A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

'From Burnout to Resilience:

Managing the Transition

in German Enterprises'

Nick Vidovic

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
Requirements of Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

Munich Business School

June 2019

Abstract

Resilience is defined as the ability to cope with adversity and seems to be the answer to many mental ailments, especially burnout, in organisations. Thus, there are numerous manuals on how to create and support a resilient workforce. However, despite sufficient scientific findings, many enterprises have not been successful avoiding stress and mental illnesses, and statistics still show a rising number of absence days due to workers suffering from burnout. This study aimed at closing that gap between knowledge and practice in an interpretive, qualitative approach that integrated two methods: Fourteen in-depth interviews with leaders, Human Resource (HR) professionals and health managers concerning their practical experience were conducted, and the information gathered was linked with documentary analysis of twelve resilience-development programmes. Both parts of the study were evaluated using Template Analysis and shed a new light on burnout: It should be avoided but can also be a chance for sustainable change, if the recovery process is accepted and designed as a learning opportunity. Resilience correlates with individual dispositions but mostly with organisational matters such as internal structures, recognition and participation. Resilience is not a neoliberal move since a truly resilient organisation does not need to place profits over workers' long-term well-being. To achieve both, it takes employees who are skilled and proud of their company's high-quality products, as well as mid-level leaders who are given autonomy in addition to guidance and who have a clear mission on whether or not they are responsible for their team's health. Most of all, it takes a sincerely value-based, emotionally intelligent, top-down management. Focusing on German industrial companies but reviewing mostly anglophone studies, the thesis revealed new aspects such as culturally different attitudes towards issues such as psychoanalysis or positive psychology in business contexts. It also uncovered varying work ethoses and how resilience can be seen as part of sustainability efforts. Future research might go into more detail here.

Contents

1 An Introduction to Burnout and Resilience

In a recent German study with more than 8,000 participants, almost 14 percent of the women and about 8 percent of the men involved said they believe they have more stress than average levels. Those survey participants that suffered from chronic stress reported more often that they were in medical treatment for burnout syndrome than a comparison group with lower stress levels. Vice versa, about half of the sample affected by burnout syndrome, reported being under serious stress (Hapke et al., 2013, p. 752 f.). This introductory example gives a glimpse of the impact of stress and burnout in German enterprises and - although it is anticipated that the findings from the research will in principle be generalisable - the setting for this thesis is in the German business and industrial context.

As a response to increasing stress levels and challenges derived from that, Business and Management research has brought forth plenty of publications looking for solutions. One way of handling stress at work can be found in concepts of resilience. Crane defines resilience as "the capacity to adapt effectively to life adversity with a short-lived downturn in functioning" (Crane, 2017, p. 3). Resilience is thus an approach that looks at strategies for coping with stress. It does not, at first sight, include any strategies of finding the sources of stress and diminishing stress factors. So, is resilience just another neoliberal move, designed to make workers neglect their limits and keep working despite obvious signs of stress? Are we to take jazz singer Bobby McFerrin's advice not to worry but to be happy? Or even to purse our lips and whistle as comedy group Monty Python suggests at the end of the film *Life of Brian*, no matter how bad the situation? There are, in fact, critical voices warning that instead of trying to make workers stronger, companies and business researchers should find ways of reducing the pressure, which causes burnout and other mental conditions (Krauss-Hoffmann, May-Schmidt, Stiegler & Sebbesse, 2016, p. 95).

This introductory chapter will first look at the need for discussing burnout as well as resilience and for managing both in an effective way. It

will deliver some explanatory remarks on burnout and resilience, before describing the study with its research objective and the methods applied for generating as well as for evaluating information.

1.1 Why discuss Burnout and Resilience?

Globalisation, new and ever-changing technologies as well as the need for flexibility are developments that shape the modern day workplace. Many workers and employees experience social and financial risks and insecurities. They are faced with the requirement to keep learning and adapting, in addition to increasing mental and emotional demands. At work, the pace seems to get faster and faster. Some jobs can only be done successfully if a steady stream of communication and cooperation is kept up, which also requires certain competencies and stamina (Breu, 2014, p. 138).

With that in mind, it is not surprising that German health insurance companies[1] report a rising number of stress related illnesses among employees. Many of those lead to leaves of absence. In fact, leave rates have

---

[1] The German health insurance system has some specific characteristics: Most employees working in private enterprises, as well as in civil organisations, are insured through their employers. Both parties, worker as well as enterprise, contribute a certain percentage of the employee's gross income as an insurance premium into the funds of one of the German semi-public health insurance companies. It is also possible to be a member of a private health insurance company, but for most employees the public system offers more advantages since it is based on mutual support: The individual monthly premium depends mostly on the worker's income, and in many cases family members are also insured without any additional premiums (especially children or spouses without their own income). The financing system of health insurance is part of the German public social security structures since the insurers collect contributions from the insured in relation to his or her financial capabilities, not in relation to the expenses they create. The insurance companies are obliged to render good medical provision but at the same time they intend to keep their expenses low. To that end, they support public health, for example by encouraging prophylactic and preventive efforts of the German populace, by gathering data and by offering

been increasing for the last one and a half decades. Currently, statistics show an average of about fifteen sick days per year and worker, of which 2.5 days are due to depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses (Wohlers & Hombrecher, 2016, p. 2). While rates of physical complaints tend to decline, mental problems have increased by 66.6 percent since 2001 (Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016, p. 97). In the United Kingdom stress is the most important psychological condition that causes workers to stay away from work. It ranks second in reasons for short-term absences (CIPD, 2016, p. 14) and first for long-term (p. 28).

One of those problematic mental conditions is burnout. Burnout is a syndrome, which is related to stress and depression (Ahola, Hakanen, Perhoniemi & Mutanen, 2014) and other mental illnesses. It can be defined as "a process in which the psychological resources of an employee are gradually depleted as a consequence of prolonged stress at work" (Ahola et al. 2014, p. 29). Since burnout seems to be a problem of increasing impact, there is pressure on managers, politicians and society as a whole and particularly on companies to prevent or handle it adequately. Research into phenomena that were similar to modern day burnout symptoms can be traced back to the 19th century. Sigmund Freud (Freud, 1895/1953) and psychiatrists of the time developed interest in an ailment that they called neurasthenia. In many ways, symptoms of neurasthenia are comparable to those of burnout. With that in mind, the sometimes-mentioned doubt whether or not burnout is really just a fashionable extravaganza can be dismissed. It might be true, however, that burnout has been occurring increasingly often in recent decades.

Another important thought is posed by Diener (2011) who observes that in today's societies people firmly believe in sciences and knowledge. It is interesting to apply this observation to burnout and resilience, since it

---

information and activities that improve or maintain people's health (Bundesgesundheitsministerium, 2019).

might deliver the following insight: Unfulfilled expectations at work lead to frustration. Trying harder and harder – but maybe in vain – to achieve the expectations anyway, will cause feelings of fatigue and of being overburdened. Since, according to Diener (2011, p. 8), we are part of a knowledge-based society, we look for a name, a label, an explanation of those emotions. A scientific term can give feelings a medical value, and thus a higher relevance than simply tiredness or indifference. This might be an additional reason for the rise of burnout figures in public and organisational health statistics.

Many organisations consider it necessary to support their workers in order to protect them from stress and to help them develop resilience (CIPD, 2016, p. 36). Leaves of absence due to burnout eventually cause financial damage to organisations (Crane, 2017, p. 1). Not only the direct costs caused by absence, such as continued salary payments, must be considered. Moreover, it is expensive to replace a sick person with a colleague who has to receive extra training or needs time to adjust to the new environment. Many people are – directly and indirectly – affected by individual burnout cases: Colleagues will spend time trying to solve conflicts, and human resources management as well as supervisors will be occupied finding solutions (Bardoel, Pettit, Cieri & McMillan, 2014). Job routines can get out of balance. Thus, an individual condition can have a serious impact on an entire organisation.

Besides considering the impact on work processes, in many companies there is a strong sense of responsibility for employee well-being. Many enterprises feel the need to ensure their employees' health, and often place such responsibility in the hands of managers in mid-level positions (Horváth et al., 2009, p. 11). Researchers have shown that relationships at work – among employees as well as between supervisors and their team members –, affect workers' well-being (Renee Baptiste, 2008, p. 284). However, many line managers are not sure of how to improve those relationships and what their possibilities and responsibilities really are. There appears to be a need for information and training.

In addition, there are legal reasons to ensure that employees remain healthy: In Germany, certain federal rules regulate employers' treatment of their staff. The respective law is called *Arbeitsschutzgesetz*, the current edition is from 1996. It is designed to enhance health conditions in the workplace and includes mental health aspects such as a reduction of stress factors (Kleinschmidt, 2015, S. 19). However, the law does not provide a practical framework or a manual. It is up to the organisations to create and carry out the steps that fit their needs, structures and experiences. Based on the law's general outline, each management can develop means that are person-oriented as well as means that are organisation-oriented (Giesert, Liebrich, & Reuter, 2016, pp. 35/7-35/8).

For all of the above reasons, organisations will be interested in developing strategies for better resilience and implement health programmes to keep their employees healthy (Renee Baptiste, 2008, p. 284). It seems helpful to understand how to support executives and other individuals who have suffered from burnout in such a way that they turn that experience into a lasting and effective resilient attitude (Lohmann-Haislah & Schütte, 2013, p. 181). In addition to understanding the processes behind that transition, companies might need hands-on, practical tools that they can use in such cases. However, the "study of resiliency in the workplace is still in its infancy" (McLarnon & Rothstein, 2013, p. 63). One of the objectives of this thesis therefore is to provide organisations in the industrial sector with scientifically founded recommendations on how to achieve the transition from burnout to resilience.

Besides resilience, there are other concepts that could be contrasted to burnout, which can be seen as preventive measures or as interventions.

Examples are ideas such as mindfulness[2] (Kabat Zinn, 1994), salutogenesis[3] (Antonovsky, 1979) or aspects of positive psychology. All of these approaches are similar to resilience since they could reduce the impact of stress at work and create a change in awareness in workers as well as organisations. Nevertheless, for this thesis, resilience was chosen as a topic rather than the ones mentioned for these reasons: Mindfulness or salutogenesis can be considered as attitudes and factors that might be part of a resilient mindset or steps towards it, as will be explained in the subsequent chapters. Thus, resilience seems to be a broader approach. It is a conceptually strong approach, on which substantial research has been done, stemming from various scientific disciplines, which this thesis will be grounded upon. Without intending to anticipate the results of this study, resilience may have wide implications on many aspects of Business and Management research as well as on other social sciences.

A group of players within an enterprise that plays a critical role when it comes to employee well-being is mid-rank managers. Middle management personnel are often responsible for departments or other entities within an organisation. They are leaders who have to face two sides: their teams and their own supervisors. Moreover, employees working in middle management positions might be particularly at risk of suffering from burnout themselves (Sommer et al., 2014, p. 9). Two other important professions are central for dealing with employee well-being: HR personnel and health professionals. HR departments administer leaves of absence. In addition, they are often in charge of employee development, placements, matching

---

[2] "Mindfulness refers to a meditation practice that cultivates present moment awareness" and can improve "consciousness and affect regulation through mental training" (Ludwig & Kabat Zinn, 2008, p. 1350).

[3] "In its most general meaning, salutogenesis refers to a scholarly *orientation* focussing attention on the study on the origins of health and assets for health, contra the origins of disease and risk factors" (Mittelmark et al., 2017, p. 2).

jobs and professionals, etc. Therefore, HR administrators, as well as internal or external physicians and psychologists, are concerned with employee well-being. Creating resilience is a way of fostering it, since "a coherent set of resilience-enhancing HR practices have the potential to contribute to employees' psychological capital, attitudes and behaviour" (Bardoel et al., 2014, p. 279).

Thus, burnout and resilience are topics of relevance for Business and Management research. They also call for certain strategies in business behaviour, as the following section will illustrate.

1.2 Enterprises' Interest in Managing Burnout and Fostering Resilience

Despite the considerable amount of effort that has been made to understand burnout syndrome, comparably little has been achieved to find solutions that lead to lasting and widespread success. In Germany, there are quite a few preventive programmes and guidelines for organisations or executives (for example Gabriel & Nicham, 2012). But, as can be seen from the statistics on burnout, they have not been able to stop or diminish the problem in general. Instead, burnout figures keep increasing.

Burnout syndrome is now fairly well known and has been examined in numerous scientific studies as well as practical, business-oriented literature. Most research projects and books seem to focus mainly on possible causes of burnout and on preventive measures (Gabriel & Nicham, 2012). However, some important questions remain widely unasked and unanswered: What happens after burnout? How do affected workers and their employers continue after a burnout has been overcome? Some might go back to doing "business as usual". Others may try to use the opportunity to change certain aspects of their work life. Therefore, a new approach is needed as enterprises seem to require a different kind of support. Since burnout phases are signs of an individual and organisational crisis, a solution might lie in the idea of turning a crisis into a chance.

Companies have understood the necessity to protect the mental health of their employees (BMW Group, 2017). Some have a structured approach to reintegrate workers into the workforce who have experienced burnout (Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016, p. 85). Nevertheless, it remains to be a scientific task to evaluate those interventions and find out how workers actually recover. Do they remain healthy and for how long? Do they get back to their former performance levels?

In Germany, industrial companies, researchers, as well as health and pension insurers, commission research programmes and develop various preventive and rehabilitative measures. For that, they rely on current scientific findings. This thesis intends to contribute to that. The objective of this research is to look at business and industry related aspects of the problem. Medical or psychological questions are not the main topic of this study. One of the contributions of this study to business practice is that it will provide an overview and an extensive evaluation of preventive and rehabilitative strategies of business behaviour.

This study assesses the existing concepts by way of documentary analysis and by generating opinions of subject-matter experts. Thus, it presents some new useful approaches and provides organisations with practical information on burnout and resilience. Therefore, the practical use of this study is generating helpful knowledge on how to prevent burnout and how to support employees who have suffered from burnout. Most importantly, it provides solutions on how to turn the experience of burnout into resilience, both on a personal and on an organisational level. Burnout prevention and interventions cannot always be clearly differentiated. For example, stress reduction can be a prophylactic measure but it will also help those on the verge of a burnout to recover. From an ethical standpoint, protecting workers from illnesses and suffering will, in many companies, be a main priority. However, this thesis will show that critical phases can sometimes deliver an impulse that triggers changes in ways of thinking and acting. Another research objective, therefore, is providing companies with practical information on how to turn burnout into resilience.

To come to such practice-oriented results, the study will be based on a specific research question and certain assumptions. The next section will present those and describe the methodology with which they will be examined.

1.3 Research Question and Methodology

Within companies, the transition from burnout to resilience supposedly calls for changes of certain business activities (Scherrmann, 2015). This thesis will look into respective possibilities, examine, compare and possibly categorise and evaluate them. Some other reasons for stress, depression and burnout can be traced back to personal and structural challenges within the company: Problematic forms of communication, lack of clarity, divided loyalties and other aspects that pertain to social relations rather than business needs can increase pressure on managers and employees (Leiter, Day & Price, 2015). The constructivist and personal approach of this study puts a strong focus on such communicative topics.

Both social as well as business-related factors have to be considered when studying burnout and resilience. They can be subsumed under the term *organisational business behaviour*. The research question therefore is:

How can organisational business behaviour support the transition from burnout to resilience in German enterprises?

Subordinate research steps will help to provide companies with information on how the transition from burnout to resilience can be managed. The basis will be an exploration of the literature on burnout and resilience, such as theories and concepts on resilience as well as models, manuals and other information for developing resilience in companies. The literature review will be guided by certain questions:

a) What is meant by organisational resilience and how does the concept diverge from resilience as individual, workers' strategy? Are personal and managerial beliefs of resilience interrelated?

b) Is resilience an innate trait or can it be acquired in adult life, and if so, how can a transformation be carried out?

c) Is there an awareness of resilience as a possible consequence of burnout in companies? How can individual changes happen and how do these interdepend with potential structural changes?

d) How are transitions from burnout to resilience done at the moment, either on an organisational or an individual level?

e) Which ways of improving the transition are there, according to mid-level, HR and health professionals in industrial companies?

The necessary background information will be derived from scientific literature. However, the main tool for data investigation will be personal interviews with managers, HR professionals and health experts as well as an analysis of organisation-related reports.

A research project is always based on certain epistemological assumptions. Epistemologies are the underlying suppositions in any research design. They give an answer to the question "Why are we interested in these particular research questions?" (Cassell & Symon, 2004, p. 6). Some common epistemologies are for example rationalism, relativism, realism or constructivism. For the researcher, it is important to reflect on and understand his or her personal outlook on working scientifically. This thesis – especially with its empirical part – reflects a constructivist worldview.

Deciding on a research design in a social science such as Business and Management research often means to choose between qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2014). The appropriate research design for the purpose of this study is a qualitative approach in the form of interviews of subject-matter experts and of documentary analysis. A qualitative approach has its advantages regarding contents. It is suitable for gathering in-depth information rather than superficial, general material. Qualitative interviews can generate a lot of – expected and unexpected – information. Another benefit of a qualitative approach is that it opens a field that has not

yet been considerably looked into (Creswell, 2014, p. 5). Resilience in industrial enterprises is such a new field of research.

An objective of this research is to produce material and data that could – in future – lead to further studies. Currently, there is a lack of knowledge about resilience, about the transition from burnout to resilience and about appropriate strategies for companies. This study is meant to provide information on these topics. An aim of this thesis is to find out why existing manuals on burnout and resilience do not seem to have the intended effect. It can be suggested that their contents, ideas and methods do not always respond adequately to some of the requirements of enterprises, managements or workforce.

Methodologically, an interpretive and phenomenological approach was chosen for this research project, since it is based on a constructivist and subjectivist epistemology. A suitable method for evaluating the interviews and documents is Template Analysis (King, n.d.).

1.4 The Study

For this thesis, the focus is on German literature. However, British and international studies also have to be considered. Are there any differences between German and British or anglophone literature findings? What are the differences in their outlooks on and contributions to knowledge and business practice about burnout and resilience?

This research focuses on industrial companies, for two reasons: One, the author of this thesis is working in an industry setting and is therefore familiar with certain dynamics that are typical for industry. Second, existing research on burnout often looks at service-related companies. Particularly organisations from a social, educational or health sector have been examined. Only very few papers deal with industry. Here, the researcher would like to close a research gap.

Theoretical and practical findings provided by researchers and public institutions will be analysed in this thesis. For that, a thorough assessment of programmes was conducted in the form of a critical documentary analysis. This included manuals and suggested processes that are available to and used in companies. Useful instructions about the transition were systematically collected and examined. German health and pensions insurance organisations are an important source of information about burnout and about rehabilitation after burnout in German enterprises. Another important group of suppliers of information, of course, are German and international researchers. Business and Management researchers were the main scientific contributors to this thesis. Apart from Business and Management research studies, other scientific disciplines provided valuable information, too. Those were for example other social sciences, organisational and other work-related psychology, social work, sociology, medical sciences. The methods found there for developing resilience in the workplace were extracted and will be described and compared.

For eventually producing a useful and scientifically grounded process for managing the transition from burnout to resilience in organisations, it is first of all necessary to assess existing practices and programmes. A literature review provides insight into the current state of research on burnout, resilience and the transition from one to the other. An overview of those programmes was then presented to experts in the field, who were interviewed as subject-matter experts in order to collect their opinions about the existing resilience training and similar programmes. Based on that, a compilation of the most practical aspects can form the basis of a new model for the transition from burnout to resilience and a new framework for transferring burnout into resilience.

For finding answers to the research question and effective practice-oriented recommendations for enterprises, this research report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 presents an insight into the current state of research on burnout and resilience. After looking at the history of burnout and resilience research, an overview of research today with its most relevant aspects

will be given. This will lead to a clearer definition and a differentiation between burnout, stress and other similar ailments. A discussion of common symptoms and phases, of problems in diagnosing burnout in Germany will also be part of the second chapter as well as current findings about resilience. Concepts, theories and models of resilience in the context of organisations will be presented in that section. These include aspects of an organisational as well as individual level and a description of certain features of positive psychology. Further concepts that are relevant in the context of positive psychology are mindfulness and salutogenesis, but most of all emotional intelligence.

Chapter 3 is a detailed explanation of the research methodology. The constructivist epistemological foundations behind the study design will be clarified and the chosen research design will be explicated. This includes a report of the development of documentary analysis and of the interview outline, interview questions, the interview procedures and conditions as well as the evaluation method (Template Analysis).

As a preparation for the empirical findings which were to be generated with the help of the questionnaires, chapter 4 is an analysis of a choice of literature dealing with the transition from burnout to resilience in organisations. Research findings and existing organisational models of transition will be presented and analysed in a detailed way. In chapter 5, findings from the interviews, relevant topics, clusters and themes concerning the transition from burnout to resilience are gathered and described. These can then lead to the development of a new model or tool for presenting an effective transition from burnout to resilience.

Chapter 6 provides some pragmatic recommendations for leaders and HR professionals to guide them out of burnout cases and help them create better resilience in their teams. The final chapter also includes a summary of the main results of this study, its contribution to professional practice and points to further and future research needs.

2 Literature Review: Research on Burnout and Resilience

The main topic of this thesis is the transformation from burnout to resilience. Therefore, this chapter will give an overview of some important findings concerning burnout and resilience.

The chapter will first provide some historical milestones of burnout research and current developments as well as the status quo of modern burnout research. Causes of burnout will be discussed and categorised, symptoms and forms of burnout will be presented. To finalise this part, the researcher will provide the concept of burnout that was derived from the literature research and that will be the basis of the empirical study.

After that, the second part of the chapter will offer definitions of the term "resilience" and present and discuss some respective concepts of resilience in work environments. Burnout and resilience appear to be two sides of the same coin: Burnout can be a warning sign for stressful conditions and a critical state. Looking closely at stress and strain, one will sooner or later come across the concept of resilience, which seems to be the other side of the coin since it tends to appear as a result of critical phases. Resilience is nowadays often considered a vital issue in enterprises: "In the increasingly and endlessly turbulent context of today's working world, the resilience of both individuals and organisations becomes paramount in order to survive and thrive" (CIPD, 2011, p. 2). This part of the thesis will attempt to find answers to the following questions: What is meant by resilience in an organisational, managerial context? What are the characteristics of resilient workers and how do they acquire an attitude of resilience? In addition, a focus will be placed on two approaches that currently receive much attention in research and other publications: positive psychology and emotional intelligence. It seems these two aspects contain some potential for workers as well as for managers. The researcher will for example examine whether positive psychology could be a field in which workers can find personal strength and whether emotional intelligence contains elements of a helpful mindset for supervisors. After presenting a brief summary of the main points

of the entire chapter, the key questions that arise from the review of literature on resilience will form the final section of chapter 2.

2.1 Discussion of Burnout Syndrome

Generally, fatigue and pressure are considered two of the most prominent factors of burnout syndrome. Mental illnesses among workers appear to be on the rise, with burnout often being a consequence or contribution to that (Steltzner, 2015). So what exactly is burnout?

Before turning to historic developments of burnout research and discussing some approaches that can help to structure the investigation of burnout, the chapter will start by examining the syndrome itself in some detail. A first question worth looking into in the context of this thesis is whether there are differences in German and anglophone outlooks on the topic of burnout in research and management literature. And, if so, how can the differences be described?

There are numerous definitions for burnout. Nevertheless, in many cases, it can only be diagnosed based on the subjective impressions and reports of the person who feels he or she is affected. Risk factors and symptoms of burnout can be described but are not always easy to distinguish, as will become visible in the following sections. Finally, this part will be concluded by examining the individually different ways in which burnout can develop and by explaining how it almost always appears in the form of a process.

2.1.1 Differences in German and Anglophone Outlooks on Burnout

There are diverse attitudes towards burnout and resilience in different countries. For example, Squires et al. (2014) compared translations of

the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)[4]. They found that the term "burnout" does not necessarily imply the same ideas for researchers of different languages and regions. The internationally different approaches can also be seen in the two internationally relevant manuals that classify mental diseases: The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), published by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), and the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD) set up by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The ICD is the foundation for German physicians, psychologists and all medical professionals, based on which they formulate a diagnosis.

DSM 5 is the current version of APA's manual. Prior to its completion in 2013, there were discussions among experts, whether to include burnout syndrome in the DSM, respectively how to include it. Burnout is often termed 'syndrome', meaning a number of symptoms that appear in conjunction. Following the notion that burnout is not a disease in itself but rather a process that comes with various physical and mental impairments, burnout syndrome was eventually not included as a diagnosis in DSM 5 (Plieger et al., 2015, p. 19).

The other manual, ICD, has a category Z for "Factors influencing health status and contact with health services (Z00-Z99)". According to the current 10th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD10CM), burnout syndrome

---

[4] Maslach and others created a questionnaire with which they were able to determine whether a patient was in fact suffering from a burnout. This diagnostic and scientific tool came to be known as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Despite some criticism, the MBI served as a model for many similar inventories and is widely used today (for example Kleijweg, Verbraak and van Dijk, 2013; Wheeler, Vassar, Worley and Barnes, 2011 or Leon, Halbesleben & Paustian-Underdahl, 2015). The MBI contains, for example, items like "I feel emotionally drained by my work" or "I doubt the significance of my work" (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). The MBI and subsequent developments are still very much in use: "Of the instruments developed to measure burnout the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey (…) is the most widely used scale" (Trépanier, Fernet, Austin and Ménard, 2015, p. 51 f.).

would fall into a subcategory (Z73.0) which defines burnout as a "State of vital exhaustion". As medical professionals in Germany have to work with the ICD, many of them, when intending to diagnose a condition as a burnout, rather tend to label it vital exhaustion. Exhaustion can mean being tired, irritable, unmotivated or lacking energy (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013, p. 402).

The ICD also contains a chapter F for mental illnesses, which does not have any subcategory for burnout (Plieger et al., 2015, p. 19). It does, however, contain "Depressive Episode" (F32). It may stand to reason for some physicians and psychological professionals to diagnose a depression since its symptoms resemble that of a burnout in many cases: In the ICD manual, depressions are graded as minor, moderate and severe. They often occur episodically, and patients suffer from a dispirited mood, decreased motivation and inhibited activity. Their ability to feel happiness, develop or maintain interest and to concentrate is reduced. Tiredness on the one hand and insomnia on the other hand often appear in the same patient. Loss of appetite, feelings of guilt or a sense of being worthless are further typical symptoms of depression. Somatic symptoms often accompany the mental negativity, such as weight loss or physical apathy (ICD-10, F 32.).

Burnout is an aspect of mental or psychological health, and thus is often treated by psychologists. Since some psychologists have a professional background that borrows from psychoanalysis and since one could presume that Sigmund Freud's explanations of mental ailments[5] are still valuable today – particularly in the German context, both could influence a certain view of stress and burnout, which might be more common in Germany

---

[5] These explanations include the notion that mental ailments usually have their roots in childhood, that it needs an in-depth process to discover such roots and that understanding the origins is useful for being able to cope with their consequences in adult life (Thomä & Kächele, 1989)

than in anglophone regions. There, the outlook might be more clinical, solution- and behaviour-oriented. The research literature on burnout and resilience suggests that, as will be seen later on in this thesis.

German physicians, psychologists and similar professionals also have a practical reason for placing burnout close to depression in the context of diagnosing patients: German health insurance companies recognise depression as a condition that requires treatment. They appear to be reluctant, however, to consider burnout an illness and are therefore hesitant to finance respective therapies. Accordingly, statistics imply that there are less diagnoses of burnout syndrome in Germany than the appearance of burnout in the media would suggest. Possibly, the label burnout is – at least in certain groups – a representation or concealment of other mental burdens (Maske et al., 2016, p. 23).

As a general observation, Germans seem to look at burnout as a condition or even illness. Concerning Business and Management research, this will become more obvious in the following chapters of this thesis. In German research literature, burnout is often considered a form of sickness although it is not really listed in the medical reference manuals (Burisch, 2010). Thus, it is a phenomenon located somewhere in between a mental disease and a current state of acute stress or a beginning depression. Anglophone literature tends to handle stress as an 'individualised' experience. Moreover, researchers and practitioners from Britain, the USA or Australia but also from other European countries tend to be more solution oriented instead of looking for causes or for stress coping strategies. Positivity is a key concept in many current books and articles (for example Sekerka, Comer & Godwin, 2014; or Ahola et al., 2014). Sekerka, Comer and Godwin cite Peter Drucker, who pointedly wrote: "Good executives focus on opportunities rather than problems. (…) [P]roblems solving, however necessary, does not produce results. It prevents damage. Exploiting opportunities produces results" (Drucker, 2004, as cited in Sekerka, Comer & Godwin, 2014, p. 435)

2.1.2 Symptoms and Comorbidities

This section will describe symptoms and processes that are directly related to burnout. It will also illustrate mental indications and illnesses that tend to appear in conjunction with burnout, so-called comorbidities.

Stress at work can be defined as a condition of tension, which is perceived as unpleasant and accompanied by an imbalance of demand and control. Experiencing stress or feeling stressed is subjective since individuals have different stressors (Korczak, Kister & Huber, 2010, p. 72). Whether or not someone develops a sense of stress in a certain situation can also depend on age, experience and especially on the coping mechanisms to which a person can resort.

Some researchers see stress as a cause for burnout; others see burnout as a specification of stress (Bamberg, Keller, Wohlert & Zeh, 2012, p. 15). Both views imply that stress reduction can be an appropriate prevention for the symptoms of burnout. The difference between the two approaches is in the quality or meaning they assign to burnout syndrome. Believing that stress can lead to burnout means assuming they are two different challenges that will be treated as separate problems and in separate ways. Considering burnout to be an advanced stage of stress or a type of high-impact stress implies it is not a condition in itself. Here, stress prevention and burnout prevention are basically the same. For this thesis, which looks at the development of resilience, this differentiation in research literature is not of high importance. Many authors do not draw this line at all. Nevertheless, it is useful to note these two approaches as they are facets of the multiple aspects of burnout research. Moreover, both approaches are based on findings about the close links between burnout and stress, as for example shown by Cherniss (1980).

Since stress plays a major role in the development and process of burnout, it is useful to define stress. Selye (1978) introduced the term and many authors consider him the founder of stress research (Hedderich,

2014, p. 6). According to him, stress is an unspecific physical reaction to any kind of challenge that an individual is confronted with. Stressors can be perceived as positive encounters or as threats, especially in work contexts. In many cases, burnout is a consequence of a prolonged state of stress (Gnerre et al., 2017, p. 151). Nevertheless, stress does not automatically lead to burnout. Stress is a highly individualised phenomenon, which means that a situation can be very stressful for one person but might not pose any problem to another person. This depends on the perception of the situation and on the coping strategies a person has access to, has been born with or has acquired (Gnerre et al., 2017, p. 157).

Coping strategies are mechanisms which individuals can use in their behaviour or in their way of thinking that are helpful for them in unusually challenging situations. Examples of coping strategies are: Approaching a situation by consciously thinking about it and dealing with it in a way that appears proper. In addition, avoiding certain situations or dealing with them on an emotional level, which could include substance use, can be called coping strategies (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 2). Based on such under-standing of coping, stress can be "defined as the result of a relationship with the environment that the person appraises as significant for his or her well-being, and in which demands tax or exceed available coping resources" (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 2).

The term "burnout" was coined in the 1970s, as the following section will explain in more detail. In the early years, therapists and scientists as-sumed that it was mostly employees from helping professions such as med-ical staff who were affected (Kahill, 1988). In the meantime, researches have shown that workers from any sector can suffer a burnout when certain outer and inner factors exist: "Any type of work can prompt emotional ex-haustion" (Leiter, Day & Price, 2015, p. 28).

According to Maslach and Jackson, who have looked mostly at fac-tors within the individual worker, burnout syndrome in a work context is char-acterised by three domains (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 99). The authors

developed their model in the beginning of burnout research and many current studies still refer to it (for example Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013; Steltzner, 2015; Gnerre et al., 2017). The first domain is a feeling of being overburdened and exhausted because of job-related assignments. The second one is that many burnout patients develop an inner distance from their organisation. In addition, the third domain is a subjective impression of not being competent and successful enough (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 99).

Two decades later, Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) still described work-related burnout as consisting of three elements but also found evidence that they usually appear in a combination, depending on the individual's personality and situation. They now defined the three factors as dimensions, which are a perceived state of inefficacy and perceived lack of competence, an attitude of cynicism as well as detachment from work contents and social aspects of the job. The third and overall characteristic of burnout syndrome also in that model is exhaustion.

In addition to the factors described above, there is another phenomenon connected to burnout: Depression and burnout seem to be related in different ways (Ahola et al., 2014, p. 29). Depression – as well as burnout – can be interpreted as an individual's reaction to seemingly unmanageable demands. There is a wide span of symptoms, thus depression can range anywhere between a general sadness and a medically relevant psychological illness (Ahola et al., 2014, p. 29). The argument that depression is connected to burnout is also a diagnostic issue, as explained above.

Some studies have shown that burnout is related to social and psychological problems such as shortcomings in job-related or social areas of life but also sensory and cognitive limitations such as reductions in nonverbal memory, lessened visual and auditory attention as well as reduced ability to concentrate, think or make decisions. In addition to that, it is connected with eating disorders, with an increase of consumption of antidepressants, barbiturates or pain relievers and with the manifestation of mental disorders

(Ehresmann, 2016). A large-scale representative study that was carried out in Finland in 2000 conveyed correlations between burnout and depression, anxiety disorders, cardiovascular problems as well as musculoskeletal disorders. Some of these ailments, as well as infectious diseases, were also evident in international longitudinal research ventures. Burnout is even associated with an increased mortality (Ehresmann, 2016, p. 35). It is also considered not uncommon that burnout patients experience thoughts of suicide or even commit suicide. Another problematic aspect of burnout is that its consequences – mental as well as physical – tend to persist even after the stressors have ceased (Ehresmann, 2016).

Apart from comorbidities and symptoms, research on burnout brought forth insights into the procedural characteristic of burnout syndrome. According, for example, to Korczak, Kister and Huber (2010) the course a person undergoes during the phases of burnout syndrome can proceed like this: In the beginning, there is chronic stress at work, followed by a pre-burnout phase during which performance and motivation decrease, negative feelings about work arise, feelings of incompetence grow. The second stage is characterised by an overall loss of energy and social interest. In phase 3, emotional and social involvement diminish further, motivation disappears almost entirely. Somatic illnesses like insomnia or pains arise. Periods of rest do not lead to a feeling of being rested. The final phase can include existential fears and desperation, with thoughts of suicide in extreme cases (Korczak, Kister & Huber, 2010, p. 17).

Some authors have categorised burnout in types (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013, p. 404 f.). They base their research on the assumption that there are three types: "a 'worn-out' subtype, a classic (frenetic) subtype, and an under-challenged subtype" (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013, p. 404). The type "worn-out" is characterised by a loss of enthusiasm, a sense of frustration, by giving up and becoming apathetic. "The 'worn-out' type gives up when faced with stress or the absence of gratification and shows lack of control, lack of acknowledgement and neglect" (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 2). The "classic" or "frenetic" type can occur when

someone – frenetically and ambitiously - keeps working until the point of complete overload and exhaustion, while not having sufficient control over outcomes and not receiving enough acknowledgement. "The 'frenetic' burn-out type works increasingly harder, to the point of exhaustion, in search of success, and presents involvement, ambition and overload" (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 2). The third type, the "under challenged", occurs when a worker is bored of his or her tasks and lacks opportunities of career development. "The 'under-challenged' type has to cope with monotonous and unstimulating conditions that fail to provide satisfaction and feels indifference, boredom and lack of personal development" (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 2).

Overall, there is much consensus in research literature on the basic symptoms and processes of burnout. The research gap, however, is still in the transfer of scientific evidence to enterprises' practice. As it is an aim of this thesis to contribute to closing that gap. Knowledge of the symptoms of burnout syndrome, as well as of the phases in which it manifests itself, are essential for understanding the implications that mental strain can have on an enterprise's workforce, how they can influence business procedures, recruitment practices and, eventually, financial outcomes. In addition, the two research approaches of this thesis – especially the interview part – will be better understood and can be adequately evaluated based on the findings of burnout research, both historic and current.

2.2 Historic Findings and Current Trends of Research into Burnout

In order to understand the most prominent approaches of the past and present towards burnout, as well as widespread opinions about likely indications of burnout, it is necessary to have an overview of parts of the historical development of burnout research. This will show that the term "burnout" was coined many decades ago, which means it is not a current "invention". Understanding the root of today's burnout research will help to grasp current trends, such as the one Burisch (2014) has recently pointed

to, which is a new scepticism concerning burnout and will be referred to later in this section. Looking at the history of burnout research also shows that it is closely connected to the research of stress. However, as burnout can be considered a more complex phenomenon than stress, burnout research seems to yield a wider range of studies and approaches from various scientific fields. While it is not the thesis's aim to present an outline claiming to cover the entire development, some of the most important achievements will be presented in this section.

Early accounts of phenomena similar to modern burnout date back to the end of the nineteenth century. A bodily origin of certain afflictions could not be verified and an important observation from that was that mental sufferings are not usually rooted in biological malfunctions of the brain or in medically tangible conditions. Early researchers of the psyche claimed that the soul is normally able to manage inner conflicts and that some mental strains originate from experiences in the course of life. However, certain occurrences can evoke the conflicts and lead to breakups, which may cause mental sufferings. Early endeavours to deal with those ailments and to possibly heal them were the beginnings of modern psychotherapy (Thomä & Kächele, 1989, p. 8). A major milestone of research into mental ailments were the first findings on stress (Selye, 1978). Later, an important basis for future resilience research were studies on stress coping strategies, for example by Richard Lazarus (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 2).

The beginnings of actual burnout research can be traced back to the 1970s (Ehresmann, 2016, p. 164). German-American psychoanalyst Herbert Freudenberger coined the term (Freudenberger, 1974) and applied it to forms of fatigue he noticed in some of the patients of his psychoanalytical practice. In his article titled "Staff burn-out" from 1974, he described and tried to examine his observations after having worked with volunteers in a therapy setting. Many of them had complained of tendencies of fatigue and boredom due to the routine in the context of their tasks. As Freudenberger was investigating the individual circumstances from a psychoanalytical perspective, he observed in many of his patients some unresolved childhood

matters. Since Freudenberger had seen these tendencies in volunteers and not (yet) so much in workers and employees, he did not see it as necessarily a condition arising in the context of work, but any area of life. Within the realm of work, he saw it mostly as a problem arising among professionals whose job it is to help others, for example in service, health or teaching positions. Today, burnout is viewed as a condition that is relevant in any type of industry or business sector (Leon, Halbesleben & Paustian-Underdahl, 2015, p. 88).

At his time, Freudenberger did not only call the phenomenon or the syndrome "burnout", but also referred to the person suffering from such state as "a Burn-Out". Nowadays, his research is still relevant, but its value does not so much lie in any scientific quality since he received some criticism for his methods. His writings were largely based on his thoughts and observations as well as on conclusions he drew from that. However, even though his work seems to have lacked empirical evidence and validity, Freudenberger set an important milestone in stress research because he saw the complexity of the symptoms. Also, his texts are significant because of the fact that he introduced the term "Burn-Out" which is a telling and pictorial expression. Maybe this is even why the term is still popular on the one hand but seems colloquial on the other hand – which, to some, makes the word as well as the syndrome appear as non-scientific. Regardless of that, Freudenberger hit a nerve at the time and many researchers from various academic disciplines have since studied burnout. A great number of studies and texts about burnout have been produced and even some twenty years ago, in 1998, Schaufeli and Enzmann estimated that up to then, more than fifty dissertations and 300 studies had been produced annually which contained the word *burnout* in their title (Casserley & Megginson, 2009, p. 14). As an example for the current situation, the researcher searched for articles in PubMed, a database for social sciences, medical and psychological studies, with the search word "burnout". As burnout as a concept came up in the 1970s, research started during the subsequent decade. Since then, researchers' interest kept increasing: The search word brought only 2 results

for 1978 but already 108 for 1980. Since then, numbers are continually rising and have reached 1265 scientific articles for the year 2017. Plus, research into burnout nowadays is an international endeavour: While most initial publications came from the USA, today scholars carry out studies all over the world and have gathered data for example in Finland (Innanen, 2015), Taiwan (Lin et al., 2016) or in Mongolia (Altangerel et al., 2015).

Having learnt from Freudenberger, Christina Maslach, a researcher that became prominent in the 1980s, first put an emphasis on health care jobs. Subsequently, she also investigated jobs in social services. She expanded the perspective by looking beyond personal psychological states or initial infantile encounters. She included workplace settings and working conditions. Maslach moved burnout research forward with her definition of burnout, according to which it consists of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation/cynicism and personal inefficacy (Maslach & Jackson, 1984, p. 137).

In the early 1980s, Cary Cherniss was another significant scholar for the topic of burnout. Cherniss was a scientist who had specialised in the psychology of organisations and, besides work-related causes, he incorporated further components into the discourse. In his opinion, it was also necessary to reflect on influences from society. Social control as well as impacts from the collective or cultural circumstances ought to be considered (Cherniss, 1980). In line with that, Cherniss pointed out that burnout could partly be caused by dynamics in the relations between individuals and the social systems surrounding them. He built on the results which Maslach, Freudenberger and others had published and added his own positions. He concentrated on qualitative, empirical exploration styles and carried out various in-depth surveys. His analyses disclosed that workers with a well-developed sense of coherence are comparatively resilient in stressful times, which helps them to guard themselves from disorders like burnout.

Also in the 1980s, researchers began creating integrated health concepts, such as Antonovsky's salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1997; Breu, 2014,

pp. 138-139). Since then, various target groups have been examined and researchers have found employees of certain professions, positions and work conditions to be more at risk of burnout than others. They also saw that mid-level managers are a group that is particularly likely to be affected (Burisch, 2014). A multitude of reasons for and forms of burnout have been found and described, for example by Mäkikangas and Kinnunen (2016). They presented a review of studies that examine person-oriented aspects of burnout. Much consensus is on the finding that stress and depressive emotions are both central aspects of burnout (Burisch, 2014, p. 131; Plieger et al., 2015).

