

## **Resilience through digitalization. How individual and organizational capacity and capability affected the performance of public employees working from home during the Corona pandemic**

Dr. Caroline Fischer (University of Potsdam)

The digitalization of a majority of public administrations worldwide has advanced slowly so far and employees are often not enabled or allowed to work from home (*Hofmann/Ogonek 2018, Jakob/Krcmar, Mergel 2019*). During the Corona pandemic, rapid changes regarding the digitalization in public administrations were made under substantial political pressure. Digitalization is not a direct reaction to the pandemic but an outcome of the lockdown executed in many countries of the world and the need to deliver public services to citizens during the social distancing time. The fast digital development occurred on different levels: *Employees* were encouraged to work from home and to use multiple tools to work virtually, *processes* were revised and reduced, citizens were enabled to file applications online, digital *infrastructures* were rapidly built (e.g., *Liang 2020, Schomaker u.a. 2020, van der Wal 2020, Siegel u.a. 2020*). However, it remains an open question, whether the public service was able to perform effectively while working remotely and which antecedents affected individual as well as organizational performance during the time of virtual work from home. Nevertheless, it is essential to analyze the performance and its determining factors during the Corona pandemic to learn for future situations of crisis and change.

Following the job demands and resources model (*Bakker/Demerouti 2007, Crawford/Lepine/Rich 2010*) we argue that job and personal resources make employees resilient against situations of crisis (job demands). Resilient employees, as well as organizational capacity, make organizations resilient and able to cope with situations of crisis. Furthermore, we suggest that this resilience can be observed by a constant performance. Usually, external change would impact performance and a situation of crisis should lead to decreasing performance at the individual as well as the organizational level (*Kuusela/Keil/Maula 2017, Jimenez 2013*). However, when employees, as well as whole organizations, are resilient, hence can cope with external change, performance can remain constant (*Arslan-Ayaydin/Florackis/Ozkan 2014, Hawes/Testa 2020*). Therefore, we pose the following research question: How do individual and organizational capacity and capability impact public employees' as well as organizational resilience and performance during the Corona pandemic?

To answer such a complex question, this project adopts a two-step mixed-method research design. In the first step, 15 exploratory interviews with leaders from different agencies and ministries on the local and Länder level in Germany have been conducted in early June 2020. These interviews revealed organizational factors (leadership, IT resources, organizational culture) as well as individual ones (digital competencies, ability to learn and change, proactivity) to be important antecedents of resilience and effective performance while working from home during the pandemic. In a second step, survey data from 1,189 public employees were collected between August and September 2020 to proof these exploratory findings. This quantitative dataset will be analyzed using regression analysis and structural equation modelling.

All in all, we expect to add to the literature on performance while working remotely and work performance during situations of a crisis. We will discuss how public organizations foster effective remote work and effective working during times of crisis and, thereby, contribute to the literature on resilience through digitalization and innovation.

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