs facing crises, ensuring their ability to thrive in the face of adversity.

The finding that work culture serves as a strategic asset for crisis management aligns with existing research emphasizing the crucial role of organizational culture in navigating periods of crisis. As demonstrated

by Schein (2010), a strong organizational culture provides a stable foundation that guides behavior and decision-making during turbulent times. This study supports the argument that a positive work culture, characterized by collaboration, trust, and commitment, fosters a unified approach to crisis management (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Similarly, Denison (1990) argues that organizations with an adaptive and supportive culture are better positioned to face disruptions, as their employees are more likely to be flexible and responsive to emerging challenges. This aligns with the present findings, which suggest that MSMEs with a supportive work culture are more adept at overcoming crises. Moreover, the study echoes the work of Kotter (1996), who highlights the role of culture in driving change and innovation, particularly in crisis situations where traditional methods may no longer be effective. It is also consistent with the findings of Deal and Kennedy (2000), who note that organizations with a strong and positive culture can weather storms more effectively by fostering resilience and commitment among employees. The present research further supports this by showing that a culture of continuous learning and improvement within MSMEs enhances their crisis management capabilities. Additionally, a strategic focus on work culture can promote not only short-term crisis response but also long-term sustainability by enabling MSMEs to adapt to changing market conditions (Schein, 2010). As demonstrated by research on corporate resilience (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2011), organizations that strategically cultivate a robust work culture are better equipped to anticipate future challenges and respond proactively, rather than reactively. In conclusion, the findings suggest that MSMEs should prioritize the development of a supportive and adaptive work culture as part of their crisis management strategy, as it contributes to both immediate recovery and long-term organizational resilience.

D. CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study highlight the significant impact of work culture on employee behavior, particularly in enhancing the resilience of MSMEs during periods of crisis. A supportive and inclusive work culture fosters employee engagement, commitment, and adaptability, which are essential for organizations to navigate challenging situations. The research reveals that employees working in organizations with a positive culture are more likely to exhibit proactive behaviors and contribute to the overall resilience of the organization. Adaptability emerges as a key factor in sustaining MSMEs through crises, with employees demonstrating greater flexibility and responsiveness to unforeseen challenges. Furthermore, work culture plays a pivotal role in crisis management, acting as a strategic asset that helps MSMEs recover quickly and effectively from disruptions. The study emphasizes that cultivating a strong organizational culture not only aids in immediate crisis response but also ensures long-term sustainability by enabling MSMEs to adapt to market changes. MSMEs with a positive work culture are better positioned to maintain operational continuity, improve business outcomes, and foster a more resilient workforce. Additionally, a culture of continuous learning and innovation strengthens the ability of MSMEs to anticipate and manage future crises. The findings suggest that MSMEs should prioritize work culture as a strategic component of their crisis management plans to foster long-term resilience and organizational growth. The study contributes to the understanding of how work culture influences employee behavior and organizational adaptability in the face of crisis. It also underscores the importance of leadership in nurturing a positive work culture that supports the resilience of MSMEs. As businesses continue to face global uncertainties, developing a supportive and adaptive work culture becomes an essential strategy for surviving and thriving in times of crisis. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, business leaders, and researchers seeking to enhance MSME resilience through effective organizational strategies. Finally, future research could explore specific work culture practices that are particularly effective in enhancing resilience in different sectors and regions.

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