Historically, there was a transition after the initial phase when the term burnout was coined and first books and articles were written on the phenomenon towards approaches based on empirical findings in the 1980s. Thus, the twentieth-century history of research with regard to burnout can be seen as split into two eras: the pioneering stage and the empirical period. The pioneer phase began in the mid-1970s and was characterised by the discovery and early portrayals of the syndrome (for example Freudenberger, 1974 or Cherniss, 1980). The empirical research phase commenced in the 1980s with an emphasis on standardised quantitative studies (especially Maslach & Jackson, 1981 and 1984 and Kahill, 1980, who reviewed the findings of that time). After about 1995, some researchers chose qualitative approaches (summary by Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; further research for example by Casserley & Megginson, 2009).

Current burnout research is – among other trends - characterised by a controversy about defining and measuring burnout, its differentiation from other concepts such as depression and its value within international statistical classification systems – in other words the question whether or not burnout is to be considered as a disease. One of the leading German researchers in the field of burnout and author of many popular and scientific books on the topic is Matthias Burisch. He observed that since about 2011, there has been a tendency in society but also in the academic world to look more and more skeptically at the phenomenon of burnout. In his analysis of

media reports on burnout he finds an increase of terms like "burnout-hysteria", "fashion-word" or even "fashion-diagnosis", "burnout as a German specialty" or the German term "Burnout-Gejammer", which might be translated as "whining about burnout". More and more acclaimed scholars, he says, find it anachronistic for psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists to study burnout or practice in the field (Burisch, 2014). One might argue this opinion, considering the vast research situation depicted above, with researchers from numerous scientific fields examining burnout apparently from all angles, with a multitude of approaches and findings. Possibly, Burisch's observation reflects some of the grey literature or popular sciences. It could also represent mostly German articles and books, which might contain some of the ambiguous attitude explained above in comparison with anglophone research. In spite of that, Burisch has found evidence that some medical professionals prefer going back to a traditional term like "depressive fatigue" (Burisch, 2014). And others, such as Ehremsmann (2016, p. 14) also observe that transnationally significant health institutes like the World Health Organization (WHO) or the American Psychological Association (APA) are likewise careful and reluctant to include burnout syndrome into their manuals, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

The subsequent sections of this chapter will examine some of the current international findings in more detail. Researchers have placed various foci in their studies and many of them have tried to understand the causes of burnout. Some of their respective research results will be described in the following section.

2.3 Causes of Burnout: Individual or Organisational?

Further burnout research included theories and models, which became more defined and detailed. Burnout is a phenomenon, which appears to contain some medical and psychological factors but can also be ex-

plained as a social or social-cultural development. Therefore, there is a multitude of approaches today. In order to understand them, it is useful to cluster them and establish categories for a better overview. The structure of this section follows an attempt of sorting each approach into one of three basic groups of explanations for reasons and treatments of burnout and other stress-related mental issues: Two of those groups of explanations are person-centred approaches and organisational approaches. Both of them function as models for a better understanding of burnout. There is also a number of integrated approaches, that combine personal and organisational aspects.

2.3.1 Person-Centred Approaches

Person-oriented research examines burnout primarily from a perspective of personality specific aspects. The individual's external factors, such as living conditions, family or material resources play only minor parts in these approaches. A few person-oriented studies have examined influences such as socio-demographic or socio-economic features. Age, gender, family-background, income, social or socio-economic status play a role in the context of burnout. Gender can also be an issue. In general, women appear to be more at risk than men. Results concerning other socio-demographic features are inconsistent. For example, age or income might play a role in the development of burnout, but it is yet to be defined, what that role exactly is (Maske et al., 2016, p. 22).

Evidence-based studies searching for causes and risk factors have shown that certain personality traits correlate with the development of burnout (Brom et al., 2015, p. 67). These are traits like low self-confidence, lack of mental stability or an over-inclination to help others (Walter, Krugmann & Plaumann, 2012, p. 172). Freudenberger, in the 1970s, was one of the representatives of this line of thought. He saw an excessive motivation to help others as a source for burnout and argued that, from a psychoanalytical

view, an extreme wish to help other people goes back to childhood experiences of needs that were not fulfilled. It might actually be the desire to receive help that causes some people to offer help. Such personalities can be prone to burnout, since a strong want for attention is not met and therefore persists. Although this theory seems comprehensible, according to Hedderich it lacks empirical evidence (2014, p. 6/7).

Other personality structures that appear to increase the risk of developing burnout syndrome are narcissism (Schwarzkopf et al., 2016, p. 32) and perfectionism (Childs & Stoeber, 2012, p. 7). Perfectionists set high standards and goals for themselves and believe that others demand them to fulfil these (often self-invented) expectations. At the same time, however, they are rarely ever satisfied with themselves and attach their personal value to the fulfilment of their high aims. Such attitude is strenuous and can lead to frustration, which again are risk factors for exhaustion and burnout (Childs & Stoeber, 2012, p. 7). The main characteristics of narcissism as a personality disorder are a sense of being an important person, the need for being adored and a lack of sensitivity towards others. People who lean towards such personality structure often overestimate their abilities, tend to over perform and look down on others. Behind a longing to be treated as a special person often lies a sense of self-consciousness and of being unworthy (Tasche, 2016, p. 42).

Recently, researchers have started finding out more about the role of biomarkers, which are characteristic biological traits that can be measured, and thus convey objective information about regular biological or pathological processes in someone's body, for example blood, cells, genes, etc. Because research in this area has only begun, no clear results have been produced yet. Further insights are expected from the various fields of neurophysiology: "Researchers suggest that explorations of possible neuroendocrine abnormalities as well as brain imaging may shed further light on the pathophysiology and putative treatment regimes in this disorder" (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013, p. 402).

Some researchers take interest in person-oriented long-term aspects, for example whether burnout develops more often at particular moments in people's life-spans or at certain career stages, as Innanen and others (2015, p. 40) report. In accordance with that, more longitudinal studies have arisen, examining the same sample at two or more phases in their lives (Innanen et al., 2015, p. 39). Researchers suggest more such studies be carried out and that future longitudinal data should be generated for analyses of the chronology of possible mental predicaments, for example within a person's working life. Such critical factors could be put into correlation with other areas of life, such as social support or social resources. To complete the picture, scientists might have to observe mental comorbidities in the context of burnout (Maske et al., 2016, p. 23).

For business contexts, person-centred approaches bear many implications. For one, findings from the beginning of burnout research showed that excessive desires to help others can - under certain conditions - cause great stress. For some time, this led to the assumption that particularly employees in helping professions are prone to burnout. However, subsequent studies pointed out that mental illnesses and stress can afflict workers of any field of work, including industrial environments, which is the sector this thesis focuses on.

Moreover, person-centred approaches show that burnout, despite being "only" a mental problem, can lead to somatic illnesses, and thus researchers emphasised the far-reaching consequences that burnout can have for workers and their organisations. Some attempts have been made to find out more about biological, genetical and psycho-structural predispositions. In addition, life-stages and social conditions are being examined. All of these can have great implications for enterprises, for example concerning recruitment processes or personnel development strategies.

2.3.2 Organisational Approaches

Apart from person-oriented approaches, burnout syndrome obviously is a relevant phenomenon also from an organisational point of view. Organisational factors are for example structures, work design or control structures. There are reports of a heightened tendency for burnout in employees who perceive that their work-related burdens and challenge match neither their room for decisions nor the recognition or fair treatment from the employer (Ahola et al., 2014). Another risk factor is a sense of not forming a collective with colleagues and of not being socially involved. "Research has found that high work load, as well as lack of participation and social support at work, increases the risk of burnout" (Ahola et al., 2014, p. 29). Another problem was found in the so-called burnout contagion or burnout-crossover. Both terms describe the observation that burnout can affect colleagues or people from other life areas of a burnout patient (Ehresmann, 2016, p. 35).

Many workers look for tasks that meet their values. Low or decreasing compatibility of assignments with personal standards can add to feelings of stress and be a risk factor for burnout (Bruch & Kowalevski, 2012, p. 12). Satisfaction with one's work, readiness to stay with the company or commitment to the job seem to correlate in certain ways with burnout. Researchers have for example shown relations between burnout and absenteeism or between burnout and work-performance and engagement (Leon, Halbesleben & Paustian-Underdahl, 2015, p. 87). Furthermore, it was shown that burnout and presenteeism as well as burnout and an increased risk of early retirement due to sickness correlate (Ehresmann, 2016, p. 35). Also, from Burisch's view point (2010), relevant causes for burnout can be that workers are not given enough possibilities to develop their own tasks and ways of fulfilling them. He agrees with other researchers that many employees have excessive responsibilities and are overburdened by long working hours, insufficient breaks or holidays. Additionally, conditions such as too few possibilities for personal and professional development or even being unchallenged sufficiently can be a cause for burnout syndrome (Hedderich, 2014,

p. 7). In their organisations, many employees experience that it only appears as if they could participate in designing the contents of their work, their working hours or working places - when in reality they might not really have such influence. Decentralisation, self-management and supporting the development of individual resources seem to be modern management approaches. Proposed aims are to allow workers a certain extent of freedom and to show them appreciation for their work. At the same time, employees are expected to invest time and energy in their personal career and to "market" themselves efficiently (Ladegard, 2011, p. 29). Depending on a worker's personality, these conditions may be helpful. For some, however, they present a burden and can under certain circumstances lead to a burnout syndrome.

There are further characteristics of working situations within enterprises that are considered relevant in the context of burnout syndrome, such as role conflicts or uncertain roles (Borritz et al., 2010, p. 964). Role conflicts emerge when workers have to show certain behavioural patterns that contradict each other. For example, this can happen when high sales figures are to be achieved, but at the same time it is a goal of the organisation to give customers the impression that sales are not the main focus. If, instead, the company aims at making clients feel they are getting some neutral and objective advice, such promise may be hard for the employee to fulfil because he or she just does not have the time for extensive counselling. Also, uncertain roles and ambiguities concerning accountabilities leave employees in a state of insecurity because they do not know exactly what their duties are, how far their responsibilities reach or simply what their tasks are (Childs & Stoeber, 2012, p. 3).

With increasing pressure due to market competition, many enterprises try to cope by intensifying work, raising performance expectations, initiating faster work processes or changing management and work strategies (Ladegard, 2011, p. 29). Bruch and Kovalevski warn that if such conditions persist without sufficient pauses, for example with less stressful phases during the course of the year, they can lead into a "speed-trap"

("Beschleunigungsfalle") with entire organisations "overheating" ("ganze Organisationen werden überhitzt") (Bruch & Kowalevski, 2012, p. 12). Under such conditions, some organisations contemplate whether monetary or other rewards can keep up their employees' enthusiasm. In fact, some researchers have found that a salary that is perceived as too low, lack of appreciation and scarce possibilities of professional development can enhance the occurrence of burnout (Bruch & Kowalesvksi, 2012, p. 17). Others point to deficiency of constructive feedback as a source of burnout (Walter, Krugmann & Plaumann, 2012, p. 172). Supervisors' leadership styles play an important role, too. As will be explained later on in this thesis, it can be important for employees to see how their superiors themselves deal with stress, heavy workloads and other burnout risk factors.

In person- and organisation-oriented current burnout research, causes are examined in greater detail than before, for example by Brom et al. (2015), who applied the Areas of Worklife Scale (AWS), which reflects on specific properties of working situations, namely workload, control, reward, community, fairness and values and their meaning for the development of burnout. A current tendency in burnout studies is to look more closely at very specific target groups. During the last one or two decades, research has examined various professional groups and samples have become quite defined. For example, instead of looking at the situation of physicians, recent research examined burnout with radiologists (Ehresmann, 2016, p. 14). Others go beyond groups like teachers or administration employees but choose social justice education activists (Gorski, 2015). Also, some researchers decide not to limit their samples to certain profession but instead ask about the situations of highly educated employees in general, regardless of sector or type of organisation (Innanen et al., 2014).

Certain approaches stem from sociology and social sciences and suggest that society should be regarded as a source for burnout tendencies. This line of thought focuses on the rising expectations concerning workers' flexibility and mobility, on the perceived increase of social isolation and loneliness due to urban anonymity. Representatives of this sociological view

also see modern communication tools as well as the concept of permanent availability due to digital technologies as reasons for a rising number of burnout cases (Hedderich, 2014, p. 7).

The research results presented in this section show that organisational aspects seem to play an important role in the prevention of burnout syndrome. This could be good news for enterprises, because this is the field they can influence and, if necessary, improve. Companies can design their internal decision-making processes, incentive strategies, participation policies, work-place descriptions, time- and value management as well as prepare mid-level managers for being role models concerning stress prevention. However, research literature also reveals that enterprises often do not adapt their business behaviour accordingly.

2.3.3 Integrated approaches

A common thread in all concepts is that researchers usually do not consider burnout being triggered by a single cause. Instead, it is assumed that a conglomerate of reasons leads to burnout (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013, p. 402). As Hedderich (2014, p. 7) points out, the phenomenon is just too complex for simple explanations. In fact, hardly any researcher would claim that just one dimension or type or theory of causes can be enough to understand even an individual case.

Some researchers therefore conclude that burnout can arise when personality traits and threatening conditions of the social environment do not match. The current discourse on burnout is dominated by models around ideas of balance. Perceived lack of control over one's own work, frustration and unfulfilled expectations can be causes of burnout – depending on individual conditions (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013, p. 402). Karasek's *Job demands-resources* model (Karasek, 1979) is an influential theory when it comes to work-stress research. Here, the basic notion is that work-related stress results from a combination of high demands in the job

and insufficient control over one's own work activities and results. High demands call for solid and persistently good performance from the side of the worker. Control includes their possibilities to participate in designing the work situation, for example concerning time aspects and tasks. Schaufeli (2017, p. 120) explains some mental developments that might occur when job-related resources and demands are out of balance. The model suggests that jobs can bring difficulties but also assets. While the difficulties are demanding in a negative way, the assets come with positive stimuli (Schaufeli, 2017, p. 121). In the case that demands outweigh resources, jobs are perceived as stressful and not rewarding. "Accordingly, in the health-impairment process, job demands (i.e., negatively valued aspects of the job that require sustained effort) deplete employees' mental, emotional and physical resources and therefore lead to burnout" (Trepanier 2015, p. 52). Burnout cases due to lack of contentment with the job, the position, the task or other aspects of work can apparently account for up to 20 percent of all burnout instances (Hollmann & Hanebuth, 2011, p. 81).

Exhaustion is a major aspect of burnout. Nevertheless, researchers draw a much more differentiated picture of burnout syndrome than just defining it as that. As a workplace phenomenon, it seems to go back to constant and lasting stress. Therefore, "some researchers prefer using the term "burnout" when it is related to work overload and 'vital exhaustion' when it is linked to family and financial stress (…) hormonal, dietary, and pharmaceutical perspectives (…) [f]eelings of inadequate control over one's work, frustrated hopes and expectations, and low levels of satisfaction" (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013, p. 402). According to Ahola et al., if an organisation expects performances from their workers that they cannot fulfil because they lack the necessary – mental, personal, financial or in any way material – means, burnout can arise. This risk increases, when employees do not have proper coping strategies (Ahola et al., 2014, p. 29). A concise summary of integrated approaches is given by Montero-Marin and others, who formulate the observation that burnout has social and psychological roots that stem mostly from conditions in the context of work. Despite the

causes that lie outside of the individual, it is nevertheless the respective person who is afflicted and bears the consequences: According to the research group around Montero-Marin, burnout can be looked at as a "work-related disorder of psychosocial origin, caused when stressful working conditions are endured. Its presence has been associated with a worsened self-perception of health and a large amount of somatic comorbidity" (Montero-Marin et al., 2014, p. 1).

2.4 Burnout and Organisational Reality: A Conceptualisation

After having depicted and reflected on some relevant models, their historical developments, reasons for burnout and structural concepts of the phenomenon, the researcher will now present the concept of burnout that forms the basis of the research project. In this thesis, burnout is conceptualised as a phenomenon of social and individual origin, which has far-reaching medical implications. These implications go beyond the person affected because they concern organisations, the economy and society. Burnout affects enterprises negatively, but it is also enterprises, especially those with problematic organisational structures and proceedings, in which burnout tends to arise.

Medical relevance: Burnout syndrome is a mental ailment that has medical and psychological implications, which are to be taken seriously (Ehresmann, 2016, p. 35). Fatigue, emotional exhaustion, cynicism and inefficacy are the main symptoms of burnout syndrome (Maslach & Jackson, 1984; Leon, Halbesleben & Paustian-Underdahl, 2015). It is a process with subsequent phases of increasingly severe symptoms. Burnout it is a relevant disorder that has serious consequences for individuals, organisations and society. It is necessary to label it as such, which is not always the case, as explained in chapter 2.1.1. In Germany, there are structural and insurance-related reasons for general practitioners, psychiatrists, etc., not to diagnose a stress-related mental disorder as a burnout, but for example as a

depression. This leads to statistical consequences as well as misinformed scientists, health professionals and managers (Maske et al., 2016).

Considering the definitions mentioned above, burnout is a socio-psychological expression of great practical relevance for many enterprises in modern societies and definitely for Germany, the United Kingdom and other Western capitalist countries. Nevertheless, scientific literature cannot provide just one, commonly acknowledged definition, despite a multitude of studies, books and articles on the subject of burnout.

Social and individual factors: Social aspects are essential even though scientists have not yet understood and described them fully. The value of work itself, of wealth and income, of one's position within a company or of business success seem to contribute to the development of burnout as well as certain personality traits (Brom et al., 2015). In some groups, burnout tends to have a positive connotation as it indicates commitment. Social aspects include a person's private environment since a less than fulfilling private life seems to be a risk factor for burnout (Kakiashvili, Leszek & Rutkowski, 2013).

Organisational causes: Some organisational structures intensify the risk of burnout, such as excessive workload, lack of participation, lack of support (Ahola et al., 2014), (role-related) conflicts (Borritz et al., 2010), problematic work procedures and ill-designed change management processes (Ladegard, 2011). Doubting that one's work serves any worthy purpose can add to triggering burnout (Cherniss, 1980). Stress can be a reason for burnout syndrome as well as a part of it. Some people are more prone to stress than others, and stress depends on the individual's perception of what is a stressor. No evaluation should be attached to that: A worker that is easily stressed can still be a good worker. In many cases, problems arise when stress is a continuous, never-ending factor at work (Hedderich, 2014). Burnout can affect professionals of any industry or work field.

Summarising the concept, the researcher defines burnout as a work-related, medically relevant mental illness. It is caused by various social, individual and organisational factors with the same groups also bearing the consequences.

Chapter 1 explained why it is important for enterprises to face mental illnesses and the first half of this second chapter described burnout to be one of those illnesses. In the second half of chapter 2, the reader will be taken to the next step, which is the question of how to manage the challenge of burnout. As researchers and enterprises have tried to find ways of dealing with it, some approaches have received attention that can be subsumed under the term "resilience". The subsequent sections, therefore, will take a closer look at research findings concerning resilience in enterprises.

2.5 Resilience: Organisational and Individual Level

Since the aim of this thesis is to look at resilience as either an alternative mindset during stressful periods or as an eventual, positive outcome of burnout, the previous sections delivered some definitions and concepts of burnout. The following sections will be dedicated to resilience. Resilience appears to be a complex matter, which resulted in a variety of approaches that were developed. Researchers as well as business professionals have created various concepts and strategies to operationalise resilience. In this chapter, some of the academic models and theories will be presented as well as some of the practice-oriented guidelines.

After a short defining introduction, the second half of the chapter will be similarly structured as the first one. There, a distinction was made between person-centred and enterprise-related approaches. Studies on resilience can often also be categorised as either concerning the individual worker or an entire organisation.

2.5.1 Origin and Definition of the Term

There are various definitions of the term "resilience". It is derived from the Latin word "resiliere" which means "to spring back" or "to bounce off" and describes that something resumes its original form. Thus, some authors mention the roots of the word as to lie in the field of materials science. A material that springs back into its original shape after having been deformed is considered resilient (Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016, p. 95). Other fields in which the word is used are natural sciences such as ecology and physics. In physics, resilience describes a material that is resistant to pressure and that can keep its shape despite a certain amount of compression imposed on it. In ecology, the ability of systems in nature to go through changes or challenges without damage is studied. Ecologists work with various definitions, of which two are also interesting for economic systems such as enterprises and their workers: The first concept investigates the ability of a system to change in order to go back to a state of balance after a period of disorder, like a natural disaster. Here, the focus is on flexibility or renewal. The second view evolves around the capability of a structure of organisms to maintain processes and interactions in or after a critical situation. Emphasis is on constancy and stability (D'Lima & Medda, 2015, p. 36).

Social sciences took up some of the nature-based concepts, but they also derived transferrable insights from psychology or psychotherapy. Psychologists understand resilience as an outlook on life that permits a person to resist problematic circumstances. Thus, the term refers to a person's ability to cope with difficult situations or periods of life (Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016, p. 95). Therefore, resilience can be defined as a "phenomenon of psychological resilience", that "implies such a coping capacity, which leads to positive adjustment and healthy development" (Höfler, 2014, p. 33).

Transferring the meaning to Business and Management research, individual workers but also an entire company can be considered resilient (Rothe et al., 2017). The scope of resilience of a system or individual can be defined "depending on the rate at which it returns to equilibrium after a

disturbance away from equilibrium" (D'Lima & Medda, 2015, p. 35). Presumably, resilient employees think positive and focus on resources rather than deficits. They know their own potential and have an ability to realistically assess if a problem can be solved or not. In spite of setbacks or negative feedback, they tend to actively change their lives in an affirmative way (Krauss-Hoffmann et al. 2016, p. 96). Researchers claim that even those who are mentally not as strong as others can acquire a certain level of resistance. This means that crises would not cause persistent mental damage in a resilient person nor would they impede their aptitude to encounter precarious situations in a proactive manner (Borgert, 2013, p. 5). The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology offers quite an inclusive definition. According to that, resilience is "Positive adaptation in the context of significant challenges, variously referring to the capacity for, processes of, or outcomes of successful life-course development during or following exposure to potentially life-altering experiences" (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers & Reed, 2011, p. 119).

Within the social sciences, models of resilience have received attention especially in youth and childhood studies. It was observed that some children from families facing various social and socio-economic burdens grow up to become mentally stable adults whereas others do not overcome their problematic past and remain living in disadvantageous circumstances. Studies found the successful ones to be more resilient (Berndt, 2013, p. 66). Scientists have begun to transfer those ideas of resilience to adults and to labour topics and with that, to burnout (Berndt, 2013, p. 72; Sommer et al. 2014). Business and Management researchers have presented studies on work-related resilience (for example Leypold, 2009; Siegrist, 2009; Götze, 2013). Leypold (2009) examined a resilience model and its impact on successful Human Resources Management. Siegrist (2009) studied how patients with work-related diseases go through a process of acquiring resilience. He found out that people who were able to improve their resilience often changed their lifestyles extensively after the crisis. Looking at resilience processes from an organisational view, Götze (2013) analysed how

resilience-training programmes can be integrated into workplace structures and administrative processes. Sommer and colleagues (2014) presented an inventory as a tool for supervisors and workers to assess their resilience potential and to define psychological and personal characteristics that might influence the ability to feel resilient (Sommer et al. 2014, p. 157 ff.).

There are various definitions of the term resilience, with different focusses, for example on organisations and systems (Carlton, 2014 or D'Lima & Medda, 2015). Other definitions refer to the individual and to psychological or emotional aspects and define emotional resilience especially in the context of work as a "set of conditions that allow individual adaptation to different forms of adversity at different points in the life course" (Business in the Community Emotional Resilience Steering Group, 2009, p. 3; similarly Höfler, 2014). The multitude of definitions that can be found in business and research literature partly goes back to the recognition that resilience can adopt various forms, depending on context and time: "Resilience is also contextual in many ways and is therefore best understood as multidimensional and variable across time and circumstance" (CIPD, 2011, p. 2). A critical aspect in any scientific work on resilience are the "wide discrepancies (…) in the way that resilience is defined and conceptualised. For instance, the construct of resilience has variously been defined as a trait, process, or outcome" (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 13). For the purpose of this thesis, it seems useful to consider all three dimensions. Resilience as a trait might stress the importance of concepts such as person-job fit. Looking at resilience as a process might help to find the answer to the question of how to design the transformation from burnout to a more positive outlook or atmosphere in workplaces. Resilience as an outcome also seems a worthy goal for the transformation process this thesis is examining.

2.5.2 Resilient Workers

Many workers suffer mentally and physically when they are stressed or are going through phases of burnout. Therefore, doing one's job with an

attitude of resilience seems to be a good solution or prophylactic. Apart from the helpful impact on the workers themselves, studies have also shown positive business effects of a resilient workforce (Bardoel et al., 2014, p. 280; Hoppenrath & Streich, 2013, p. 243; Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 26). The influence of resilience on an enterprise's success can, according to some authors, be seen in the well-being of the employees and in the organisational status quo. Therefore, they suggest that measures be taken to strengthen resilience within the workforce. Some companies may do so with a focus on workers' well-being as an end in itself. Others may have a neoliberal attitude because resilient employees are less of a hindrance for enterprises pursuing their profit-oriented goals. For example, Sinclair and Cheung believe that all organisations face the challenge "how to find and develop employees who can rise to the challenge of adverse circumstances and who are capable of persevering with relatively few health or performance-related problems" (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 15).

Moreover, it is considered helpful to strengthen an employee's personal resources because of the individually different approaches humans have when it comes to arduous incidents (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 15). Within the category of personal elements of an attitude of resilience, one can establish two basic subcategories: The first subgroup are innate personality traits, which a person has been born with or which he or she was taught during childhood. The second group of elements could be described as containing all those capabilities that someone can acquire later in life, during adulthood (for example Müller et al., 2017, p. 215 or Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 15). The German anthology "Fehlzeiten-Report" (report on leaves of absence) is published on an annual basis and presents current scientific

findings about workforce related challenges, which companies face at present.[6] In one of the 2017 articles, Ducki (p. 5) defines resilience as a conglomerate of abilities and factors, which increase a person's resistance against critical psychosocial, mental and physical developments and are needed when confronted with high performance demands. Some researchers have tried to be more precise, such as Müller and co-authors (2017, p. 217). They have filtered out from studies that a person who could be called resilient possesses a sense of being self-efficient and believes that even unexpected and unknown situations can be handled successfully. They have a feeling of coherence and an outlook on circumstances as being comprehensible and also manageable. In addition to that, according to the research findings Ducki (2017, p. 5) presents, a resilient person perceives his/her life as meaningful and useful, and is thus by and large optimistic. Combined with that is a positive attitude towards him-/herself which can also be related to being a member of a stable and supportive social network.

In addition to that, researchers found personality traits such as confidence, optimism, sensual abilities and a mindset of general acceptance in resilient people (Ducki, 2017, p. 5) as well as hardiness, positive emotions, extraversion, spirituality, self-esteem combined with positive affect (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 15). In order to achieve resilience, it appears necessary

---

[6] In the 2017 edition, the researchers report a sickness rate of about 6% in industrial companies, which this thesis focusses on, compared to a national German average of 5,3% (Meyer, Wehner & Cichon, 2017, p. 281). The higher the professional status and the more qualified employees are, the lower their sickness rate (Meyer, Wehner & Cichon, 2017, p. 302). However, mental illnesses are especially relevant compared to other ailments since the number of days that employees are absent from work due to stress, depression, burnout etc. have risen by almost 80% between 2005 and 2016 (Meyer, Wehner & Cichon, 2017, p. 281). This is alarming since mental illnesses tend to lead to relatively long leaves of absence (Meyer, Wehner & Cichon, 2017, p. 309). For positions in mid-level management, statistics show that in 2016, the average case of sickness due to mental problems lastet more than 33 days (Meyer, Wehner & Cichon, 2017, p. 328).

to look at those individual differences. In a similar manner as with burnout - where certain personality traits seem to foster the development of burnout and stress - there seem to be traits in a person that make him or her more resilient in difficult times.

Sinclair and Cheung have reviewed a number of models from occupational health that define personality traits. Probably the most prominent of those models is the Five-Factor Model, which receives much attention in psychology studies as well as in therapy. The scholars have extracted from each model those traits they consider relevant in the context of resilience. Generally, personality traits are personal resources, that support "individual functioning in adverse circumstances" (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 17). Personality traits are basically rooted in a person's psychological disposition. It is, however, also possible to change them – through better knowledge and practice in everyday life as well as by certain deliberate measures, such as training sessions or seminars. Thus, they could be altered, when necessary, within organisational contexts. Another characteristic of personality traits is that they are interdepended, that is some of them correlate. For example, "traits such as hopefulness, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy share some common elements" (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 17). From the various common personality trait-models, Sinclair and Cheung have produced a synopsis that combines the traits they consider important for the development of resilience. From the initial letters of each trait they formed the acronym POWER: purpose, optimism, will power, emotional stability and resourcefulness (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 19 ff.). Purpose is the sense that life activities, such as jobs, are filled with meaning. Optimism refers to an attitude according to which difficulties are not so much seen as threats but rather as challenges that can be overcome with positive results. Will power includes facets like discipline, self- and impulse control or thriving for accomplishments. Emotionally stable individuals keep calm in problematic situations, have a high stress tolerance or evade destructive stimuli. Resourcefulness is the self-perception of having useful personal resources and of being able to respond adequately to challenges. This trait

includes mindsets like hope, self-esteem or proactivity and especially a sense of self-efficacy. In chapter 5 of this thesis, the qualitative study among mid-level and HR managers will be presented. This study was carried out in order to find out more about professionals' attitudes towards resilience in the workplace. It is the aim to draw parallels between the results from this chapter and the outcomes of the interviews. Possibly, some of the traits will be commented on or implicitly mentioned by the interviewees.

Stressful situations can be perceived as critical phases. In the context of stress, coping abilities are central. It can be assumed that individual workers recognise working conditions as more or less stressful depending on their personality and individual coping resources. Stress perception can also depend on the relationship between a person and his/her environment (Ehresmann, 2016, p. 39). Here, too, coping strategies and resilience tactics matter: Respective studies "showed that individuals are able to compartmentalise their reactions to different work-related outcomes, i.e., the fit/misfit in different areas of work life relates more strongly to specific outcomes" (Brom et al., 2015, p. 67).

Engagement or disengagement are topics, which have been studied since business researchers started studying resilience in the 1990s. For example, they tried to understand when and why workers would commit themselves to their job. Initially, burnout and engagement were considered counterparts: "It has been suggested that the dimensions of burnout and work engagement represent opposite ends of two continua reflecting employees' overall level of energy and identification with their work" (Trepanier 2015, S. 51). A person who strongly engages him- or herself at work would be someone whose actions and attitudes are characterised by energy, involvement, and efficacy. These appear to be the exact opposites of the factors that typify burnout which are fatigue, cynicism and inefficacy. In this context, disengagement was also examined and defined in similar terms as burnout, namely as "behaviours that opposed and dissuaded physical, cognitive, and emotional connection to the job while simultaneously encouraging incomplete role performance" (Leon, Halbesleben & Paustian-Underdahl, 2015,

p. 88). Personality, attitudes towards work and resilience are subjects that were included in investigations of the concept of engagement in the context of burnout. On the one hand, resilience, burnout and commitment all relate to workers' well-being in some way. On the other hand, advanced burnout and work engagement do not necessarily correlate (Upadaya, 2016, p. 102). While the nature of that correlation still needs to be studied further, to some, it appears certain that "burnout and work engagement are not diametrical counterparts" (Trepanier 2015, S. 51). Concerning the meaning of engagement, there is no consensus among researchers. In research into the topic of engagement, one could argue that research projects need to be designed carefully since there could be possible tendencies to search for results that play into the hands of those who see the development of personal resilience as a way around organisational change. The closer look at resilience strategies, which this thesis will provide, might already be beneficial to better understand the role of engagement.

Positive business results were observed when a worker actually fits into a certain job or, vice-versa, when a job particularly suits a specific person. This relation is called "person-job fit". Outcomes of studies were that proper person-job fits mean that workers perceived their tasks as individually significant. Such concepts reportedly led to better accomplishments at work and to greater contentment. Another result of such studies was that workers who experience a good person-job fit remain in their companies and have a lesser tendency to quit their jobs (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2013, p. 92).

2.5.3 Resilient Organisations

In recent years, resilience has entered the academic stage of social and business sciences, where various ways of approaching it have been found (for example Borgert, 2013; D'Lima & Medda, 2015; Rose & Krausmann, 2013; Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). The distinction between flexible

and stable systems can be applied to organisations and enterprises. According to Rose and Krausmann (2013) a stable system can "maintain function when shocked" whereas a flexible organisation can activate a fast "speed of recovery from a shock. This refers to the efficient utilisation of resources for repair and reconstruction" (Rose & Krausmann, 2013, p. 74). Organisational resilience refers to the capability of an enterprise to keep up its basic functions and structures in the face of market challenges and disturbances from the environment at any time. The concept of resilience "provides insight into how organisations continually achieve desirable outcomes amidst adversity, strain, and significant barriers to adaptation or development" (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003, p. 94).

It is important at this point to mention that there may be various meanings attached to the term "organisational resilience". While in the context of this research endeavour, resilience on an organisational level refers to the mental states of workers, other academic disciplines also look at the organisational scope of resilience but rather understand it as a systems approach. According to that, a large organisation as a whole might experience an outstanding, negative and therefore critical event but will be called resilient if it is able to recover from that. In cases like that, resilience would be characterised by "the length of time that a system takes to return to equilibrium following a disturbance" or by an organisation's "persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables" (D'Lima & Medda, 2015, p. 36). For example, D'Lima and Medda examined the ability of resilience of the London Underground after potential disruptions due to disaster of either natural or man-made origin where large parts of the transportation network would be impaired (D'Lima & Medda, 2015, p. 35). Within that concept, an organisation would be considered resilient if it not only stays functional during predicaments and supports their employees' abilities for adjustment but if it could also benefit from threatening times by creating new strengths. Accordingly, Rose and Krausmann differentiate between inherent and adaptive resilience. Inherent resilience to them means that an

organisation had certain strengths to muster a challenge even before it happened. Adaptive resilience refers to abilities that surface because of or during the critical instance. A company that is called *adaptively resilient* can carry out appropriate changes when needed (Rose & Krausmann, 2013, p. 74). Both directions – inherent and adaptive resilience – can also be of importance for this thesis: In the face of workers suffering from burnout or when a burnout seems likely, an enterprise either has resources that are needed to protect their employees from burnout, or it is able to develop strategies to manage burnout once it has occurred.

A practical tool that can be considered a means for strengthening individual as well as organisational resilience, which is an inherent asset as well as an instrument for adapting is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). EAPs are a form of professional counselling of which employees can make use when they feel they need psychological support. EAPs are implemented on behalf of management and are mostly run by external providers (Hoppenrath & Streich, 2013, p. 264 f.). EAPs originated in the US during the 1930s as a means for fighting alcoholism and other substance abuses. Modern EAPs can have a much wider scope, though, and can be called upon whenever workers look for support in work-related or in personal matters. In Germany, there are currently three different forms of EAPs: Telephone hotlines, individual coaching sessions and online counselling services. The matters workers discuss with the counsellors can be conflicts at work, substance abuse and other addictions, mental strain at work, organising daily life (for example problems concerning child care) or anything pertaining to work-life-balance. A research study on EAPs in German enterprises delivered the result that those companies who have implemented an EAP use it mostly to support workers who have questions concerning mental health (EuPD Research/Insite Interventions, 2012). All companies that took part in the survey reported that they found the EAP to be very beneficial. None stated that they were not satisfied. Positive aspects were the good feedback and high rate of acceptance among staff, high utilisation

rate, good prevention results, reduction of presenteeism, high professionality, discretion and good communication. Criticism was mentioned concerning costs, reservations and doubts on the side of employees, worries concerning anonymity, missing standards and objectives, frequent change of counsellors, lack of competence and business knowledge among counsellors.

Managers have an essential role within the organisation when it comes to supporting the development of resilient attitudes. In this role, their own resilience seems to be a prerequisite for holding a supervising position, according to some researchers (for example Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 257). As explained in the introductory chapter, loyalty conflicts and other stress-producing factors tend to make managers in middle positions even more prone to burnout than other employees. In fact, studies have shown that executives run a high risk of burning out (Sommer et al., 2014, p. 9).

Especially mid-position managers such as team or unit managers find themselves in between two "fronts": on the one hand, they want to and might have to fulfil the expectations of their own superiors and of the enterprise as a whole. They report to a higher level within the organisational hierarchy. On the other hand, they are in charge of one or more groups on a hierarchical level below their own. In that position, many executives feel responsible for the well-being of their team members. This goal can be either an objective for which they receive support from their own supervisors. Some companies put a focus on ensuring their workers' well-being. They may delegate this task to team and unit heads (Horváth et al., 2009, p. 11). However, caring for team members' mental health for example by keeping stress away from them, can also turn out to be somewhat contradictory to the expectations of general management.

As we have seen in the first half of this chapter, burnout is a condition of modern organisational life. Pressure and stress arise from market situations, problematic organisational structures and other factors that lie mostly

in the realm of enterprises and only to a certain extent in the workers and mid-level managers themselves. Yet, the employees as individuals are the ones who bear the full impact of such pressures and in some cases develop a burnout syndrome. Many companies have assumed the responsibility, but improvements are still to be achieved to a satisfactory degree. More about that process will be explicated in chapter 4, where the transformation from burnout to resilience will be discussed and examples will be presented of enterprises that have started making efforts to reach that goal of transformation. While organisations are still trying to learn from individual and collective burnout experience and as long as certain structural problems are not solved, individuals find themselves in a situation in which they will have to assume the responsibility for their personal well-being. Important approaches seem to appear in the field of positive psychology and emotional intelligence. Section 2.6 will discuss those two concepts.

2.6 Positive Psychology and Emotional Intelligence

This section will focus on positive psychology and emotional intelligence as examples for approaches that can help individuals to develop resilience. Both burnout and resilience are issues that concern the individual but also entire organisations. On the one hand, resilient workers are a valuable asset for their company. On the other hand, an enterprise that pays attention to some of the messages from positive psychology and/or from emotional intelligence-approaches may create a culture that in turn supports the resilience of managers and employees, according to the representatives of such concepts. In the following, attention will be drawn to some of the dynamics that positive psychology and emotional intelligence can cause when applied in work processes and workplaces.

2.6.1 Thinking Positive

Resilience is an element of positive psychology as a concept. In addition, positive psychology as a discipline within the science of psychology

can be considered a field in which resilience is examined. Thus, many studies about resilience stem from positive psychology research (Trepanier, 2015, p. 51).

While early burnout research focused much on causes and symptoms of the syndrome, there are current developments that include preventive strategies or solutions. Some researchers and professionals have taken an interest in thinking about burnout or resilience neither from the perspective of reasons nor from a standpoint of burnout prevention or even intervention, because all these approaches imply negativity. Rather, they want to pay attention to constructive and affirmative positions. One of those is positive psychology: "The field of positive psychology has greatly influenced our current conceptualisation of employee functioning by highlighting the importance of not only preventing negative manifestations (i.e., ill-being) but also promoting positive ones (i.e., well-being)" (Trepanier, 2015, p. 51).

Theories of positive psychology (Bardoel et al., 2014) and branches of it, such as mindfulness, are based on ideas of a reflective mindset and a sensitised outlook on life. Positive psychology as a concept was originally introduced by Abraham Maslow in the 1950s (Lopez & Gallagher, 2011, p. 3). It emphasises and studies positive aspects of human life such as happiness, optimism, trust and other individual resources. Relevant impulses came from Martin Seligman who, since the late 1990s, discusses the meaning of optimism, happiness and personal strengths. He believes that success and satisfaction can be increased by focusing on assets rather than trying to eliminate limitations (Seligmann, 2011a, p. 36). In his "Mindfulness Book", Newman (2016) describes how mindfulness could be applied in the workplace (pp. 119-126). Positive psychology is also a school within psychology and psychotherapy and it emphasises "the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions" (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 103). With such a focus on groups and organisations it can be a contribution to Business and Management studies. Management philosopher Peter Drucker referred to the concept when he "stated that executives should build on strengths not

weaknesses" (Lopez & Gallagher, 2011, p. 4). In fact, the positive psychology approach is based on strengths rather than on problematic challenges. Studies have shown the effectivity of positive psychology-based organisational interventions (LaMontagne et al., 2014, p. 4). The aim of such interventions is to find solutions that are useful and satisfying for possibly everybody who is involved in a common activity or organisation. Since job stress prevention is of importance for an organisation's managers as well as its employees, stress reduction can, from the perspective of representatives of positive psychology, be an aim that is achievable by strategies from positive psychology. It includes "authentic leadership, supportive workplace culture and workplace social capital" (LaMontagne et al., 2014, p. 4).

Authors declare, that the concept focuses on well-being without denying that there might be negative or problematic aspects but by not centring on those problems (Diener, 2011, p. 10). Instead, what matters from the perspective of positive psychology is a favourable working atmosphere, created by certain supportive management styles. Jobs ought to be significant to employees, with tasks that are meaningful to them. Positive psychologists believe that workers do not only focus on the financial income from their jobs but also consider their jobs as a means of social contact or for something to identify with (LaMontagne et al., 2014, p. 5). Relevant authors and concepts that had an impact on the field of positive psychology or that can be considered pioneers paving the way for it are Aaron Antonovsky, who introduced his concept of salutogenesis in 1979, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi ("Flow: The psychology of optimal experience", 1991), Jon Kabat Zinn with a practical approach to mindfulness (1994) or Martin Seligman who wrote "Authentic happiness" in 2002 and later published other related books such as "Flourish" (Seligman, 2011b). It was Seligman who actually revived the concept after a period of less attention (Diener, 2011, p. 8). Another of Seligman's aims was to integrate various approaches from positive psychology, for example when he drew links between Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow to his own term for a person's characteristic strong points which he calls *signature strengths* (Seligmann, 2011b, p. 280).

