PROSPECTING THE PROCESS OF RESILIENCE AT WORK: AN INVESTIGATION WITH THE MARKETING AGENCY PROFESSIONALS OF KARACHI

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Abstract

Resilience at work defines the attributes of employees who deal proficiently with stresses in the modern workplace. Limited research is present to show how people can develop resilience at work and how managers can develop this capacity in others. This is necessary for the growth of marketing communication agency to develop professional work place with resilience from its employees because the concept of propagating business through marketing communication agencies have been revolutionized in a matter of few years. Qualitative approach has been selected for this study, while methodology is grounded theory. The data for this research has been gathered from marketing agency professionals within Karachi. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Simultaneously, analysis was carried out by coding and grouping the data. The process of resilience has been explored in this study with 24 professionals who have encountered setbacks in the job of marketing communication profession. Analysis of the data revealed in-depth knowledge of the situations outcomes that serve as trigger events or springboard for individual resilience and the recuperation strategies by which resilience at work could be build and help professionals for capacity development of resilience at work.

Keywords: Resilience, Marketing, Karachi, Professionals, Recuperation Strategies

JEL Classification: M 000, M 300, M 390

Introduction

Marketing agency professionals have to produce creative work and always face negative feedback, criticism and rejections from their managers, respective clients and peers. In order to

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continue their jobs and getting salaries smoothly, marketing agency professionals face hesitation in returning the criticism. It cause several tensions in their practical lives when such criticism combine with the tight deadline, late working hours ,more demanding creative working (Career Cast, 2010;Crenshaw, 2013).

According to research, due to negative feedback from the managers, respective clients and peers, the turnover rate of marketing communication business is 30 percent approximately (Stratz,2012; Ad Age,2013).It does not mean that there is no productive role of negative feedback. In fact, it is fully accepted by human resource professionals who are keenly interested in professional development of worker (Ilgen & Davis, 2000).In some places, negative feedback could create a hostile behavior towards the source which can cause further conflict and relation break which can continue for several years in future (Cannon & Witherspoon, 2005; Chory & Kingsley Westerman, 2009). However, client service professionals do not find option of expressing the criticism in reply due to the nature of their job while they form resilience conditions, which help them to carry their professional work. It has been elaborated in research that a person's level of resilience is worth more than the education, training and experience of him/her. It determines who will fail and who will succeed (Coutu, 2002).

Research tells us that about half million people are toiled in marketing communication agencies in the US who are proficient in digital advertising , direct marketing, purchasing media planning or public relations (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a). Agencies mostly organized by departments and encompasses the following: Account manager, account planning and creative media buying with some subsidiary section of organizations for instance, digital & mutual, production and graphic arts (Advertising Education Foundation, 2014). Account Management/Client Service departments have centered experts' attention in recent days .These departments typically entitled in arena of advertising and public relationship businesses where marketing professionals like assistant account executive, account coordinator and account manager work. Furthermore administration supervisor, account director, account supervisor and account group director encompasses in administration positions evaluated by web sites of public relations and advertising agencies across the United States. Despite of the specific title of Account Manager referring to the individuals who work in accounting branch, here, it is used for the disquisition to mention professionals who toil in advertising communication organizations and client services (Blasdel, 2015).

Blasdel (2015) provided evidences from the US and concluded about the worth of resilience at work with marketing agency professionals of US in the form of their experiences. The concept of propagating business through marketing communication agencies is also spreading in Pakistan. This study is subject to examine the process of resilience at work for the Marketing Agency Professionals within Karachi, as they are the key resource for the marketing communication agencies. The aim of this research is critically analyze how marketing agency professionals of Karachi trip resilience at work when there are negative performance remarks from customers, colleagues and management.

