

Organizational Resilience in Higher Education: An Empirical Investigation of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning

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Abstract

Organizational resiliency is an important problem in all organizations, including higher education. Pedagogical activities cannot happen if the infrastructure is unavailable to support such endeavors. The problem is that there is little knowledge of how leadership characteristics impact organizational resiliency planning within higher education. The objective of this quantitative, correlational study was to describe any correlations between leadership characteristics and organizational resiliency planning. To meet this research objective, departmental business continuity and disaster recovery planners within two large, research-oriented public universities were surveyed and their responses statistically analyzed utilizing binary logistic regression.

The results indicate that 23% of the surveyed departments had no resiliency plan. Analysis of five leadership demographics and four covariates reveals that the single most significant predictor of resiliency planning within the surveyed population was prior experience with a discontinuity event (significant at the .016 level). The independent variables and covariates were assessed for multicollinearity (all found to have a low variance inflation factor) and stepwise regression (forward selection) was used. Interestingly, having a budget for resiliency planning was not found to be a significant predictor of resiliency planning.

Resiliency planning in higher education trails that of private sector efforts. Possessing a budget for continuity planning does not appear to guarantee achieving a resiliency plan. Furthermore, the results of this study implies a generalizable outcome: having past experience with a discontinuity event is a significant predictor of future resiliency planning. When searching for personnel to lead resiliency efforts, administrative leadership could utilize this concept. Likewise, when assessing current organizational resiliency efforts, administrative leadership could analyze the leadership of these efforts within the context of prior resiliency experience.