Representatives of positive psychology believe that their approach is relevant, particularly for modern Western societies. They argue that although there is relative wealth in many areas of the world, people are still searching for improvements of their lives. "If affluence alone does not create a good life, what does? Concern for how to live a good life is natural once people's basic needs are met" (Diener, 2011, p. 8). With that, he is in line with Seligman (2011a) who makes a statement that seems to be important not only as a justification for positive psychology studies but also for burnout research: In modern, industrialised societies, most people have most of what they need, including a sufficient income. The next step, therefore, would be to improve their lives in ways that go beyond basic human necessities. They try to achieve individual happiness, participate in culture and creativity. At such a stage, people can afford to look beyond their personal world and consider society and the welfare of the communities to which they belong. Concerning work, they might wish for a job that fulfils higher ends than just a satisfactory salary. Now, in addition to that, personal growth, self-actualisation and contribution to society come into view. If, however, a job does not fulfil such hopes it can cause frustration. This may especially apply if there are some respective (implicit or explicit) promises attached to that position, such as certain freedoms or responsibilities (Seligman, 2011a, p. 264).

2.6.2 Being Intelligent in an Emotional Way

The concept of emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995) has gained importance in organisational contexts. It is related to positive psychology. "Emotional intelligence" as a term draws a verbal parallel to intelligence but has quite a different meaning. Intelligence normally relates to cognitive abilities. For many decades, it was considered necessary or at least useful if workers knew their craft or their work field, were experienced, and had good job-related knowledge and technical abil-

ities. These seemed to be indicators of good competence and learning ability. German psychologist William Stern coined the term intelligence quotient (IQ) and came up with some tools with which to measure a person's IQ. The assessment of intelligence quotient is based on a scale, according to which a quotient between 90 and 109 stands for an average level of intelligence. Any person with a value above 120 is considered to have superior intelligence. As intelligence was looked at as a prerequisite for an employee to be fit for a certain job, organisations were interested in the idea that intelligence should be measurable, and many companies utilised (and still utilise) intelligence tests for (a part of) their recruitment and employment procedures.

Emotional intelligence researchers claim that in many organisations, cognitive abilities are held high, while emotions and feelings seem to belong to the realm of private life. They appear to be considered fairly irrelevant in the work context, since many people believe emotions might rather obstruct than improve a person's performance in the business world (Goleman, 1999, p. 11). Contrary to that, Salovey and Mayer (1990) considered emotions highly important. They hypothesised emotional intelligence as enabling a person to correctly communicate his or her own emotions and to judge the feelings of others properly. The scholars also studied the ability to rely on one's own feelings to develop motivation and future-orientation (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 186). In his book "Emotional Intelligence" (Goleman, 1995) and later in many other publications, Daniel Goleman placed a focus on characteristics like initiative, empathy and the ability to adapt to certain environments and expectations or to convince others. Since then, numerous studies have been conducted in various scientific disciplines that have shown some relevance of Goleman's model. Even neuroscientific imaging procedures have been carried out and have produced respective evidence of brain activities. Emotional intelligence includes strategies on how to understand and direct one's own emotions and those of others. EI can be seen as a trait or as an ability of a person: "The *Trait* model considers EI as a set of emotional self-perceptions and dispositions that are

best assessed via introspection and self-report, similar to personality traits (…), while the *Ability* model considers EI as a set of cognitive capacities that permit an individual to accurately perceive, reason about, and use emotional information in adaptive ways, akin to other models of intelligence that focus on demonstrated knowledge and performance ability" (Killgore et al., 2017).

When the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) was conceptualised, it was not meant to be a substitute for intelligence and the initial authors did not (and in general do not up to now) question the overall importance of intelligence. Therefore, IQ and EI are no opposites but rather complement each other. They can both be relevant factors of success. For best results, they ought to be combined and in fact tend to appear in combination: Studies have shown correlations between the two (Goleman, 2014, p. 8).

Goleman also expanded his concept of emotional intelligence and included the aspect of focus (Goleman, 2013). He claims that executives who purposefully focus on themselves and - in a constructive way - on others, train their emotional intelligence. With that, they would develop a better understanding of how to get a holistic view of the world, which, in turn, helps them to find adequate strategies, be more innovative and lead an enterprise or a team more successfully (Goleman, 2013, p. 4).

EI includes the domains of *self-awareness, self-management* and *social awareness* (Goleman, 2013, p. 2). EI is a helpful model in the context of resilience, since it offers a background for a mindful and positive outlook on social and work-related activities: "Like other positive models, it has implications for the ways we might tackle many problems of our day – for prevention activities in physical and mental health care and for effective interventions in schools and communities, businesses, and organizations" (Goleman, 2013, p. 2). For example, self-awareness can help workers to resiliently look at demanding tasks, since they might develop a sense of what they can and cannot achieve.

For supervisors, Goleman says, *self-awareness* should include an attitude of attention without necessarily evaluating situations. With such an open mindset, leaders could even accept negative feedback, since they would know how to receive criticism without taking it personally but in a matter-of-fact way (Goleman, 2013, p. 5). *Self-management* relates for example to motivation, concentration and focus. Highly-motivated people can see the goal behind their actions and concentrate on that. Therefore, they might not get distracted from apparent obstacles in their way but keep pursuing their aim even in times of stress or mental strain. Focus and concentration can reduce stress, and – vice versa – a manager who believes in focusing, can only do so by keeping stress levels low (Goleman, 2013, p. 11). Thus, EI and focus can help to create resilience, at least in an indirect way.

Social awareness, as Goleman describes it, implies empathy, relating to others, to colleagues' and team members' needs. According to the concept of EI, it is useful to consider people's emotions when making business decisions. Workers' fear and rejection for example during change management processes can be taken into account in order to prevent unnecessary stress. Also, understanding and avoiding conflicts within teams requires an attitude of social awareness. Some executives might find it easier that others to act emotionally intelligent. However, despite the fact that there might be some genetic predispositions, there does seem to be the possibility of learning emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2013, p. 7).

People who are emotionally intelligent have an understanding of how to manage their own feelings (Armstrong, Galligan & Critchley, 2011, p. 333). They have found to be content even in adverse situations, to be mentally ill less often or to be able to apply coping strategies in times of stress. Such abilities can improve resilience for workers as well as for superiors. Emotional intelligence can also – according to EI authors - improve people's management of the emotions of others. This would not only be an asset for supervisors but also for workers themselves, since employees who "are able to induce positive moods in others often have greater access to

social supports (…). They are more willing to seek help when feeling overwhelmed" (Armstrong, Galligan & Critchley, 2011, p. 333).

The concept of emotional intelligence has attracted some critical comments, too. Psychologists especially criticise the term "intelligence" in this context, since cognitive intelligence is a set of abilities that can be measured. There are various intelligence tests that have been evaluated and assessed repeatedly and are thus considered valid in a scientific sense. For emotional intelligence, however, there is a lack of reliable research results, according to critics (Süß, Seidel & Weis, 2008). This line of criticism does not necessarily question the importance of emotional intelligence, though, but would rather call it something else, such as "emotion regulation" (Gross, 2013).

Another group of critics can be found especially among sociologists. The subject here is the so-called commodification of emotions, a term which includes various observations of emotional aspects of life having entered the material, commercial and work-related world – as well as vice versa. Critics observe "the transfer of emotional warmth and attachment from households to workplaces" (Smith, 2014, p. 393) and argue that with a dissolving boundary between private and public life we tend to forget to differentiate between real feelings and professional appearances of emotions. Real affection is based on intimate experiences and love, while businesses combine emotions with profit-orientation. This, critics say, is not only a problem for those who receive such paid-for feelings (in our case the workers), but also for those who have to convey them (the manager): "the effort of feigning one emotion while feeling another (surface acting) is also estranging" (Smith, 2014, p. 402). It seems appropriate to acknowledge that emotions have in fact entered the realm of money and profits. However, Goleman and others would probably protest against the insinuation that an emotionally intelligent leader feigns his or her positive attitude. Instead, the goal would be to develop a heart-felt interest in the other person, combined with a conscious perception of one's own feelings.

2.7 Elements of Transformation Processes

An aim of resilience research is to identify protective factors. Based on these factors, interventions can be created that support the development of resilience (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 258). There are also some suggestions in research literature on various transformation strategies for preventing burnout or intervening in cases of burnout and for fostering resilience among workers. The approaches can be categorised according to their objectives: Firstly, there are suggestions that aim at <u>improving working conditions</u>. Secondly, some researchers focus on individual <u>workers' coping strategies</u> (Hedderich, 2014, p. 9). Other authors add a third category, which concerns <u>leaders' and managers' behaviour</u> (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014). In order to look at current research findings about developing resilience at work, this threefold structure is useful as a general outline for this chapter. However, one has to keep in mind that such categorisation is more of a theoretical model because in business reality it is not always possible to draw clear lines between the categories. Individual and organisation matters are intertwined in business contexts. Researchers argue, for example, that interventions on an individual basis should be accompanied by changes on the organisational level (Hedderich, 2014, p. 10).

2.7.1 Improve Working Conditions

Supporting resilience on an individual level appears to be an important step towards a more resilient workforce. Most authors, however, stress the relevance of organisational actions without which individual strategies seem to be bound to fail. They say, fostering resilience of the workers cannot succeed as long as the enterprise as a whole does not implement respective processes and instruments (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 257). Studies have shown the importance of a number of measures. These will be presented in the following paragraphs and can be grouped as

communication aspects, stress management strategies, social relationships and **values**. A formal topic is how to convey these interventions and most authors recommend that enterprises offer respective **seminars** for their employees.

<u>Communication</u>

Communication-oriented approaches imply that uncertainty factors be reduced. As a respective strategy, authors advise enterprises to inform their employees proactively and transparently about the current situation, the development of the company and about upcoming changes as well as the chances and risks connected with those changes. To achieve such transparency, it is recommended to carry out workshops in which employees of all hierarchy levels jointly develop effective workflows and information cascades. Also, surveys among employees could be used to analyse the workforce's requirements concerning health and a positive working atmosphere (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 265). In addition to that, managements, which openly acknowledge teams' performances, might expand their autonomy and allow them participation, for example concerning the designing work flows (Hedderich, 2014, p. 10).

<u>Stress management</u>

Gunkel, Böhm and Tannheimer (2014, p. 265) suggest that leaders be educated systematically on how to manage efficiently while at the same time supporting the health and reducing stress in their teams. Implementing conflict management procedures can, according to the authors, add to better workflows and again reduce stress factors. In addition, supervisors would need to understand their own stress coping strategies and learn how to increase their personal resilience.

Social relationships

Some researchers refer to social relationships within companies as an important aspect of a healthy working atmosphere and therefore of resilience. There are findings, which show that positive social contacts in an organisation can be an important resource for supporting mental health. If the work culture was designed in such a way that it bears the needs of employees in mind, this can supposedly add significantly to maintaining and fostering the well-being of workers in a sustainable and holistic form. For example, Ricker and Hauser (2016) differentiate three types of relationships within an organisation that should be organised in a supportive form: There are interactions of the enterprise as a whole with their workers. Another aspect of relationships within enterprises concerns the communication between supervisors and their team members or – vice versa – between employees and their line managers. The third dimension of relationships is the one that exists within the workforce, which is between the individual workers. Ricker and Hauser also stress the importance of an organisational culture that includes elements of a structured health management. According to them, a culture of confidence and trusting cooperation is the main factor that creates an atmosphere, which will be perceived as beneficial and can lead to better social relationships at work (Ricker & Hauser, 2016, p. 107).

<u>Values</u>

Values are an element of resilience that is mentioned in many studies. Morals, ideals or beliefs are mostly acquired in childhood but in some cases can change later, in adult life. They are important for organisational and leadership decisions but are also significant for individual workers. With reference to Antonovsky's salutogenesis approach (1979), researchers have pointed to values as a substantial element of mental health: Especially during critical life periods, a sense of meaningfulness and value orientation – Antonovsky talks of *coherence* – can be part of a person's coping strate-

gies. A trusting workplace culture ought to be based on certain values because they play an important role when it comes to coping with critical situations.

Seligman points to the constructive impact of win-win-situations: When managements are grounded on certain values, they would almost automatically create win-win-situations with their employees in their everyday working life. Such positive situations, in which both sides feel successful, have, according to Seligman, an encouraging influence on all parties involved because they can lead to positive emotions, and thus enhance a confident work atmosphere (Seligmann, 2011a, p. 286/287).

Values were also found to contribute to a sense of identity and to offering guidance in dynamic environments. They have a stabilising effect and give support in times of change and crisis, Hänsel points out (2017, p. 68). As mentioned before, resilience is defined as the ability to withstand crises but also as the competence to go along with transformations and to adapt accordingly. For example, activities and decisions in a company that used to be appropriate may after some time become unsuitable. In that case, established principles can guide an organisation to implement changes that are morally and ethically correct. If new objectives will be chosen which fulfil an enterprise's values, it can be easier for the workforce to comply (Hänsel, 2017, p. 68). Implementation of an organisational culture of appreciation and dialogue as well as common values were also found to facilitate a positive working atmosphere (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 265).

Seminars and coaching

Researchers mention that organisations should provide coaching and counselling for individuals and teams in order for them to reflect on their working conditions and relationships at work. Based on those reflections, they would be able to improve them, too (Hedderich, 2014, p. 10). Continuous learning opportunities for all age groups contribute to an attitude of self-

confidence, to transparency, to social participation and other aspects of a positive outlook on one's work tasks, Gunkel, Böhm and Tannheimer state (2014, p. 265).

According to Hedderich (2014, p. 10), individual approaches as well as organisational methods to achieve resilience can be discussed and communicated in workshops. These should aim at: (a) directing workers' focus on work-related problems and at the same time offer suggestions on how to cope with them; and (b) at teaching methods of self-reflections and relaxation in order to reduce the subjective stress perception. Hedderich gives examples of companies and health insurances that offer training for their employees, which focuses on strengthening workers to develop healthy lifestyles and/or stress resistance. Some of them include offers for developing healthier eating habits, sports courses or work-life balance. In some enterprises, leaders can participate in mindfulness training that aims at making them more sensitive to stress factors and resources of themselves as well as of their teams, for example in a respective training programme of Vattenfall Europe Sales GmbH (Hedderich, 2014, p. 11).

German health insurer AOK offers training programmes for their leaders and workers about resilience so that they can cope better with change processes within the enterprise (AOK, 2017). One could argue, however, that all of the contents of such educational measures really relate to individuals and their behaviour or attitude and not to the enterprise. Nevertheless, at least it is an organisational decision to provide their employees with seminars. The critical aspect of these schemes remains - they focus on the behaviour of persons, and thus individualise structural problems. Employees are thus placed in charge to cope with stress, even though the stress is caused by the employer. Gunkel et al. believe this could eventually lead to apportioning the blame to those employees who turn out not to be resilient enough (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 259).

It does not seem realistic to expect that any one company could implement all suggestions that researchers make for the improvement of working conditions. Instead, most companies might implement some recommendations and if they are part of a well-designed frame, they may be useful for fostering the potential of resilience in workers and organisations (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 260). Moreover, most factors that support the development of resilience would probably not cause any changes when applied singularly. Instead, they have to be applied within the respective business context and according to the needs of both individual workers and entire organisation (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p.15).

2.7.2 Improve Workers' Resilience

Stress was found to be one of the most important causes for burnout (Cherniss, 1980). According to research findings (for example Hedderich, 2014, p. 10), measures that improve individual workers' coping strategies are stress-relieving courses, recreation through relaxation as well as sports. However, resilience research in general has a broader outlook. Stress reduction for some researchers is only one of various aspects of a resilient mindset and more of an indirect objective. In addition to it, some studies have shown interventions to be useful that aim at increasing workers' sense of self-efficacy (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 17). Employees were found to develop a more resilient outlook if they felt they could influence changes and actively maintain their own working abilities (Ladegard, 2011, p. 29). Therefore, researchers suggest that instruments on the individual level should be directed to creating a sense of responsibility towards one's own well-being. Traits that were found to strengthen such self-responsibility or self-efficacy include an attitude of mindfulness and the ability to deal proactively with problems, conflicts or negative emotions. Furthermore, it was found to strengthen workers' sense of self-efficacy if they muster the courage to ask for support and to accept it as well as to demand information, for example, on certain current occurrences within the enterprise (Armstrong,

Galligan & Critchley, 2011, p. 333). Another aspect of self-responsibility is to consider personal professional development and educational possibilities an asset and to appreciate one's own learning successes (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 266).

Various studies have shown that it can support resilience when one is able to draw on those assets (for example Müller et al., 2017 or Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014). However, obviously, there is no general strategy that works for everybody in any given situation. Therefore, for a resilient mindset, it is not only necessary to have some of the personal resources mentioned but also to be able to apply them according to one's own needs and preferences as well as in accordance with the necessities the respective situation calls for (Müller et al., 2017, p. 216).

Early resilience studies examined mostly the factors that make up a resilient personality. Later, some researchers shifted their study designs so that they could grasp some of the inner psychological changes that cause a transformation from being vulnerable to being resilient, in other words "the focus of resilience research has shifted away from identifying protective factors to understanding the process through which individuals overcome the adversities they experience" (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 13). For such a process, Fletcher and Sarkar identify two fundamental tendencies that correlate in some way with resilience: "adversity and positive adaptation" (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 13), with adverse situations occurring before entering a state of resilience and positive adaptation as an effect of it (p. 15).

Another finding makes resilience difficult to grasp and to put into practice: It tends to change from situation to situation. Hence, a person may react to challenges resiliently in some cases, while in very similar circumstances but at another point in time they may be overwhelmed with the challenges. In their review of studies on psychological resilience, Fletcher and Sarkar conclude that resilience factors may change "contextually (from situation to situation) and temporally (throughout a situation and across an individual's lifespan)" (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 15). Lazarus (Montero-

Marin et al., 2014, p. 2) already observed that stress levels are individually different and that the quantity and quality of stress a person experiences depends on their evaluation of a problematic incident. Adding to that notion of what one might call relativity of stress, some resilience researchers have pinpointed a number of variables that influence the perception and assessment of a possibly stressful situation (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 15). According to their findings, a person's stress-resistance – or resilience – depends on the individual's processes of perception and appraisal of a situation as well as on his/her coping styles and certain personal characteristics. Such complexity of resilience development makes it difficult for enterprises to support their workers. This might be an argument against offering individual seminars or instruments, since there are many approaches but their effectiveness depends much on individual disposition.

Another relevant result that can be derived from scientific literature on resilience is that for the advancement of resilience, critical experiences are vital. Although crises can be a strain for workers' mental health, even negative outcomes of dire incidents can enhance resilience. This is because they included the learning experience that one was indeed able to cope with such situations somehow and will probably be able to cope with future trials, too (Ducki, 2017, p. 5). Some studies even suggest that resilience is an ability that ought to be acquired through critical interactions between a person and his or her environment. According to Gunkel et al., resilience arises from confrontations with difficult tasks in life and in the use of repetitively successful coping strategies. That would mean, resilience can get stronger when it is challenged and a person becomes more resilient, when he or she manages critical incidents well (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 258). In their review, Fletcher and Sarkar (2013, p. 16) quote the findings of a study in which participants had undergone traumatic experiences in their childhood. Many of them had developed resilience by actively recovering from their experiences, for instance, by creative writing. Although the authors do not go further into this observation, one might, from the example,

draw the conclusion that it does not only take the experience of having overcome difficult incidents. Instead, an active recovery process seems to enhance a resilience building process.

This is very important for the transition from burnout to resilience: Suffering from burnout syndrome is a critical experience (and, of course, not an experience one would wish anybody). The chance hidden in this crisis lies in the way it is dealt with. It should be an active and conscious process. Thus, the enterprise should not leave it up to the colleague who is in a critical situation to find solutions. Instead, the employer needs to grasp the chance and accompany their worker in the procedure. A special role is assigned to the team leader. The transformation process should be used as an opportunity to create a process map so that a route is prepared for future cases.

2.7.3 Improve Leaders' Behaviour

In resilience research literature, supervisors, team leaders and other mid-level managers are usually mentioned as a highly relevant target group for resilience strengthening measures. Armutat considers the development of individual resilience a tool for leaders and supervisors to create an awareness for conditions that may cause excessive mental strain. Furthermore, a resilient leader would know where to find the proper support in difficult phases (Armutat, 2011, p. 23). The author stresses that managers should lead their teams in such a way that they foster their team members' health. This, according to Armutat, can be achieved by expressing appreciation, giving compliments and beneficial, practical feedback. Conflicts should be discussed in a helpful way. Many employees are thankful for a trusting atmosphere, he says. They want to be able to rely on their supervisor and hope to get "rear cover" in difficult situations (Armutat, 2011).

In addition, Ducki (2017) believes leaders ought to communicate transparently and exactly and convey the sense or meaning behind any assignment they give, explain the need for certain workflows and for change

processes. This, she writes, can be done in person-to-person talks or in team settings such as meetings or other group activities. To Ducki, it is important that job contents fit the employee's abilities and strengths, otherwise personnel development or training is needed. Learning arrangements should be offered according to the needs of each worker. There are teachable coping strategies like goal orientation and attachment to certain values, competencies in problem solving strategies, health and self-efficacy (Ducki, 2017, p. 5).

Supporting a conscious understanding of values was presented in this chapter as an important step towards resilience. That part focused on workers, but values play a vital role in the behaviour of leaders, too. Hänsel (2017, p. 68) describes that some managers see it as their duty to always function as excellent as possible. For that reason, they find it not unusual to expect high performances of themselves. Unknowingly, some of them transfer that expectation to their teams and demand continuous high performance of them, too. Hänsel explicates that, due to that attitude, they may tend to ignore physical or mental boundaries. If such executives experience a serious life crisis such as a burnout, it may not be helpful to remind them of the necessity of living a healthy lifestyle, of observing lunch breaks or of the negative effects of perfectionism (Hänsel, 2017, p. 68). While Hedderich (2014, p. 10) refers to findings which argue that teaching managers to dismiss ideas of perfectionism is a good means for strengthening resilience, Hänsel suggests a different approach: According to him, studies have shown it to be a better strategy to confront executives with the values they have internalised. As a next step, one would enable them to integrate a value such as high performance into an outlook on life that will actually empower them to keep performing well by conveying a message like "Our high level of performance can only be kept up, if you allow your team a timeout." Dealing consciously with one's values would also include a reflection on what for example performance can mean and why perfect functioning is of such an importance to them (Hänsel, 2017, p. 68).

2.8 Resilience in Organisations: Key Questions for the Study

In this chapter, the researcher will summarise the main facets of burnout and resilience research that are relevant for this study. After that, the key questions and issues concerning resilience that have come from the literature review, which will form the research, will be specified.

Burnout research can be seen as a field within the social sciences that examine mental illnesses and other psychological dilemmas, in the context of work. Burnout can be considered a pathological form of reaction towards challenging situations. It correlates much with stress which is perceived differently by each individual. It can be a conglomerate of a multitude of symptoms and no two cases seem to be alike. A general observation is that burnout develops in subsequent phases, becoming more and more serious with each stage. Although it has many social and work-related roots, the consequences of burnout syndrome are mostly to be borne by the affected individual.

Resilience is a concept that stems from quite a different stance over aspects such as stress, pressure, workloads or even traumatic experiences. When psychologists and social scientists began examining resilience, some of them performed a general swing from studying mental hazards – like burnout researchers would - to the recognition of psychological assets (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 12). While burnout studies examine what makes people ill or overly burdened (or forms of prevention of that), resilience scientists ask what keeps people healthy. Their view is resource oriented. In that way, resilience research is similar to or is based on concepts such as salutogenesis, flow, mindfulness, flourish or positive psychology and emotional intelligence.

Most authors categorise their suggestions and results concerning the development of resilience as either pertaining to the organisation or as an individual task or asset. This duality can be helpful to understand concepts of resilience and to create some clarity. A question that arises here, though,

is in what forms the two lines are represented in everyday business activities. From the study's field research, the researcher does not expect to find that it is either solely an organisation's responsibility or completely the individual worker's to create resilience at work. Nevertheless, how can both sides contribute to an improvement? The aim of this research is to gain understanding about the interconnection of the two sides and the opinions of mid-level managers on that. As there is a large number of definitions for concepts of resilience, an aim of this research project will be to find out what the interview partners actually consider a resilient mindset.

Another question concerns the concepts of resilience as either being the ability to react flexibly and to resume balance or the capability to manage difficult phases by holding on to habits. Is either concept more useful than the other, according to the interviewees? Also important for organisational contexts and for developing practical strategies is to find out whether resilience is more of an in-born trait or whether leaders believe it can be acquired and how.

In the literature review, the researcher found a multitude of recommendations on how to create or maintain resilience. Most of the suggestions appear reasonable and the researcher's concept of fostering resilience has become one that encompasses many options. These include seminars and workshops on stress or burnout as well as on traits and skills that can enhance a resilient attitude. Other plausible strategies are implementing stress management concepts, strengthening employees' personal and social resources, stimulating motivation and engagement or "simply" finding the right person for the job (or vice versa). Critical incidents seem to be useful for some workers to develop a resilient outlook. Providing an EAP seems to be a good policy in some cases. Many authors refer to managers as role models and as central contact partner for their subordinates. Positive psychology and emotional intelligence approaches stress the relevance of managers being good leaders in the sense that they communicate well and have a certain consciousness about themselves and others. As all of these suggestions appear to be useful, a main objective of this thesis is to look for

opinions from those who are in that role: Which strategy do they find practical, what does their organisation offer and what is needed?

3 Methodology

This chapter provides an account of the research methodology of this study. The epistemological foundations behind the study and the two chosen research designs will be explicated. This includes a description of the documentary analysis of secondary data, such as manuals of practice and other documents. The documentary analysis is the first part of research. The second, larger approach are the interviews. This chapter will illustrate the designing of the interview outline, the conversations and framing circumstances, of Template Analysis (King & Brooks, 2017) as the method for the empirical procedure as well as some ethical reflections and information on study validity.

There are qualitative and quantitative approaches to choose from in a social science such as Business and Management research (Creswell, 2014). For this thesis, a decision was made to utilise a qualitative methodology. For that, two research strands were carried out: Firstly, a number of resilience approaches from consultancies and organisations were chosen and analysed. Secondly, interviews with practitioners from the field were conducted. A qualitative approach is appropriate for collecting detailed and subjective material rather than visible facts. "Qualitative research is at heart about people as meaning-makers and meaning-sharers" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 1). Qualitative interviews can produce predictable information but are especially interesting when researchers are open to unanticipated, surprising and unforeseen data.

This study aims at providing an insight into researchers', managers' and practitioners' attitudes about transition from burnout to resilience in companies. Research interest was on the opinions of professionals in HR, mid-level managers and health professionals connected to industrial companies. The findings of this study are meant to contribute to the development of methods for implementing resilience strategies in businesses. Therefore, it will provide organisational and practice-oriented data from

which models or theories might be deducted in future research undertakings.

This chapter explains how the two parts of the study were conducted: It clarifies the underlying epistemology and the overall research designs. A description of the actual research methods is given, which includes information about how the data was gathered and how Template Analysis was performed. This refers to the documentary research as well as to the interview style, the sample, the interview procedures and evaluation methods.

3.1 Constructivist Epistemology

Although the roots of epistemological considerations can be found in ancient Greek philosophy, some scholars consider the 16th century as the beginning of modern epistemological reflections (Walber, 2000, p. 7). During that time, changes in economies occurred that shed a new light on generating knowledge. Academics became increasingly aware of the importance of the way one would create understanding and the implications that are behind any judgements or apparently objective thoughts. Populations in post-medieval Europe kept growing and with that their everyday needs that had to be supplied. Technologically more efficient economical systems were required, and knowledge seemed to be a key to that. In addition, the era was marked by shifts from the formerly unquestioned religious, god- and bible-centred views of society towards a more human- and nature-oriented, in a modern sense scientific, way of looking at the world. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) or Galileo Galilei (1564-1641) are representatives of such new, nature-based scholarship (Walber, 2000, p. 7). During that early modern era, focus shifted towards epistemological reflections because in their search for "truth", scholars looked for foundations to justify their ideas and to explain why they would be indisputable. However, some one or two centuries later, the ideal of an objective verity became questionable, after all. One of the first thinkers to openly query the existence of truth as a neutral concept was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Because of that, he could be

considered the founder of constructivism and some of today's constructivists actually labeled him "Urvater der konstruktivistischen Erkenntnistheorie" (Walber, 2000, p. 8), which can be translated as "ancestral father of constructivist epistemology".

Research studies should always be grounded in particular epistemological and ontological suppositions. The outlook may for instance be rationalist, realist, objectivist, positivist or postmodern. Epistemology is the mindset that lies beneath a scientific project (Cassell & Symon, 2004, p. 6). For this study a constructivist and subjectivist view are essential, especially since it centres around an empirical analysis. There are some reasons why objectivist epistemologies are not as fitting for an empirical qualitative design that examines people's feelings and actions. Also, a positivist view has its shortcomings and a postmodern research approach would not be useful in this case since it would probably bring very complex results and may not produce clearly outlined suggestions or recommendations.

There is a number of constructivist approaches and they all vary in certain aspects. Generally, according to most constructivist views, truth is not a fact based on perceivable existences, but merely as a result of communicative processes (Walber, 2000, p. 8). A human brain cannot represent reality, it can only construct it. At the same time, humans can reflect on what they think, and their mind is part of a complex inner system. Language does not convey mere information but interpretations. Information and observations become knowledge when they make sense to the individual (Knorr-Cetina, 1989, p. 89). From other epistemological points of view, constructivism can be seen critically in the sense that it assumes that knowledge is located in the individual's perception and can therefore realise its implications only there. Scientific findings, however, are understood to be the result of the efforts of a community of scientists and are therefore not derived merely from personal understanding (Knorr-Cetina, 1989, p. 90). But constructivist and subjectivist research does not imply a pursuit of objectivity in a traditional scientific sense. Instead, it intends to create an access to areas that are otherwise hard to examine. An example for such a "hidden" space

is the inner world of enterprises, their employees' attitudes and experiencing. Thus, constructivist research, even when investigating individual notions, usually includes a consideration of society and its influences on its members. From a constructivist viewpoint, human beings are seen as part of their social systems and structures (Knorr-Cetina, 1989, p. 95). These systemic influences play a role in the thoughts and everyday decisions of people.

In summary, constructivist approaches, due to their interest in biography and personal involvement, accord well with empirical methods. A competency necessary for conducting empirical analyses and qualitative interviews is to be aware of the idea that each of us humans - in a way - have our own personal reality (Lauckner, Paterson & Krupa, 2012, p. 5). In other words, we construct our individual worlds and social surroundings. It would not be appropriate to design a thesis on aspects of human life and mental health with a very technical approach. The way people work and act within an organisation cannot be grasped by merely looking at figures and countable output. Constructivist theories are based on the belief that a human being does not have access to "objective" reality, plainly because there is no actual representativeness. Rather, we all develop (that is, construct) our own, individual version of reality – based on our experience, socialisation, beliefs, etc. (Glasersfeld, 1997). A general principle of constructivism is that we do not acquire knowledge passively but that we construct it actively. Statements about any perception of life stem from a person's experience, development, abilities, etc.

Constructivist methods are significant for Business and Management Studies because they draw attention to the observation that strategic decisions are hardly ever based on objectivity but normally bear some biased view of reality. Thus, according to constructivist theory, they always draw on the constructs that executives have of reality. "The organisations for whom we work, with which we collaborate or compete, or which otherwise touch our daily lives, cannot help but be concerned with the meanings made

and shared within and about them" (King & Brooks, 207, p. 1). In the following section the researcher will explain the research designs and present how the constructivist approach will be used in the study.

3.2 Research Designs

An academic study should examine a certain area because the researcher has a particular research interest, which culminates in the research question. In order to approach any explanations and to discover possible solutions, it is necessary to define how the research topic will be dealt with and how the researchers intend to find answers to it. For that, it is useful to clarify selected details of the research topic, apart from the research question. Such elements can be subordinate questions or underlying scientific constructs. In addition, it is part of any research design to define which data will be needed and how they will be gathered and structured. The sample needs to be identified and strategies have to be developed on how to find and approach the respective group that will make up the sample. Important issues to take into account when designing a research project are for example "sampling; (…); measurement; data collections decisions; and data analysis" (McGrath & O'Toole, 2012, p. 514). Any research design has to be clarified from the beginning and must then be adhered to and carried out in an evident and reproducible way. Apart from ensuring the scientific quality of a study, the "whole objective of structuring a research design is to get better quality information" (McGrath & O'Toole, 2012, p. 518).

Many studies that examine workplace conditions, workplace stress, job-related burnout syndrome or resilience are based on quantitative designs. For example, Brom et al. (2015) examined the role of work life areas as predictors of occupational health with a sample of almost 2,000 public service workers and nurses. Robertson et al. (2015) as well as Vanhove et al. (2016) each presented a review of papers on resilience training/programmes at work and both groups of researchers explicitly excluded qualitative studies from their reviews. However, in the case of this thesis, the

research method that best appears to generate practical insights is conducting interviews with people in the workforce who have to deal with the problem of burnout and the development of resilience as part of their jobs. Therefore, in this process of collecting and analysing the data, interviews were performed with the overall aim of developing answers to the research question.

A qualitative and in-depth interview as well as a documentary analysis can take variable and unique thoughts and activities into consideration and provide room for contemplations and for statements that were not anticipated but that are voiced spontaneously, and that originate in that particular interview situation or when scrutinising a document. A qualitative study does not ask for factual knowledge and there are no true or false answers. Thus, open-ended studies can often generate a "truer" picture of a situation than most large-scale quantitative method could. This is effective because such a procedure can actually contribute to the development of new ideas. New impulses and eventually new solutions can arise in an open setting.

An interpretive research design enables the researcher to gather even information from the data that are expressed implicitly. It allows them to find as well as apply outstanding or unexpected relevant themes. These are for example characterised by the fact that they either appear often in texts and debates or – on the contrary - that they are individually unique. Opinions and even subconscious content can thus be incorporated. The subsequent sections in this chapter will provide more information on how the actual design made it possible to gather such implicit or unconscious data.

The following sections 3.3 and 3.4 will discuss in detail the research methods, the processes of sampling, the processes of actual data collection and in sections 3.4 and 3.5 the processes of analysis as well as some ethical issues.

3.3 Research Method 1: Documentary Evidence

This thesis consists of two research approaches: One is a critical examination of documents; the other is an interview procedure. This section will explain the method of analysing the documents as secondary data. The subsequent section explains the interview approach.

The intention of the textual analysis is to better understand organisational views by providing documentary evidence of corporate approaches to burnout and resilience. This was done by critically exploring them. The underlying strategy was to treat the documents as discourses and subject them to discourse analysis. The template, the description of the documents as well as the outcomes of the documentary Template Analysis are described in chapter 4.

In Germany, various organisations have published manuals, brochures, counselling literature, etc. on topics like health and mental well-being at work, stress reduction, resilience and work, work-life-balance, prevention of job-related mental illnesses, etc. The organisations who publish these brochures are public and private health insurance organisations and various associations concerned with public health and especially mental well-being in the workplace. The manuals and brochures contain suggestions for organisations on how to deal with mental problems in workplaces in general and how to develop or strengthen resilience in particular.

Often, the target group are leaders in mid-management positions or higher ranks, depending on the size of the organisation. Another target group are HR professionals and other workers who are entrusted with health matters in their firms. It is this type of burnout and resilience publications that are considered in the thesis. Brochures for supervisors, leaders and for HR professionals contain suggestions for dealing with burnout, how to prevent it or how to strengthen and develop resilience in work settings. Thus, the brochures try to answer the question how organisations and enterprises can support their employees in developing a more resilient attitude.

An important initial step of this study was the formation of a synopsis or a summary. With such a digest, the researcher intended to provide an overview of techniques, processes, rules and methods that are widely used. However, in the course of the research, there were considerations to broaden the view on the documents, which in the beginning the researcher had only wanted to summarise. Eventually, it was decided to analyse them in a more detailed way because research interest was in finding out more about the attitudes and implicit messages that might be traceable in the texts.

At the onset of the documentary research, the documents to be analysed were identified. For the documentary analysis, twelve German and anglophone brochures and programmes were evaluated. The evaluation was done in two steps: As step one, the researcher set up a template that served as a guideline. This template can be found in the appendix of the thesis (Appendix 1). It contains four main aspects (general information, resilience, burnout and transformation), each of which is subdivided into two to four questions. The documents were examined along the structure of the template and based on those questions. This resulted in a detailed description of the twelve texts. A table giving an overview is also part of the appendix (Appendix 2). After having extracted the relevant information for the topic, the researcher developed step two, which was to scrutinise the information gathered. The aim of the second loop of analysis was to better understand some of the implicit information in the brochures, such as general attitudes or any underlying beliefs that might not be expressed directly – either because the authors themselves were not aware of them or because they did not want to disclose them openly. Another aim was to find similarities among the documents, but also, whether differences could be found between German and anglophone authors or whether researchers propose different approaches than enterprises.

At the same time, the documentary procedure enabled the researcher to provide materials for a handout that was given to the participants. For eventually producing a useful and scientifically grounded process

for managing the transition from burnout to resilience in organisations, the researcher felt it was first of all necessary to assess existing practices and recommendations. Therefore, a literature review was carried out which provides an insight into the current state of research on burnout, resilience and the transition from one to the other. The results of the review can be found in chapter 2 of this thesis.

The researcher decided to present an overview of strategies to some experts in the field in order to bring together their opinions about existing resilience training and similar advices. Therefore, to inform the interview partners about some key elements of existing resilience programmes, the researcher supplied them in advance with a handout that was a summary of recommendations derived from a number of manuals. The interviewees were asked to read the summary before the interview so that the researcher could use it as a common starting point for the conversation.

Initially, the researcher had planned to provide the interview partners with a more extensive information on existing approaches. The intention was to give them a synopsis of relevant burnout prevention strategies and resilience enhancement propositions. For that, the researcher compiled a summary and designed a table that included a lot of information. A first draft of the table contained the categories "prevention of burnout", "resilience after burnout" and "support of development and strengthening of resilience". The column "prevention of burnout" was subdivided in the following categories: "employees", "leaders" and "politics/laws", with further sub-columns especially for the "leaders"-group because many recommendations focused on that group and recommended examining "leadership role", "conversation culture", "workplace atmosphere" and "offers/benefits". Since this structure did not yield sufficient information on explicit suggestions for business behaviour that would improve resilience, a second overview in the form of a table was drafted. However, that compendium turned out to be quite complex. Due to that complexity, it became unpractical for presenting it to potential interview partners. In addition to being complex, the table was also

too vague for the interviewees, since it contained mostly keywords and cues that would have appeared somewhat cryptic to outsiders.

A new, more focused version of the table was created in order to increase its usability, without excluding important information. Since the main objective of the research was on resilience, preventive aspects were removed. In yet another, more concise version, the number of columns was thus reduced to:

- Advancement and strengthening of resilience

- Handling of burnout or reaction to burnout cases

- Practical and precise recommendations for transformation from burnout to resilience

Nevertheless, the table continued to be confusing and unclear for the research participants. Another step was therefore included in the process: The information from that compendium was phrased as sentences and in the form of a clearly arranged, short list of keywords. That made the contents more readable and comprehendible. However, it was now fairly long, and it seemed too demanding a task for busy managers. Therefore, after carefully choosing the most relevant information, the list was again shortened and eventually reduced to a three-page-document. With that overview, which can be found in the appendix (Appendix 3), interview proceedings were started, and the list was handed to the first respondent.

How were relevant documents chosen and how was the template developed? There is no particular database which lists brochures or other publications on resilience. Some of them can be located in the German universities' library catalogues; others can be found through Google scholar. Writings like this can be called grey literature, meaning "research that is either unpublished or has been published in non-commercial form. Examples of grey literature include: government reports, policy statements and issues papers" (University of New England, 2018). To find the brochures, it was necessary to visit the websites of German insurance companies, management associations, public health organisations, work safety institutes,

the German public accident insurer, etc. Other sources were found by means of a pyramid scheme, that is suggestions and reference lists were used to discover further relevant and current literature. Thus, the list of brochures may not be complete. Nevertheless, it represents the publications that are available to interested readers. Since some of the information contained in the recommendation literature continue to resurface, it may not even be necessary to consider every publication.

The following decisions were made concerning the documents evaluated: The recommendation brochures were chosen because they provided ideas how to actually look at burnout as a chance for change towards a more resilient workforce. They contained either innovative or typical (in the sense of recurrent in the literature) ideas. Each programme was then examined in order to extract the information it contained concerning the aspects that would help to answer the research question. The research objective was to learn more about the ways in which organisations deal with burnout and whether there are possibilities to create a transition from burnout to resilience. This included: Prevention of mental strain or mental diseases, advancement and strengthening of resilience, prevention of burnout, handling of burnout or reaction to burnout cases as well as practical and precise proposals for transformation from burnout to resilience. After having gathered a number of brochures containing recommendations on burnout prevention and supporting the development of resilience, a table was set up. It was based on a list of twelve relevant publications (nine German, two British, one Australian). The twelve programmes were screened and analysed in order to extract the important information on burnout prevention, handling of burnout cases and especially on development of resilience.

Seeing that there is quite a large number of resilience fostering programmes led the researcher to the next question: How are these programmes received? Do the target groups they were designed for consider them relevant, realistic and useful in their day-to-day business processes? Why is the topic of stress and burnout still so virulent after all the effort researchers and other authors have made to write about resilience? "We

found evidence warranting low confidence that resiliency training programs have a small to moderate effect at improving resilience and other mental health outcomes. Further study is needed to better define the resilience construct and to design interventions specific to it" (Leppin et al., 2014, p. 1). It is the aim of this thesis to contribute to that field of research and close the gap concerning the practicability of existing resilience programmes.

3.4 Research Method 2: Interviews

A large variety of established qualitative methods exist that include interpretation of different forms of texts and provide far-reaching insights into the information that can be gathered from the material. Two types of qualitative research are especially widespread: observation and interviewing. Interviews are useful when it is the aim of the study to "allow respondents to let them express in their own ways and pace, with minimal hold on respondents' responses" (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87).