Literature Review

In literature, resilience exhibits the concepts and a factual finding in psychology (Buzzanell, 2010).The communicative aspect represents an alternate that creates resilience (Torres & Fyke, 2013). Buzzanell (2010) described "a notably enduring an array of identity due to which individuals and their community individuals, collegial, and/or familial explained who they are in relation to others and for themselves". One method for creating resilience is by communicating individuals and companies for constructing social capital and money during challenging times (Buzzanell,2010; Youssef & Luthans, 2005) . In addition, the essential position of resilience is unique from hope and optimism. Whereas, the existing research about resilience argues with the aid of assessment that overall performance of negative feedback may additionally be activated and engendered. Feedback conceptualized as "information furnished through parents, teachers, peers, experiences and self involves factors of one's performance" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Research suggests that intellectual and physical health evolution is associated with physical and mental health and it contributes to protection against post-traumatic stress disorder in combat veterans (King et al., 1998; Vaishnavi et al., 2007; Waysman, Schwarzwald, & Solomon, 2001). However, the notion "Resilience" has been taken to be a mental health index (Ramaniah, Sharpe, & Byravan, 1999; Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994), particularly it can correlate with mental and physical health evolution (Vaishnavi et al., 2007). Coutu (2002) concluded that resilience may be linked up to neuropsychiatric disorder prevention so it plays an essential role in mental fitness.

Previously, resilience mostly focused on children while further researches elevated to probe with aged people (Luthans, Vogelgesang, & Lester, 2006; Moekenmeyer, Hoegel, & Weiss, 2012). A critique in views of men and women being resilient produces a wrong split between 'non-resilient' and 'resilient' individuals" (Wilson & Arvanitakis, 2013).

Evidence is increasing about resilience that it has some validity in biological manner and better understanding for the insight of resilience concept could be important and vital for the treatment of assortment of disorders relevant with neuropsychiatric disorders (Vaishnavi et al., 2007).

Optimism and hope are applicable where a situation can be accessed with a plan (Youssef & Luthans, 2005); whereas resilience identify the flexibility needs, adaptation, proactive and reactive measures in the face of adversity (Youssef & Luthans, 2005). Moore, Grunberg, and Greenberg (2004) illustrated that individuals who are in connection with layoffs (either by witnessing colleagues being laid off or being laid off self personally) reported high level of intentions to quit, low level of job security, depression role ambiguity and other problems. They further argued that connection with layoffs tend to reduce resilience once setbacks have settled.

The present research argues that feedback on negative performance is a situation where

resilience may engendered in performance feedback. Another person provided communication-containing information is usually intend to assist candidates in their future performance and to inform about their past job performance (Chory & Kingsley Westerman, 2009).If feedback givers passes negative emotions then it will influence the feedback quality in a negative way. For example, a manager can overbear his/her emotions and could hit his/her subordinates and this feedback cannot be counted in the type of constructive responses (Cannon & Witherspoon, 2005). Understanding the process of resilience at work is the requirement of management for low employee turnover and mitigation in psychological damage to professional staff (Blasdel, 2015).

Research Methodology

Research Approach

One of the objectives of a research format is to find out compliance that records what we collect sufficient to tackle the research argument logically (Dannels, 2018). Badke (2017) advised that research strategies should be based upon the precise task at hand. A qualitative approach bounds to answer queries appropriately associated as to how resilience is activated after negative feedback from purchasers and colleagues from advertising and marketing communications experts. The qualitative research entails emerging quests from a massive data and examining inductively from particulars to standard issues, which adopts positive aspects to locate troubles that frequently missed such as nuance and complexities (Creswell, 2014; Hughes, 2006). A qualitative research is a collective process through that the people studied about their lives (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Babbie (2010) depicts qualitative approach through establishing a guidance to pursue additional subjects raised by means of the interviews.

According to Crabtree and Miller (1992), the investigation is supposed to apprehended revealing material that cannot be delivered through quantitative data about values and feelings that underlie actions. In previous studies, quantitative methods have been used to explore Ego-Resilience (Block & Kremen, 1996) as flexibility in the workplace. The scale used has 14 items survey such as "I shortly get better after being alarmed" and "I like to take distinctive trails to intimate places". Youssef and Luthans (2005) used survey statistics for recognition that how resilience relates to man or woman consequences on behalf of performance and commitments with satisfaction of job and enjoyable working environment. However, these ventures do not have a motive to determine if advertising and marketing exchange authorities are most resilient as compared to others. Therefore, qualitative inquiry used is a first-class method to acquire this knowledge.

The research approach suited for this study is the inductive approach that has been specified as the dominant research approach in the natural sciences and Creswell and Creswell (2017) clarify theoretical or conceptual position prior to the collection of data. The intention of this research is prospecting the process of resilience at work for the marketing agency professionals of Karachi. We

have used the research methodology Grounded Theory here.

