

# POSITIONING THE STUDY OF FIRST LINE MANAGERS' RESILIENT ACTION STRATEGIES

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## **Abstract**

This paper introduces a study on the action strategies of first line managers (FLMs) using a resilience perspective and the aim is to position the study in the theoretical field of resilience management and engineering. One important key to an organization's long-term competitiveness are the first line managers' ability to handle the role as a leader in daily work. In the role of a FLM, there are a lot of conflicting objectives to manage, for example, regarding available resources, subordinates' views versus superiors', centralized and/or local control, optimization of cost and capability (quality and delivery). Moreover, at the operational level of detail, FLMs have to balance daily deliveries in relation to development activities, i.e. technical development, product development, implementation of new system and management concepts. Regardless of the complexity in work and organisational change over time, a FLM's most important task is to contribute to a high and stable production output out of an input that is characterized by variability and disturbances. To do so in a sustainable way, the FLMs must develop action strategies about ways of working and problem solving that systematically facilitate coping with the situation and managing their own workload. We consider this as developing resilient actions strategies that allow the FLMs to handle the upcoming problems without getting problems on their own. In this paper we describe and develop the theoretical underpinnings of the study as well as how we position our own research in relation to the different theoretical strands of resilience management. We further suggest some methodological ideas on how to capture the work and nature of first line managers' resilient action strategies. The focus in our work will thus be on how FLMs handle and can improve the more or less chaotic mix of activities in daily work in a resilient way.

**Keywords:** First line managers, resilience, manufacturing industry