There are various ways of conducting qualitative interviews (Creswell, 2014). For this research, an evaluation technique was needed that is flexible and that could be adapted to the research needs which came up during the course of the project. This flexibility concerned the sampling, coding and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). The technique used in this study was also supposed to appreciate and make as much use as possible of the expertise of the interviewees. This research was done based on Template Analysis (King & Brooks, 2017). The approach is explained in more detail in section 3.5. The interviews are individual in-depth interviews. A narrative approach with a lightly structured interview outline was chosen because it was intended to allow interviewees room for individual thoughts and innovative ideas.

This section describes the interviews style, who was interviewed and how many interviewees participated and what information the interviewees were supplied with.

The interviews of this study were intended to provide in-depth information on participants' experiences in their organisations. For that reason, further considerations had to be made to decide on the form of interviews that appeared appropriate. Qualitative studies are categorised by the type of interviews they are based on. For example, interviews could be conducted orally or in writing, they could be carried out using open-ended questions or narrative forms (Jamshed, 2014, p. 87). Interviews can also be highly pre-structured, offering the participants a questionnaire that purposely leaves little room for individual reflection or for formulating ideas. The choice of interview style depends on the aim of the study. According to Creswell, "to best learn from participants, the researcher poses general, open-ended questions, allowing the individuals in the study to provide information without constraints" (Creswell, 2014, p. 29).

In this research project, an open, narrative form was chosen. The interviews consisted of open questions about individual opinions. It was not a goal to use structured questionnaires because the interviewees were asked to share their personal thoughts on various aspects of existing burnout and resilience manuals, recommendations or programmes. After taking the decision to apply open-ended questions and a lightly structured interview outline, a conclusion had to be made concerning a suitable procedure to develop the questions, gather the data and evaluate the data.

A useful framework for conducting the study had to be found and selected which first of all conformed to the interpretive, subjective and qualitative outlook of the research venture. Therefore, a flexible procedure was needed that would allow changes at various points to respond to the different views, experiences, needs and interests of the interviewees and therefore permit that not all interviewees would be asked the same questions. Thus, a suitable framework had to provide strategies for evaluating an array of answers to questions that might differ from interview to interview. Second, the method had to provide means of incorporating the main research question as well as the list of subordinate questions. Template Analysis (King &

Brooks, 2017) provides such framework, it was decided to apply the methods described in Template Analysis.

3.4.1 Interview Partners

The research method chosen was qualitative empirical design. Individual interviews with HR professionals, middle and line managers as well as health experts were expected to provide information on their subjective, personal but professionally founded views. The participants were asked for their expertise and evaluation of existing practices and research findings. Since burnout and other mental complaints continue to be a problem for some organisations, hopes are on concepts such as resilience to prevent or control job-related mental difficulties (Grant, 2018). Health insurers and public health organisations provide enterprises and leaders with information on how to implement resilience in their companies. Nevertheless, how helpful are the brochures and recommendation manuals from the point of view of those they were written for? In order to find out more about the efficiency and practicability of such information material, it seemed logical to ask those who are supposed to work with it: supervisors in middle positions who are responsible for teams or departments, HR specialists whose task it often is to further employees' developments in a professional and personal sense, as well as health professionals who work in or for companies of the industrial sector in order to support workers' health. Middle management within the hierarchy of an organisation is defined as the position in which someone is responsible for the work of at least one lower level and who is at the same time subordinate to a higher level (WebFinance, 2016).

It was planned to interview about twelve to fifteen participants. In qualitative studies, the number of interviewees is usually determined by a phenomenon that is called saturation. In Template Analysis a saturation concept makes sense, since not much new content is to be expected after a number of interviews. The number of sufficient interviews in qualitative interviews is commonly determined by the point at which enough content

has been gathered to understand the research topic well enough. Critics claim that it is difficult to determine in advance the number of interviews that will lead to satisfactory results (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2015, p. 1753).

However, a general plan is needed at the onset of a research endeavour. If necessary, sample size would have to be adapted to the needs later, with respective documentation and explanation of any changes of the plan.

In addition, formal aspects led to the decision of interviewing some twelve to fifteen persons, such as time frame and other resources. Each interview lasted between 60 and 120 minutes. They were conducted in different places and under differing circumstances, for example at the interviewee's workplace, in an informal meeting place like a park or a café and some were done by phone. Exact times and dates are noted in the transcripts, three examples of which can be found in Appendix 4. In order to provide the reader with more information about the interviewees, a table with anonymised details about them is included. The table contains their gender, ages and positions within the enterprise they work for, their familiarity with resilience and burnout plus some information about their regional origins or whether they have international working experience. The table can be found in chapter 5.

3.4.2 Interview Design

For the roughly outlined but otherwise open guideline, an initial question was planned as well as some flexible subsequent questions. The interviews were carried out in face-to-face meetings. Each interview lasted about an hour. The experts were interviewed one by one, not in a group setting. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed afterwards. The researcher started each session by reminding the interview partner of privacy regulations and his or her options to stop the interview or withdraw from the study.

A pilot interview had been designed in the form of a draft and carried out as a first run. The insights from that preliminary dialogue were used to improve the outline and led to a few slight modifications of the questions: The first version included some detailed questions about the contents of the information handout. However, after the first interview, the researcher realized that these would rather lead a discussion of the information paper instead of the interviewee utilizing the time for expressing his or her own ideas and experiences. Therefore, questions concerning particular aspects of the information like "Why do you remember that aspect? What did you like/dislike about it? Which of the aspects you mentioned did you especially like/dislike? How do you feel about them?" were eliminated.

After that, all interviewees were, in principle, approached with the same set of questions, even though the interview courses depended much on the situation, the flow of thoughts, the interests of the interview partners and other individual factors.

Based on the research findings laid out in chapter 4 (documentary analysis) and the knowledge from chapter 2 (literature review), the interview participants were provided with some general information. At first, the plan was to give them a table with suggestions of resilience building that were extracted from research and management-related literature, but the first drafts of the table were rather lengthy (like the one in Appendix 2) and it did not seem a convenient document to hand over to the interviewees. Therefore, a synopsis of keywords and summarising sentences was written. This was given to the interview partners so that they would refer to it and evaluate the ideas formulated in it. It was a three-page paper and the interview outline contained questions such as "Tell me about your overall impression of ideas presented in that summary" or "After having read the summary: Which ideas presented in it do you particularly remember?". The structure of the handout, which can be seen in the appendix (Appendix 3), reflected the observation that many manuals contain:

- general information on resilience, on the term, on ways of supporting resilience and on enhancing it as well as

- proposals on how supervisors, team leaders and personnel managers should approach and deal with employees who are suffering a burnout and how they could achieve a transformation from burnout to resilience. That transformation process refers mostly to individuals but the tactics often have – as explained before – an influence on organisational contexts, too.

Although the sample size was quite limited, it became a challenge to gather enough participants. Many of the managers that were approached said they were too busy to attend. After having found a number of potential interviewees, the researcher wanted to prepare them for the interview appointment and to make sure that they would all have the same knowledge. It took the researcher some time to compose an overview of relevant information from a number of brochures on resilience development and on burnout. Considering the limited time resources the participants have, an effort was made to produce a very concise handout. In spite of that, many interview partners did not read it thoroughly before the appointment. Nevertheless, after the preliminaries in each interview, the researcher asked all of them the same first question: "Before the interview, I had provided you with a summary of some organisational burnout programmes. Tell me about your overall impression of ideas presented in that summary." Some of the experts had read the paper, others had gone over it superficially, and some did so while being asked the first questions.

After that initial question, the subsequent questions depended much on the flow of the conversation and on the topics the interviewee appeared interested in. There was an outline, though, which the researcher turned to when the stream of thoughts seemed to slow down or when the interview partner moved away from the main subjects, sometimes in the form of a monologue. At this point, the researcher had not developed any themes and the only guideline was the summary. The development of themes and their

application to the interview data will be explained in the next section. More details of the research sample and data collection are discussed in section 5.1.

3.5 Template Analysis

The Template Analysis approach was used both for the interviews and for the documentary analysis. Interview results can be found in chapter 5, documentary analysis findings are in chapter 4.

Template analysis is a method that provides a flexible framework for various strategies of interpreting qualitative data, usually in the form of written data such as documents or interviews. Template Analysis can be "used extensively, both as an integral part of popular methodologies such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Grounded Theory, and as a method in its own right" (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley & King, 2015, p. 202). This form of evaluation is a thematic analysis for texts (Kirkby-Geddes, King & Bravington, 2013, p. 275). In general, "'thematic' approaches seek to identify distinctive themes within a data set which shed light on important features of the topic under study" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 2). The researcher will first detect these relevant themes and in the course of the research put them in the centre of the exploration of the material. This happens by: (a) clustering the data and/or (b) by sub-dividing them. Thus, general themes as well as more detailed themes will be found. They will be derived from the data (during the interviews) as well as in advance ("a priori"). The themes will be labeled ("coded"). The coding process will lead to a structure that can then be applied to the transcripts of the interviews. Codes and themes will eventually be utilised to interpret the data in a documented and reproducible manner (King, n.d.). That way features of existing forms of handling burnout and of promoting resilience were to be identified that appeared for example non-effective, costly, difficult to understand or complicated to put into practice. Problematic aspects that interviewees pointed to could then – in the next stage of this study - be used to develop

a new model for turning burnout experiences into resilience. The synopsis of existing programmes, which was set up before the interviews, could serve as a basic document for the new programme or framework.

The idea behind this form of a content validation study was to estimate the effectiveness and practical value of the ideas in the recommendation brochures that were gathered. With the knowledge that can be derived from the interviews, it might be possible to change or eliminate or replace certain elements. Based on that process, a general model for managing the transition from burnout to resilience could emerge. This resulting model should integrate findings from research and current organisation practice with the subject-matter experts' judgements.

Template Analysis was used for both the document analysis and the interviews. The process for Template Analysis of the documents is discussed in chapter 4, for the interviews at the start of chapter 5.

3.6 Ethics and Validity

This section delivers ethical considerations and aspects of scientific validity of the qualitative research.

Before each interview, the participants were advised that the dialogues are led without disclosure of personal data. The only information that will be recorded is how old the participant is, whether they are male or female, in which position and industry he/she works. Such information might later reveal interesting correlations and is recorded merely as contributions to the research aim of this study. The participants' views and knowledge are the focal point of the interviews.

The participants were reminded of the privacy rules. These are:

- Each interviewee can decide what and what not to reveal during the talk and can cancel their participation in the study at any time.

- The interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed, with some quotes being – anonymously - mentioned in the thesis.

It might not be possible to describe forms of support for the transition from burnout to resilience that can be applied to and by organisations in general. Rather, it seems as if such support can be described only for one company at a time since various aspects such as cultural and communication habits of a firm depend on the circumstances.

Business and Management procedures do not always seem to be as truthful and authentic as Business and Management research aims to be. Sometimes, there appear to be conflicts between the goals of a company to work in a profit-oriented way and to treat their workers respectfully and protectively. Therefore, a conscious ethical approach to any research and practice in this field is necessary. Particularly research concerning organisational theory needs to take into consideration that it is the employees working in a company that are at the centre of attention. Dealing with people will always have ethical aspects. Any empirical Business and Management research looks at them from a scientific view and, at the same time, should be based on the understanding that humans are no mere scientific objects but rather that they are acting and – especially – feeling beings that need to be treated with respect (McAuley, Duberley and Johnson, 2014, p. 22). Focus is therefore on the experiences of managers who had cases of burnout in their departments or teams. For ethical reasons, it is not the aim of this study to interview burnout affected employees themselves.

The process of collecting information through a qualitative interview is a two-way communication between interviewer and interviewee. The results do not simply and only depend on the questions asked but are influenced by former experiences of both parties involved and especially by the type of relationship they have with each other. The researcher becomes part of the interaction and unintentionally affects the progress of the interview. The researcher will therefore want to create a positive atmosphere in order to avoid anticipated answers, which do not bring much useful insight. According to King and Brooks it is a quality prerequisite to keep what they call an "audit trail" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 41). They consider it necessary to record the development of the research project. Relevant decisions that

were made during the research process ought to be documented. Template Analysis allows the researcher to adapt the templates they use throughout the steps of the proceedings, if necessary. Keeping an audit trail therefore includes dating and saving the various versions of the template. Also, it includes describing why the template has been changed and even personal aspects such as "reflexive comments on how your own position shaped coding choices and/or template development" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 41). In the study, all information had to be considered relevant that helped to understand the transition from burnout to resilience in organisations, based on the data from the transcripts of the interviews. However, in any qualitative approach, the researcher's personal outlook on the topic influences the procedure, which has to be considered and possibly documented while developing codes, themes and interpretations.

When Business and Management researchers enter an organisation in order to analyse structures or make suggestions on changes, they have to be aware of the fact that they might – unwillingly – influence those structures and changes. In this research, the objective is to examine processes concerning mental health in organisations and to make suggestions on how to shape those processes. With both activities, the researcher runs the risk of not only watching structures but also influencing them – by his or her mere presence. That is, obviously, not a proper aim of a research project. Researchers should not involve themselves in the company in which they conduct their research. Otherwise, they might influence the dynamics in the organisation. If they find it is impossible not to get involved, at least they need to be aware of that and document it as they carry out their research.

Concerning the topic of burnout in particular, one should bear in mind that improving resilience within organisations might mean increasing workers' ability or readiness to cope with stress. Ethical considerations include the question whether that is a desirable goal, since an increase in stress should not be an outcome of a study on burnout and resilience.

3.7 Limitations

Since it was not an aim of this study to examine widespread beliefs or common behaviour the sample was large enough for the purpose. Nevertheless, it was partly because of the limited sample size that the researcher was not able to find certain answers that had been a research interest from the onset of the research project. A desired objective was to discover more about cultural correlations. The study brought a few hints concerning views of German employees as opposed to the mindsets of some professionals with working experience in the UK, in the US and in Arab countries. However, those findings were indeed only hints and could not be substantiated. Neither did the sample allow the researcher to effectively compare men's and women's opinions nor to deliver any results concerning age-groups nor to differentiate between work areas, such as administration, sales, production, etc.

However small the sample size might seem, it was a challenge to find sufficient interviewees. Professionals of the target segment are often highly involved in their jobs and find little time for activities outside their work or their – obviously limited – leisure time. Therefore, once the challenge of finding adequate interview partners was resolved, the next task was to motivate them to prepare for the interview by getting information on existing resilience manuals. The researcher invested much time arranging a synopsis of suitable publications and even shortened that to a clearly laid-out three-page overview. Nevertheless, obviously most of the interviewees had not spent any relevant amount of time reading the paper in advance, not to mention thinking it through. Possibly, some interview results would have been different if they had done so.

In the research literature section of this thesis, the difference and the correlation between stress and burnout were explained. In the interviews, the researcher found that in practical language use, the two concepts tend to blur and be used synonymously. A similar phenomenon concerning vari-

ous concepts of resilience was observable. For practical reasons, some differentiations between research-based approaches were not followed consequently throughout the thesis, for example the lines between resilience as a state or as a development, between organisational resilience and resilient staff in an organisation or between resilience as the ability to adapt and change or to go back to a former condition. Within the frame of this thesis, such differentiations had to be neglected in some contexts - which does not mean they were not acknowledged.

4 Findings: The Documentary Evidence

This chapter will present the first of the two research approaches and its findings: the documentary analysis. There are numerous ways of dealing with stress at work, and a multitude of brochures, online tools and manuals that present these different ways. Authors publish new findings or describe existing ones, they combine them in ever new forms, depending on their focus, target group, attitude or intention. It is the aim of this chapter to critically examine some of these documents.

4.1 Organisational Approaches

As described in the methodology chapter, twelve organisational resilience programmes were examined and compared. Focus of that assessment was on information and recommendations for strengthening workers' and organisations' resilience and on transformation processes. All of these agendas aim at improving employee mental health. However, the approaches differ in their basic assumptions, respective target groups and in the objectives of the organisation that present the programme.

The authors and organisations that publish recommendation manuals and tools can be divided into three categories: Firstly, some German health institutions and insurance companies have presented brochures concerning security at work, improving health and avoiding work-related illnesses or accidents. Their target groups consist of leaders and workers in general, with no or limited attention to the industrial sector. Therefore, they convey general views on strategies that can be applied in various kinds of organisations of any industrial sector (for instance AOK, 2017). Secondly, some programmes were written for employees of certain industries or even specifically for one enterprise (for example BMW Group, 2017) and as such can be seen as part of that company's public relations or corporate responsibility appearance. Thirdly, there are brochures for managements, team leaders and HR departments. These are, for example, published by government-funded health organisations or groups of researchers (such as

Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016). Since the thesis has an international orientation, some schemes from outside German-speaking countries will be presented (Carlton, 2014; CIPD, 2011; Crane, 2017). This can provide grounds for a cross-national comparison and possibly some findings for an improvement of existing recommendations in Germany.

For this analysis, in total twelve German and anglophone brochures and programmes were evaluated. The evaluation was done in two steps, as explained before, in the methodology chapter. Step one was a Template Analysis. The following section presents the findings from that. Step two was a second analysis loop; this time with the aim of identifying any relevant background information such as general attitudes toward burnout and resilience or commonalities between certain groups of authors.

4.1.1 Overview: CIPD Guide for Practitioners

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is a British organisation that offers qualification measures and work-related information. Their target group are enterprises and other organisations that employ a workforce. Based on a review of resilience interventions from about 35 organisations, authors, research groups, CIPD produced a publication that summarised the main directions in practical resilience development. The focus here is not explicitly on burnout but on stress reduction. Concerning resilience, the authors technically differentiate between the individual and the organisational level but in fact describe both approaches as being similar. As a result of their review, the authors gather that it is helpful but not sufficient to acquire a sense of mindfulness, to cope with stress or to cultivate a positive outlook on life. In addition to that, social factors, such as building networks, are essential (CIPD, 2011, p. 4).

The review presents a great multitude of approaches but does not provide hands-on, practical advice. The authors conclude that there is not one general method that can match the situation of any company or individual. Therefore, it is the task for those responsible in the companies to decide

which steps to take and when to implement them. Needs and resources vary from case to case, therefore any approach will have to be designed especially for the organisation or even the individual affected. However, there are no categories for evaluation of the programmes and, thus, no recommendations. This would make it difficult for managers to find a fitting approach for his/her team or enterprise.

4.1.2 Guidelines for Team and Mid-Level Leaders

Five of the documents examined stem from researchers in the field of HR. One was written by Matthias Burisch (2010) who is a renowned Management researcher and publicist specialising in burnout.[7] Another one was brought out by a German association for personnel management (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Personalführung (DGFP)) (Armutat, 2011). The DGFP association is a group of academics and practitioners, led by Armutat, who published their brochure in 2011. The third programme is a description of an approach carried out by Transport for London (TfL) (Carlton, 2014). The fourth document is from the book "Managing for Resilience" (2017), edited by Monique Crane and the fifth is a chapter from the 2014 German "Fehlzeiten-Report" (annual report on leaves of absence in German enterprises) by Gunkel, Böhm and Tannheimer.

All five texts are directed at mid-level leaders or at workers and team leaders. Each of the descriptions explicates how to deal with team members who are undergoing mental strain and stress (or other crises) and how to develop resilience for oneself as well as among the workforce. According to the DGFP, authors and team leaders need to be familiar with indicators for mental strain and with possible strategies to retain a worker in the organi-

---

[7] This thesis is referring to two of Burisch's writings on burnout (Burisch, 2010 and Burisch, 2014). In the documentary analysis, "Burnout erkennen, verstehen, bekämpfen: Informationen für Führungskräfte" was included (Burisch, 2010).

sation (Armutat, 2011, p. 39). In order to reintegrate a person into the work-force, structured steps for that process are recommended. A critical event should be seen as a chance to initiate preventive measures in order to avoid similar instances in the future. Only if all else fails, the authors suggest finding a new job for that worker (Armutat, 2011, p. 37).

Burisch (2010) is – like the DGFP group - of the opinion that leaders and team managers have an outstanding role: They should strengthen their teams' identification with the company. Generally, Burisch recommends reflexive and conscious planning, an attitude of awareness in the position of a leader. He believes it is for team leaders to be the initiators of organisational changes concerning stress. He also, however, suggests the implementation of a form of EAP, where possible and necessary. Burisch's suggestions contain a special advice: He emphasises that leaders should keep up a certain sense of independence. For example, they ought to identify with their personal performance rather than with the organisation, maintain their „market value", build savings in order not to get dependent on current amenities, expect critical phases and consider them chances.

Carlton (2014) defines resilience in a broader way and does not link it to stress or individual mental conditions. Nevertheless, she also stresses that there is a need to generally encourage self-reflection among leaders and workers, for example by using a self-assessment questionnaire. Mid-level leaders also should be able to develop a common language as leaders and form a team of managers. This would help encourage them in their positions as role models.

For Gunkel, Böhm and Tannheimer, developing resilience is a task for mid-level managers, but also for other levels within an enterprise, such as workers and overall management. Although the authors argue that team leaders need to see resilience development as one of their assignments, they consider it an unavoidable prerequisite that first of all, general organi-

sational and managerial processes have to be established within the enterprise which enable team leaders to fulfil this task (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 257).

For Crane (2017), it is important that managers support certain personality styles, evaluate work designs and observe rest periods, promote self-efficacy and train resilient thinking (pp. 1-12). Crane sees the development of a resilient workforce as a change process for leaders and team managers.

4.1.3 Recommendations for Company Managements

Some of the documents analysed are directed at directorates, executive boards and generally company managements. This section examines an article from 2017's "Fehlzeiten-Report" (Hänsel, 2017, pp. 6375), a report on a reintegration-project (HTW, 2015) and a brochure on stress avoidance (Kleinschmidt, 2015).

Hänsel focuses on value-oriented management. The author is a researcher and practitioner specialising in strategic organisational development. Analysing three large empirical studies, he arrives at a multidimensional approach towards what he calls "healthy leadership". This comprises engaging leaders in active self-management and establishing a personnel management that focuses on the needs, the abilities and especially on the well-being of the workforce. It is on the level of top management where, for Hänsel, the core of any cultural development lies, especially towards healthier leadership styles. Mid-level managers play an important role, too. They need to be supported by their supervisors to live up to the values that the enterprise postulates.

A multinational group of researchers led by a team from Berlin's University of Applied Sciences (Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft HTW, 2015) published a report about their joint project in which they endeavoured to reintegrate workers into the workforce after lengthy times of sickness or

unemployment. Based on that, they formulate recommendations for various scenarios, which can all be categorised as person-job fit approaches.

Kleinschmidt (2015) published her brochure "Kein Stress mit dem Stress" in 2015 and subtitled it "action aid" ("Handlungshilfe"). She addresses top- and mid-level leaders. Her approach towards developing resilience is to define and enhance personal strengths and resources in a step-by-step way. The author emphasises stress avoidance and mental health but avoids the term "burnout". She gives lists of recommendations on structural, communicative and social improvements at work. Transformational processes are to be initiated by the company management.

4.1.4 AOK Baden-Württemberg, "Lebe Balance"

German health insurer AOK offers a programme consisting of mostly online resources. Their programme is designed for workers of any business sector. AOK is the largest German public health insurer; thus, they have a strong interest in keeping the population in Germany healthy in order to keep costs within the national health system low.

"Lebe Balance" (AOK, 2017) is an online prevention programme for mental health, although the term "burnout" does not appear. In addition to the online service, AOK offers in-house events and health campaigns for companies. However, the programme does not include any recommendations concerning working conditions or structural improvements. The overall aim is to strengthen individual resilience factors. The target group are members and the general public but only persons of good mental health. Once a worker has developed a medically relevant state of burnout, the programme would not be appropriate. However, bearing in mind that burnout is a processual phenomenon, it is difficult to draw a clear line between being healthy and beginning to be ill. It can be assumed that AOK intends to help individuals even if they are already showing early signs of a burnout syndrome. After all, someone who is entirely content with his or her stress level might not even come across a programme like "Lebe Balance".

The focus on mindfulness corresponds with approaches from positive psychology and emotional intelligence. The programme neglects research findings, though, which explain that mindfulness can usually be only one of many integrated steps towards resilience. The mere focus on mindfulness could be problematic: As long as outward reasons for stress remain or increase, a person tending towards developing a burnout might not only be frustrated with the job. In addition, they will be frustrated from not being able to withstand the pressure.

4.1.5 Health Management Strategies of BMW Group

Automobile manufacturer BMW regularly publishes a report on their sustainability efforts. Part of their "Nachhaltigkeitsbericht" is a section on employee health, which contains recommendations on how to improve resilience. BMW Germany is affiliated with a health insurer especially for their staff. The German term for such insurance companies that are directly connected to a large enterprise is "Betriebskrankenkasse" (BKK). BMW Group, as well as BMW BKK, publish health recommendations and stress handling suggestions. The term "burnout" does not appear in the reports. The suggestions are mostly prophylactic. BMW Group say they consider their staff their most important factor for success. Due to that, they see workers' health and ability to perform as vital. The enterprise has established a health management plan, which includes age-adequate jobs, health education and medical examinations (BMW Group, 2017, p. 118). Some causes for mental problems can be found – according to the programme - in individual factors. Thus, the main objective is to motivate employees and leaders to actively control their health themselves (p. 120). Nevertheless, the BMW publications assign some preventive tasks to the organisation: A subordinate aim is to create a work environment that supports people's health and ability to perform (p. 122).

Gathering from the information in the report (BMW Group, 2017) and the health insurer's publication (BMW BKK, 2015), line managers are not in

charge of their team members' health. Instead, the enterprise contracts professional medical and psychologically trained staff for health issues within their offices and production sites.

As for a transformation process from burnout to resilience, there are some stress management seminars, a campaign about mental resistance and information events about resilience (p. 120). In times of excessive stress, the report recommends reducing stress factors, accepting help from their social environment, talking to the superior whether stress factors can be decreased and other measures for individuals. Interestingly, there is another recommendation on their website that can emerge as a result of a personal online "stress-test": If stress reduction just does not seem possible, consider changing jobs (BMW BKK, 2015).

4.1.6 Healthy Personnel – Healthy Enterprise

"Healthy personnel – healthy enterprise" is the translation of the title of a comprehensive brochure published by a German health initiative that is affiliated with a subdivision of the German Ministry of Work and Social Affairs. It contains recommendations about health at work in general and resilience in particular and was written for managers and HR professionals (Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016). Their project was government-funded and connected to various not-for-profit organisations as well as federal and regional authorities. The overall aim of that network is to improve the quality of work and work environments in Germany in order to boost innovation and to back German enterprises in the global market competition (Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016, pp. 148/149).

This brochure also avoids the term "burnout" but rather focuses on mental strains. The publication emphasises a systematic approach towards company health and reintegration management. Gathering from the recommendations given, one can deduct that the authors see most of the responsibility to prevent mental problems lies with the organisation. They focus on overall management being in charge. The authors in this network point out

that it ought to be a priority to remove the causes for mental pressure within organisations. Nevertheless, they see a certain chance in mental challenges. This appears to be a pragmatic approach, since businesses can face extraordinary challenges anytime, despite good leadership or well-designed workflows. Nevertheless, leaders ought to familiarise themselves with methods of coping with stress and they should learn how to handle change adequately. Organisations that focus on resilience in their leaders create a lever effect, according to the authors.

In contrast to the recommendations from AOK and from BMW, Krauss-Hoffmann et al. describe how management and HR departments can react in cases of burnout (Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016, p. 85). In general, this project group focuses more on organisations rather than individuals. At the same time, they point out that it always needs a combination of measures to establish resilience in an enterprise.

4.1.7 Burnout, Resilience and Recommendations

This section will present some common strands that can be found in the reports and try to link them to each other. That way, some general beliefs will become visible in the comparison of German and anglophone authors as well as when comparing independent researchers with organisational or government funded studies.

The Australian and two British researchers do not mention the term "burnout". Two of them relate directly to stress, one has a very broad understanding of critical phases or incidents. Out of the eight German texts, four use the word "burnout" (Burisch, 2010; Armutat, 2011; HTW, 2015; Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014 and Hänsel, 2017). The other four do not, but they explicitly talk about stress. The German authors who do mention burnout are all researchers, while the publications that leave it out are either government-funded (Kleinschmidt and Krauss-Hoffmann et al.) or directly affiliated with one or more enterprises (BMW and AOK). It seems as if the researchers, who are (or should be) independent of business or public

funds, are open and direct. They have no particular need for being diplomatic or cautious.

There is a further observation to be made in this context: All of the authors who explicitly write about burnout say that team leaders ought to be assigned as contact persons for their teams in critical phases such as excessive stress or (beginning) burnout. But this suggestion is in all four texts closely linked to the demand that top-management takes this decision reflectively and consciously and that they equip team leaders with all the necessary resources to fulfil this assignment. Burisch as well as the DGFP and the HTW authors describe that critical events can be looked at as chances, for example to initiate a process of health management implementation. All three also present a rather bold thought: If all efforts fail to reduce stress, team leaders should contemplate terminating their work contract with the respective employer. Neither the German government-funded brochures, nor the organisational programmes, nor the three anglophone documents suggest that.

Initiating the resilience development process is a top-management task - there is general consensus about that in all texts. However, the strategies differ: The enterprises AOK and BMW see the individual worker as responsible for his or her own health but admit that the enterprise ought to supply them with respective tools. This strategy is understandable since enterprises would not usually believe that causes for health problems lie within their own companies (at least they would not publish them). Instead, they would motivate their workers to take care of their well-being. As a benefit, they would provide them with some additional resources to do so.

Most of the independent and the government-funded researchers (Burisch, Armutat, Krauss-Hoffmann and co-authors, Kleinschmidt and Carlton) consider mid-level managers as important actors, with some efforts stemming from themselves and some resources (such as time, knowledge or networking opportunities) to be given to them by their supervisors or top-

management. The HTW authors assign most of the responsibility to company management and suggest creating structured HR-practices. Gunkel, Böhm and Tannheimer as well as Hänsel but also Crane and the CIPD recommend that health management systems or other general, structural measures be implemented by way of change management procedures. There is no differentiating line between German and anglophone programmes here.

4.1.8 Emotional Intelligence and Positive Psychology

These two concepts play a minor role in the documents analysed. They rarely get mentioned directly and could only be derived by trying to look at implicit messages. Some of the authors, for example Hänsel, look at ways out of a crisis but not so much at its causes. This is a view related to aspects of positive psychology. For Hänsel, creativity and participation are leadership elements of a positive culture, which is part of emotional intelligence-concepts, too.

According to the CIPD, programmes and interventions that are designed for individuals often relate to concepts from positive psychology and to mindfulness developing techniques. Looking at the AOK and BMW approaches, this observation can be confirmed. An important aspect of the AOK programme is its preventive attitude towards stress. From the viewpoint of positive psychology research, the programme has the right direction since it supports positive mindsets. BMW's mental health strategies include individual solutions, which means they take individual stress perceptions into account. Also, they have adopted some positive psychology attitudes since their policies focus on resources rather than dilemmas. Other authors stress the importance of mid-level leaders and that they need time to reflect, to informally talk to their teams or to create networks among each other. These are elements of the emotional intelligence approach.

Is there a correlation between mentioning the term "burnout" and mentioning elements of emotional intelligence and positive psychology?

One could hypothesise that authors who write explicitly about burnout have a problem-oriented, negative outlook on stress at work and would therefore not agree with the positive background assumptions of emotional intelligence and positive psychology. In fact, Burisch and the other researchers who have quite a bold approach to burnout do not seem to relate much to those two concepts. The CIPD authors, on the other hand, do not use the term "burnout" but stress emotional intelligence and positive psychology.

It is not a focus of this thesis to look further into reasons whether or why such elements are mentioned implicitly but not explicitly. However, it would be a worthy future research project to examine emotional intelligence and positive psychology strategies in German, British or other anglophone cultural settings and business behaviours. Another assumption might be that in some anglophone regions, both concepts are well received, even in Business and Management research. In Germany however, they seem to be looked at as somewhat esoteric. If this resulted in possibly being true, a next research step could be to examine the attitude of organisation towards burnout (do they mention it explicitly, how "bold" are they about it?) and their outlook on emotional intelligence and positive psychology: Are there any correlations?

4.2 Organisational Possibilities and Approaches

In section 2, various documents were analysed according to a template. The intention of this analysis is to understand more about the way organisations look at burnout and resilience. The next step is to further analyse the various reports so that one will be able to capture through the secondary data some of the more formal understandings and recommendations for action.

The structure of this section is based on the research question and the focus the researcher has placed on mid-level positions. The aim is to find possible elements of organisational business behavior, which support the transition from burnout to resilience in German enterprises. Considering

the results of the study so far, the researcher arrived at some observations and saw a number of possible "mistakes" that some of these programmes contain. In a section titled "How (not) to approach resilience effectively" respective reflexions are presented.

Before that, this section will now extend the finding and reflexions of the previous sections with information from the reports on the role of mid-level managers. Also, more statements concerning the attitudes towards burnout in organisations will be extracted. Attitudes towards causes influence attitudes towards transformational processes, which will also be described in this section. Examining the documents raised another question for the researcher, which is why – despite such a multitude of programmes – figures of leaves of absence and other consequences relating to stress and burnout do not seem to decrease, as explained in chapter 1.

With all of those steps in section 4.3, the researcher intends to develop a basis for improved practical recommendations that can be applied in enterprises.

4.2.1 Role of Mid-Level Managers

Generally, an overall recommendation for mid-level managers is to consciously reflect on their role as leader. All texts examined in this thesis give explanations on how to deal with stressed-out teams or how to avoid excessive stress.

The researchers' texts that are directed at mid-level leaders differ from the ones written for top managements and also from the documents organisations publish for their workers and stakeholders: A remarkable commonality these text have is that most of the authors suggest that team leaders consider critical periods not only as negative. Instead, the positive aspect about them is that they can bring opportunities of change. Such change can relate to working conditions and the workplace climate. However – and this is quite an outstanding aspect – it can also be an occasion

for finding a new job. Enterprises should pay attention to such radical advice, as it might not be in their interest to lose well-performing leaders – due to conditions an enterprise's general management could influence and improve.

4.2.2 Causes for Burnout

Apart from the CIPD compilation, which provides a broad overview of approaches, the publications differ in the party to which they attribute most of the responsibility. While AOK gives suggestions only for workers themselves and on how they can change their views, BMW includes some self-critical reference to internal information cascades. Krauss-Hoffmann et al. as well as most of the other academic texts place a strong focus on organisational problems. They stress that these can cause burnout, and thus see managing those problems as a means of improving resilience.

Most of the researchers' documents examined in section 4.2 do not discuss individual causes for stress and burnout. That way, they do not appear to see burnout as a personal problem or as one that employees themselves need to struggle with on their own. The same applies to the BMW documents or the CIPD review.

Three documents directing their message at company managements were analysed. The overall implications are that enterprises need to prepare the grounds for a healthy workplace climate. This can be achieved for instance by carrying out transformational developments in the form of change processes. Such changes ought to be done with a particular focus. The focus, according to the documents analysed here, should either be on health or on company values. Once the basis is laid with company principles being formulated and structures provided, top managements can then delegate further stress reduction and resilience development measures to their mid-level executives. The authors of this group of documents consider that phase of the resilience building process as part of the team leaders' jobs.

None of the documents goes much into detail concerning social factors of resilience building, apart from the CIPD text (CIPD, 2011). Here, the authors state that some of the programmes they reviewed included aspects of the social environment (CIPD, 2011, p. 3 and pp. 6-8).

4.2.3 Transformation from Burnout to Resilience

Only one of the texts – Burisch, 2010 – pays attention to the processual development of the syndrome. Thus, in all of the other documents, there are no suggestions on how to act at the various phases of a burnout.

Programmes that were set up by enterprises themselves (for instance BMW's company report) or that can be seen as strategies to support companies (for example the tools provided by health insurer AOK) focus much on prophylactic steps for stress avoidance instead of on dealing with acute cases of mental strain or burnout. AOK singles out mindfulness as apparently one of the most promising modes to establish resilience, which is somewhat one-sided. Generally, the authors of all documentations had to find a balance between presenting a complete picture of burnout or ways of developing resilience and presenting a useful, action oriented practical tool without too much side-information. While the AOK-tool focuses on basically one set of techniques, the CIPD review is on the other end of the spectrum, depicting the multitude of potential methods. This gives readers the opportunity to choose from different possibilities. More than most other authors, Krauss-Hoffmann et al. stress the need to apply various strategies within one enterprise to strengthen resilience in workers and organisation.

The tools developed by AOK explicitly aim at healthy employees, there is no transition implied – at least at first sight. However, the tools obviously are designed for those who feel in need of protecting their health or maybe even for those who already feel too stressed out.

4.2.4 How (Not) to Approach Resilience

As described in this chapter as well as in the previous ones, especially in chapter 2, there is a multitude of brochures, programmes, manuals and other tools to guide workers and managers towards more resilience within their organisations. Nevertheless, work-related mental ailments with burnout being probably the most prominent one keep being a problem. In fact, figures are still rising; chapter 1 includes respective background and statistical information. It appears that the recommendations and suggestions, which researchers and practitioners keep gathering and publishing, do not fulfil their purpose. Why can that be? What is "wrong" with these publications that they do not seem to support enterprises in the improvement or development of resilience? In this section, the researcher wants to propose a few possible reasons, which were deducted from the documentary research.

Possibility 1: Too much information

The CIPD publication is an example of a very complex document. It includes a wide range of possible interventions. This is a great merit but maybe it is also its flaw. Readers might be at a loss being confronted with so much information. Although the authors state that there are no two companies alike in their needs and that it is up to the managers to choose the adequate approach, the review does not give any aid as to how that choice can be made.

Some of the information brochures are quite voluminous. For example, Kleinschmidt's handout (2015) is part of a series of publications that consist of at least three parts: the action aid cited here plus a booklet that contains the guidelines for a seminar for workers and managers plus an A4-size, 160-page book of solutions and tips for managers and enterprises, including templates and practical examples. All three publications are available in English, too. This is confusing and most busy managers might shy

away from reading them because they may not even be sure which ones of them to read.

Possibility 2: Too narrow an approach

German health insurer AOK presents a well-designed, user-friendly online platform with various tools for individuals to improve their resilience. As we have seen from research literature in chapter 2, resilience will be difficult to achieve with only one strategy. Leaving it all up to the workers – which is the impression one might get from the AOK programme – is not enough to establish a lasting resilient attitude. Stress reduction and mindfulness are good components of a resilience development process. However, it will not be sustainably successful if other factors such as unsupportive communication styles or excessive workloads are not tackled.

Possibility 3: Too academic or too plain

Some texts are directed at managers but apparently also at the scientific community. Thus, the wording as well as the structure tends to be complicated, for example in Hänsel's article (2017). Other publications – which were not included in the documentary analysis – are superficial, include only commonplace knowledge or try to convey their message as a type of sensation, such as "Der Burnout-Irrtum: Ausgebrannt durch Vitalstoffmangel" ("The burnout-misunderstanding: burnt out due to nutrient-deficiency") by Eichinger and Hoffmann (2016).

Possibility 4: Scratching on the surface

All of the above publications include useful information on dealing with mental health. Interestingly though, the term "burnout" hardly ever appears. It seems to be a word that needs to be avoided. This may be due to the sometimes-claimed fuzziness of the concept. Or the fact that there is no

clear physical or psychological category for burnout in the international manuals for medical professionals. It may also be due to the stigma still attached to the syndrome. Some writers may fear that burnout is a term to hide behind when you do not feel like going to work.

A term that is not mentioned, apparently does not need to be explained. Nor does the author have to mention any causes, phases or any complexity attached to the phenomenon behind the word. The one author who goes into detail about burnout syndrome is Burisch (2010). He contemplates possible reasons and goes beyond individual or organisational dimensions; he includes thoughts on society and tries to find answers in sociological contexts. Therefore, he reflects on organisational structures (2010, p. 5), social matters (p. 10) or work ethos (p. 11). Not surprisingly, Burisch is the only author in this analysis who comes to the explicit conclusion that, if all else fails, quitting a job can be a good way of avoiding burnout.

Hardly any of the brochures or programmes have a broader view that goes beyond everyday workplace experiences. The authors do not, for instance, touch on topics like economic systems, capitalism-related dilemmas, expectations from society and family, fear of social descent or unemployment, etc.

Possibility 5: Fuzzy terminology

In the previous chapters, we have already seen that burnout is a complex syndrome that is hard to grasp and difficult to define. Combined with a latent suspicion about the seriousness of the phenomenon, this may lead to a subtle feeling of not wanting to spend time and thought on it. A similar observation can be made concerning resilience: The reports appear to vary in their outlook on what they consider a resilience supporting job environment. While there is much agreement on the etymological meaning of the word resilience (the ability to resume a former state), there are hardly

any explanations as to what that means in a work context. Thus, there appears to be a tendency that resilience will become as fuzzy a concept as burnout is, because many authors use the term as if there is no need to define it. The various interpretations would only appear implicitly.

In addition to that, resilience can be achieved on an individual level or on an organisational level. Organisation resilience, again, has many dimensions. Plus, resilience is sometimes considered a process, sometimes a state. How can busy managers implement a concept when they are not clear about its meaning and impact?

Possibility 6: Lack of clarity about target group and intention

The motivations to publish recommendations on resilience differ. Some organisations are government- or EU-funded and it is their purpose to inform the populace about prevention possibilities in order to maintain public health. Health insurers have an interest in keeping employees healthy. Employees in private enterprises as well as civil organisations are mostly insured through these health insurance companies. The financing system of public - and to some extent also private - health insurance is part of the German public social security structures. Employees' payments into the health insurance system in Germany depend on their income and on their family status. In other words, a health insurer collects contributions from their insured in relation to their financial abilities, not in relation to the costs they generate. Therefore, they support prophylactic and preventive efforts within society. Insurers also inform the public through their websites and print publications. In most cases, the target group of such activities and information strategies is the general public and in particular employees and their families. In some cases, however, publications are directed to the companies and organisations where the insured persons work. Public health strategies that are associated with work obviously need to be directed to the employees, too. This is the case with information concerning mental health at work. Employers are also interested in keeping their staff healthy but not

per se. Their eventual intention has to do with business outcomes and profit. Workers are interested in their own well-being, but many cannot or do not want to forego career steps and income raises.