Grounded Theory (GT) in social sciences is a systematic methodology concerned the concept through the analysis of data that operates inductively. Usage of grounded concept is likely to start with a quest of series of qualitative data. Further researchers evaluate the collected statistics, repeat ideas and concepts as well as tag with codes and these codes are grouped into concepts, and then into categories with composed and reviewed data based on new theory. Hence, grounded principle is quite different from the regular model where an existing theoretical framework can be chosen by researcher to show how the theory does or does not observe the study (Charmaz, 2014).

Several researchers have tried different number of elements for linking with the grounded idea such as given by Dick (1990) in the following figure 1.
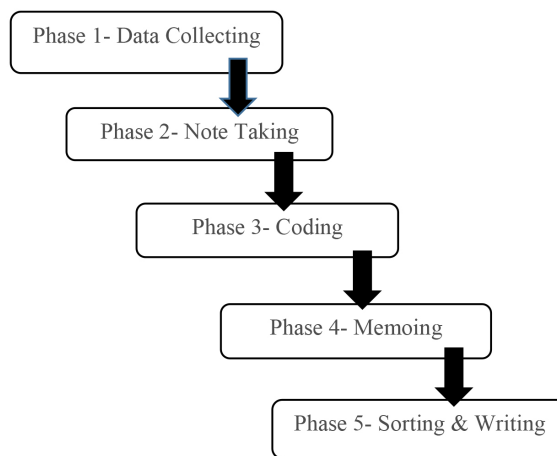

Figure 1: Phases of Grounded Theory (Dick,1990)

This research is strong in the sense that it has iteration process. It contains in-depth semi structured interviews. Data collection has been done through strong referral network so high level of abstraction has been obtained. It has implications for senior managers and top management

Population and sample size

In research, population refers to individuals or objects that have similar characteristics or traits. Since a population is a large group of people or individuals therefore it is difficult, time consuming and costly to reach all of them. In Pakistan, marketing communication business has boosted in past

recent years. The whole concept of propagating business through marketing communication agencies have revolutionized in a matter of few years and the marketing agency professionals of Karachi are the population for our research. We selected those employees who had at least two years of job experience. All those employees with less than 2 years of experience are usually considered as fresh employees, as they are usually in the phase of job-hunting and may not have spend enough time in the agency environment to be able to relate the job shifting behavior in the context of marketing professional and this is the reason behind their non-selection.

A sample is a subgroup of the population (Khalid, Abdullah, & Kumar, 2012). With 24 advertising and marketing communication experts, semi-structured interviews have been performed. This population has been chosen because they acquire numerous critical remarks due to the nature of their work. Participants were working in eight different advertising organizations. Participants included marketing managers, supervisors, executives and coordinators. The foremost requirement is the nature of their job that should demand controlling a range of relationships with purchasers within their respective agencies.

Data Collection and Data Analyses

We used semi-structured interviews to collect data. Data collected through open-ended questions that have been adapted from Blasdel (2015) in the local context, and had been handled through notes taking process. At the time of coding, scattered data had been categorized to facilitate analysis. Coding means transformation of data into an understandable form. Memos made and linked to the codes and then reviewing, sorting and reports generation had been performed. Answers to the following queries have been sought:
RQ1: While dealing with springboard or set off situation at work, what are the internal communicative factors calling for prompt resilience?
RQ2: After following springboard or set off events, how do people recuperate record when they execute resilience in subsequent set off events?

Data collection and analysis took seven months for completion. Through professional network, using snowball sampling method, the participants were identified and selected. The selected individuals were interviewed individually. Interviews were conducted based on which memos were developed which were analyzed. This whole process was carried out simultaneously and through iteration. Two-step process (wide or open) fundamental coding has been performed throughout analysis. During this stage, "chunks of data" have been categorized (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). The records were categorized into significant classes where an appropriate suit was revealed. To indicate analytical linkages, the class codes or labels were developed between the data .The developed codes for the theme *"Working in this company support my family in terms of health benefits"* were "Company supports parents", "Spouse needs support", "Medical benefits include financial reimbursement", "My family needs medical" and "Company gives medical". Similarly, the developed codes for the theme

"Problems teach how to survive" were "learning through problems"," Without problems no life", "Survival through problems" and "Problems give lesson to life",

To collect and analyze the data, the similarities and frequent factors from the interviews were specified into categories and themes. The process of inspecting the facts means that we are able to generate classes and reorganizing facts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The purpose of writing memos was to have written documentation of the evaluation, which would help open up the inquiry. Memoing aided to seize gush thoughts and imposed standards. While the process of memoing ties to the researcher and caters the spark, to probe the normative nature between consumer and agency due to lack of civility (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

With Owen's approach (1984), reoccurrence, repetition, and forcefulness have been considered to interpret the interview transcripts. Recurrence is different wording where two contributors use similar ideas and the same key words. In order to develop a key concept or theme, a confined evaluation has been carried out persistent to indicate noting times of recurrence, repetition, or forcefulness during reading and rereading the transcripts.

Results

This research resulted in apprehending that how resilience will be retrieved from the overall poor performance outcomes through clients and colleagues. This research inquired participants to describe sort of circumstances for activating their own resilience tends to admit bounce back from negative feedback. A successful recalling was not easy and due to the fact, the comments may additionally charge emotions. Participants cited the emotional experiences and conveyed innovative thoughts to consumers who later alternated their minds or eventually had not the price range to execute the ideas.

Research Question (RQ1) in this research with particular communicative methods contributed in finding the process of resilience. The results arose from neglecting the facts and feeling pride at work. Some members confronted with hard conditions by means of preserving a perspective of job nature at workplace but in past, if they would had a pleasure of alternate working condition then that can save them from struggling with a tough consumer or colleague. Some emerged themes from the acquired responses were "Company gives me good bonuses"," "This company gives good career growth", "All is well", "Job is easy to me", "My job is my passion" and "This job is tough but at least secured" (For details, please refer to appendix 1). Later following eight categories have been arises from the data accordingly and have been mentioned in figure 2.
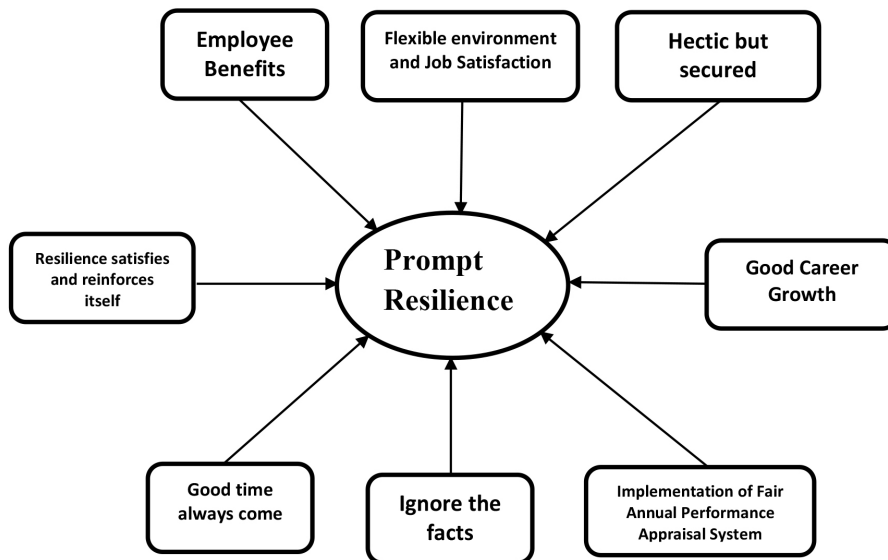
Figure 2: Building categories for calling factors of getting prompt resilience

Good time always come: Nobody can predict the future. Employees just need to give their best for taking care of their work. The most important things in working are remembering the other done tasks through good times and bad. Once it is clear that they have done well things in past, then it boost their motivational level.

Resilience satisfies and reinforces itself: Participants pleased with a mark of respect to be positive from negative feedback and stay calm throughout in times of tough criticism.

Employee benefits: As a result of analyzing the responses, it is determined that if employees are very disappointed with the benefits and incentives being offered to them in advertising agency then resiliency at work will be difficult. The employees remain less loyal towards their assignment and organization's goals when they are less paid. This is a growing industry and chances of switching are easy with the passage of time so employees feel that once they work hard, they will get benefit in the future.