Considering that multitude of recipients, it should be difficult to integrate the various messages that fit each group of readers. A helpful manual would probably have to take sides. Instead, most programmes try to encompass many – often diametrical – goals. One might see an inherent paradox in a system that is decidedly profit and income oriented on the one hand and stress avoiding on the other. While to some, resilience promised to be a solution of that contradiction, the documents analysed seem not to present a satisfactory form of or road toward resilience. One reason for that might lie in the lack of clarity of messages that the texts convey due to the fact that they want to convince groups of opposing interests.

4.3 Conclusion

This section will provide a brief conclusion of the findings in this chapter and present the main aspects that can be deducted from the documentary analysis. Thus, it will reflect on the literature of the twelve documents and the definition of resilience and thus, present an overall organisational view of burnout, resilience and transformation from one to the other.

Burnout is not an explicit topic in many of the brochures and programmes, but stress and mental strain are, as well as stress avoidance and recommendations on how to handle stress and its consequences within teams. None of the three anglophone writers talks explicitly about burnout including none of the German studies that were company or government affiliated. Authors who do refer to it tend to be more blatant in their suggestions and recommend terminating a work relationship if no effective strategies can be developed.

Resilience is mentioned in all twelve documents as a goal for organisations or individuals. There is consensus among all authors that workers' well-being is relevant for enterprises. Some authors see health as important

for the performance of an organisation or for a nation's economy; others do not formulate it that explicitly and convey that their interest is in people's health as an aim in itself.

All reports state that the development of resilience in an enterprise is a process that needs to be designed according to the situation of each particular organisation. Most brochures present various approaches that managements could choose from. Emotional intelligence and positive psychology concepts are not explicitly included. However, some reports have a more positive outlook while others are more problem oriented.

According to most of the documents, mid-level managers have to be at the centre of attention when an enterprise decides to design a resilience approach. Team leaders should be trained and educated, for example about stress coping strategies or about signs indicating that a team member is overstrained. For that, they need to be supported by top-management and given sufficient time and other resources, such as a good network. Generally, most brochures state that the implementation of a resilience development process is a top-down decision and many reports suggest an extensive organisational change process. Some of the authors consider critical incidents to be useful opportunities for change towards a culture of more resilience. Therefore, they propose systematic reintegration procedures.

As for formal characteristics of the reports, some of them tend to be rather lengthy or complicated and unpractical from the view of business needs. Others, again, are very narrow in their approach and tend to leave out important elements of work-related resilience development processes. Often, they lack clarity concerning terminologies, readership and aims. These aspects point to either uncertainty on the side of the authors or their contracting authorities. Alternatively, they refer to some general discrepancies and contradictions in the research field, for example that profit orientation, proposed values and staff well-being still seem to be difficult to align in many enterprises.

5 Findings: The Interviews

The second, and central, part of the research of this study was a qualitative approach based on interviews. This section will discuss the contents of those interviews. First, the entire sample will be described according to their demographic background. For that, five categories were created, that is each person's gender, age and position at work. In addition, every participant was asked about their cultural background and experience with burnout and resilience in a work context. This information was gathered in case any consistencies according to these parameters might become visible during the evaluation.

5.1 Demographic Background of the Sample

Fourteen interviews were carried out in this study. The sample consisted of three women and eleven men, all of whom were employees in industrial companies or working in the context of such organisations. Nine participants hold supervising positions as team or unit leaders, three are HR professionals and two work in the health sector. Ages vary between 32 and 63 years. Most interview partners live in Germany, one of whom has worked in Arabic countries. One interviewee lives in the United States. The two who live in England have both previously worked in various other countries.

All interview partners had heard of burnout. Some participants had not come across the term "resilience" before, at least not in the context of work. Some had experience with reintegration schemes. Experience with burnout and resilience as well as regional backgrounds are shown in table 1, in addition to names (first names only to comply with privacy principles), gender, ages and positions within the organisations.

Name of interviewee	Experience	Male/ Female	Age	Position/ Area of work	Region
Ali	Has heard of burnout.	m	49	Supervisor	Arab countries/ Germany
Andreas	Familiar with burnout and resilience.	m	38	Supervisor	Germany
Angelika	Familiar with burnout.	f	63	HR	Germany
Colin	Familiar with burnout.	m	32	Supervisor	Germany
Gina	Familiar with burnout and resilience.	f	32	Supervisor	UK
Heiko	Familiar with burnout.	m	48	Health	Germany
Kai	Familiar with burnout and resilience.	m	53	Supervisor	Germany
Ludger	Familiar with burnout.	m	47	HR	Germany/UK
Matthias	Familiar with burnout and resilience.	m	56	HR	Germany
Merten	Has heard of burnout.	m	42	Supervisor	Germany
Peter	Has heard of burnout.	m	43	Supervisor	Germany
Sabine	Familiar with burnout and resilience.	m	44	HR/Health	Germany
Victor	Familiar with burnout and resilience.	m	46	Supervisor	USA
Volkan	Familiar with burnout.	m	45	Supervisor	Germany

Table 1: List of study participants' names, experience, gender, age, position, country

Ten participants are Germans living in Germany. Two have some bicultural experience, from Germany and Britain or Arabic countries, one is American. This table shows no correlations between region and the parameter of experience. The entire study revealed almost no insights concerning attitudes of German workers as opposed to the mindsets of the professionals who have worked in the UK, in the US and in the Arab world, as will be described in more detail in section 5.2.

5.2 Development of Themes and Evaluation of Interview Data

At the beginning of the research project, some topics were identified to serve as an outline for the subsequent analysis of the data. These topics are labelled *themes* within the Template Analysis approach, which was chosen as a frame for gathering, structuring and evaluating the interviews. The themes were explained in section 5.1 since they serve as an outline for the further discussion of the data in this section 5.2.

In order to have a structure according to which the researcher could analyse, discuss and evaluate the interview data, some themes were identified, as the Template Analysis approach suggests. For that, the researcher turned to some underlying assumptions, which have been expressed in the previous chapters, especially in chapter 1. These serve as *a priori themes* in the sense of Template Analysis (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 29). According to King and Brooks, themes "are usually identified because a researcher has started out on a project with the intention of focusing on particular aspects of the phenomena under investigation" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 29). That applies to this research. It is important to note that initially, those a priori themes are to be used tentatively (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 29). For that reason, one has to be open to the possibility that eventually a priori themes may turn out not to be relevant after all.

Since this thesis is based on a constructivist epistemology, the initial themes were formulated fairly openly and were used in a flexible way. While some research designs may call for precise and clearly laid out a priori

themes, this study is based on what King and Brooks call "soft" themes, which "are more loosely defined and often broader, often representing potential aspects of the data" (King & Brooks, 2017, p. 29). Some additional topics came up during the interviews: *practical experience* turned out to be a relevant subject, as will be explained in the respective section (5.2.1) and *personnel management* (5.2.7). Thus, the themes of this study are as follows:

- Many interviewees talked about their <u>practical experience with burnout and resilience</u> in their workplace. Some work in enterprises that have implemented an EAP and some had observed processes of re-integration. The focus of this theme, therefore, is on transformational processes, which will be discussed in section 5.2.1.

- Within companies, the transition from burnout to resilience can be carried out by means of appropriate <u>business activities</u> and decisions (Scherrmann, 2015). Such activities and decisions could concern marketing strategies, dealing with competitors, pricing policies, salaries and incentives and others and will be discussed in section 5.2.2.

- Another section discusses the result that burnout is an important topic not only in service-related companies but also in the industrial sector. The type of <u>industry</u> might have an influence on how an enterprise deals with (lack of) resilience (see section 5.2.3).

- Some reasons for stress and burnout can be found in personal disagreements and structural discrepancies within an organisation. These <u>structures, processes and workflows</u> (section 5.2.4) include or depend on certain organisational cultures such as communication styles, handling of ambiguities or divided loyalties (Leiter, Day & Price, 2015).

- Often, there is a lack of knowledge especially among leaders about resilience and about the transition from burnout to resilience. Their

attitude might be influential when decisions are made about appropriate strategies for enterprises. This assumption will be another a priori theme and labelled <u>knowledge: leadership and attitudes</u> (5.2.5).

- Studies have shown different results concerning the question whether resilience is a personality trait with which a resilience person is born or which they have been brought up during childhood. Other authors emphasise that resilience can be acquired, even in adult life. These aspects can be subsumed as <u>psychological aspects of resilience and burnout,</u> and thus will be defined as another a priori theme. They will be discussed in section 5.2.6, which includes another observation to be found in secondary literature:

- One can derive the hypotheses that German organisations tend to look at burnout as a mental or medical condition, quite like an illness. For example, some of literature have words like "krank" (sick) in the title (Unger, 2007) or "crisis" (Hänsel, 2017)[8]. German health service suppliers, including public health insurance companies, provide entire burnout clinics that offer no other services but burnout-related treatments and rehabilitation programmes (BIG direkt gesund, n.d.)[9]. In anglophone regions, compared to Germany, burnout rather seems to be considered a phase of stress that will pass without taking on forms of a disease. For example, psychological directions like positive psychology or emotional intelligence, which focus on positive developments and on strengthening health, stem from anglophone researchers (among others: Goleman, 1995; Seligman, 2002 publications; Antonovsky, 1979). Some of them also stress the possibility of

---

[8] "Bevor der Job krank macht" (English: Take action, before your job makes you sick) (Unger, 2007) or "Wege aus der Krise." (English: Stepping out of the crisis/Finding ways out of the crisis) (Hänsel, 2017).

[9] Clinic Möhnesee is a modern psychosomatic and cardiological rehabilitation facility was established in 1997 and has about 230 places for patients with burnout-related diagnoses (BIG direkt gesund, n.d.).

using burnout as a learning experience (Casserley & Megginson, 2009) or focus on ways to craft a supportive and meaningful workplace (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2013).

- <u>Personnel management</u>: This theme was not an a priori theme, since it was not derived from the secondary literature. However, almost all interviews contain comments about personnel decisions, personnel development or other staff-related topics as can be seen in section 5.2.7.

Although the a priori themes provide the structure of the investigation, the interviewees were in most cases not asked directly about these themes, apart from some exceptions where it fit in with the flow of the conversation. That means, the interviewees voiced their opinions without being aware of any categorisations. This technique was used to find out whether the burnout and resilience manuals provided by health insurance companies and other organisations correspond with the needs and experiences of the study participants.

The subsequent sections are structured according to the a priori themes and to the additional themes that surfaced in the course of the interviews.

5.2.1 Practical Experience

Almost all interview partners make comments on how to look at cases of burnout as an opportunity to create resilience and three of them have personally experienced such cases. There are comments about the transformative energy burnout and other crises can enhance. This section is a reflection of the various forms of experience the interviewees had in the

context of burnout and resilience. In some companies, an EAP[10] was implemented. A few participants talked about reintegration processes after cases of burnout and others put their experience in the context of cultural differences. Their thoughts on these experiences are outlined here.

<u>Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and computer-based platforms</u>

A facet of practical experience is that some interviewees are familiar with EAPs and other computer-based tools or reintegration plans. A practical tool that can be considered a means of strengthening individual as well as organisational resilience and is an inherent asset as well as an instrument for adapting is an EAP. EAPs are professional support hotlines, counselling services or online platforms where workers have the opportunity to get psychological advice. The programmes are usually provided by external companies.

Victor speaks about a "mental health fitness plan" his company started. It is internet-based, includes information and a forum for interaction and communication as well as a time-management programme. In Andreas' company, an EAP was implemented. His opinion about that is ambiguous, though. He was informed that leaves of absence-days due to sickness were reduced and he likes the idea of his organisation offering a tool that can help colleagues during difficult phases. But he would appreciate a closer investigation of the origins of those difficulties. However, management does not pay much attention to that, he says.

---

[10] Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) were introduced in chapter 2: they are professional, mostly external, counselling tools that enterprises offer their employees, who can make use of it when they need psychological help.

<u>Step-by-step reintegration</u>

Angelika is familiar with a step-by-step reintegration programme and knows that health insurers support such procedures. According to her, if someone has suffered from burnout, that person should be given a chance to reintegrate into the workforce step-by-step. Those steps should be accompanied by counselling sessions and talks. The superior should not, she says, present him- or herself as a friend or even therapist. Rather, focus ought to be on performance and work. Angelika puts much emphasis on the role of line managers as well as their respective supervisors and looks at hierarchy as an important aspect. She would appreciate a certain type of relationship in between the hierarchical ranks. To her, superiors have a protective and supportive role. It seems important to note, that Angelika is the oldest among the interviewees and possibly has a somewhat traditional view on worker-supervisor relationships.

A similar opinion concerning the role of line managers is voiced by Heiko and also HR-professional Ludger agrees and believes that dealing with a burnout patient

is not a task for team leaders or other business professionals. Rather, a reintegration programme should be run by doctors. A team supervisor cannot take on a responsibility like that.

Ali believes that

[i]f a sick person comes back to work after six weeks of illness and has not received proper treatment, well that would probably make him aggressive.

Kai reports his experience: One of his team members had suffered from burnout and was able to come back to work after a lengthy rehabilitation process. Kai describes that process as a joint effort of supervisors, health insurance, psychotherapist and the patient himself. Eventually, the worker was successfully reintegrated into the workforce and could continue

with his job. His report makes it very clear, that such a procedure can take a long time:

> *It still took almost half a year until the crane operator had enough trust and self-assurance to even try it.*

Skepticism comes from Ludger, who considers

> *the reintegration process described here as somewhat over the top. Too much.*

Positive comments on a structured reintegration plan after burnout also comes from interviewee Colin as to him it seems to offer a well-designed solution. Gina criticises that in her company, management would only look for solutions like that when somebody has already fallen ill or is already suffering from burnout. Instead, she would appreciate a prophylactic programme and organisation-funded measures to strengthen resilience. Similarly, Heiko suggests that organisations should ask: «How could we help the individual worker to re-gain strength in his or her personal situation?"

Cultural differences?

As explained in the introductory chapter, there might be cultural or national differences between business behaviour strategies in transforming burnout to resilience or in establishing resilience in organisations. Three interview partners refer to cultural topics.

Ali, who has an international working background and has lived in Arabic countries, considers Germans timid and risk averting. Ludger has worked in many countries including Germany and the UK. In Germany, he finds, workers have quite a demanding attitude. Apart from that, he sees differences in working ethos between Scandinavia and Germany on the one hand and the United Kingdom on the other hand. To make his point, he

expresses his thoughts – in this context – rather crudely, without being aware of generalizing and stereotyping.

> *In England, for instance, people work more than in Germany. Or in Scandinavian countries, workers leave the office by four o'clock sharp.*

The interview material does not reveal culturally diverse ways of carrying out a transition from burnout to resilience. What can be derived from the answers are certain attitudes, but it does not seem to be possible to link them to cultural or regional backgrounds of the interviewees or of the organisations they work for. A table in the appendix compares opinions and experiences concerning business activities to enhance resilience but does not reveal any culture-related predictors for differences in approaches to resilience and transformation (Appendix 5). Thus, this study does not disclose any evidence that there is a correlation between cultural backgrounds and beliefs about resilience.

Concluding from the reports of their practical experience, some of the interviewees have seen that a burnout syndrome can be a starting point for a transformation towards a resilient attitude. On an organisational level, this transformation has for example led to the implementation of various health management plans, which include computer- or internet-based tools. A common tool are EAPs and two of the participants have such EAPs in their companies. The interviewees have a generally favourable opinion of these applications. But they also warn that it is not enough to work on the symptoms of stress but point to the necessity of examining the roots of mental troubles which, they feel, is not what these programmes do.

Another way to carry out a transformation is by reintegrating burnout patients into the workforce by means of a step-by-step scheme. It is interesting to note that those interview partners who have not had practical encounters with such reintegration plans are rather sceptic. However, those who did have actual experience are quite convinced of the positive development their colleagues underwent.

Since this research has participants from different countries, it was one of the study's aim to find out whether there might be cultural differences in their views and expertise. The material supports that presumption but does not contain any evidence on how the two variables (opinion/knowledge and cultural background) might correlate.

5.2.2 Business Activities

Can certain business activities influence the development of resilience in an organisation? This was an assumption made prior to conducting the interviews and defined as an a priori theme. In order to find answers to this question within the interview data, the transcripts of the interviews were searched for clues about business behaviour, such as stakeholder-related plans, market strategies or product development. The focus was on outward activities and not on internal structures since these will be looked at in a different category (5.2.4 Structures, Processes and Work Flows). The theme Business Activities does not include HR-related decisions, such as hiring strategies or personnel development, which will be discussed in section 5.2.7 (Personnel Management).

The topic Business Activities turned out to be relevant, since it is mentioned in each of the fourteen interviews. The comments can be clustered into sub-themes and are reflected in the subheadings of this section: Some comments relate to quality of products and processes, others to competition.

<u>Quality</u>

Good business decisions and being the number one in the market can prevent stress, according to Ali. Extensive training combined with good quality and fair prices of products as a competency (Andreas). Quality management with its standardised processes can alleviate stress, says Merten. Colin mentions the quality of products or services as a means of creating

resilience, because workers feel proud to be part of that. This, in turn, is an asset because of the passion the staff has for the products they work with. The company where Colin works combines their workers' enthusiasm with external communication and public relation and - at the same time – increases their workers' motivation. A sense of identification with the organisation and pride of working there can be an aspect that can build resilience (Merten).

According to Merten, a company that wants to have high quality standards will have to change them in rapid successions nowadays, with one project still being processed and the next one already on its way. Sabine is of the opinion, however, that transformations in the working world cause increasing pressure. Peter would agree with that, since he sees heightened consumer expectations as a reason for frequent changes, and thus for increasing pressure. Angelika questions the need for frequent changes but especially focuses on business decisions to restructure organisational workflows such as implementing a new IT-system. A contrary strategy might be to stick to traditional processes. However, that may not always be an effective way of strengthening resilience, either: Gina points to bureaucracy and to tasks that simply exist because they have always been done like that. Merten brings the two poles of change and routine together when he says that according to his experience, stress increases when new production procedures are already in function that have not yet proved successful and keep needing improvements.

Apart from the subject of quality, some interviewees related to competition as an important element of business activities that have to be taken into consideration in the context of burnout and resilience in enterprises.

Competition

Concerning interventions to establish resilience, such as relaxation training or coaching, Peter says that in his company there is no time for things like that. With that comment, he might refer to structural factors such

as tight time schedules or great workloads. Time is an important aspect in that firm, since they have overseas customers who work in other time zones. Thus, responsibilities and tasks come in at times that might not fit European work hours.

> *If I have an international client, for example in Asia, they work when it is night here. I must check my mails and I must receive calls after, say, four or five o'clock in the afternoon.*

Colin criticises that his CEO makes his customers promises without taking the current order volume and capacity into consideration. This problematic behaviour increased as turnover figures threatened to go down. With technical and qualitative demands on the customer side rising, higher demands and increased workloads but also feelings of insecurity are a challenge for many people (Heiko). A sense of uncertainty hinders resilience but is becoming more and more common, Merten believes:

> *Plants and units get dissembled and rebuilt elsewhere, people have to move to keep their jobs or they lose long-time colleagues and friends.*

That could, in fact, be a reason for an organisation to think about resilience. The implementation of a health programme that supports the development of staff-resilience might be a crucial difference between one competitor and the other, as Victor suggests.

There are ideas in all conversations about the meaning of business activities for the development of burnout as well as resilience. Some of the study's participants refer to quality in the sense of high standards: Resilience can be supported by keeping staff well qualified. An even more important sign of quality is being a leader in the market that offers superior goods and services, which customers appreciate, and employees are proud of. Some participants also look at business process management as a supportive means since structured procedures and an administration that keeps

reflecting on their company's processes might reduce stress. Such reflections should include thinking about the way an enterprise deals with competition. Some interviewees report that challenging external competition leads to internal pressure on the employees because of increasing workloads coupled with a fear of redundancy.

While quality and competition are two factors within business activities that influence tendencies towards burnout, possibly in any sector, the following section will take a closer look at industrial companies in particular.

5.2.3 Industry

Burnout is a phenomenon that has been greatly studied, but mostly in social, teaching and service professions. There is less research about stress and mental problems in industrial enterprises. Is the affiliation of workers to a certain sector of the economy an important factor when it comes to their assessment of resilience? Which attitudes do workers in the industrial or manufacturing sector have about burnout and resilience? This category summarises ideas the interviewees mention concerning a transformation from burnout to resilience. Are burnout and resilience topics that play a role in the manufacturing industry?

All interviewees of this study work in the context of manufacturing enterprises, although in different areas of their organisations. Thus, they are in touch with manufacturing procedures and with the atmosphere in that work field. Some are in positions that deal with manufacturing, enhancements or development (Andreas, Colin, Merten, Kai, Volkan), others are in sales (Ali, Peter) or administration and external administrative services (Angelika, Gina, Victor). Matthias and Ludger work in HR departments or are HR trainers for manufacturing companies. Heiko and Sabine are psychotherapists. Heiko works for a health insurer, which has close ties to the manufacturing industry; Sabine is in the HR department of an electronics manufacturer.

129

Ali, who is in sales, has not come in touch with either burnout or the term "resilience" and is not much aware of the problem. He has heard about it but has no personal experience.

Andreas is in a unit that supplies workshops with tools and machinery. He has no personal experience with burnout, but his organisation has a programme for enhancing resilience. It is that programme that gives him some knowledge about the topic.

Angelika, who is very familiar with burnout since she knows some cases personally, is in the insurance sector. Her experience, however, does not stem directly from manufacturing contexts. Her reports rather relate to incidents that happened in her own organisation, which is an insurance broker.

Interviewee Colin had some personal contact with a person who found a way to deal with a high stress level. Whether this was a case of burnout was not detectable in the interview material. However, it was a good depiction of someone trying to overcome a critical phase and look for solutions. This enterprise is part of the automotive industry. There is a significant difference between Colin's organisation and large manufacturers, which is relevant in the context of this study: The enterprise seems to lack the clearly defined workflow processes which are typical for large manufacturers, as this is a workshop for custom made luxury car enhancements. In this small-sized, owner-operated enterprise, the CEO takes most of the decisions. He decides, for example, which order is to be carried out when and by whom and within which time frame. Plus, orders here vary in their scope and content, so that no two orders are completely alike.

An interviewee who has a dissimilar experience is Merten. He is in the Research and Development department of a large car manufacturer. Here, process management and structured procedures characterise the everyday work flow. "Standards and norms and all the quality management developments can make life easier", he thinks. For some of his colleagues, these structures help to keep stress levels low. But he also reports that

many workers feel demands are high. Although he has not heard of cases of burnout as such in his area, he talks much about pressure arising from an increasing workload. And not only does he notice an increase but also a tendency towards perpetually high expectations as he compares former years to the current situation: Formerly, the company used to go through phases of greater and lower impact. Nowadays, there seem to be fewer calm periods. Instead, workload is now on a constantly high level. It is that continuity of extraordinary demands, in which he sees a source of stress.

Gina also works in a manufacturing company where she is in administration. She has little experience with burnout. However, she is very aware of stress as a challenge in her work field and for herself. Therefore, she informed herself about ways of dealing with stress and became very familiar with mindfulness as a means of strengthening resilience. She also has a good insight into her company's policies of dealing with stress, which is really a lack of strategy. Here, management does not implement any resilience building strategies but would probably respond when individual cases of excessive stress came up. According to Gina, they would react rather than take any pro-active decisions.

The ones with most experience and knowledge are, obviously, Heiko and Sabine. From their professional backgrounds as psychologists, they are familiar with resilience building strategies. Sabine is an employee of a large electronics manufacturer. She works in the HR department and is a qualified resilience trainer. Heiko advises manufacturers and other organisations on how to deal with or prevent excessive stress. The fact that insurance companies and industrial companies cooperate in this area involving psychologists, illustrates the importance of the subject for manufacturers. They created those positions and finance internal as well as external experts in order to support their workers in such cases.

Health management systems often include tools for dealing with stress and strengthening resilience, like in Victor's case. Victor is a health manager in a furniture production plant. His superiors decided to hire an

external firm to present wellness packages to their employees. That, according to him, helped to improve mental health among his colleagues and is attractive for newcomers. Plus, it is a strategy to retain employees who might otherwise be willing to change jobs. That strategy saved the company money, Victor says. The fact that some organisations choose external support shows that in many companies there is no or not sufficient internal expertise about burnout and resilience.

Volkan gives a vivid example that burnout can in fact be a serious problem in an industrial company. Possibly, there are certain features of industrial organisations that might even enhance the development of a burnout: At the time of the incident, as he was a

> *General Manager for a tier one automotive supplier, one of my department managers was affected by several business problems, such as changing company structures, merging with other departments, new hierarchies, etc.*

Burnout and the transition to resilience are a problem in industrial companies, Ludger agrees. He has observed that excessive demands tend to be a challenge in many companies and that proper training is needed for supervisors. However, he is sceptic about the scope of the problem. According to him, burnout might not be so much a phenomenon that depends on the sector but rather on the cultural background of a company. Culture in the context of his interview refers to certain regional or national attitudes, mainly in the way workers and management draw a line between private and professional lives. According to Ludger, the drive to fulfil every assignment perfectly, independently from prioritisations, can often be noticed, non-exclusive, in German organisations. This kind of attitude in many situations seems too excessive, stress increasing and does not necessarily lead to an overall better company result, he experienced.

Another industrial company that has dealt with burnout and transformed it into resilience is the one where Kai works. He talks about a crane operator who suffered from a major mental breakdown but was reintegrated

into the workforce through a step-by-step programme involving profession-als from different areas. Such a procedure might also be considered a strat-egy for retaining qualified staff.

According to the data of this study, burnout syndrome as well as re-silience are phenomena that are of relevance not only in social or service-related work fields but also in the manufacturing industry. All interviewees have come into contact with these topics or have at least heard of them. They all – without exception – experience pressure at work because of com-petition and increased workloads. Not all organisations take steps to reduce stress factors or to improve resilience. Those that do, offer health manage-ment programmes like EAPs for their employees, employ psychotherapists or carry out step-by-step reintegration schemes. Standardised work pro-cesses are sometimes, but not always, a useful means to avoid stress, ac-cording to the interview material. There are some reports of workers looking for their individual way of coping with stress.

After having discussed the comments concerning the industrial sec-tor, the information given by the participants relating to another a priori theme, which is structural aspects, will be discussed.

5.2.4 Structures, Processes and Work Flows

All interviewees make comments that relate to structures. They have various suggestions about causes of burnout and possibilities to strengthen resilience. The comments of this category can be subsumed as concerning either internal communication or change or availability/workload.

Internal communication

A person who greatly discusses the transition from burnout to resili-ence is Angelika. She believes that talking about problems is the most im-portant approach when handling a burnout case. She had witnessed several

such cases and believes that looking for help among colleagues and managers, but also among friends and family, can be helpful – depending on the cause of the burnout.

Andreas proposes trying

> *a different type of communication, especially between the hierarchy levels.*

He refers to inadequate communication as a source of stress, especially in connection with an excessive workload. Merten, who works in a very large automotive manufacturing company, worries because

> *communication could be better. The internal flow of information is sometimes sluggish. That causes people to lose trust in the management.*

In Andreas' opinion, there needs to be a good exchange between hierarchy levels to provide an understanding of what causes stress for whom. If that form of communication does not work well, he as a team leader feels like a buffer in between his superior and his workers:

> *When I, as a team leader, get pressure from 'above', what do I do? I have to deal with it. But I am not supposed to pass it on to my team.*

Adequate communication between management and workers is relevant for Colin, also. This goes especially for working hours:

> *The team members need an environment to help structure their minds. Sometimes work seems never-ending. You have to give the workers a clear time for going home.*

This is necessary in his company because the CEO tends to take all the decisions, without taking the needs and resources of his workers into consideration. This seems to cause a climate of insecurity and stress. Uncertainty can be a source of stress, believes Victor and he refers to short-time contracts and to the flexibility that his management expects from staff.

In the context of structures, Matthias criticises that some people invest time thinking about jobs that are not their own, and thus take up unnecessary responsibilities. He disapproves of vague and blurred organisational structures and believes that precise job descriptions help create resilience whereas it causes stress when responsibilities are not well defined:

> For example, when people from Logistics waste thoughts on how Controlling handles things.

He believes that some stress factors stem from problematic structures such as organisational conditions. Especially in HR many problems could be avoided by a HR policy which is tactically and strategically well set up. For employees in higher positions, Matthias sees a strong need for annual personal reviews, combined with objectives. He also refers to competition in the market:

> Challenging competition can appear existence-threatening for some companies, with respective consequences for managers and workers. It is then a small step from existential fear to burnout.

Andreas talks about interaction between departments. This has improved, according to him, after the company implemented an EAP, which has led to more solidarity and understanding within the organisation. Communication is important also for Colin who refers to the relationship between mechanics and customers in his company. The direct communication helps to reduce stress because in the case of the organisation he is working for, it adds to the pride and passion the workers have, which strengthens their resilience. According to Matthias, a certain open and respectful corporate culture is needed, and Peter suggests looking into and resolving conflicts in order to create an atmosphere of resilience. An open and thoughtful atmosphere can create a new dynamic to face difficulties, according to psychotherapist Sabine.

In accordance with that, Gina suggests that workers must learn to reject certain tasks. Merten and Volkan also point to the necessity to decline

errands that are too much. Volkan believes it is necessary to have the cour-age

> *to prioritise and share tasks with colleagues and finally not to hesitate to communicate clearly when workloads reach not manage-able levels. Resilience means to figure out and respect own limits.*

Merten proposes setting clear priorities and to ignore redundant as-signments. Interestingly, he looks at excessive demand at work as a posi-tive aspect because it can be the starting point of a more efficient work style.

Change

An important aspect within the topic of structures is change. In a learning organisation, changes are being accepted as normal because it has a culture that is open to change and mechanisms of effective learning. Peter Senge was one of the authors who coined the term. He defined learn-ing organisations as "organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured" (Senge, 1990, p. 3).

An example for that is Victor's company. He says,

> *we are constantly trying to learn so that we will get to where we want to be which is a cultural health environment.*

Angelika considers dealing with change as a more relevant compe-tence nowadays than in former times. New developments appear in rapid succession and especially older employees tend to find it hard to keep up. She questions the need for frequent changes and says that administrators seem to be forced to carry out more changes than are really necessary.

> *All of a sudden there is yet another system, programme, IT instrument. I wonder if that is all so necessary.*

Angelika suggests that good change management is important to prevent stress and that all employees ought to be informed on time about

what is going to be changed, how and why. Proper information is a clue word that Kai would agree with. He stresses the factor of communication as a means of fostering resilience. Ludger voices a similar opinion. He demands

> *[p]rompt feedback, sufficient informal and formal conversations, in confidence.*

Kai's account of a worker who was reintegrated into his workplace after a lengthy time of absence and illness depicts the procedure of a reintegration process. One of the reasons that it worked well was because of the structure. Various participants were involved, and it was controlled by an external consultant.

Andreas seems to think that cases of burnout have caused the HR-department or management to initiate some changes in his organisation. They implemented a mental health programme, which however tackles only the symptoms rather than the reasons for certain problems:

> *The programme is good for giving people tools to deal with problems. But that does not remove the problem. The problem – whatever it is – still remains. Why is somebody stressed? Overburdened?*

The area in which change and learning processes seem most visible, is, according to him, the hiring procedures. The company wants to be seen as providing a good work situation, so they made an intensive concerted endeavour to give the workers better resources.

Availability and workload

Some of the interviewees talk about working hours or about e-mails and the use of mobile phones after closing time, on weekends or during holidays. This is an aspect that is mentioned in some burnout or resilience

manuals. Ludger says that in Germany or in Scandinavia it is more common than in Great Britain for workers to be able to

> *leave the office by four o'clock sharp [and] turn of their mobiles at the time they go home.*

Gina, who works in London, has had a similar experience and believes that there many workers are expected to answer the phone when receiving calls after work. She says:

> *Even when you are on holiday, they expect you to read your mails. If they consider something urgent you have to forward it to someone else. Or you do it yourself.*

In Merten's company, there is a regulation called "Mail on Holiday" which allows some of the workers to erase their e-mails on return from vacation, if they have installed an out-of-office message before they had left. However, it is not a must, which still leaves a chance for mental stress to occur. Volkan suggests that employees establish

> *A personal system how to deal with oscillating workloads; in particular for mid-level and line managers a very essential point.*

Some interviewees talk about drawing a line between private and professional life although they are not all of the same opinion, whether that is a necessity or not. Gina thinks

> *they should make it official to separate between private and work. But it is not common here.*

Most of the interviewees recognise that many workers cannot expect to have a regular nine-to-five job, although some draw resilience from the fact that they have a private life, like Volkan suggests:

> *good social relationships and private relaxing activities can support that; for instance, during weekends and holidays employees "switch off" from daily business and problems.*

Merten's comments can create the impression that it is not even his organisations' goal to actually reduce the source of stress, which is for example work intensification:

> *extra tasks, which have to be done in shorter time. (…) Many of us work in so many different teams and projects at the same time. And sometimes, when someone quits or retires, they won't replace that person. So that guy's work has to be done, too. That does not enhance quality.*

While in secondary literature some authors mention a good person-job fit as a means of building a resilient workforce, the manuals hardly mention that idea. In the interview data, there are some comments concerning that topic. Matthias for example advises that a potential future employee should be told no later than in the job interview what will be expected of him or her. Gina experienced exactly that clarity:

> *[W]hen I had my job interview with this job I am having now, with the woman who is now my line manager, I told her that I have a young son and that I might sometimes have to pick him up from day-care or so. She said to me straight: 'Don't expect I will give you a job from nine to five'.*

In summary, what can be learnt concerning structures is that processes and workflows are very often factors that either increase stress or improve resilience. An appreciative and trust-building communication style within teams and departments as well as between hierarchy levels helps to reduce stress, according to some interviewees. Mid-level supervisors can be particularly vulnerable to stress because of their intermediary position in which they have to communicate both as leaders and as subordinates. Small as well as large organisation could improve their employees' resilience by means of transparency and a reliable flow of information. This could for example reduce feelings of uncertainty and is considered a vital aspect when it comes to corporate change management.

Should employees be available even after work or on weekends? Should there be a well-defined line between private and work life? Opinions about such questions vary within the study sample. Even on an individual level there is little clarity about it since many interviewees are not sure what to think about it. Some of them talk about the topic as if it was an occurrence that simply exists, more or less like a natural condition. Most participants look at permanent availability as a stress factor, while others believe it is necessary or even desirable to make themselves available at almost all times. Few organisations try to tackle the problem by restricting email traffic at certain times, others present it as unsolvable or do not consider it a problem. A group of interviewees sees it as an obligation of the individual worker to cope with it. Few think that it is a matter of adequate person-job fit.

While section 5.2.4 described the participants' views on the impact of structural conditions on burnout and resilience, section 5.2.5 will discuss the next theme, which is on leaders' knowledge and attitudes.

5.2.5 Knowledge: Leadership and Attitudes

As explained earlier, understanding causes of stress and coping strategies can influence the development of either burnout or resilience. Knowledge (or lack of knowledge) influences a person's mindset about something. Therefore, employees' as well as supervisors' standpoints can have an influence on what is considered a burnout. In addition to that, some of the interviewees believe that a key to better resilience might be found in certain leadership styles or other aspects of leadership.

Organisational and leaders' attitudes towards burnout and resilience

Matthias is a psychologist who worked as a HR manager in various industrial companies. He is now a lecturer in vocational schools and higher education institutions, which means he teaches future personnel adminis-

trators, mostly in leadership-related subjects such as teamwork/team build-
ing, psychological aspects of leadership and employee development. Mat-
thias defines burnout as a physical, cognitive and emotional state of fatigue
due to long-term excessive use of personal resources. He defines resilience
by saying what it is not:

> *what resilience is not: an attitude that many leaders have*
> *adopted: obstinately denying the problem or unpleasant challenges*
> *and have them bounce off.*

This appears to be the mindset that Angelika has experienced since
she puts an emphasis on leaders being trained so that they would know
how to handle burnout and promote resilience. On the one hand, this is
necessary for them to be able to help their team members in challenging
times. On the other hand, executives need to be aware of their own stress
levels and factors that cause stress so that they do not hand down the pres-
sure they are experiencing themselves. Good leaders, says Kai, understand
that workers will appreciate the same conditions as leaders when it comes
to resilience-supportive tasks and environments. Kai suggests that superi-
ors should hand a good amount of control over to their workers for specific
tasks. As a side effect, that would allow leaders more time to concentrate
on leadership tasks, which includes informal conversations. Kai lists some
factors that contributed to establishing a resilient mindset and with those
factors he is in accordance with some of the manuals:

> *I felt my supervisor trusted me and believed I could do the job.*
> *Therefore, I was allowed to act autonomously, could do what and*
> *how I wanted. I felt needed and I felt I received appreciation for my*
> *work. I felt I was contributing something important. There was a good*
> *team spirit. My tasks were useful and necessary and they gave me*
> *new perspectives.*

Concerning structures, Kai points out that his tasks at work give him
a sense of value. He feels his job is necessary. He calls on supervisors to
maintain a spirit of self-efficacy among their staff. Plus, he asks them to

keep in touch with their team members on a regular and appreciative basis and to accept them as competent partners:

> *See your team members, talk with them, ask them how they feel in the team. (…) Also, be ready to receive feedback regularly, be it from colleagues, team members or even friends and family.*

For Gina, it seems important that executives do not look at isolated cases of excessive stress. Instead, they ought to learn about stress as a structural phenomenon. In addition to that, she puts a focus on the responsibility of the workers themselves. They should also learn about burnout and resilience.

> *The workers themselves also have to understand how to deal with difficult situations. This is not only for the line managers. In fact, I think it should be cascaded into the whole workforce.*

She believes in a top-down approach, just like Sabine, who says

> *an organisation can only develop and improve as much as its leaders allow it to.*

In the context of leadership, Sabine firmly believes in training for managers and executives. In seminars, supervisors

> *will see that lack of resilience is a problem that many of the best employees can have, in all sectors and enterprises.*

According to Sabine, resilience training should be part of any professional health management programme. This might on the one hand be useful for employees and supervisors who are already working in an enterprise. As soon as ideas are put into action and prove to be effective, workers will see positive changes in their colleagues and want to participate from such good results. Sabine has observed that then

> *a very special dynamic happens.*

Another solution might be to jointly develop solutions, which are accepted by management and workforce alike, says Sabine:

A company that supports their workers in [voicing their opinion], for example by jointly looking for a solution, has actually learned something

Such learning processes sometimes start with novel ways of thinking coming from new staff, particularly leaders, like in Victor's case:

When a new HR manager came, he looked at the business case and I think he started searching for solutions.

According to Victor, those solutions were effective in the company because many people were involved. All departments had their share of the duties and of the effects.

Interaction between supervisors and team members is also a topic to which Angelika refers. She proposes that leaders assign tasks in such a way that they will be manageable, not cause pressure, that deadlines be realistic. What causes stress for her is a situation in which she has to apologise for not fulfilling a task in the given time. Concerning mental or other illnesses, she believes a trusting relationship between team leaders and team members is helpful. Moreover, she thinks that superiors who are aware of difficulties within the team should themselves have the opportunity and the obligation to forward respective information to higher hierarchy levels. Angelika feels it is helpful if overall management is informed of problems within the departments so that they can take proper structural steps or improve on those aspects that led to those difficulties.

Ali suggest that it might cause stress when

some people try to advance and make a career. They get stressed when younger colleagues make it before them, for example.

This opinion concerns organisational structures and touches on personnel development decisions. It implies a certain career attitude and suggests that frustration about unexpected or seemingly unfair promotion decisions may cause stress.

Knowledge and sensitivity among leaders

One of the assumptions derived from the secondary literature and from the insurance manuals is that there seems to be a lack of knowledge, know-how or precognition about resilience and about dealing with burnout. The respective suggestions in the manuals can be summarised like this: Supervisors and team leaders should receive particular training about resilience. That way they can become sensitive to anything that might obstruct or hinder the development of resilience in enterprises and organisations. Thus, there is probably not enough knowledge about the transition from burnout to resilience and about appropriate strategies that can be applied within organisations.

This supposed lack of knowledge is in fact an observation, which many of the interviewees have made within their companies. A number of interviews contains respective comments. However, the interview partners draw different consequences from the same observation. Some believe in teaching leaders how to avoid burnout and improve resilience, others ask for medical or psychological staff for such responsibilities.

For Volkan, it is essential that symptoms of burnout be detected as early as possible. For that, he says manuals as the ones supplied by health insurers and other companies are useful, since

> *frameworks would basically help supervisors and HR departments in enterprises to be best possible prepared for these situations.*

The terminology concerning resilience and burnout does not seem to be widely known in German enterprises, according to Matthias. In fact, Volkan's account of a burnout case in his division exemplifies that very well:

I even had at that time absolutely no clue about what it means and that it is really existing. Anyway, you were able to recognise how his professional performance and personal behaviour on an almost weekly base negatively changed. Including myself, as direct supervisor, and our HR responsible at that time, nobody really recognised what was happening to the person.

Angelika, Sabine and Volkan say that many leaders do not have experience in dealing with burnout situations and that they need training. According to Angelika, supervisors should be able to listen to employees in need and they should approach their team members when they consider it appropriate. This, however, calls for sensitivity on the side of the executives since some workers might like to be approached by their line managers, whereas others might rather be left alone in problematic life situations. Some might look at it as intrusive, others as a sign of appreciation. Therefore, a sick person should not be contacted during the time of leave. To Angelika, that appears like control. Instead, supervisors should listen to their team members and pay attention to them when they resume work. She sees it as an employer's duty to ensure that every worker will be safe from any harm in the workplace, including excessive demand that could lead to mental illness. In any case, a director or entrepreneur should look at their employees not only as workers but think of them as individual personalities. However, she supposes that many leaders are not even familiar with the term "resilience" and that they need to develop better empathy.

Ludger believes it is a problem that

leaders do not see the need in their team members

and that they need training for that. Matthias complains that supervisors have poor observing competences to understand the needs and resources of their team members. It is his belief that such a competence could prevent many cases of excessive stress or burnout.

> *Once they detect a possible unhappiness in a person with his or her position or tasks, they can react quickly and adequately, without – in a worst-case scenario – the need to dismiss somebody or to have to terminate a contract due to unhealthy overexertion.*

The culture of an organisation should be made clear from the beginning since he believes

> *that too many employees are in the wrong position.*

Colin reports that his line manager did get some support after a long leave of absence due to excessive stress. However, that support lasted only until profits declined. Kai considers the seminars useful which his organisation offers to leaders.

Some interviewees also demand training for workers (Gina, Sabine, Angelika, Andreas). Volkan makes an illuminating comment in his report about a case of burnout in his organisation, where the man who was affected did not really understand what was happening to him:

> *For me at that time was interesting, that he even was not able to explain what the problems are in particular and what affects him to mutate from a confident and conscious to an insecure and reluctant person.*

Heiko and Peter say that neither supervisors or HR professionals nor co-workers should be assigned taking care of stressed out team members since most of them are not qualified for that. Peter states that he as a team leader should not have to act as a psychotherapist for his team members.

> *It's not possible. You're either a good sales professional or a psychologist. Not both.*

For Sabine, changes are an important opportunity for and a facet of building resilience. Sabine considers change important because it can be a starting point for better resilience in many cases. On an individual as well as on an organisational level, any negative experience can be looked at as an opportunity for improvement. Sabine suggests developing and cultivating organisational well-being strategies. According to her, in the context of building resilience, leaders

> have to be willing to check and – if useful - change structures, strategies and proceedings within the organisation.

Sabine proposes that any change management process should include considerations about resilience. Once a decision has been made to improve or implement measures for strengthening resilience, it ought to be a top-down process:

> If upper levels are not ready to get involved, lower levels can try as much as they might – they won't succeed.

In summary, the study participants confirm a notion that can be found in secondary literature according to which leaders' knowledge and attitudes about burnout and resilience influence the respective climate in an organisation. Many interviewees criticise a lack of information and compassion on the side of their line manager. This is a problem to most of the study participants because they see it as a necessity that organisations protect their employees from burnout and other mental illnesses caused or influenced by their job. Therefore, some believe that cases of burnout or excessive stress be handled and treated by psychologically trained professionals such as psychotherapists. However, many interviewees agree that training for the leaders in their company is useful in which supervisors learn how to handle their own stress, develop an understanding of stress-reducing work conditions and obtain greater sensitivity to their workers' needs.

The interview data show that many interviewees believe in resilience building as a top-down development. However, also workers themselves

should be educated about resilience factors. Further suggestions point to resilience building as a cross-organisational process that includes all departments and levels, that makes use of change dynamics and cultivates better communication between hierarchy levels.

After having discussed the interviewees' opinions about leaders' knowledge and attitudes, the following section will focus on psychological aspects of resilience and burnout, which is another a priori theme.

5.2.6 Psychological Aspects of Resilience and Burnout

From a psychological point of view there are different beliefs about the roots of resilience in a person. This is an existential question for this study because it aims at finding practical possibilities to create resilience in an organisation. For the same reason it is important whether or not participants believe burnout is a matter of psychology at all, how seriously it should be taken and what interventions can be useful to reduce the risk of burnout. This section will therefore discuss the interviewees comments on resilience being a personality trait or not and on the debate whether burnout is a medical condition that requires professional treatment or just a stressful phase which will pass more or less by itself.

Personality trait or acquired competence?

In the secondary literature, one can find two lines of opinions about resilience. Some authors claim, resilience is a personality trait, a characteristic of a person. Others have generated results in studies that resilience and respective techniques or mindsets can be acquired during the course of life, even as an adult. The manuals mostly state that resilience can be learnt. According to that, for a resilient attitude, it is first of all necessary to know various techniques of reducing or handling stress, for example physical relaxation techniques. The manuals also recommend coaching sessions

or seminars for better self-management. They propose that a resilient person can face changes without being overburdened by them.

Almost all interviews contain references to that aspect. Ali believes that a person who wants to achieve certain career developments, might be (or have to be) more resilient than others.

Resilience can be acquired, but it can also be a competence that one already possesses, according to Volkan:

> *resilience for me means to have and develop certain mental strength*

A person who is already resilient, can actively keep up that attitude, according to Colin, who says,

> *the strategy is to keep the passion burning.*

Andreas talks about resources rather than resilience. For him resources are composed of competences like knowledge, adequate self-assessment or stress management, all of which can be learnt at least to a certain extent. Gina talks about her personal learning experience: she decided to understand more about mindfulness and sees that as a tool for strengthening her resilience. She also believes that

> *if you are mentally stable, then you can learn to be resilient.*

For Ludger, even a competence like asking for help in stressful situations can enhance resilience.

Peter is sceptic whether a person who has had a burnout will be able to develop resilience because he believes that experience will rather impede such a transformation. Angelika has experienced crisis sometimes to be a chance. That is a view that also implies a learning process. From a professional point of view, Heiko would agree with that, since many of his

> *patients have overcome burnouts or depressive phases and come to us for rehabilitation before going back into their regular work life.*

Sabine is a psychologist who works in the HR department of a German electronics manufacturer, where she is responsible for recruitment and development of staff as well as the company's health management. She is a qualified resilience trainer and had implemented a resilience-training programme in her organisation some two years ago. Naturally, she is convinced that resilience factors can be learnt and internalised. Many of her comments refer to the theme *Personality trait or acquired.* Sabine also suggests a healthy life style including nutritious food and sports as aspects of a resilient work life.

Victor has seen successful classes in which leaders and workers were taught how to deal with stress. Such training take time, though, as Matthias and Sabine point out. Some interviewees believe that it is not only a task on the company's side to support the development of resilience, but also each worker's individual responsibility. Volkan voices a similar opinion when he says

> *I believe that success factors, social imbalance and mental resilience are the key factors for potential burnout "candidates". That means that a social balance, a good and regular relationship with the family and friends, purposive time outs from business as holidays without being connected and available, is essential for a helpful balance.*

Medical condition vs. stressful phase

All interviewees relate burnout to stress. Most of them look at burnout as a serious impediment and they agree that building resilience among an organisation's workforce is necessary or at least useful. Obviously, this may originate in the fact that burnout and resilience were the focus of the interviews. Nevertheless, interviewees were given the opportunity to define what burnout and resilience meant to them. During the interviews, the interviewer made an effort to create an open and trusting atmosphere that would allow any opinion to be voiced.

In fact, a sceptic approach came from Ludger, who argued that employment ratios are relatively good, which appeared to have led to an attitude of security among workers. That in turn would cause people to overrate their feelings of stress and to label them with the somewhat medical term "burnout". He believes, however, that it is a rather fashionable expression rather than a medical issue. It has become so common that it might motivate people to reflect on their health in such a way that they detect a burnout when in fact they may only go through a stressful phase.

Most interviewees consider burnout a problematic matter and take the meaning of resilience seriously, like Volkan, who has had the experience that in the beginning there are mental symptoms, which can later turn to physical effects. Resilience is for Matthias a competence or trait that is needed in times of profound challenges, since he has heard of it

> *in the context of existential life crises such as war and flight.*

Colin has experienced it as a major burden for his line manager. Gina, who works in London, sees stress as a relevant aspect of her own work life. Her employers, however, are not aware of the scope of mental illnesses. In Heiko's interview, burnout is depicted as a major health problem, which is due to his profession, in which he clinically treats many people with stress or burnout. He describes burnout as a medical problem and connects it with certain physical consequences, for example that

> *it is necessary to reduce and metabolise the adrenalin*

or

> *that other symptoms come up such as repeated infections or an excessive tiredness.*

An untreated or unrecognised burnout can lead to serious mental illnesses such as depression, he says. In many cases, he advises, professional help is necessary. Kai's and Volkan's accounts of workers in their teams who had suffered from burnout are practical illustrations of Heiko's

medical judgement. Kai's team member actually received psychological treatment and had to undergo psychological tests.

Even if most study participants agree that burnout is a clinical condition, not all of them think that it stems only from work-related stress. There might be factors in private life, too, says Volkan:

> *I would define burnout as a mental disease, which seems to begin when affected persons are not able to deal with private and in particular professional targets and work or task loads over a longer period of time.*

While some researchers claim that resilience is part of certain personality traits (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 16; Stoddart & Clance, 2017, p. 48). Others have shown that a resilient attitude can be acquired during childhood and even later in life (Ducki, 2017, p. 5; Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 258).

Summing up, most of the study participants generally agree with the latter statement and say that workers need awareness of stress reducing techniques. Views differ as to whether it is the employer's or the employees' own responsibility to generate such knowledge.

In addition, there are quite a few differentiated comments, for example that it takes a basic mental stability to learn how to become resilient or that under certain conditions an already resilient person can maintain his or her resilience. Others have actually experienced burnout cases as a starting point for the development of a more resilient outlook on life and work.

The interview data was also searched for comments concerning the scope that participants assign to burnout: All participants link burnout to stress and most of them consider it a medical or at least quite serious mental condition, which in many cases needs professional treatment.

In this section, the participants' attitudes towards psychological aspects of burnout and resilience were discussed. The following section is about the impact of personnel management, which was not an a priori

theme of this study but surfaced as a relevant subject. Therefore, the researcher included it in the list of themes and will present the data in section 5.2.7.

5.2.7 Personnel Management

Most interviewees make some comments that can be summarised in this category. No other category has more references than this one. The high number of comments is especially remarkable, because the manuals hardly ever mention this aspect. For this reason, a subject concerning personnel or staff was not an a priori theme in the sense of Template Analysis method.

Workplace atmosphere

Ali says it was important for him not to cause too much stress for his teams. For that reason, he attempted to

create a friendly atmosphere and to establish positive relationships with the sales teams I was responsible for.

in order to reduce stress levels. A good work climate is also a relevant aspect in Colin's organisation, where they offer fun events like parties and outings for the workers. Management tries to keep the job attractive and to show the mechanics some appreciation by addressing their passion for luxury cars and allowing them to drive them. Merten reflects on the notion that many of his colleagues consider it a privilege to work in his organisation:

Many of us are proud to work here. We like the car, it is our brand.

Gina would agree with such a strategy because she believes

the recognition that someone does a good job, makes them proud of it and better at the job.

She points to companies that she finds creative in that area, such as Google or Facebook. They are companies that allow their workers much liberty.

> *People have the freedom to do things in the way they want. They can come in shorts, be themselves. They have beds in the office and play areas and so on.*

Employer responsibility

According to Ludger, it is vital that supervisors observe their team members in a positive way and help them strengthen their resilience. For that, Matthias says, leaders need some empathy and sensitivity to their teams' needs. However, Ludger states that many superiors do not have the qualification or talent for an open and integer leadership style:

> *Leaders like that are an ideal. They hardly exist in reality.*

In Andreas' company, management makes an effort to "protect" the workers because they matter to them and because they want to be known as an attractive employer:

> *We want them to give us their best, so we should also give them our best.*

This is necessary, as Victor points out as he talks about recruiting new employees: To him, the most important asset for his organisation are the employees and new talent. Volkan would probably agree with that since he believes that

> *we have to improve our performance on learning and providing resilience/programmes fast and significantly because I believe it will be even more necessary in the (near) future.*

<u>Personnel development and benefits</u>

Ali would make sure that his sales team members performed well and were given sufficient support to do so, for example good sales training. Some of the interviewees consider regular monitoring and feedback sessions useful tools to establish resilience (Ali, Kai, Matthias and Ludger). In addition, in Ali's organisation, they had

> *a well-planned target-system, good and achievable objectives*

and paid a comparatively high salary. Good payment to Ali can be a means to avoid burnout and for Merten good monetary but also non-monetary conditions contribute to resilience.

For that reason, the organisation, in which Andreas works, trains its staff through seminars and team building methods. They also consider a good social atmosphere in the organisation to be important. In Gina's company, they do not offer anything to relieve stress or build resilience, which is something that they should do, according to her. According to Angelika, too, self-management seminars can strengthen resilience.

Freedom is a clue word in Heiko's answers, who says that

> *for a resilient work force, it is vital that we turn those developments around and allow especially high-potential workers more freedom, more choice, more self-control and at the same time recognise and appreciate their performance.*

Similarly, Kai reflects on some positive incidents at work during which he was able to fulfil his potential. He says, experiences like that could strengthen resilience. Many interviewees stress the importance of voluntariness: If companies offer measures such as seminars to improve their workforce's resilience, participation should be on a voluntary basis.

Apart from training for workers and leaders, some other benefits can be offered in order to enhance resilience among employees. Merten mentions a whole list of means that his company offers:

flexible working hours; some mobile workplaces and some people can apply for sabbaticals. Also, we have daycare for children, usually close to where the parents work. Some units have sports facilities.

In the sense of personnel development, another interesting approach is mentioned by Volkan, who suggests reducing one's own responsibility in order to gain mental stability, when necessary. New career opportunities may come up later, he says:

In last consequence even a step back on the career ladder can establish resilience; as a temporary or a long-term solution. Maybe at later stages circumstances will change and new opportunities to climb up again will be given.

A qualified leader should be aware of his workers' problems, sometimes even before they themselves are, according to Matthias. He also refers to another point mentioned in the summary of resilience suggestions: leaders as role models. According to his observations, for most employees their supervisors are just the opposite (*anti-role model*) and they would never want to be like that person. He draws an impressive comparison with the military when it comes to good leadership: Good leaders, he says, must control their own emotions and take care of their troops. And in order to become good leaders, they first must be trained to be good leaders.

As I am saying this, I come to think of the military: Leadership training in the Bundeswehr (German army) is just that: They must be able to do that. They cannot - while the grenades are flying, or the Taliban are coming - freak out. The commanding officers must be emotionally controlled. Which Management school would teach such good self-management? So, I will say it in a military way: Before I send the troops into battle, I must qualify the commanding officers. So they can lead.

Summing up, a substantial portion of the interview material refers to personnel decisions, recruitment and development or work climate. Statements were made about the importance of a friendly atmosphere, attractive monetary and non-monetary benefits, pride in working for a particular organisation, receiving recognition for good performance and creativity enhancing environments. Other suggestions include cultivating a good team spirit and offering voluntary self-management or stress-reduction seminars. Also important for some of the participants are achievable objectives and regular feedback meetings. According to the study data, all these are factors that can help to improve resilience. Another key factor in the interview material is the employers' responsibility to ensure their workers' well-being. This can be important for existing staff as well as for potential newcomers. Many interview partners say that good supervisors should be aware of their team members needs but they also observe that many leaders are not (yet) qualified for that.

The interview material has brought a lot of information on employees' attitudes and experiences about burnout and resilience. The following section provides the key points derived from the interview data so that the groundwork will be laid for drawing conclusions on professional practice.

5.3 Conclusion: Business Behaviour to Improve Resilience

Certain relevant themes were identified from the secondary literature and especially from a number of manuals published by German health insurance companies. Those themes were categories of suggestions and recommendations about burnout in organisations and about the way a transformation to better resilience could be achieved. The themes were applied to the interview material and based on that, an analysis of the entire sample was carried out, the results of which were laid out in chapter 5.2 and will be summarised in this section.

What were the interviewees' practical experiences concerning a transformation from burnout to resilience? Many of them said, the experience of burnout syndrome can lead to first steps towards a transformation to resilience. Nevertheless, organisational health management plans can improve resilience but need to be accompanied by efforts to reduce stress factors. If need be, transformation can be achieved by reintegrating burnout patients step-by-step. Although the participants came from different countries, no correlations concerning cultural backgrounds were found.

Can certain business activities influence the risk of burnout or the strengthening of resilience? Many participants believe that high quality products and services of an organisation can in fact improve its workers' resilience. In addition, employees who work for a company that is ahead of its competitors might be more resilient than those who work for a company that is not well established.

Are burnout and resilience phenomena that are of importance in the industrial sector? Yes, burnout occurs in industrial companies. Therefore, resilience is of importance there, too. For example, pressure arises from competition in the market and increased workloads for many workers. As many interviewees have observed, some organisations have started taking steps to improve resilience. An adequate approach is, according to some participants, a standardised workflow since good structures can sometimes help to strengthen resilience. Nevertheless, workers should also increase their resilience on their own account, in addition to or instead of support offered by their company.

Does burnout relate to internal structures and how should communication and interactive processes be designed to improve resilience? A supportive and protective interaction within and between all levels and units should be pursued since it can decrease stress. A transparent and reliable communication structure can help to reduce feelings of insecurity, especially during times of change and thus improve resilience.

It remains a challenge, though, that mid-level managers seem to be more prone to stress because of their intermediary position, which can cause particular communicative challenges. For them, but also for their team members, permanent availability seems to be a stress factor but can also be a necessity in some jobs. For that reason, employees should learn when and how to give certain tasks priority over others.

Lack of knowledge among leaders: Is there such problem and if yes, how can it be solved? Generally, the interview data show that leaders' knowledge and attitudes about burnout and resilience matter. Many participants find that organisations ought to protect their employees from mental illnesses. Resilience building should be a top-down development and include all areas and hierarchy levels of an organisation. Leaders as well as workers need to be trained about burnout and resilience and/or psychotherapists can provide support.

Is resilience a personality trait or a competence that can be learnt? Is burnout an illness? Some interviewees think that a resilient attitude can be acquired during childhood and even later in life. Some even say that crises can be turned into chances; therefore, burnout can be turned into resilience. Especially a person with a generally stable psyche can learn resilience techniques. Notwithstanding, it is the employer's as well as the employees' responsibility to initiate the learning process. Also, most interview partners consider burnout a mental condition that is to be taken seriously, since it is not simply a stressful phase that will pass. Sometimes, professional treatment is needed.

Can an organisation manage the development of resilience through HR strategies? Monetary and non-monetary benefits as well as achievable objectives and regular feedback can foster resilience, according to the many participants. However, values also count, as pride, recognition and good team spirit are factors of a resilient workforce. Apart from that, HR departments ought to initiate self-management, stress-reduction and other semi-

nars since some interviewees think they can be useful tools. Finally, ensuring an adequate person-job fit can help as well as individual career decisions against certain stressful positions (like changing jobs).

Section 5.2 provided an in-depth analysis of the opinions of realised interviews. The following items sum up the most relevant statements.

Those interviewees who are acquainted with step-by-step reintegration programmes say they appreciate them. They also think such programmes ought to be supplemented by counselling sessions and dialogue. Some interview partners recommended rehabilitation plans should be carried out by a health professional rather than a supervisor.

Good business process management can help to improve resilience since problematic structures and lack of standardised workflows increase stress. Instead, the interview data shows that positive communication styles and support between hierarchy levels, transparency, reliability, a sense of security, positive feedback, participation and good team spirit are considered helpful. This might also protect a group of employees who are especially exposed to stress: mid-level managers such as team or unit leaders. Resilience development should be implemented top-down and as a cross-organisational process, since stress concerns workers on all levels. Sometimes, however, it is a matter of adequate person-job fit.

Also, reliable structures can alleviate stress factors which seem unavoidable in some businesses such as being available by phone or email in the evenings, on weekends or even during holidays. This has to do with competition. Competition is a given factor in most markets, but it adds to workers' stress. This dilemma may not be of the same severity in all companies because the perception of competition varies among enterprises and business fields. Competition can be looked at as a positive dynamic and is often a common aspect of the market. Nevertheless, strategies of dealing with competition should include considerations of staff well-being. A positive side effect of that can be that resilient workers are an asset in businesses that are confronted with shortage of highly skilled personnel.

An array of information was gathered from the interview material and presented above. As a next step, it will be necessary to draw conclusions from that since the objective of this thesis is to derive indications for better business behaviour that can lead to transitions from burnout to resilience.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

After having presented the opinions of the interviewees in chapter 5, this chapter will discuss the outcomes. It will synthesise the materials from chapters 4 and 5 and combine them with the findings from the previous chapters. In that context, the study data will be linked to the research literature. This will lead to an analysis of the information gathered from the interview data, using the literature to help explore that information so that the aims and objectives of this thesis can be fulfilled.

The analysis can form the basis of some recommendations on burnout prevention and resilience development. Such recommendations could be designed in a form that responds to the difficulties managers and organisations experience. Based on that, organisations can develop adequate business behaviour to tackle the problems. Once the obstacles that hinder the development of resilience are described, they become tangible. Proper solutions can then be generated.

Therefore, the difficulties will be defined and categorised in this section. A closer look at the opinions and suggestions made during the interviews will show that organisations are faced with certain predicaments. This chapter will also suggest certain business behaviour that can be derived from understanding these dilemmas. In the concluding sections, the researcher will discuss the initial situation for the research project, the main findings of the thesis and derive some topics for further research.

6.1 Discussion: The Dilemmas in Creating a Resilient Enterprise

In the analysis of the findings from the interview sample (chapter 5) and from the documentary analyses (chapter 4), some general dilemmas can be identified. This section will discuss these challenges in more detail. The following subsections will each refer to one of the dilemmas identified.

First of all, in most interviews and from the documentary analysis, a general question that arises in the process of organisational resilience building is: <u>Who is responsible for workers' mental health?</u> This will be discussed in section 6.1.1. Many mid-level managers are not skilled to handle mental problems of their team members, neither before an illness becomes virulent nor afterwards during a reintegration process. There are contradicting opinions among the interviewees and in research literature whether this is their task at all or whether they should only focus on business aspects in their leadership role. This will be the topic of the first section below.

Encouraging and empathic leadership styles as well as a friendly mood within teams support the development of resilience. However, not all leaders in industrial enterprises are talented attachment figures or psychologically skilled in social matters. This can be a problem because inadequate behaviour from the side of a line manager can add to stress and give way to an unhindered progression of burnout syndrome, as explained in section 2.1.3, where the stages of burnout syndrome were discussed. There is no clear consensus, neither in research literature nor among the interviewees whether or to what extent social issues are part of a leader's job. Probably, organisations need to decide whether their leaders ought to occupy themselves with stress in their teams and to what extent. It can also be decided that they are to concentrate on business matters only and leave health issues to designated experts. Enterprises that do not take a conscious decision about these questions might face the dilemma that their mid-level leaders are not clear about their role: Are they supposed to be <u>experts in their business or (also) in social matters?</u> This will be discussed in section 6.1.2.

Some interview participants report that their supervisors do not seem to know how to approach a team member who is sick or has been sick due to burnout. <u>How should leaders react to burnout in their teams?</u> Many team leaders seem to shy away from broaching the issue. This is understandable, since research results have shown that burnout starts subtly but in its advanced stages is a serious condition of ill health that calls for professional

psychological and medical therapy (for example by Burisch, 2010 or Ahola et al., 2014). Section 6.1.3 will take a closer look at the difficulties and possibilities that leaders face here.

As Ladegard (2011, p. 29) has pointed out, many enterprises experience rising pressure to perform since they are part of competitive markets. This pressure cascades down to the workforce who find themselves challenged by a faster pace and frequent changes. The interview data confirm this. Also, the evaluation of documents shows that there is a dilemma of competition and stress because it appears that stress cannot be avoided in a competitive market. However, according to the interviewees, it seems to be less of a burden for employees who feel aligned with their employer's values and business objectives. The dilemma of stress avoidance in a competition situation will be discussed in section 6.1.4.

Two other, seemingly contradicting approaches have both emerged as useful, especially from the interviews: On the one hand, more autonomy for employees is fruitful. On the other hand, more structures also get mentioned as necessary guidance and security factors. Research literature has pointed to the autonomy aspect, too. For example, Hedderich (2014, p. 10) suggests that teams should be allowed more independence to reduce stress. The research literature examined in chapter 2 does not, however, explicitly discuss positive aspects of structures. Some authors relate to communication flows (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 265) but without formulating any guiding or supporting factors of that. The dilemma of autonomy vs. structures will be the topic of the fifth subsection below.

Researchers, for example Antonovsky (1997), as well as some of the interviewees describe the importance of workers having a sense of coherence concerning work. Many employees look for certain values to be fulfilled in their job, which can be an asset for companies. However, for-profit organisation may find it difficult to respond to some of these values and to workers' hope for self-actualisation. Apparently, enterprises need to decide which one to prioritise: values or business goals? What business behaviour

would be appropriate to deal with this dilemma? Section 6.1.6 will examine the meaning of values in resilience supporting business behaviour.

The following sections will discuss these dilemmas further and in more detail. Based on the discussion of this chapter, it will be possible to develop some recommendations on how to include steps to a more resilient enterprise into business behaviour.

6.1.1 Who is Responsible for Workers' Mental Health?

All interviewees have experience with work-related stress and mental strain, both personally as well as in their teams. But only some of their organisations have started taking steps to improve resilience. Research literature has shown that, too (CIPD, 2016, p. 3). According to the interview partners, it is mostly organisational factors that cause stress or burnout and the majority of the interviewed mid-level supervisors hold their employers accountable. They demand that general management should investigate the roots for stress-related phenomena such as rising numbers of absence days due to sickness. Therefore, many believe that an implementation of resilience should happen top-down.

Nevertheless, the interview partners also believe that employees have to assume responsibility for their own health. Although most interviewees say that enterprises should feel responsible, all of them take care of themselves, anyway. As described in the literature section of this thesis, stress is a concept that depends highly on the individual's coping strategies (Korczak, Kister & Huber, 2010, p. 23). There are various aspects to the concept of staff being accountable for their own mental condition. These can be derived from resilience research, which has pointed to the meaning of person-centred factors influencing mental well-being, such as age, gender, family background, income, social or socio-economic status. Apparently, facets of life that are not work-related play an important role in a person's health at work, as explained in section 2.5.2. It is up to each individual

to create a nourishing environment with supportive social contacts and beneficial leisure activities. Everyone should make sure their life is in balance – this goes for all areas of life, such as family, hobbies, health, as well as spiritual aspects. In addition to that, a person who feels responsible for his or her own health should develop an attitude of sufficient resilience for work (or choose a workplace that does not demand too much).

Therefore, some authors suggest that workers should learn how to deal with stress, for example by taking respective classes (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017; Hedderich, 2014, Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014). The interview data include similar suggestions. Concerning workers, interviewees talked of business-related qualifications, but they particularly stressed the importance of learning more about stress coping strategies and how to develop resilience factors. Also, seminar contents like self- and time-management or mindfulness are beneficial. They can be offered as an additional staff benefit, preferably on a voluntary basis as mentioned in the interviews. Also, all manuals that were examined and that were included in this study propose educative measures to strengthen or develop resilience in enterprises. All interviewees agreed that courses and lectures seem useful. Seminar catalogues should not only contain work-related training. Most interviewees believe that mentally stable people can be trained to be more resilient which is what research confirms (Sinclair & Cheung, 2017, p. 17). The documentary analysis produced a wide agreement that organisations are responsible for implementing respective learning opportunities (for example Kleinschmidt, 2015 or Krauss-Hoffmann et al., 2016).

Although there is no unanimous consensus in the interview sample on who should initiate these learning processes (employer or employee), many interviewees expressed that resilience building should be a top-down improvement and include all teams and levels of an enterprise. Many large enterprises transfer that responsibility to their mid-level managers, as Horváth and his research group found out (2009, p. 11). That way, some organisations try to to find a way of safe-guarding the well-being of their staff in order to fulfill their duty of care.

However, the documentary analysis showed that organisations themselves tend to shift the responsibility for employee well-being directly to the workers. Neither the AOK programme nor the BMW reports described whether or how they had put their mid-level managers in charge of their teams' health. This approach is in contrast to research literature as well as to the documents analysed in chapter 4. For example, Kleinschmidt (2015) lists various recommendations on stress reduction for leaders and their teams.

Obviously, there are good reasons for holding employers as well as employees accountable for workers' well-being. A good tool that includes both aspects – employer obligation and workers' concern for their own health – are EAPs. Asked if they are familiar with these tools, about half of the interviewees said they were and that they considered them useful. Those who heard about them for the first time in the context of the interview were also mostly in favour of such instruments, as far as they were able to tell without having first-hand knowledge. Research has shown that especially companies with more than 1,000 employees appreciate the counselling services of EAP providers concerning mental health and stress (EuPD Research/Insite Interventions, 2012, p. 23). Face to face-coaching sessions and telephone hotlines – sometimes with 24/7 availability – are well accepted ways of communicating within an EAP, while online services are not as established (yet), according to a survey among 101 German enterprises (EuPD Research/Insite Interventions, 2012, p. 40).

An additional service that EAP providers could offer is training, for example on stress coping strategies. Since the counselling professionals of the EAP supplier are – after some time – familiar with some common problems within a specific organisation, they could design seminars to exactly match the needs of that particular enterprise. Since many customers might appreciate regular reports on the matters discussed within the EAP, the programme contractors can support management in that area, too. Instead of carrying out surveys among their staff themselves, enterprises could fall back on the EAP reports to get an insight into the general stress level and

critical occurrences among their personnel (EuPD Research/Insite Interventions, 2012, p. 48). Thus, organisations would fulfil the recommendations of some of the interviewees of this thesis, who said that the implementation of an EAP ought to be complemented by efforts from management to find out why people are burnt out, stressed out or stay at home. After all, according to the interview data, a pro-active approach that prevents stress could strengthen resilience. In addition to that, management should inquire from their staff into what is needed to regain full performance abilities after critical phases and what is required to reduce stress levels in the first place. An EAP can be an effective tool for that, too.

6.1.2 Experts in Business <u>and</u> in Social Matters?

Research literature presents the question whether team leaders should only be experts in their business or whether they should also be skilled in social matters (Horváth et al., 2009, p. 11). The interview data is not consistent with regards to the question of team managers being aware and in charge of their team members' well-being. The interviewees were of different opinions whether a delegation of responsibility to mid-level leaders is appropriate or not. Some said it is a central aspect of a team supervisor to know his workers well. This applies to all executives on all hierarchy levels. Two interview partners even believe a leader should see his or her team members' need for help before they themselves realise. Others felt this is not a leader's task, since most of them might not to be trained for that. There is no general standard for leadership training in Germany. Some leaders are graduates from Business and Management higher learning faculties. Others may have started from lower positions and carried out career steps which ultimately led to them to a leadership rank. While the first group, coming from a structured training background, might have studied leadership styles or methods, the second group would be rather sector- or branch-oriented, maybe from a production or sales background and thus have less or no formal training concerning leadership duties.

Some interviewees say they would want to be able to turn to psychological experts in such cases. This is an understandable suggestion, bearing in mind research findings about the scope of medical and psychological consequences of burnout described in section 2.1. Among others, Ehresmann (2017, p. 35) presents research projects that have shown that burnout can result in lasting negative physical effects. In line with that, a group of interviewees did not agree that social matters should be part of a mid-level manager's job. Some argued that the necessary qualifications for such a position are business-related. As a sales, team or unit leader one should have technical expertise or knowledge of the respective trade. Because of that, an executive in an industrial enterprise does not necessarily have psychological knowledge. If at all necessary, such issues could be delegated to respective professionals, either internal or external.

According to many participants, leaders ought to lead in an encouraging way, but they also need to be guided and supervised supportively themselves. Researchers, for example Sommer (2014, p. 9), state that many studies have found top- and mid-level managers to be at a higher risk of burning out than other workers.

A common complaint in the interviews as well as a result from the studies described in research literature is a perceived lack of communication (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 265). Many managers do not seem to have the time for sufficient work-related conversations and especially not for informal talks. Plus, many appear not to be skilled communicators and lack possibilities or empathy to establish reassuring relationships with their teams. When stress-related problems arise, companies react. Instead, they should – according to some interviews - rather prevent stress. A number of the interviewees have observed a lack of knowledge about resilience and resilience building, which might be a reason for organisations' inactivity in that area. Besides the relationship between leaders and team members, researchers also found that social contacts among workers of the same level are important (Ricker & Hauser, 2016). From this, they derive another task for superiors, which is to provide a pleasant, collegial mood in

their teams. The need for a friendly atmosphere was also mentioned in the interviews.

The dilemma is in the competences expected of mid-level managers themselves and of their supervisors: Is it really a part of their position to manage the well-being of their team leaders? If so, to what extent? How can they be equipped with the necessary resources? When organisations plan to improve resilience among their staff, they should therefore create a respective policy that includes a description of the role of mid-level leaders. Similar to the process described in section 6.1.3 (How should leaders act during and after a case of burnout?), they need to decide which business behaviour is appropriate for their particular situation: To what extent will supervisors be in charge of their team members' well-being and with what resources will they provide their mid-level managers? While for cases of burnout and other mental illnesses a solution might lie in subcontracting external experts, the issue of leaders' social competences cannot be outsourced.

According to research literature (for example Armutat, 2011) and to the opinions of the interviewees in this study, leaders being deficient in social matters is a challenge that enterprises ought to embark upon. Aspects of emotionally intelligent communication skills that can be learned are for example listening attentively or conveying one's emotions effectively. Good communication styles for leaders also include sufficient explanations for assignments, workflows and processes (Ducki, 2017, p. 5). The appropriate business behaviour is to enable leaders to acquire these skills.

In addition to the skills, an important resource for effective social interaction is time: managers need to have sufficient time, which they can dedicate to their team members, for example in meetings, individual conversations and even informal chats. Some of the interviewees also suggested team events outside the working place as means to improve resilience. Others proposed design job descriptions in such a way that they include time slots for informal get-togethers such as festivities or team dinners

but also for example weekly team meetings that include room for informal topics such as stress-reflection on the agenda.

Executives who lead teams or departments often find themselves caught in the middle: On the one hand, they are expected to care for their team members' mental health, for example by keeping stress away from them. On the other hand, their own superiors have expectations relating to business outcomes. The two sides can turn out to be contradictory. Here, also, organisations have to position themselves. When Business and Management researchers propose that managers ought to be trained how to lead economically yet supportively (Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer, 2014, p. 265), this appears easier said than done. As long as the directorate does not acknowledge the tensions or unrealistic expectations with which many mid-level leaders find themselves confronted, resilience will be difficult to come by. This does not necessarily mean to try to avoid such paradox leadership situation. It may even help to acknowledge that it exists. To illustrate this, the situation can be compared with that of social workers or other helping professionals: While governments or local administrations fund their work, helpers often have to act contradictory to authorities' policies, for example when they assist their clients in entering an objection to an administrative decision (Staub-Bernasconi, 2007, p. 41). Part of a social worker's job is to be in conflict with government agencies and yet they get their pay from them. The same strategy might work for industrial enterprises when a general awareness of discrepancies is developed. Realising the dilemma and acknowledging the results mid-level managers bring forth in spite of it, might activate new coping strategies in them and strengthen their resilience.

6.1.3 How should leaders react to burnout in their teams?

It seems problematic to offer organisations a general recommendation on a solution for this. Circumstances such as environment, personnel, corporate culture, stakeholder expectations and many other factors vary from organisation to organisation (CIPD, 2011). For some enterprises, it

might be a solution to train their managing staff to deal with stress and with mental diseases of team members. Other companies might prefer making use of psychologically skilled personnel. Such experts could come from outside the company, in the form of contractors. A third way can be found in preparing some of the leaders or (certain employees of) the HR department to be contact persons for workers in cases of excessive stress or mental problems. More solutions can be developed in an organisational decision process.

The first recommendation therefore is to broach the issue. According to the interviewees as well as to research literature, stress appears to be an omnipresent phenomenon in the majority of businesses, at least in industrialised and technology-oriented societies. However, hardly any of the companies the interviewees work for have any type of stress handling strategies. Research literature confirms this observation (CIPD, 2011). However, in light of the scope of the problem, it seems inappropriate for managements to ignore that topic or to push it aside. Therefore, a company that has not yet decided what to do about mental strain or that has not found a satisfactory practice ought to allow itself time and resources for a development or change process concerning that subject. The following list offers aspects that will help to find the proper demands an enterprise has to identify for its particular circumstances. The subsequent questions can therefore be starting points for a respective process:

- What is our current procedure in cases of stress?

- Are (some of) our leaders skilled to recognise excessive stress, beginning burnout syndromes or serious mental illnesses?

- Who can workers turn to when they have respective worries?

- Do we see it as a line manager's task to deal with issues of mental strain? If so, which issues should they be able to handle? Shall we develop a workflow and if so, how detailed should it be? What resources are needed?

- If leaders are assigned to manage business aspects only, who shall be in charge of stress-related topics? Can we place them in the hands of HR personnel and if so, how will HR deal with them? Is it more effective to subcontract external professionals?

A similar process is needed concerning strategies of reintegrating workers who have been ill or out of work due to stress. Questions to be asked in order to describe the current or a future workflow, for example are:

- Is our enterprise interested in reintegrating professionals for example after a burnout? If so, how will it be carried out?

- How have we done it until now and is that process sufficiently useful? Should we analyse former cases and utilise that analysis for creating an outline for future procedures?

- Is reintegration a task for our mid-level leaders, our HR or for external providers?

- What possibilities are there to successfully accomplish a return? Representatives of the German health insurance system can inform managements on available options, on best practice examples, on costs and other financial aspects, on prerequisites, etc.

Team and department leaders are in a special position concerning the development of resilience in enterprises. The extent to which their workers are resilient, depends much on these mid-level executives. This is often a dilemma because leaders are not always able to really protect their teams from stress since they have certain objectives to fulfil which tend to be designed in such a way that stress is predetermined. Plus (and because of this contradiction), they are often exposed to much stress themselves (Sommer et al., 2014, p. 9). Therefore, leaders in intermediary positions need to:

- have opportunities to reflect on their attitude towards stress and think about implications of mental well-being for themselves and for others,

- acquire knowledge of facts about stress, burnout and other mental ailments, especially early signs of them in order to care for themselves and their team members,

- understand resilience and the enterprise's stance on it

- become familiar with principles of supportive communication as well as the role of emotions in management.

Positive psychology and emotional intelligence concepts offer constructive and productive foundations for those aims, although there will be other suitable basic psychological approaches, too. Training measures should, obviously, not lead to more stress. Directorates have to allow for sufficient time and provide all necessary resources for that.

In addition to acting on time, it seems necessary to reintegrate a worker after he or she has been sick for a lengthy period of time. Many interviewees – but not all - believe that a step-by-step return to work is a helpful method. Those that are not familiar with such reintegration plans are more doubtful than those who had respective experience. Especially, there are different beliefs about the intensity and scope of a reestablishment process. Some go along with the opinion some researchers have reached which is that the occurrence of burnout cases could support a development towards a more resilient attitude. Some even imply that the experience of having successfully overcome a problematic phase as well as a reflective way of going through the recovery process might support the healing and the "immunisation" against future breakdowns.

However, the interviewees are of diverse opinions whether mid-level managers ought to participate in that reintegration process. Some say, it is a genuine task for leaders to attend to team members while they go through difficult phases, others believe such responsibility should be placed in the hands of psychologically trained professionals.

Whichever decision enterprises arrive at, they will bear their business goals in mind, which, in industrial companies, are profit-centred. This leads

to another dilemma many organisations and leaders face, which is the dynamic between competition and stress or stress avoidance. This problem will be discussed in the following section.

6.1.4 Competition and Stress

All interviewees report that they often feel being under immense stress and stress – as research results on burnout clearly show – is one of the most prominent causes and symptoms of burnout syndrome. This goes especially for long-term stress, which brings not only mental problems but – according to Selye (1975) also physical reactions. In addition to stress because of plentiful work to be done in short periods of time, competition can add to stress because it often conveys a sense of uncertainty. Workers may wonder whether their company will succeed among the competitors. If not, will they still need all of their employees?

The dilemma is in the observation that stress appears to be a characteristic of today's business world and a work life without stress seems to be almost unthinkable. Competition is also a prerequisite of many business concepts. A manual on burnout prevention and resilience building would therefore have to include strategies of coping with stress. Most manuals have that, too. During the interviews, there was much criticism, though, on placing the responsibility solely on the workers. Thus, a manual that consists primarily of stress reduction techniques (like the AOK-tool, for example) responds only to part of the challenge. Instead, there ought to be some recommendations directed at organisational measures, too.

Stress seems to be unavoidable in many enterprises and is often ascribed to the dynamics of a competitive business world. Workers can prepare themselves and develop resilience on their own account. However, organisations will also have to assume responsibility. In many cases, they will even want to assume responsibility because it makes business sense to ensure workers' health. The good news is they can do so while keeping

up or even strengthening their position in the market. According to statements from the interviews, the following interventions can and ought to be initiated by management:

Products and services of high quality can improve workers' resilience. Employees who are proud of their company appear to be more resilient. They identify with the enterprise and are therefore often ready to perform well, without being as prone to stress as workers who are not as convinced of the positive status of their organisation. This is especially true if workers' and enterprise's values match. Interview data indicate that in some cases, staff of an enterprise which is a driving force in the market or even the market leader are quite resilient. In general, stress can be problematic. Sometimes though, stress seems to be less of a problem in a competitive enterprise, where workers feel that they contribute to the status of the enterprise by coping with high workloads, fast working pace, availability on weekends, etc. "Burnout and work engagement are not diametrical counterparts" (Trepanier 2015, S. 51). Competition can be positive and cause a "sporty" dynamic. Great workloads seem bearable as long as surrounding conditions are good. A prerequisite for this, however, appears to be the level of qualification of staff. Keeping personnel well qualified for their job can thus be a means of creating resilience. Expectations and standards will remain high. As long as they are achievable, stress is less of an issue and resilience can even be improved.

The interviewees suggest annual review talks as well as jointly defined and achievable objectives as a means of improving resilience. The concept of person-job fit appears appropriate to some interviewees. To achieve that fit, training may be needed and should be granted. Generally, an enterprise should support the worker to adapt to the job. While the proper person should be employed in the first place, the interviewees acknowledge that demands might change over time but felt that through appropriate HR measures personnel can be prepared for new tasks.