Flexible environment and job satisfaction: Increasing trends of promotions, outside parties and flexible timings are in marketing industry are the key causes for influencing employees to be resilient at work. When employees are in stress and environment is not conducive, this will make them dejected, which are not in this case.

Hectic but secured: Most of the participants think that job is creative but tedious with time taking. It is very hectic but most often secure. Employees have not been fired usually without any substantial event or severe disciplinary action. Most of the employees are quite happy of this job security but at the same time, they are also dejected of being stressful.

Good career growth: Employees believe that they have very good career growth in marketing profession especially in Karachi that makes them satisfied. Besides, they have flexible working timings for which they can give adequate time to their other activities.

Implementation of fair performance appraisal system: Annual performance appraisal system is a tool that appraises employees at the end of each year by looking his/her achievements and overall performance during a year for maintaining the performance even having dejection of several types of working throughout the year. Participants recorded their responses that if, annual performance appraisal system is justified and they get promotions and salary raise based on their performance and hard work then they can strive to achieve organization's goals with resiliency at work.

Ignore the facts: Participants often convey the venture of taking disagreeable conversation personally. In our opinion, they are careful in taking criticism with great harder time rebounding. Several participants interpreted that it could be much simple with experiences in journey once we are addicted to omit bad things.

Research Question 2 (RQ2) investigates how profitable recuperation trigger incident that change human beings and how they enact resilience when face with the consequent triggers events. Analysis concedes about the benefits for working employer and working conditions that helps to trigger them to work resilient. Some emerged themes from the acquired responses were "Family supports me always", "I do philanthropy for good causes", "Mistakes are the key to success", "I convey positive messages", "Our thoughts make things beautiful or bad" and "If I be positive then I will see positive" (For details, please refer to appendix 2). Figure 3 illustrates categories that were established from the data accordingly.
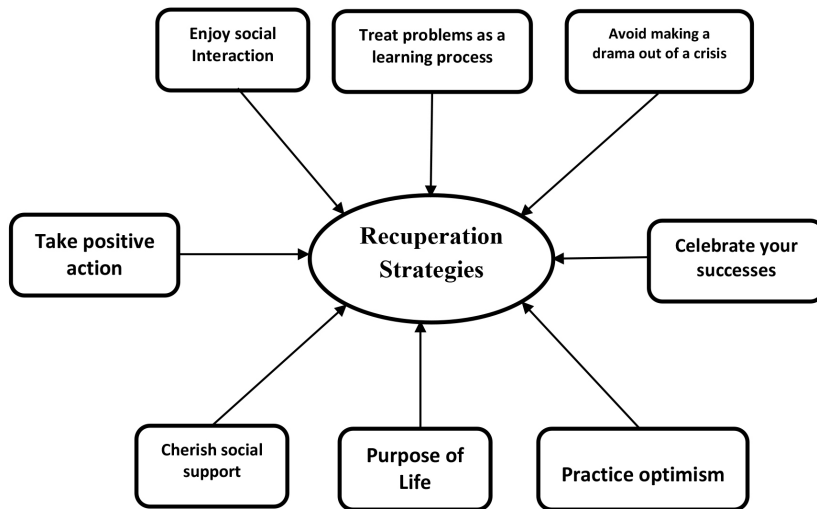
Figure 3: Building Categories for factors of getting recuperation

Enjoy social interaction. Good relationships with family, friends, and relatives are essential for a happy and enjoyable life.

Treat problems as a learning process. We need to develop the habit of using challenges as opportunities to acquire achievement.

Avoid making a drama out of a crisis. Although stress and changes are part of life, however we respond such events with huge stressful impacts that need to be neglect.

Celebrate your successes. We need to trains the mind to congratulate us at the end of the day for achieving success rather than dwelling on negativity and 'failure'.

Purpose of Life. We require development of realistic life goals for guidance and a sense of purpose. A beautiful and one small step amid the chaos and help in a busy day so there is need of moving towards the life. Keeping a realistic perspective is essential but, with the placement of challenging events in the broader context of lifelong personal development.

Take positive action. Bringing a sense of control, even if it does not remove the difficulty but aids us to face adversity. We need to nurture always a positive view of ourselves. We need to develop ability with confidence to solve problems and trusting to build resiliency.