Saying that stress itself is not necessarily a problem as long as circumstances are beneficial does not mean that enterprises can neglect efforts to reduce stress. Interviewees and researchers mention the particular challenge that emanates from lasting, chronic stress. Temporary pressure every once in a while, is bearable as long as there are quieter phases. Organisations should therefore take care that excessive stress is not a permanent condition. For that, they have various options of business behaviour. One is a structural approach: Find out where work flows can be improved, time slots can be planned, synergies can be used, interruptions (caused by telephone, e-mails, etc.) and multiple tasks to be done simultaneously can be minimised (Kleinschmidt, 2015, p. 76), meetings can be shortened, or other time-consuming effects can be reduced. Another option is to assess the stress level within the company regularly to get an overview of whether staff members are at risk of being overburdened. A means that researchers propose for that is conducting surveys among the workforce (Kleinschmidt, 2015, p. 77) – preferably on an anonymous basis and with just a few questions that are quickly answered and also quickly evaluated. Even a smiley-button system can provide management with some approximate information.

6.1.5 Autonomy vs. Structures

Limited possibilities to decide and to act independently can inhibit resilience. The interview data show that a reason for frustration – and, with that, often for stress – is the sense that there are too few possibilities for personal and professional development within enterprises. Also, on a day-to-day level, there is often insufficient room for individual, spontaneous decisions. Researchers have pointed out that jobs that do not fulfil employees' hopes for autonomy and creative solutions of problems tend to generate frustration. Instead, some of the interview partners wish themselves and their teams had more freedom. Choice and self-control are mentioned as important factors especially for high-potential workers. This would be looked

at as a means of balancing stress and pressure. With such freedom, recognition and appreciation of good performance are necessary, according to two of the interviewees. In fact, allowing workers more sovereignty and creativity could be appreciation. However, the interview data show that some executives lack confidence in their team members' job-related abilities.

It may appear to be a contradiction that, at the same time, structural ambiguity and other operational deficiencies can also add to stress. In fact, some of the interviewees observe a lack of helpful structures. They have experienced that stress seems to correlate to certain internal structures and communication processes. Uncertainty among workers about their company's business situation or upcoming changes can arise due to delayed flow of information. Other situations that produce worries are non-supportive interactions within teams or hierarchy ranks as well as across unit and level boundaries. Unclear demands concerning tasks, working hours, time frames, etc., add to stress. The same goes for competences, scopes of authority or availability expectations. Concerning organisational problems, the interview partners have a similar opinion as researchers who have found out that there are certain structural causes for burnout. Leiter, Day and Price (2015) have observed that emotional aspects play a role and that it tends to be burdensome when they lead to personal disagreements, ambiguous assignments or insecurities concerning loyalties. Especially mid-level managers are exposed to a multitude of expectations.

An organisation that aims at improving resilience will have to take those two contradicting aspects into consideration. Their dilemma lies in finding ways of granting (some of) their staff more autonomy while at the same time making sure that structures are clear and that they are in fact observed.

How can enterprises solve the dilemma of granting their workers sufficient freedom while guiding them with an adequate amount of regulations? The two sides are not necessarily opposites. In fact, they can even correspond well if autonomy is granted - within defined boundaries. Especially

job descriptions but also regular appraisal interviews with documented outcomes can provide sovereignty as well as rules. Monetary and non-monetary benefits as well as achievable objectives and regular feedback can foster resilience, according to the interview partners. Furthermore, a well-planned target-system can be helpful, with worthwhile goals for each individual. That way, superiors will also make sure that more independence will not cause more uncertainty because they could only give more autonomy to those employees who would appreciate it. Sovereignty can be admitted according to the needs, tasks, position or capabilities of a person. Such methods would complement what researchers propose, which is for managers to lead by promoting the strong points in their team members (Lopez & Gallagher, 2011, p. 4). That way, an atmosphere to sustain individual growth and improvement can be created.

Another suggestion that is mentioned often in the interviews is that tasks be formulated precisely and are clearly defined. Ambiguous assignments, contradictory undertakings and uncertainties concerning time frames, scopes of a chore or possibilities to delegate create insecurity or frustration. Here, another concept might be of interest, which is *bore-out*, a relevant subject of modern work surroundings (Arnold, Mattes & Wagner, 2016, p. 41). In addition to company's own interest to protect their employees, they even have the obligation to ensure the mental well-being of their workers, according to the German federal rules regulating employers' treatment of their staff (Arbeitsschutzgesetz, here: § 5). This well-being includes making sure someone is protected from being under-challenged. Straightforward communication can support resilience among the workforce. A person can then fully concentrate on the assignment itself and does not need energy for subsidiary matter.

The same goes for adequate business processes: Interviewees recommended more standardised workflows as well as understandable and consistent communication cascades to improve resilience. A transparent reporting system can be an element of such internal communication. Partici-

pative techniques to design operational procedures can also increase work-ers' autonomy and intensify a sense of identification with the organisation (Hedderich, 2014, p. 10). Structured procedures and superiors who assess and adapt also their own workflows regularly (in a visible way) can contrib-ute to a resilient attitude within the organisation. Describing interaction pro-cedures, revealing changes and decisions transparently and on time can be done through modern tools like internal newsletters or traditional information boards as well as other organisational (on- or offline) exchange instruments.

The interviews point to a lack of opportunities for professional pro-gress within enterprises as a source for burnout. This complaint can be seen as part of the autonomy vs. rules-dilemma: Training improve workers' qual-ification and many of them might hope for subsequent professional better-ment. If that hope cannot be fulfilled, frustration might arise. However, well-qualified employees are an asset to an enterprise and – more important in the context of this study – they tend to be more content and resilient. A company that keeps their staff highly skilled and makes use of their en-hanced knowledge improves the quality of its services and products - which also strengthens resilience.

In addition to that, training workers enables mid-level leaders to have faith and confidence in the abilities of their teams because they can rely on their expertise. Research literature as well as interview data have shown that trust within teams and especially between hierarchy levels is an im-portant aspect for improvement of resilience. Ricker and Hauser (2016, p. 107) have found in their research that an atmosphere of trust is necessary for sustaining social contacts among employees. The interviewees have also observed that pride in one's work, acknowledgment from superiors and friendly team spirit contribute to resilience in organisations.

Some interviewees demand supportive leadership styles and sys-tematic approaches to dealing with conflicts to improve resilience. Failure management and a no-blame culture are keywords for this form of manage-ment. Goleman (2014) and Seligman (2011a) stress that progress can be

achieved when managers focus on their values and develop emotional intelligence. One of the positive aspects is that executives who practice self-awareness are also attentive of their team members' situations and conditions. They will be able to conduct a communicative atmosphere in which criticism and honest feedback can be voiced in a constructive manner, and thus lead to better business behaviour. Such leadership style will also allow for employees to prioritise their tasks, and thus to reduce their stress factors by themselves.

Again, resilience through structured autonomy will be a factor within a circle of cause and effect: As Gunkel, Böhm und Tannheimer (2014, p. 266) have pointed out, resilience leads to a sense of self-responsibility and self-efficacy as well as to mindfulness, solution-orientation, self-assuredness to ask for information and interest in learning and succeeding. Vice versa, these traits add to a mindset of resilience.

6.1.6 Values or Business Goals?

Values appear to be of great importance in today's business world. For many workers, jobs have a relevance in their lives that goes beyond monetary aspects. Studies have shown that many employees look for jobs that carry some significance and are meaningful, either for their own self-actualisation or for society. Some of the interview partners also mention that necessity.

On the one hand, this development is an advantage for many enterprises: they get the chance to employ individuals who are interested in identifying with the organisation, with its products or services and who are willing to perform on a high level to achieve the company goals. According to Goleman (2014, p. 11), employees who are highly motivated, are goal oriented and tend be less prone to stress, at least for a certain period of time. Values are helpful in times of change because they have a steadying influence (Hänsel, 2017, p. 68). Seligman points out that value-based business

behaviour will almost inevitably create positive working situations (Seligmann, 2011a, p. 287).

On the other hand, some employers may find it difficult to satisfy the expectations many employees have. High moral standards, positive influences on society, sustainable use of natural and other resources are values, which are not always easy to fulfil for profit-oriented organisations, especially not in conjunction. Changes are another important topic for the interviewees, since many employees seem to fear adjustment processes. Here, organisations face the challenge of adequately managing changes. Additionally, 21st century employees tend to look for opportunities for self-improvement at work while simultaneously expecting a good work-life balance.

Some of the tasks workers get may not meet their personal values. One recommendation for fighting stress is to reject tasks that do not seem worthwhile in the context of a certain position. Organisations would have to cope with that attitude and try to make somebody do an unpopular task, knowing that the person's value-orientation is normally useful for the company.

A good match of employer's and employee's values is a strong basis for resilience. Many companies make an effort to describe their guiding principles and to formulate their mission statement. These are often part of corporate identity and public relations. Moreover they also serve as guidelines for internal behaviour. Communicating the guidelines regularly, and developing a corporate culture that lives up to the values on which they are based, can support the development of resilience.

Allowing for participation from the workforce can be a useful way of coining the principles or for updating them after certain time intervals. There are various process models, which provide frameworks for the procedure of concept development. Also, when parts of the guiding principles need to be changed, democratic practices could be applied. Giving staff the opportunity to take part in that process strengthens feelings of identification with the

organisation and ensures that workers are familiar with the concept. If possible, it even gives them a chance to include their own values in their company's general orientation. Proceeding that way, the value dilemma can (at least partly) be solved.

Personnel development measures, appraisal interviews or feedback methods can also be opportunities – both for the organisation and for the employee - to examine whether both sides believe in similar values. Employers ought to take care that the values they publicise are being observed in everyday work practice. Some interviews draw attention to problems that can arise when values turn out to exist on paper only. In an atmosphere of resilience, superiors and teams alike work on tasks that comply with their values, so that they can perceive them as useful. Workers who feel their work makes sense and leads to improvement in certain areas and to high quality goods or services feel less stressed, as research literature points out.

During the interviews, change processes were often mentioned as sources of stress. Changes are inevitable in most enterprises, though. Here, values can play an important role again for keeping up a setting in which change will be perceived as manageable: If the basic values are maintained, they offer stability through the change process. Changes can even be necessary to uphold certain values. The respective reasons will then have to be communicated to the workforce (Hänsel, 2017, p. 68).

By linking research literature, organisational documents and interview material, one can derive certain recommendations for business behaviour. The following section will present a very concise summary of the previous sections. After that, section 6.2 will give a more detailed conclusion of the findings of this chapter.

6.1.7 Business behaviour for more resilience – in a nutshell

According to this study, a practice-oriented, hands-on and effective resilience-fostering programme includes certain specific business behaviour aspects. There are many publications concerning individual workers' mindsets and possibilities of achieving resilience as well as recommendations directed at mid-level managers on how to lead their teams in a stress-reducing way. The following suggestions can especially be a first overview for an enterprise's general management and top-directorates as they are initiating a process of establishing a resilient organisation. Therefore, these suggestions are very concise and it was a conscious decision to formulate them in a pithy mode.

1. **Take burnout seriously and consider it a chance to build resilience**.

2. Learn about stress, burnout and resilience. Provide your leaders and your workers with training on supportive communication and mental well-being.

3. Make a conscious decision:

   o Either support your mid-level managers to improve their social competences and their emotional intelligence. In that case, provide them with resources (including time) to establish trusting relationships in their teams and put them in charge of team members returning to work after a period of mental illness.

   o Or assign specific personnel from in- or outside your enterprise as experts for mental well-being and for reintegration processes.

4. Consider implementing an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

5. Keep your staff well qualified, agree with each employee on challenging objectives that can be achieved without <u>constant</u> stress. Work on high quality in your products and services, giving your workforce reasons to be proud of working for your enterprise.

6. Trust in your workforce and your leaders. Allow your workers autonomy. For that, make sure your internal structures are clear, information cascades function well and business process descriptions are observed.

7. Appreciate your employees' personal values. Let your workers participate in the set up of mission statement and general principles and have the company live up to them.

8. As top-managers, assume responsibility – even if you decide to outsource required actions.

6.2 Conclusion

In this section, the thesis will be concluded. After reviewing the study goals, the researcher will present the main findings of the twofold study, extract some contributions to professional practice and formulate necessary future research aims.

6.2.1 Research Aims and Objectives

In this section the researcher will discuss the extent to which the original aims and objectives of the study were fulfilled. The researcher will draw some conclusions concerning the research questions formulated at the beginning of the thesis. Also, the chapter will debate the ways in which the researcher's initial assumptions changed as a result of the qualitative research.

The underlying conceptualisation of burnout for this study considered the syndrome an individually as well as socially induced phenomenon that very often stems from outward conditions in the workplace. The main burden is carried by the afflicted person, though. As such, it is a phenomenon of medical and psychological relevance for an individual. At the same time, it affects not only that person but also organisations and even parts of society. All of these presumptions were confirmed by the interview data.

Despite many results brought forth by decades of global burnout research, even up to now many authors of Business and Management studies as well as other scientific disciplines doubt or deny the existence of burnout or the scope of consequences perpetual pressure at work can lead to. Both strands of this study proved otherwise: Apart from individual dispositions, organisational issues obviously play an important role in the development of stress-related troubles. Factors are, among others, problematic internal communication structures, perceived lack of recognition and social participation as well as a mismatch of personal and organisational values. Excessive workloads, a seemingly ever-faster pace and insufficient monetary or non-monetary rewards contribute to the risk of workers developing burnout

syndrome. Mid-level managers tend to be under especially strong pressure, while at the same time - yet somewhat contradicting - they are the ones who are supposed to protect their teams from stress.

It was a research objective to find out more about organisational as well as individual workers' and managers' resilience. The question had been formulated, whether and how the two sides might differ or how they might be interrelated. The literature confirmed that in German enterprises, stress-related illnesses such as burnout syndrome pose an increasing challenge. Not only do they cause rising numbers of absence days among staff members. Well-being among employees has become an asset within HR policies as companies compete for qualified and passionate talent. In addition to many enterprises feeling of responsibility towards their employees' physical and mental safety, they also have to comply with social security regulations that commit organisations to ensure workers' health. Although there is ample research literature and recommendations concerning burnout as well as resilience and – to some extent – concerning transformation processes from one to the other, business and management practice still appears to have needs that have not yet sufficiently been approached. Statistics show that leaves of absence due to mental ailments keep rising. The interviews conducted in this study also proved that leaders are often not satisfied with the efforts of their enterprises. Stress keeps being a major burden for many and they find that coping with it or taking up measures to improve their resilience lies mainly in their own responsibility.

It was another question at the onset of this study, whether resilience is a personality trait or a competence that can be learnt. The researcher found that most of the analysed documents as well as the interviewees see resilience as acquirable. The idea that some people are more resilient in their character than others leads to approaches such as the person-job fit model. However, under the circumstances in which many enterprises find themselves, this model appears to be somewhat theoretic, since there is a lack of highly-skilled workers which has led to a competition for talent. This again puts enterprises under some pressure to offer potential employees

more than just a paid job. Therefore, the question should not only be whether or not resilience can be learnt – it is also important to ask how and when enterprises will make efforts to support their workers in acquiring a resilient attitude.

In this context, a topic came up in one of the documents analysed as well as in the interviews, which had not been anticipated at the beginning of the study: Since in the modern world of work, many people's expectations seem to have changed, workers more often than before tend to demand positions that align with their personal values. This study has shown that the subject of values might be essential for further research on resilience. An aim of this thesis was to find out why existing manuals on burnout and resilience do not seem to have the intended effect. It was a hypothesis that their contents, ideas and methods do not reflect some of the requirements of organisations or, rather, their staff. The research partly confirmed this assumption but more so extended the scope of it: It now appears that resilience programmes do not necessarily lack useful recommendations. Also, many of them are sufficiently practice-oriented. Most approaches, however, still lack a vital factor, which might be called sincerity or authenticity. A large number of organisations have made an effort to describe their principles concerning staff well-being and on social as well as other, not profit-related goals. Describing these goals, though, ought to be backed up by processes of implementation. Some researchers have outlined respective change processes in their works and some interview data confirms the necessity for such processes, especially from interviewees working in health professions. Maybe their position, which is somewhat detached from everyday profit-oriented business, allows them a broader view and the insight that in many cases it needs a radical change to fully implement resilience in an organisation.

The subject of change also became more relevant during the study than anticipated. In the beginning, a question was formulated concerning awareness of resilience as a possible consequence of burnout. In some of the documents but also in the interviews, the answer to that question would

have been that there is such an awareness. Most interviewees, neverthe-less, are in favour of prophylactic measures. Prevention is considered better than intervention. At the same time, a general attitude that can be derived from the study is this: Should a case of burnout appear, it could be an op-portunity for change and enterprises ought to understand it as that. In addi-tion to that, to transform a crisis into a chance and use it for improvement, a conscious process is desirable, even though it can take a long time, might be expensive or require other resources. Interviewees who had witnessed such a procedure were mostly in favour of it, while others, who had not had first-hand experience with burnout cases, were more reluctant. This is a paradox situation that needs strategic management beyond personal in-volvement.

6.2.2 Change of focus: from burnout to resilience

Business and Management research, obviously, cannot stop at trying to understand the causes and effects of burnout but has to move forward and endeavour to find solutions. A possible way out seems to lie in concepts of resilience. Per definition, resilience is an ability to resume a former or an improved status after having undergone a critical incident or phase. Refer-ring to humans, resilience is an attitude or a set of characteristics that ena-ble a person to remain stable despite arduous circumstances. Resilient in-dividuals tend to be confident, solution- and future-oriented, responsible and socially integrated. For organisations, a resilient workforce appears to be a possible key against work-related mental problems.

How can organisations achieve resilience among their staff? Accord-ing to research literature, they can either make sure their employees are resilient personalities when they hire them, since some people seem to be inherently resilient; or enterprises support their personnel in developing re-silience. For that, mid-level leaders play an important role. They can act as role models who make an effort to develop resilience, they can support re-

silience building in their teams and they can create an atmosphere of reduced stress. However, the multitude of expectations many managers face expose them to even more stress than others so that they often need respective aid themselves.

Leaders who want to be supportive and strengthen their teams can gather suggestions from concepts of emotional intelligence, which propose learning and effecting communication styles based on self-reflection, authenticity, interest in the other person and a holistic world view. More contributions to resilience research come from positive psychology research. Both positive psychology and emotional intelligence focus on health rather than illness, on promoting positive attitudes rather than preventing or even fighting negative developments. Representatives of positive psychology and emotional intelligence, for example Martin Seligman, have drawn attention to the positive effects on workers when their organisations foster an atmosphere of joy, hopefulness and confidence. The results of this study point to the relevance of value-based jobs, an encouraging team environment and empathetic management methods. This, at least, is a finding from the interviews conducted in this research project. However, in the documentary analysis of organisational reports on resilience building, there were only few and mostly implicit referrals to either emotional intelligence concepts or positive psychology approaches.

Much of the research literature can be clustered in three categories: structural aspects, individual behaviour and leadership traits. Based on that following recommendations can be found that supports the transition from burnout to resilience: Firstly, organisations can improve workplace conditions for their workers (analyse internal communication flows, implement stress management measures, look at social relationships within the company, and compare values). Secondly, enterprises ought to support their employees in improving their personal resilience (offer stress-relieving activities appreciate mindful thoughts and behaviour, assist workers to solve problems on their own, provide information on business decisions, and ar-

range for training and other means of personal and professional advancement). Thirdly, top-managements are advised to try to regulate their leaders' behaviour (make them resilient first, have them develop an appreciating, encouraging, explanatory leadership style, have them conduct supportive appraisal interviews and find resilience-strengthening training for their team members, let them develop values and match them with the organisation's ethics).

Companies should preferably find suitable means in each of these three categories and combine them. If a case of burnout has occurred and if enterprise management decides to have their own staff attend to the recovering employee throughout the return procedure, they should use that opportunity to document the case and develop a framework for potential future cases.

To sum up, this thesis has shown that there are numerous strategies to carry out a transition from burnout to resilience by applying appropriate business behaviour. The recommendations gathered from research literature, from the documentary analysis and from the interviews are valuable contributions to professional practice. Apart from that, this research provides enterprises with further insights, which will be discussed in the following section.

6.2.3 Contribution to Professional Practice

Based on a review of current burnout and resilience research, this study presented a documentary analysis of organisation-related reports and interviews with mid-level leaders. The research design and the outcomes contribute in various ways to professional practice.

First of all, the study made it very clear that stress and burnout syndrome are frequent phenomena in industrial enterprises. This became obvious from research as well as organisational literature and also from the interviews conducted. Any enterprise that finds their workers being under mental strain can be assured that they are not a singular case. However,

this thesis has also revealed that there are strategies available to deal with work-related mental strains. Developing resilience among workforces and mid-level leaders is one of them and it is a promising approach, according to many researchers. It is not an uncommon professional tactic, as organisational reports and the interview data of this study have proved.

This research project placed a strong focus on mid-level leaders, assuming they play a special role in this context. This assumption was confirmed. Therefore, many strategies aiming at improvement of resilience will have an influence on that level or can be initiated from that level. The impact that team, unit or division leaders have in this context cannot be underestimated. They act as intermediaries between their subordinates and higher-level management with their attitude on stress, their knowledge about burnout and their outlook on resilience. Many authors stress the importance of mid-level leaders reflecting on their outstanding position. They can create a certain momentum and top-managements can either make use of that or decide not to.

Decision is an important keyword and this thesis provides enterprises with the opportunity to arrive at an informed decision on business behaviour concerning burnout and resilience. The study has provided means of reducing stress and burnout in enterprises. There are various paths that enterprises can choose from, each of which starts with a decision on whether or not to look at resilience as a business strategy. Organisational goals, especially profit- and competition-orientated, often do not match the requirements that are needed to create a resilient workforce. This thesis identified a number of dilemmas that will occur in organisations that strive for good financial results but also intend to implement resilience. Managements will have to decide whom they want to hold responsible for workers' health because the respective positions will need to be equipped with the appropriate resources. Directorates will also have to reflect on the influence of market competition on their staff since they will sometimes have to prioritise one over the other.

If a directorate decides to implement more resilience, the next step will be to decide on an adequate procedure. This can be a top-down change process, an empowerment of mid-level leaders or, as the reports by AOK and BMW suggest, a strengthening of stress resistance among workers. There are various available manuals, brochures and programmes that can lead an enterprise through the implementation process. This study has made visible that most of these reports or tools have a certain focus and target group. Understanding that can help enterprises to consciously and purposefully choose the approach that is useful for them.

Another important element for better resilience is values. Enterprises that live up to their postulated standards are in a favourable position concerning resilience among their staff, especially if they manage to align workers' values and organisational goals.

Enterprises that find an extensive change process or discussion on values to be unsuitable for them can also derive important insights from this study. Many researchers and some of the interviewees look at critical periods, such as a case of burnout, as bearing a spontaneous, unplanned opportunity for change and improvement. Obviously, this can also be a policy for enterprises and, in fact, seems to be a common one, according to researchers and interviewees. Excessive stress can for example lead to changes within teams, to better workflows, to a more appreciative leadership style, to more (or less) employee autonomy or to individuals improving their personal coping strategies. It can also result in employees or leaders changing their jobs, which is an unstructured but, in some cases, effective form of creating a better person-job fit.

At the onset of the research project, the researcher had intended for the study results to lead to a new manual for professionals on how to carry out transitions from burnout to resilience. Later on it became clear, though, that there might be no need for yet another lengthy, text intensive brochure or a complex internet platform. As explained before, mid-level managers do

not have the time to read such texts in detail or use computer-based programs fully. It was therefore decided to present a concise set of recommendations instead. This decision is in line with the intention to produce a practice-oriented result, which is what was presented in this chapter, especially in "Business behaviour for more resilience – in a nutshell". A critical aspect of a very concise list of slogan-like recommendations is, however, the fact that it does not reflect the complexity of the subject. Managers trying to find in-depth information on certain parts would still have to read more detailed reports.

6.2.4 Future research

It was a finding of the thesis that – at least within the sample – cultural backgrounds had no traceable influence on the interview partners' attitude towards resilience. Future research projects should examine this topic further. For that, they can either draw on a larger sample size that includes distinguishable cultural groups. Alternatively, they can arrange the sample in such a way that participants from two different ethnic or national backgrounds be interviewed, and the data compared with that possible correlation in mind. In a globalised business world, such a procedure could yield results that allow for more insight into possible reasons and solutions to stress and work as well as various resilience strategies. Another suggestion for future research projects in this context is to examine emotional intelligence and positive psychology strategies in German and anglophone cultures. How are they related to attitudes about burnout?

Similarly, future research projects ought to allow comparisons based on gender, age, socio-economic backgrounds, education status and other social and individual features. Even health-related differentiations such as physical conditions, family health history or certain attitudes towards illness and well-being might lead to a better understanding of burnout and resilience.

This thesis provides knowledge of a given status quo since it is concerned with observations only for a given moment in time. Future research designs can include long-term views. For example, it can look at an enterprise that has established means for improving resilience: How or for how long did that process change workers' health situations? One could also study an individual's or a group's development and ask how that particular person or group took up suggestions for a resilient mindset and what was most effective for them.

Many of the participants of this study said being available most of the time with the "help" of modern communication techniques was not a major cause of stress for them. It might be interesting to question that statement and find out what exactly can be meant by that. Can such a belief be found in certain types of person? Or does it depend on circumstances? Managements could derive that they are making a mistake when protecting their staff by restricting availability. To get more clarity on that, researchers ought to do further research on the implication of that statement.

Another relevant point is that some participants see crises as a way of improving resilience. This view implies some ethical consideration that researchers need to investigate further. For moral reasons, this opinion cannot mean that excessive challenges are acceptable or even desirable. But what does it mean for organisations to understand that critical events can lead to a better handling of – again - critical events?

Researchers of subsequent Business and Management studies ought to generally consider business-related outcomes of resilience building processes. Financial reasons to implement resilience were briefly touched upon in this thesis but a closer look seems worthwhile. The same goes for the implications of resilience within a competitive market setting and for public relations and corporate responsibility. Studying HR is a facet of studying resources in general. Supportive management styles might go along with sustainable usage of energy or materials, and thus with environmentally friendly business strategies. Which trends can researchers identify? Also,

there can be an influence from sciences on practical business behaviour for example towards leadership styles that manage resources more carefully than what is seen at present.

Concerning HR, resilience appears to be a valuable objective for many enterprises: Resilient employees are optimistic, accepting, solution-, future- and network-oriented. They have positive mindsets about themselves and a sense of coherence. These characteristics form personalities who contribute to developments towards a more prospering enterprise. A resilient workforce can thus be an advantage over competitors and the fostering of resilience can well be considered a strategy that promotes positive business outcomes as well as mental and physical health among staff. In any case, it needs to be addressed as a top-level issue.

References

Ahola, K., Hakanen, J., Perhoniemi, R. and Mutanen, P. (2014) Relationship between burnout and depressive symptoms: A study using the person-centred approach. *Burnout Research,* 1 (1), 29–37. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2014.03.003

Altangerel, O., Ruimei, W., Elahi, E. and Dash, B. (2015) Investigating the Effect of Job Stress on Performance of Employees. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 4 (2)276-280.

Antonovsky, A. (1979) *Health, Stress and Coping.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Antonovsky, A. (1997) Salutogenese: *Zur Entmystifizierung der Gesundheit.* Forum für Verhaltenstherapie und psychosoziale Praxis: Band 36. Tübingen: dgvt-Verlag.

AOK Baden-Württemberg (2017) *Lebe Balance.* Retrieved from https://www.aok.de/pk/uni/inhalt/lebe-balance-das-gesundheitsprogramm/ (20 March 2019).

Arbeitsschutzgesetz. Gesetz über die Durchführung von Maßnahmen des Arbeitsschutzes zur Verbesserung der Sicherheit und des Gesundheitsschutzes der Beschäftigten bei der Arbeit (Arbeitsschutzgesetz – ArbSchG) vom 7. August 1996 (BGBl. I S. 1246), zuletzt geändert durch Artikel 427 der Verordnung vom 31. August 2015 (BGBl. I S. 1474).

Armstrong, A., Galligan, R. and Critchley, C. (2011) Emotional intelligence and psychological resilience to negative life events. *Personality and Individual Differences,* 51 (3), 331-336. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.03.025

Armutat, S. (2011) *Umgang mit psychisch beanspruchten Mitarbeitern – ein Leitfaden für Führungskräfte.* In Deutsche Gesellschaft für Personalführung e.V. (eds), Düsseldorf, 25-42.

Arnold, M.; Mattes, A. and Wagner, G. (2016) Die Normalarbeit wird nicht weniger, aber die Nicht-Erwerbstätigkeit. In Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales (ed) *Werkheft 2. Wie wir arbeiten wollen.* Berlin, 40-45.

Bamberg, E., Keller, M., Wohlert, C. and Zeh, A. (2012) *BGW-Stresskonzept: Das arbeitspsychologische Stressmodell.* Hamburg: Berufsgenossenschaft für Gesundheitsdienste.

Bardoel, E. A., Pettit, T. M., Cieri, H. de and McMillan, L. (2014) Employee resilience: An emerging challenge for HRM. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 52 (3), 279–297. https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12033

Berg, J. M., Dutton, J. E. and Wrzesniewski, A. (2013) Job crafting and meaningful work. In B. J. Dik, Z. S. Byrne and M. F. Steger (eds), *Purpose and meaning in the workplace.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 81-104.

Berndt, C. (2013) Resilienz: *Das Geheimnis der psychischen Widerstandskraft. Was uns stark macht gegen Stress, Depressionen und Burn-out.* München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag.

BIG direkt gesund (n.d.) *Individuelle Versorgung. Burnout wirksam bekämpfen.* Dortmund.

BMW BKK (2015) *Stress vorbeugen.* BMW AG. Dingolfing. Retrieved from https://www.bmwbkk.de/de/topics/ihre-gesundheit/psychische-gesundheit/stress-vorbeugen.html (9 November 2018).

BMW Group (2017) *Sustainable value report 2017.* München. Retrieved from https://www.bmwgroup.com/de/ downloadcenterpage.html (10 September 2018).

Borgert, S. (2013) *Resilienz im Projektmanagement. Erfolgskonzepte adaptiver Projekte.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

Borritz, M., Christensen, K., Bültmann, U., Rugulies, R., Lund, T. and Andersen, I. (2010) Impact of burnout and psychosocial work characteristics on future long-term sickness absence. Prospective results of the Danish PUMA Study among human service workers. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine,* 52 (10), 964–970. DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0b013e3181f12f95

Breu, P. (2014) Gesundheits- und Stressmanagement-Coaching in der öffentlichen Verwaltung. *Organisationsberatung, Supervision, Coaching,* 21 (2), 137–147. DOI: 10.1007/s11613-014-0363-3

Brom, S. S., Buruck, G., Horváth, I., Richter, P. and Leiter, M. P. (2015) Areas of worklife as predictors of occupational health – A validation study in two German samples. *Burnout Research,* 2 (2-3), 60–70. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2015.05.001

Brooks, J., McCluskey, S., Turley, E. and King, N. (2015) The Utility of Template Analysis in Qualitative Psychology Research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 12 (2), 202-222, DOI: 10.1080/14780887.2014.955224

Bruch, H. and Kowalevski, S. (2012) *Zwischen Hochleistung und Erschöpfung - Wie Führungskräfte das Potential ihrer Mitarbeiter ausschöpfen und Burnout vermeiden.* St. Gallen: Universität St. Gallen/compamedia.

Bundesgesundheitsministerium (2019) *Grundprinzipien der GKV.* Retrieved from https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/themen/krankenversicherung/grundprinzipien.html (16 March 2019).

Burisch, M. (2010) *Burnout erkennen, verstehen, bekämpfen: Informationen für Führungskräfte.* Hamburg: VBG Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung.

Burisch, M. (2014) *Das Burnout-Syndrom: Theorie der inneren Erschöpfung - Zahlreiche Fallbeispiele - Hilfen zur Selbsthilfe.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

Business in the Community Emotional Resilience Steering Group (2009) *Emotional Resilience Toolkit. Healthy People=Healthy Profits.* London.

Carlton, O. (2014) *Increasing individual resilience within the work place - the practicalities* (Transport for London) Retrieved from https://nano-pdf.com/download/increasing-individual-resilience-within-the-work-place-the-practicalities_pdf (18 October 2018).

Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (2004) *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organisational research.* London: Sage Publications.

Casserley, T. and Megginson, D. (2009*) Learning from Burnout: Developing sustainable leaders and avoiding career derailment.* Oxford: Elsevier professional.

Cherniss, C. (1980) *Staff Burnout – Job Stress in the Human Services.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Childs, J. H. and Stoeber, J. (2012) Do you want me to be perfect? Two longitudinal studies on socially prescribed perfectionism, stress and burnout in the workplace. *Work and Stress,* 26 (4), 347–364. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2012.737547

CIPD Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2011) *Developing resilience. An evidence-based guide for practitioners.* London.

CIPD Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2016) *Absence Management 2016: Annual survey report. London.* Retrieved from https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/absence/absence-management-surveys (28 January 2019).

Crane, M. F. (2017) *Managing for resilience. A practical guide to individual wellbeing and organizational performance.* London: Routledge.

Creswell, J.W. (2014) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991) *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience.* New York: HarperPerennial.

Diener, E. (2011) Positive Psychology: Past, Present and Future. In C. R. Snyder and S. J. Lopez (eds), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology.* New York: Oxford University Press.

D'Lima, M. and Medda, F. (2015) A new measure of resilience. An application to the London Underground. In *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice* 81, 35-46. DOI: 10.1016/j.tra.2015.05.017

Ducki, Antje (2017) "Nervöse Systeme" - Leben in Zeiten der Krise: Ein Überblick. In B. Badura, A. Ducki, H. Schröder, J. Klose and M. Meyer (eds), *Fehlzeiten-Report 2017. Krise und Gesundheit - Ursachen, Prävention, Bewältigung.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 1-8.

Ehresmann, C. (2016) *Burn-out und das Sozialkapital von Organisationen – auf die Bindung kommt es an. Eine quantitative Analyse zu Sozialkapital, emotionaler Bindung und psychischer Erschöpfung am Beispiel von Mitarbeitern in medizinischen Rehabilitationskliniken.* Dissertation, Bielefeld.

Eichinger, U. and Hoffmann, K. (2016). *Der Burnout-Irrtum: Ausgebrannt durch Vitalstoffmangel.* Systemed.

EuPD Research/Insite Interventions (2012) *Qualitätsanforderungen an ein Employee Assistance Program (EAP) aus Praxissicht – Studienergebnisse.* Bonn.
Retrieved from ww.eapforum.de/fileadmin/user_upload/EAP_Studie.pdf (21 October 2018).

Fletcher, D. and Sarkar, M. (2013) Psychological Resilience. *European Psychologist* 18 (1), 12–23. DOI: 10.1027/1016-9040/a000124

Freud, S. (1895/1953) *Studien über Hysterie – Frühe Schriften zur Neurosenlehre. Gesammelte Werke.* (Band I) Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

Freudenberger, H.J. (1974) Staff burn-out. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30 (1), 159-165.

Gable, S. L. and Haidt, J. (2005) What (and why) is positive psychology? *Review of General Psychology* (9), 103-110.

Gabriel, T. and Nicham, R. (2012) *Burnout: Leitfaden zur Betrieblichen Gesundheitsförderung für Unternehmen, Führungskräfte und Mitarbeiter/innen.* Wien*.*

Giesert, M., Liebrich, A. and Reuter, T. (2016) Betriebliches Eingliederungsmanagement: Arbeitsfähigkeitscoaching: So gestalten Sie die Rückkehr von erkrankten Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern erfolgreich. In *Praxishandbuch Arbeitssicherheit and Gesundheitsschutz im Betrieb.* Bonn, Warschau: BWRmedia, 1-22.

Glasersfeld, E. von (1997) *Radikaler Konstruktivismus: Ideen, Ergebnisse, Probleme.* Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Gnerre, P., Rivetti, C., Rossi, A., Tesei, L., Montemurro, D., Nardi, R. (2017) Work stress and burnout among physicians and nurses in Internal and Emergency Departments. *Italian Journal of Medicine* 2017 (11), 151-158.

Götze, U. (2013) *Resilienzentwicklung im Personalmanagement: Angebote zur Steigerung psychischer Widerstandsfähigkeit von MitarbeiterInnen.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

Goleman, D. (1995) *Emotionale Intelligenz.* München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag.

Goleman, D. (1999) *EQ2 - der Erfolgsquotient.* München/Wien: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag.

Goleman, D. (2013) *Focus.* New York: HarperCollins.

Goleman, D. (2014) *Der fokussierte Manager.* Harvard Business Manager. Retrieved from http://www.high-balance.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/achtsamkeit_-_daniel_golemann_der_fokussierte_manager_2014-02.pdf (6 September 2018).

Gorski, P. (2015) Relieving Burnout and the "Martyr Syndrome" Among Social Justice Education Activists: The Implications and Effects of   Mindfulness. *The Urban Review*, 47, 696-716.

Grant, C. (2018) *Digital resilience in a 24/7 world.* CIPD. Retrieved from https://www.cipd.co.uk/news-views/changing-work-views/future-work/thought-pieces/digital-resilience-24-7-world# (20 March 2019).

Gross, J. J. (2013) *Handbook of Emotion Regulation.* New York.

Gunkel, L., Böhm, S., Tannheimer, N. (2014) Resiliente Beschäftigte – eine Aufgabe für Unternehmen, Führungskräfte und Beschäftigte. In B. Badura, A. Ducki, H. Schröder, J. Klose and M. Meyer (eds), *Fehlzeiten-Report 2014.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 257-268.

Hänsel, M. (2017) Wege aus der Krise: Gesund führen auf der Basis werteorientierter Unternehmensführung. In B. Badura, A. Ducki, H. Schröder, J. Klose and M. Meyer (eds), *Fehlzeiten-Report 2017. Krise und Gesundheit - Ursachen, Prävention, Bewältigung.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 63-75.

Hapke, U., Maske, U. E., Scheidt-Nave, C., Bode, L., Schlack, R. and Busch, M. A. (2013) Chronischer Stress bei Erwachsenen in Deutschland: Ergebnisse der Studie zur Gesundheit Erwachsener in Deutschland (DEGS1*) Bundesgesundheitsblatt, Gesundheitsforschung, Gesundheitsschutz,* 56 (5-6), 749–754. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00103-013-1690-9

Hedderich, I. (2014) Das Burnout-Syndrom: Theorie, Forschung, Intervention. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Heilpädagogik* 20 (7-8), 5–11.

Heinemann, L.V. and Heinemann, T. (2013) Die Etablierung einer Krankheit? Wie Burnout in den modernen Lebenswissenschaften untersucht wird. In S. Neckel and G. Wagner (eds), *Leistung und Erschöpfung: Burnout in der Wettbewerbsgesellschaft.* Berlin: Suhrkamp, 129–147.

Höfler, M. (2014) Psychological Resilience Building in Disaster Risk Reduction: Contributions from Adult Education. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science,* 5 (1), 33–40. DOI: 10.1007/s13753-014-0009-2

Hollmann, D., Hanebuth, D. (2011) Burnout-Prävention bei Managern - Romantik oder Realität in Unternehmen? In B. Badura, A. Ducki, H. Schröder, J. Klose and K. Macco (eds), *Fehlzeiten-Report 2011.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 81–87.

Hoppenrath, M. and Streich, R. (2013) Leistungsfähigkeit durch Ressourcennutzung. In C. Schmidt, J. Bauer, K. Schmidt and M. Bauer (eds), *Betriebliches Gesundheitsmanagement im Krankenhaus. Strukturen, Prozesse und das Arbeiten im Team gesundheitsfördernd gestalten.* Berlin: Medizinisch Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft, 243-270.

Horváth, P., Gamm, N., Möller, K., Kastner, M., Schmidt, B., Iserloh, B., Kliesch, G., Otte, R., Braun, M., Matter, M., St. Pennig, Vogt, J. and Köper, B. (2009) *Betriebliches Gesundheitsmanagement mit Hilfe der Balanced Scorecard.* Dortmund/Berlin/Dresden (Projekt F 2126) Retrieved from http://www.baua.de/de/Publikationen/Fachbeitraege/F2126.html (2 March 2019).

HTW Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft (2015) *Betriebliches Eingliederungs-management erfolgreich umsetzen: Ergebnisse aus einem transnationalen Projekt.* Berlin.

Innanen, H., Tolvanen, A. and Salmela-Aro, K. (2014) Burnout, work engagement and workaholism among highly educated employees: Profiles, antecedents and outcomes. *Burnout Research,* 1 (1), 38–49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2014.04.001

Jamshed, S. (2014) Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of basic and clinical pharmacy* 5 (4), 87–88. DOI: 10.4103/0976-0105.141942

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994) *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life.* New York/Boston: Hachette Books.

Kahill, S. (1988) Interventions for burnout in the helping professions: A review of the empirical evidence. *Canadian Journal of Counselling,* 22 (3), 162-169.

Kakiashvili, T., Leszek, J. and Rutkowski, K. (2013) The medical perspective on burnout. *International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health,* 26 (3), 401–412. https://doi.org/10.2478/s13382-013-0093-3

Karasek, R. (1979) Job Demands, Job Decision Latitude and Mental strain: Implication for Job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly* (24), 258–308.

Killgore, W., Smith, R., Olson, E., Weber, M., Rauch, S., Nickerson, L. (2017) Emotional intelligence is associated with connectivity within and between resting state networks. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience,* 12 (10), 1624–1636. https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsx088

King, N. (n.d.) *Welcome to the Template Analysis website.* Retrieved from https://research.hud.ac.uk/research-subjects/human-health/template-analysis/ (20 March 2019).

King, N. and Brooks, J. M. (2017) *Template analysis: For business and management students. Mastering business research methods.* Los Angeles, London: SAGE.