Practice optimism. Nothing is either good or bad totally but only if we allow our thoughts to dictate benefits rather than letting by seeing only the bad side or with doubts.

Cherish social support. Helping others pacifies the soul and we need to make it a habit for us.

Overall, 16 categories have been identified through the responses of RQ1 and RQ2. Further, these categories merged into two different clusters that are prompt resilience and recuperation strategies. It suggested that the process of resilience is an ongoing process that based upon factors for getting prompt resilience at work in set off situation and recuperation strategies for facing next set off situation. Prompt resilience is bringing back the capacity of a person for responding pressure and demands of life during the trigger event or set off situation while recuperation strategies help professionals in regaining their previous state of working with calm condition and make them ready for the next trigger event or set off situation. Referring figure 4, we are proposing a model for the process of resilience at work.
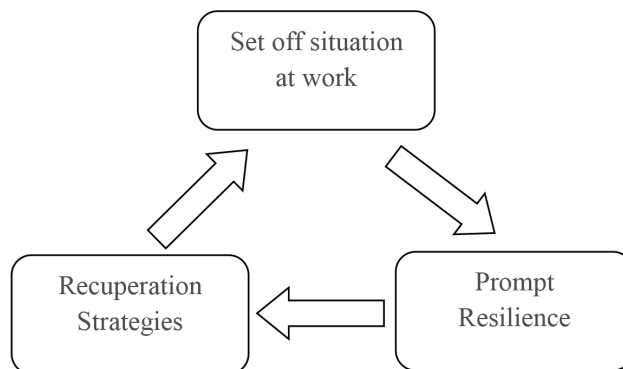

Figure 4: The Process of Resilience at Work

Discussion

Resiliency affects our potential to 'bounce back'. Resilience at work defines the attributes of employees who deal proficiently with the stresses and strains of the modern workplace. Also a person's capability, encompass like flexibility suppleness, durability, strength, agile of healing and buoyancy to response strain in routine life. At work, resilient human beings are highly capable to deal with the needs placed upon them, especially dealing with continuously altering priorities and a heavy workload. The pivot is that the resilience is now not a passive quality, rather an active process and has a huge effect on our experiences. Resilience makes people to do extra things that assist responsiveness and make them capable to perform under pressure and to live in circumstances that strives with

competence to endure affectively with pressure, adversity and uncertainty that depends on creating behaviors, thoughts and actions.

Individuals can analyze techniques to assist massive resilience and determination. While resiliency experts suggested a distinct mold of characteristics and capabilities that aids them to live on and boom under stress. Indeed, due to the fact of the current realization, resilience is turning into a hot topic in enterprise that it may be simply essential for the success of professionals having capabilities such as training and experience (Coutu, 2002).

Blasdel (2015) concludes that resilience can be developed and understanding of recovery from previous trigger event affects resilience in future. However, significance of negative impact is that it will prepare the professionals for future while confronting trigger events.

The findings of this research support previous researches. If employees stay happy at work then it counts (e.g., Achor, 2015; Aaker, Leslie, & Schifrin, 2012; McKee, 2014). Mostly researches do not create a connection between happiness at work and resilience at work while some researches have connection of resilience with other positive states like optimism and hope (Luthans & Youssef, 2005). Managers need to be mindful about the bottom-line benefits of happy employees, such as increased productivity, innovation and lesser sick days (Aaker et al., 2012).

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is enormous. The outcomes reveal some generic techniques to setbacks and prompt resilience at work used by professionals. This research frame the concept of resilience by exploring the communicative factors while proved that resilience has a capacity to develop. Notably, this research affords specific strategies of recuperation that can execute individuals or managers to enhance the capability of resilience. However, these approaches sometimes did not affect resilience at work. For example, some people with a religious conviction aided in prayer and practicing with concentration or meditation. Therefore, the key is to become aware of methods probably to work properly and for promoting resilience at work.

The potential to build resilience is a proficiency that will serve professionals properly in an increasingly stressful work place and later agencies get benefit from a greater resilient workforce. Building an organizational culture that encourages and helps resilience coaching makes commercial enterprise sense. Manager and client can work together for solving how feedback should be delivered and conflict can be managed with the agency partners. Informal and formal sessions with clients should be carried out. Agencies need to invest time and money for that, as it is likely to count as pales in comparison to the money and time lost due to turnover.

Limitations and Future Implications

Due to the referral factor for gathering all agency professionals, this research is limited to a small sample size. Convenient sampling has been used to referral system and due to limited network, this research is restricted to single city only. It is time consuming and has financial constraints for pursuing research in future.

Although this study is time and money consuming, it can be expanded to other cities of Pakistan because marketing agency profession is progressing throughout Pakistan and resilience at work is the need of the day. Marketing Communication practitioners need to use this research for the development of resilience among their team members and within themselves. They can learn how psychological and emotional damage could be mitigated to professionals. It would help in reducing the turnover of marketing agency professionals. This study is not limited to the marketing profession and it can apply to other professions as well where set off situations occur.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Emerged categories from the responses of RQ1

S.No.	Interviewees	Themes	Categories
1	Interviewee No.1	Company gives me good bonuses	Financial Benefits
2	Interviewee No.2	This company gives medical reimbursement	
3	Interviewee No.3	I will get new vehicle soon on the basis of performance	
4	Interviewee No.4	Experience of working in this company is reputable for switching to next level job in any other company	Good Career Growth
5	Interviewee No.5	This company gives good career growth	
6	Interviewee No.6	I am getting promotion next year	
7	Interviewee No.7	I feel proud in doing job here due to my salary package	
8	Interviewee No.8	That was unnecessary	Ignore the facts
9	Interviewee No.9	All is well	
10	Interviewee No.10	Things will always change	Good time always come
11	Interviewee No.11	Good time will come after bad time	
12	Interviewee No.12	Happiness is more than grief	
13	Interviewee No.13	Working timings are flexible	Flexible environment and Job Satisfaction
14	Interviewee No.14	Working environment is good	
15	Interviewee No.15	I am not a morning bird so feel happy in coming late	
16	Interviewee No.16	I can go early once after completion of work	
17	Interviewee No.17	I can work from home	
18	Interviewee No.18	Job is easy to me	
19	Interviewee No.19	My job is my passion	
20	Interviewee No.20	I love this job	
21	Interviewee No.21	This job is tough but at least secured	Hectic but secured
22	Interviewee No.22	Management is fair in terms of appraisal	Fair Annual Performance Appraisal System
23	Interviewee No.23	Performance appraisal system is good	
24	Interviewee No.24	My shy nature makes me calm	Resilience satisfies and reinforces itself

Appendix 2: Emerged categories from the responses of RQ2

S.No.	Interviewees	Themes	Categories
1	Interviewee No.1	I do social service	Enjoy social interaction
2	Interviewee No.2	Family supports me always	
3	Interviewee No.3	My friends help me in my need	
4	Interviewee No.4	My family is my life	
5	Interviewee No.5	I call friends at the time of problems	
6	Interviewee No.6	I learn from my mistakes	Treat problems as a learning process
7	Interviewee No.7	First time problem will never become problem again	
8	Interviewee No.8	Mistakes are the key to success	
9	Interviewee No.9	Problems teaches how to survive	
10	Interviewee No.10	Once an issue is resolved then there is no need to make it live again	Avoid making a drama out of a crisis
11	Interviewee No.11	Conflicts needs to be resolved at the earliest level	
12	Interviewee No.12	Always nurture a positive view of yourself	Take positive action
13	Interviewee No.13	Good feedback giver sense responsible	
14	Interviewee No.14	I convey positive messages	
15	Interviewee No.15	I enjoy the success	Celebrate your successes
16	Interviewee No.16	I am happily manage the good time	
17	Interviewee No.17	I find events of celebration	
18	Interviewee No.18	Our thoughts make things beautiful or bad	Practice optimism
19	Interviewee No.19	Beauty is in our eyes	
20	Interviewee No.20	Either I can see half glass filled or half glass empty, it is up to me	
21	Interviewee No.21	If I be positive then I will see positive	
22	Interviewee No.22	I keep a realistic perspective	Purpose of Life
23	Interviewee No.23	Realistic life goals play role for guidance	
24	Interviewee No.24	I do philanthropy for good causes	Cherish social support