Kirkby-Geddes, E., King, N. and Bravington, A. (2013) Social Capital and Community Group Participation: Examining 'Bridging' and 'Bonding' in the Context of a Healthy Living Centre in the UK. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology,* 23 (4), 271–285. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2118

Kleijweg, J.H.M., Verbraak, Marc J. and van Dijk, M.K. (2013) The clinical utility of the Maslach Burnout Inventory in a clinical population, *Psychological Assessment,* 25 (2), 435–441. DOI: 10.1037/a0031334

Kleinschmidt, C. (2015) *Kein Stress mit dem Stress: Eine Handlungshilfe für Führungskräfte.* Berlin. Retrieved from http://www.inqa.de/DE/Angebote/Publikationen/psyga-kein-stress-mit-dem-stress-handlungshilfe-fuehrungskraefte.html (20 March 2019).

Knorr-Cetina, K. (1989) Spielarten des Konstruktivismus: Einige Notizen und Anmerkungen. *Soziale Welt* 40 (1/2), 86–96.

Korczak, D., Kister, C. and Huber, B. (2010) *Differentialdiagnostik des Burnout-*Syndroms (Health Technology Assessment No. 105) Köln.

Krauss-Hoffmann, P., May-Schmidt, J., Stiegler, F. and Sebbesse, S. (2016) *Gesunde Mitarbeiter - gesundes Unternehmen: Eine Handlungshilfe für das Betriebliche Gesundheitsmanagement.* Berlin.

Ladegard, G. (2011) Stress management through workplace coaching: The impact of learning experiences. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and* Mentoring (9), 29-43.

LaMontagne, A. D., Martin, A., Page, K. M., Reavley, N. J., Noblet, A. J., Milner, A. J., . . . Smith, P. M. (2014) Workplace mental health: Developing an integrated intervention approach. *BMC Psychiatry*, 14 (131), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-14-131

Lauckner, H., Paterson, M., Krupa, T. (2012) Using Constructivist Case Study Methodology to Understand Community Development Processes: Proposed Methodological Questions to Guide the Research Process. *The Qualitative Report, 1*7 (13), 1–22.

Leipold, B. (2015) *Resilienz im Erwachsenenalter.* München, Basel: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag.

Leiter, M. P., Day, A. and Price, L. (2015) Attachment styles at work: Measurement, collegial relationships and burnout. *Burnout Research,* 2 (1), 25–35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2015.02.003

Leon, M. R., Halbesleben, J. and Paustian-Underdahl, S. C. (2015) A dialectical perspective on burnout and engagement. *Burnout Research*, 2 (2-3), 87–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2015.06.002

Leppin, A. L., Bora, P. R., Tilburt, J. C., Gionfriddo, M. R., Zeballos-Palacios, C., Dulohery, M. M. and Montori, V. M. (2014) The efficacy of resiliency training programs: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized trials. *PloS one,* 9 (10), e111420. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0111420

Leypold, H. (2009) *Das Resilienzmodell als bestimmender Einflussfaktor für erfolgreiche Organisations- und Personalentwicklung.* Berlin: Logos Verlag.

Lin, T., Lin, H., Cheng, S.L., Wu, L. and Ou-Yang, M. (2016) Work stress, occupational burnout and depression levels: a clinical study of paediatric intensive care unit nurses in Taiwan. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 25 (7/8), 1120-1130.

Lohmann-Haislah, A. and Schütte, M. (2013) *Stressreport Deutschland 2012: Psychische Anforderungen, Ressourcen und Befinden.* Dortmund: Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin.

Lopez, S. J. and Gallagher, M (2011) A Case for Positive Psychology. In S. J. Lopez and C. R. Snyder (eds) *Handbook of positive psychology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-6.

Ludwig D. and Kabat-Zinn J. Mindfulness in Medicine. *Journal of the American Medical Association.* 2008, 300 (11), 1350–1352. doi:10.1001/jama.300.11.1350

Mäkikangas, A. and Kinnunen, U. (2016) The person-oriented approach to burnout: A systematic review. *Burnout Research,* 3 (1), 11–23. DOI: 10.1016/j.burn.2015.12.002

Malterud, K., Siersma, V., Guassora, A. (2015) Sample Size in Qualitative Interview Studies. Guided by Information Power*. Qualitative health research.* DOI: 10.1177/1049732315617444

Maske, U., Riedel-Heller, S., Seiffert, I., Jacobi, F. and Hapke, U. (2016) Häufigkeit und psychiatrische Komorbiditäten von selbstberichtetem diagnostiziertem Burnout-Syndrom. Psychiatrische Praxis 43 (1), 18-24. DOI: 10.1055/s-0034-1387201

Maslach, C. and Jackson, S. (1981) The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour.* (2), 99-113.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. (1984) Burnout in organisational settings. In S. Oskamp (eds), *Applied Social Psychology Annual.* Beverly Hills: Sage, 133–154.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. and Leiter M. (2001) Job burnout*. Annual Review of Psychology* (52), 397-422.

Masten, A., Cutuli, J., Herbers, J., Reed, M. (2011) Resilience in Development. In S. J. Lopez and C. R. Snyder (eds), *Handbook of positive psychology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 117–131.

McAuley, J., Duberley, J. and Johnson, P. (2014) *Organization Theory. Challenges and Perspektives.* Harlow: Pearson.

McGrath, H., O'Toole, T. (2012) Critical issues in research design in action research in an SME development context. *European Journal of Training and Development,* 36 (5), 508–526. DOI: 10.1108/03090591211232075

McLarnon, M. J. W. and Rothstein, M. G. (2013) Development and Initial Validation of the Workplace Resilience Inventory. *Journal of Personnel Psychology,* 12 (2), 63–73. DOI: 10.1027/1866-5888/a000084

Meyer, M., Wehner K. und Cichon, P. (2017) Krankheitsbedingte Fehlzeiten in der deutschen Wirtschaft im Jahr 2016. In B. Badura, A. Ducki, H. Schröder, J. Klose and M. Meyer (eds), *Fehlzeiten-Report 2017. Krise und Gesundheit - Ursachen, Prävention, Bewältigung.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 281-484.

Mittelmark, M., Sagy, S., Eriksson, M., Bauer, G., Pelikan, J., Lindström, B., Espnes, G. (2017) *The Handbook of Salutogenesis.* Springer International Publishing.

Montero-Marin, J., Prado-Abril, J., Piva Demarzo, M., Gascon, S., García-Campayo, J. (2014) Coping with stress and types of burnout. Explanatory power of different coping strategies. *PloS one* 9 (2), e89090. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0089090

Müller, G., Lyssenko, L., Kleindienst, N., Junk, S., Pfinder, M., Bohus, M. (2017) Psychischen Krisen vorbeugen - "Lebe Balance". In B. Badura, A. Ducki, H. Schröder, J. Klose and M. Meyer (eds), *Fehlzeiten-Report 2017. Krise und Gesundheit - Ursachen, Prävention, Bewältigung.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 215-231.

Newman, M. (2016) *The mindfulness book: Practical ways to lead a more mindful life.* London: LID.

Plieger, T., Melchers, M., Montag, C., Meermann, R. and Reuter, M. (2015) Life stress as potential risk factor for depression and burnout. *Burnout Research,* 2 (1), 19–24. DOI: org/10.1016/j.burn.2015.03.001

Renee Baptiste, N. (2008) Tightening the link between employee wellbeing at work and performance. *Management Decision,* 46 (2), 284–309. DOI: org/10.1108/00251740810854168

Ricker, S. and Hauser, F. (2016) Arbeitsplatzkultur und Gesundheit – ganzheitliche Gestaltung der organisationalen Beziehungen zur Stärkung der psychischen Gesundheit von Mitarbeitern. In B. Badura (ed), *Fehlzeiten-Report 2016. Unternehmenskultur und Gesundheit - Herausforderungen und Chancen: Zahlen, Daten, Analysen aus allen Branchen der Wirtschaft*. Berlin: Springer, 107-120.

Robertson, I. T., Cooper, C. L., Sarkar, M. and Curran, T. (2015) Resilience training in the workplace from 2003 to 2014: A systematic review. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology,* 88 (3), 533–562. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12120

Rose, A. and Krausmann, E. (2013) An economic framework for the development of a resilience index for business recovery. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* (5), 73-83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2013.08.003

Rothe, I., Adolph, L., Beermann, B., Schütte, M., Windel, A., Grewer, A., Lenhardt, U., Michel, J., Thomson, B. and Formazin, M. (2017) *Psychische Gesundheit in der Arbeitswelt.* Dortmund.

Salovey, P., Mayer, J. (1990) Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, cognition and personality* (3), 185–211.

Schaufeli, W. B. and Enzmann, D. (1998) *The Burnout Companion to study and practice.* London: Taylor and Francis.

Scherrmann, U. (2015) *Stress und Burnout in Organisationen: Ein Praxisbuch für Führungskräfte, Personalentwickler und Berater*. Berlin: Springer.

Schwarzkopf, K., Straus, D., Porschke, H., Znoj, H., Conrad, N., Schmidt-Trucksäss, A. and Känel, R. v. (2016) Empirical evidence for a relationship between narcissistic personality traits and job burnout. *Burnout Research,* 3 (2), 25–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2015.12.001

Searle, B. (2017) How work design can enhance or erode employee resilience. In M. F. Crane (Ed.), *Managing for resilience: A practical guide to individual wellbeing and organizational performance.* London: Routledge, 103-116.

Sekerka, L. E., Comer, D. R. and Godwin, L. N. (2014) Positive Organizational Ethics: Cultivating and Sustaining Moral Performance. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 119 (4), 435–444. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1911-z

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002) *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfilment.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011a) *Der Glücks-Faktor. Warum Optimisten länger leben.* Köln: Bastei Lübbe.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011b) *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Selye, H. (1975) Confusion and controversy in the stress field*. Journal of human stress* (1), 37–44.

Selye, H. (1978) *The stress of life.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Senge, P. M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline. The art and practice of the learning organization*, London: Random House.

Siegrist, U. (2009) *Der Resilienzprozess: Ein Modell zur Bewältigung von Krankheitsfolgen im Arbeitsleben.* Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Sinclair, R. and Cheung, J. (2017) The right stuff: Employee characteristics that promote resilience. In M. Crane (ed), *Managing for Resilience.* London, New York: Routledge, 15-31.

Smith, S. (2014) Arlie Russel Hochschild: Spacious Sociologies of Emotion. In P. Adler, P. DuGay, G. Morgan and M. Reed (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Sociology, Social Theory and Organization Studies. Contemporary Currents.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sommer, D., Kuhn, D., Milletat, A., Blaschka, A. and Redetzky, C. (2014) *Resilienz am Arbeitsplatz.* Frankfurt am Main: Mabuse-Verlag.

Squires, A., Finlayson, C., Gerchow, L., Cimiotti, J. P., Matthews, A., Schwend-
    imann, R.,. . . Sermeus, W. (2014) Methodological considerations when
    translating "burnout". *Burnout Research,* 1 (2), 59–68. DOI:
    10.1016/j.burn.2014.07.001

Staub-Bernasconi, S. (2007) Soziale Arbeit: Dienstleistung oder Menschen-
    rechtsprofession? Zum Selbstverständnis Sozialer Arbeit in Deutschland mit
    einem Seitenblick auf die internationale Diskussionslandschaft. In Lob-
    Hüdepohl, A. & Lesch, W. (eds), *Ethik Sozialer Arbeit – Ein Handbuch: Ein-
    führung in die Ethik der Sozialen Arbeit.* Stuttgart: UTB, 20-54.

Steltzner, H. (2015) *Viele deutsche Manager fürchten sich vor Burnout.* Retrieved
    from   https://www.focus.de/gesundheit/gesundleben/stress/burnout-angst-
    studie-zeigt-viele-manager-fuerchten-sich-vor-burnout_id_4389837.html (20
    March 2019).

Stoddart, P. and Clance, P. (2017) Personalities that impair resilience. In M. Crane
    (ed), Managing for Resilience. London, New York: Routledge, 32-52.

Süß, H.-M., Seidel, K. and Weis, S. (2008) Neue Wege zur leistungsbasierten Er-
    fassung sozialer Intelligenz und erste Befunde. In W. Sarges and D. Scheffer
    (eds), *Innovationen in der Eignungsdiagnostik.* Göttingen: Hogrefe, 129-143.

Sutcliffe, K. M. and T. J. Vogus (2003) Organizing for Resilience. Positive Organi-
    zational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline. In K. S. Cameron, J.
    E. Dutton and R. E. Quinn. *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations
    of a New Discipline.* San Francisco, CA, Berrett-Koehler: 94-110.

Tasche, J. (2016) *Körperpsychotherapie zwischen Bioenergetik und Psychoana-
    lyse.* Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2016.

Thomä, H. and Kächele, H. (1989) *Lehrbuch der psychoanalytischen Therapie: 1
    Grundlagen.* Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer.

Trépanier, S.-G., Fernet, C., Austin, S. and Ménard, J. (2015) Revisiting the inter-
    play between burnout and work engagement: An Exploratory Structural
    Equation Modeling (ESEM) approach. *Burnout Research,* 2 (2-3), 51–59.
    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2015.04.002

Unger, Hans-Peter & Kleinschmidt (2007). *Bevor der Job krank macht*. München: Kösel.

University of New England (2018) *Grey literature*. Retrieved from https://www.une.edu.au/library/support/eskills-plus/research-skills/grey-literature (20 March 2019).

Upadyaya, K., Vartiainen, M. and Salmela-Aro, K. (2016) From job demands and resources to work engagement, burnout, life satisfaction, depressive symptoms and occupational health. *Burnout Research,* 3 (4), 101–108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.burn.2016.10.001

Vanhove, A., Herian, N., Perez, A., Harms, P., Lester, P. (2016) Can resilience be developed at work? A meta-analytic review of resilience-building programme effectiveness. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology,* 89, 278–307. DOI:10.1111/joop.12123

Walber, M. (2000) *Konstruktivistische Erkenntnistheorie als Legitimation für den Einsatz von multimedialen computerbasierten Lernumgebungen in der beruflichen Bildung.* Universität Bielefeld Fakultät für Pädagogik, Bielefeld. Fakultät für Pädagogik.

Walter, U., Krugmann, C. S. and Plaumann, M. (2012) Burn-out wirksam prävenieren? Ein systematischer Review zur Effektivität individuumbezogener und kombinierter Ansätze. *Bundesgesundheitsblatt, Gesundheitsforschung, Gesundheitsschutz,* 55 (2), 172–182. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00103-011-1412-0

WebFinance (2016) *Middle manager: BusinessDictionary.com*. Retrieved from http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/middle-manager.html (20 March 2019).

Wheeler, D.L., Vassar, M., Worley, J.A. and Barnes, L.L.B. (2011) A Reliability Generalization Meta-Analysis of Coefficient Alpha for the Maslach Burnout Inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement,* 71 (1), 231–244. DOI: 10.1177/0013164410391579

Wohlers, K. and Hombrecher, M. (2016) *Entspann Dich, Deutschland: TK-Stress-studie 2016.* Hamburg.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Template for documentary analysis

Analysis of burnout prevention and resilience building information brochures
(Themes are based on literature review in chapter 2 and on the question which concepts about burnout/resilience and the respective transformation are conveyed or assumed.)

1. General information	1.1 Authors/Publishers	1.1.1 Health Insurer/Social Security player
		1.1.2 Science/Research
		1.1.3 Public Authority/Political Agency
		1.1.4 other
	1.2 Target group	1.2.1 Workers
		1.2.2 Employers/enterprises
		1.2.3 other
	1.3 Description of the programme	
2. resilience	2.1 Role of mid-level managers	2.1.1 What is expected of them?
		2.1.2 How should they be equipped and supported?
	2.2 Social and structural aspects of workplace and work processes	
	2.3 Other means of improving resilience	
	2.4 Overall picture of resilience	
3. burnout	2.1 Causes for burnout	2.1.1 individual
		2.1.2 organisational
		2.1.3 social or other
	2.2 Overall picture of burnout/general assumptions	

4. transformation	4.1 Can individuals acquire resilience and, if so, how?	
	4.2 Can enterprises develop to become resilient organisations? (How?)	
	4.3 Overall picture of transformation towards resilience/general assumptions	

Appendix 2: List of documents for analysis

practical recommendations			
1. Authors, year, title, target group	**2. development of resilience**	**3. managing burnout syndrome cases**	**4. transformation processes from burnout to resilience**
1 AOK Baden-Württemberg (n.d.) *Lebe Balance* **recommendations for workers**	focus on techniques to reduce stress and strengthen individual resilience interventions for individuals: seminars book and audio CD smartphone app self-evaluation tools reflection of one's values in-house events for companies: lectures health campaigns seminars for leaders	no information	programme is directed at healthy workers but is likely to also reach individuals who are in an early phase of burnout so that they will develop -a sense of coherence -contentment with life in general -concentration on the present -self-efficacy -social networks
2 DGFP Deutsche Gesellschaft für Personalführung (2011) *Umgang mit psychisch beanspruchten Mitarbeitern – ein Leitfaden für Führungskräfte* **recommendations for leaders**		recommendations for leaders (p. 25 ff.): -understand your role -reflect on relationship with your team -discuss team member's performance and health instead of taking on a role of a therapist or of a friend -be familiar with indicators for mental strain	if all else fails: terminate work contract (p. 37) redesign workplaces and -flows (p. 39) take structured steps for re-integration processes initiate preventive measures

3 BMW Group (2017) *Sustainable Value Report 2017* **general public and stakeholders** and BMW BKK (2015) *Stress vorbeugen* **workers and managers**	improve communication rules implement human rights stress management seminars campaign about mental resistance information events about resilience	mostly prophylactic suggestions	online tools for stress management test for self-assessment of stress recommendations: - reduce stress - accept help - talk to supervisor to decrease stress factors - time management - deliberately plan leisure time - relaxation techniques - consider changing jobs (!)
4 Burisch (2010) *Burnout erkennen, verstehen, bekämpfen: Informationen für Führungskräfte* **recommendations for executives and team leaders**	leaders/team managers: -strengthen sense of identity -carry out a self-assessment of plans, wants, attitude towards leadership, strengths, … -formulate current goals and visions -appreciate time with family/leisure activities -identify with one's performance, not with the organisation -keep up "market value" -build savings, not get dependant on current amenities -expect critical phases, consider them chances -keep being capable of acting, avoid "falling" -cultivate your professional network	do not taboo burnout leaders should be able to read signs for beginning or existing burnout syndrome in their team members: -social withdrawal -increased irritability -emotional overreaction -emotional unresponsiveness -reduced commitment -negativity and sarcasm -reduced effectivity/unnecessary overtime -listen well (to team members who appear overburdened) -refer to external helpers/counsellors -do not accept burnout in your company/unit/team	discuss and find solutions and potential changes within the team (possibly during a one- or two-day meeting in an external place), if appropriate with an external group coach team leaders: initiate organisational changes implement EAP

5 Carlton (2014) *Increasing individual resilience within the work place - the practicalities (Transport for London)* **recommendations for workers and leaders**	use self-assessment questionnaire and encourage self-reflection among leaders and workers individual: -learn about resilience -develop self-awareness -venture to become more resilient -improve by practicing small changes line managers: -allow teams to flourish -need time to reflect -develop common language as managers, form a team -be a role model environment: -people respecting and treating each other with dignity -fair enterprise policies	no information on managing burnout syndrome cases	no information on transformation processes from burnout to resilience
6 CIPD (2011) *Developing resilience. An evidence-based guide for practitioners on developing resilience* **recommendations for workers and leaders**	individual level: resilience is -an internal attribute or -a social matter or -both organisational level: resilience depends on -job design -organisational structure -organisational culture -leadership styles -external environments	various information on managing burnout syndrome cases	various examples on how to design transformations processes from burnout to resilience

7 Crane (2017) *A manager's introductory guide to resilience / Epilogue: Making change happen* **recommendations for managers**	support certain personality styles evaluate work designs and observe rest periods promote self-efficacy train resilient thinking		change process for leaders and team managers, with practical business example: -noticing (self-assessment and feedback) -what to change (setting goals) -how to change (first steps, etc.) -barriers to change (and sustainability) -evaluating success
8 Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer (2014) *Resiliente Beschäftigte – eine Aufgabe für Unternehmen, Führungskräfte und Beschäftigte* **recommendations for workers and leaders**	Developing resilience absolutely requires a respective organisational and managerial process (p. 257)	no information on handling of burnout cases	Burnout prevention (for example workshops/seminars) as part of a resilience development process (p. 265),
9 Hänsel (2017) *Wege aus der Krise: Gesund führen auf der Basis werteorientierter Unternehmensführung* **recommendations for leaders and directorate**	Resilience among workers and team leaders can only be achieved if top-management and directorate apply means directed at developing a certain corporate culture.	no information on handling of burnout cases	Focus on values: Executives who experience the atmosphere at work to be congruent with the values put forward, tend to be mentally healthier than others (p. 69).
10 HTW Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft (2015) *Betriebliches Eingliederungsmanagement erfolgreich umsetzen: Ergebnisse aus einem transnationalen Projekt* **recommendations for directorate**	Resilience building is not a focus of this paper.	Managing burnout is not a focus of this paper.	4 milestones of reintegration: -in case of return to former workplace: match with worker's profile -adapt former workplace -chose new workplace -outplacement (p. 87)

11 Kleinschmidt (2015) *Kein Stress mit dem Stress. Eine Handlungshilfe für Führungskräfte* **recommendations for leaders and directorate**	develop strengths and resources step-by-step	standardised approach tips on how to communicate with affected colleagues and team members Steps: talk about burnout, learn to interpret signs, offer support EAP Employee Assistance Programme	standardised step-by-step reintegration procedures psychological self-test and evaluation tool to assess workers' stress levels reduce stress and increase resources for team leaders
12 Krauss-Hoffmann et al./ Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit (2016) *Gesunde Mitarbeiter - gesundes Unternehmen: Eine Handlungshilfe für das Betriebliche Gesundheitsmanagement* **recommendations for directorate**	resilience can be learnt methods of coping with stress: physical relaxations techniques, coaching, self-management training learn how to handle change focusing on resilience in leaders has „Hebelwirkung" (lever effect)	systematic approach according to company health and reintegration management check workplace and workload conduct personnel appraisal or reintegration meeting consider various measures, depending on the case change or reduce working hours change workplace/tasks/position reintegrate step by step	example/case description: in the context of a change process, lectures for workers were given (sports, healthy food, mental strength, communication) as well as training for managers (subjects: individual energy potential, organisational resources, supporting each other)

Contributions and omissions: The programmes that are currently on offer are not unfeasible. All of them feature at least one or two helpful factors or suggestions. After all, most of them include or are grounded on scientific findings or rely on practical experience.

Authors, year, titel / focus	suitable element	critical aspect
AOK Baden-Württemberg (n.d.)	suggested methods for reducing stress and strengthening individual resilience	The programme contains merely recommendations for workers, not for business behaviour of leaders or organisations. However, resilience can usually only be achieved if a combination of strategies, directed at more than one target group is included.
DGFP Deutsche Gesellschaft für Personalführung (2011)	suggestions for leaders on how to approach mentally strained workers	Many leaders lack the necessary emotional intelligence for talking about mental illness.
BMW Group (2017)	solutions offered to returning workers appear effective	The proposed solutions are usually not in the sphere of responsibility of team or department leaders but require action from top management.
Burisch (2010)	differentiated recommendations for leaders and team managers, also on a very personal level	The suggestions require an in-depth process which many team managers might not be able to carry out on their own account. Recommendations imply that leaders are already emotionally intelligent and burnout-sensitive.

Carlton (2014)	supportive environment is needed for resilience building	The description contains no information on **how** to create a supportive environment.
CIPD (2011)	contains a multitude of recommendations	Since the publication is a review, it contains multiple suggestions. The aim was not to present a cohesive concept. Correspondingly, the proposals and examples appear somewhat arbitrary.
Crane (2017)	practical example	In spite of the example given, the recommendations are rather superficial and nonspecific.
Gunkel, Böhm & Tannheimer (2014)	focus on organisational and managerial process for the development of resilience	The authors propose that resilience programmes be integrated into a general organisational health management plan (Betriebliches Gesundheitsmanagement). This may lead to a neglect of other health issues or to a lack of focus on the issue of resilience.
Hänsel (2017)	comprehensive approach with strong focus intermediary managers' roles and challenges	academic approach: Results are presented but lack direct, practical recommendations on how to apply them.
HTW Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft (2015)	clear and unconventional recommendations for reintegration, including for example outplacement	job-person-fit approach with stronger focus on adapting workers to the job (or even termination of contract) than on organisational changes towards a less strained workforce

Kleinschmidt (2015)	practical recommendations based on standardised processes and consecutive steps	The author does not address top-management nor does she mention the impact of that group. Thus, the manual conveys the impression that a good leader should be able to reduce stress in the team without help from superiors.
Krauss-Hoffmann et al. (2016)/	comprehensive practical recommendations	The brochure has a quite technical approach and does not focus much on emotional aspects of management. Thus, it overlooks for example the importance of reacting to early stages of stress-related illnesses.

Appendix 3: Handout for interviewees

<u>1. Generally supporting and enhancing resilience</u>

Resilience can be learnt and acquired. For a resilient attitude, it is first of all necessary to know various forms of handling stress, for example
- Physical relaxation techniques
- Coaching sessions run or financed by the employer
- Better self-management

A resilient person can face changes without seeing them as extra burdens. For that, it can be helpful to learn useful ways of dealing with change in general.

Supervisors and team leaders should receive particular training about resilience. They need to become sensitive to anything that might obstruct or hinder the development of resilience in enterprises and organisations. That way, they could understand how to develop resilience themselves and support others in that development.

Especially supervisors and team leaders should be trained in resilience, since they are multipliers when it comes to handling demanding workloads. They serve as role models concerning the way they look at their own stress, work, and leisure time. Also, resilient leaders can create a more relaxed work atmosphere.

Individual and social resources should be strengthened by:
- Training employees and enabling them to advance professionally
- Health services and courses offered by the organisation such as stress relaxation, back therapy training, time management, etc. (encouraging employees to actually make use of these offers)
- Respect working hours, going home after 8 hours of work, offering flexible work hours. Nobody, not even team leaders should, for example, send out e-mails after closing time.
- Make sure that employees take their lunch and other breaks

- Support team spirit and communication, allow informal chats, agree on common activities and festivities
- Offer incentives and advantages that are non-monetary and that reduce stress and increase motivation

organisational resources should be strengthend by:
- An organisational culture of appreciation
- Fair and just personnel policies
- Allowing employees room for decision making according to their abilities and interests
- Autonomous handling of work processes and time management
- Making sure tasks appear useful and make sense
- Avoid inefficient work styles
- Increase employee satisfaction by avoiding excessive work stress
- Watch and realise who is resilient and in what way
- Talk about resilience
- Agree on objectives, actually support employees in reaching them.

2. According to your opinion and experience, how should supervisors, team leaders and personnel managers approach and deal with employees who are suffering a burnout? How could cases of burnout be turned into cases of resilience?

a) Check workplace strain and risks, if an employee has been sick for extended periods of time.
b) Stay in contact with the burnout patient during periods of acute burnout (if necessary, involve a colleague of trust)
c) After 6 weeks of absence due to sickness, supervisors or HR department should
- get in touch with the person who has the burnout
- meet and talk with them

- check if another workplace within the company might be more fitting
- change working hours
- reduce working hours
- reintegrate step-by-step, increasing working hours slowly
- everything needs to be done on a voluntary basis, monitored by a physician or therapist
d) learn how to recognise stress in team members (they work less, are less efficient, stay away from work often, isolate themselves)
e) learn how to address these problems in one-on-one conversations
f) supervisors should be able to reflect on their role and their relationships
g) team leaders are neither therapists nor friends and should, therefore, talk about work and performance rather than private subjects
h) peer-lectures about sports, nutrition/food, resilience and communication
i) train leaders (to recognise their individual energy resources and organisational possibilities) and have them develop ideas for supporting each other
j) implement an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and ensure that employees make use of it.

Interview Merten, January 8, 2018, 16.45-18.00 h

- age: 42

- gender: m

- workplace position: product development (Serienplaner), team leader

- industrial sector: automobile manufacturing

To start out with, will you tell me a little about your career and your position?

I am a team leader in a team that works in between the Planning/Development department and Production. Our task is to optimise repetitive manufacturing processes. Within a lean management policy, we analyse and improve assembly and leadership procedures. We also develop innovative methods to support production. Our company is a very large German automobile manufacturer, in fact one of the leading brands in the world. If not __the__ leading brand. I started there some 20 years ago, as an assembly-line worker. After a number of trainings and promotions I am now in Planning and Development.

Before the interview, I had provided you with a summary of some organisational burnout programmes. Tell me about your overall impression of ideas presented in that summary.

Most of it is good. It reminded of our "Mail on Holiday"-programme. Certain employees are allowed to delete their e-mails when coming back to work after holidays. It is not for everybody, but for most who work with e-mails. And mails are only deleted when the recipient automatically receives a note who is in charge while the other person in away. That was a big thing in the media some years ago. It is not a must, though. Everybody is allowed to decide against deleting. So, there is a little back door, through which stress can come in anyway.

What other means does your company offer to reduce stress?

They offer flexible working hours; some mobile workplaces and some people can apply for sabbaticals. Also, we have daycare for children, usually close to where

the parents work. Some units have sports facilities, or – as far as I know - they give you access to certain fitness clubs.

Is stress or burnout or even resilience a topic in your team?

An issue that we talk about a lot is increasing work loads, we call it "Arbeitsver-dichtung". But different people look at it in different ways. About half of my team think that it is a periodic occurrence. That we have peaks and low level-phases that come in turns, ups and downs. And in a way, that is true. When new developments are in a certain phase, we have a lot to do. Like when a new model is launched, and processes are not smooth yet. We go through waves. Also, we have waves concerning overall structures. Like during the last 20, 25 years there have been times when management favoured a centralised organisation and then again, they went for decentralisation, in the form of profit centres. Recently, we had a tendency back towards a centralised system. And that came with increased or more standards, everything working according to standards.

Standards and norms and all the quality management developments can make life easier. Don't think much, just do and just stay close to the rules. On the one hand, that is good. On the other, I think it tends to limit our freedom and our individual decisions. So, you might hinder innovations through all that QM. And it requires a lot of time, too. To take care of all the documentation and to never forget the rules. But then, for some it is good because everybody has to deal with the same requirements and guidelines. But it is harder to come up with anything outrageous or new or innovative.

How do you cope with excessive workloads and how do you keep your team motivated?

Some people think we go through movements of more or less work. Others, like myself, would argue that. I think we had those ups and downs a long time ago. I remember, for example, that during the summer there would be so much less e-mail traffic. No, there are so many mails always. Plus, we keep getting extra tasks, which have to be done in shorter time. And changes happen so much faster today than, say, 10 or 15 years ago. One project may not even be through yet, that is when the next one comes in. Many of us work in so many different teams and

projects at the same time. And sometimes, when someone quits or retires, they won't replace that person. So that guy's work has to be done, too. That does not enhance quality. Before, you could really deal with something in detail, today that has become impossible. So, we have to take care not to have our limits crossed. To have them respected. But also, this high density of work leads to a more efficient work style, I think. Set priorities and forget about tasks that are not absolutely necessary. Don't do them. Say "No, I cannot do this and that. I just won't do it." That was hard to learn, I can tell you. But that gives you more time for your other projects.

Personally, I think that an increase in the workload is not necessarily bad. It forces you to set priorities, find innovative ways of dealing with it, work more efficiently. You have to learn to separate important from less important things. I try to teach my team members to do that. And often we realise that some things get done in the daily business, automatically, without anybody really wasting time on them. Something that appears so important today may vanish in the air tomorrow because it was not all that relevant, after all.

After having read the summary: Which ideas presented in it do you particularly remember?

What I remember is that it doesn't say much about identification with the organisation. But I believe, at least in our case, it is so important to know who you work for. It makes many people proud and they would want to change because any change would be stepping down to a lower level. Mercedes is Mercedes, it gives you a good social standing when you can say you work here. And you have worked here for years and climbed the career ladder. It is a privilege to work here.

What is also important is that the work is challenging, never boring. And conditions are good – money-wise and we get many benefits.

Does that apply to all the workers, regardless of position, income, time they have been with the company, etc.?

Yes, more or less for everybody. Maybe with the older ones more than with young folks. Workers who have been with the company for many years cannot imagine working anywhere else. Regardless of the stress level. And they could not really

work anywhere else. Because what they know, their competences, are so tide to this company. All the trainings we get are usually for very closely defined niches within the firm. With my profile, for example, I might find it difficult to get a similar job with any other car manufacturer or anywhere else in the automotive world, I am a specialist for our cars, we all are specialists for our cars.

You said for older workers or for those who have been with the company for a long time, are less inclined to change their job because of stress. Are they more resilient than younger employees?

Apparently, the senior workers have more trust in the development of the company. And of the market, because that is the main framing condition. They believe that after each peak of work there will be a more relaxed period. Because they have seen that many times before. For the younger ones, every change seems to be a turnaround, something entirely new that will start something which will last forever.

Also, for them things are more likely to be "forever", since they have a long work life before them. And if they are at the beginning of their work life, they still question things, they reflect on whether they like it that way or not. Changing is easier for them or even more necessary for them. Because they look for a job that is more than a job, that is a profession and a calling.

And how do you, as a team leader, deal with that reflective and possibly critical attitude?

I try to tell them, yes, things will keep changing and not always for the better. But we have to go with the flow. None of us is able to predict the future. In one or two years, things may be completely different. Even in a company that seems to be like a rock, never changing, never failing, never being at any risk. But life is full of risks. The solution is in the way you look at it. In the meaning your job has for you. And here we talk about resilience, your topic. I tell them to have a life outside of work. Work is important, but – hey – we are not married to our jobs. Enjoy it while you have it. Have fun with it. Take it serious and be good at what you are doing, but don't overestimate yourself and your importance. Let's all have a good time here. And that again will reduce the stress, I am sure.

I talked to a guy recently who has seen the changes more clearly than most of us. He was a Business student and started here on internships and trainee programmes. He kept coming back during university holidays every year. He said that some 15 years ago, almost everybody he met here was so proud to be working here. It was the best employer in the region. And he says, that feeling has little by little decreased. But anyway, people were happy to have the job. But according to him, now many workers get a feeling of uncertainty. Plants and units get dissembled and rebuilt elsewhere, people have to move to keep their jobs or they lose long-time colleagues and friends. Ok, I can understand that is hard. But that is why I say, don't be glued to your chair, be flexible and accept new challenges. Grow with new tasks. Many workers are so inflexible, so conservative here. Life is no more like that, and quite frankly, I am happy it is not.

Although the one thing I agree with him is that communication could be better. The internal flow of information is sometimes sluggish. That causes people to lose trust in the management. And they don't feel respected, like management could do anything with them anytime without asking their opinion.

Do you think, this "being glued to the chair" has something to do with the working conditions here, with the pay or with certain privileges? Do they make people resilient to all those changes and hardships?

Yes, definitely. We earn good money, more than we would elsewhere. Many of us are proud to work here. We like the car, it is our brand.

And it is the good qualifications we get here. Trainings, seminars, specialisations, you name it. Not only myself, others have had similar developments. Starting from scratch and now in mid-management positions. What more could you ask for? That creates loyalty.

Is there anything else you would like to say?

I think, some of the senior workers are more resilient than the younger ones. They don't get all excited when management announces changes. They don't allow the stress to get at them too much. They work as they have always done, don't get hectic like some of the younger ones that still want to distinguish themselves.

Interview Heiko 6, December 21, 2017, 10.20 – 11.40 h

- age: 48

- gender: m

- workplace position: medical consultant, psychologist/psychotherapist, chief physician

- industrial sector: health insurance (German public health insurer)

- Germany

First of all, would you please describe what your job is?

Sure, I am head physician for psychosomatics in a clinic in Nordrhein-Westfalen, in a small town. It is a clinic for rehabilitation, many of our patients have overcome burnouts or depressive phases and come to us for rehabilitation before going back into their regular work life. I am also a consultant for BIG, a German health insurance organisation. Our clinic is affiliated with that insurance company. Although BIG is an organisation of public health, which means they insure workers through the public German health system, our clinic specialises in treating patients who either pay for their stay personally or have private health insurance coverage.

Ok, so that means, your patients are mostly in well-paid positions such as managers, supervisors, etc., right?

Yes, basically. Or they have applied for coverage through their public insurer but have been denied coverage for treatment in our clinic. And then decided to pay from their own pocket, so to speak.

Before the interview, I had provided you with a summary of some German organisational burnout programmes. Tell me about your overall impression of ideas presented in that summary.

I agree with most of the suggestions, and I think supervisors play an important role. To reduce stress and burnout potential and – respectively – to create resilience, we also advise our patients and health insurance clients, to identify their individual sources of stress. Then, they can start to find a new way of dealing with them.

Since burnout is a stress-related phenomenon, it is necessary to reduce and metabolise the adrenalin. Passive approaches such as relaxation training can be helpful as well as actively performed constant cardio training.

However, it is always a problem with external sources, so it is very often a matter of a supervisor's leadership qualities and of changes in job-related processes.

And then, it is often a matter of personality.

What do you mean by that? Do you believe in personality traits that make some people more prone to burnout or to resilience than others?

Absolutely! There are definitely personality traits that are more unfavourable in this context than others. Mostly, it is an excessive expectancy of perfection, in oneself and in others. A highly developed need for control – another typical trait, that I observe a lot in my practice. On the other hand, we often see a high level of idealism, a strong strive for success and for appreciation. Today, experts know that it is exactly that lack of appreciation and recognition – combined with a sense of being overly controlled at the workplace – which increases burnout risks significantly.

So, for a resilient workforce, it is vital that we turn those developments around and allow especially high-potential workers more freedom, more choice, more self-control and at the same time recognise and appreciate their performance.

How would you define a burnout?

Burnout is a serious physical and mental state of fatigue, which mostly originates from an energetic tilt or imbalance between what a person invests in their work and what they receive as reward from that investment.

Often, the first symptoms that arise and that should be taken as a warning, are form of feeling hyperactive or psyched in a way. They have a feeling of not being able to relax. It is only much later that other symptoms come up such as repeated infections or an excessive tiredness, beside an aversion to a job that they used to enjoy in former times.

Are there any experiences concerning cases of burnout and/or hopefully resilience that you would be able to share here?

Well, what I can say is that generally, it is a thin line between just having a difficult phase and being actually ill. But as soon as infections appear repeatedly, difficulties sleeping keep being a problem and when your job takes more and more over and influences much of your private life, or when social contacts become fewer, one doesn't meet friends any longer and most of all, when the regular breaks such as weekends or holidays don't seem to have any restorative effect, then it will be time to take a closer look into your own situation.

What I mean is that we can all be stressed every once in a while, that is not a disease. And we all go beyond our limits sometimes in our efforts. That is also nothing unusual and can even be fun. But it is important that we take care to have enough time afterwards to fully regenerate and to recover in order to get back to our strength. When we don't have that time, that is when it gets critical. That is when we can actually develop signs and symptoms of illnesses. We all know that. For example, after a phase of stress we catch a cold. We get that cold just when things get back to normal, when we calm down. That can be the first sign showing me that I might have worked myself into the ground. And when that continues, that is when one can develop first symptoms of a depression.

From your experience and expertise, what is the role of a supervisor or an HR professional in that case? What is the role of the organisation I work for? How can they help or intervene or lead me to more resilience?

I am not sure this is a task for supervisors or colleagues, not even if they work in the Human Resources department.

Usually, when we are exhausted, we withdraw or retreat. We do something that does us good and that way we recover. When somebody cannot do that anymore, does not have anything that helps to recover, the problem is serious. When I can't calm down properly, can't sleep, wake up at night <u>because</u> of the fatigue, when I am generally nervous and anxious, don't want to see friends or go about my hobbies, then it will be hard to recover. And that can be clues that I need help. But that, according to my experience, is not a job for team leaders or people in the workplace. Because: What if that are symptoms of a depression? What if even thoughts

of suicide arise? Maybe someone sees no exit from this dead-end road. Then it is about time that that person sees a professional. And I mean a medical professional, psychologist, psychotherapist, for example.

Co-workers, friends or supervisors will find it difficult to cope with such a situation. They may see, even in advance, that someone is moving toward that dead-end road. Usually, they also have a lot of good ideas what that person ought to change. But the person who is in need will not be able to execute those changes. The advice may be given with a good intention, but it will not lead to improvement. In such cases, what is needed from the surrounding world, is patience and understanding. And to take that person by the hand and guide him or her to the doctor's. But not to try and treat them themselves.

Do you think burnout and resilience are phenomena that occur more in certain cultures or societies than in others? Do you think, for example, we have a „German problem"?

Statistically, there don't seem to be shifts towards an increase of mental diseases. What has increased, nevertheless, are absence times due to mental conditions. I believe we are witnessing over the last five to ten years a sort of de-stigmatisation of mental problems and psychological treatments or psychotherapies. Plus, medical professionals have become more aware of those problems and diagnose them more properly than before. Almost everybody is in job situations where they find themselves in more and more insecure fields, in higher demands, increased workload. It is necessary to face technical and qualitative demands more than before. Therefore, I consider it the most important therapeutic approach to look into those circumstances, those new and changing challenges. We need to ask: How can we help the individual to gain strength in his or her personal situation? But we also need to see and need to help our patients understand where their limits are. Where the limits are, in general.

Which aspects should be included or described in more detail?

Is there anything else you would like to say? Maybe you could refer to the concept of resilience some more. Is that something that you promote? Or the health insurance company you are affiliated with?

The nearest concept to that of resilience and which I know well is positive thinking.

Could you explain that in more detail?

Is a glass half-full or half-empty? That is the attitude in which optimistic people differ from pessimists. Those who look at a glass as half-full, react more relaxed in challenging life situations. They exercise what we call positive thinking. On a physical level, they are less sensitive to pain and recover faster after being ill.

Thinking positive does not mean hiding away from reality. Optimistic people also go through critical times or have to deal with challenging experiences. But with that positive attitude they don't lose hope even in times like that.

That comes close to what we in this study consider resilience. Do you think such an attitude can be learnt or in any way acquired?

Yes, it is possible to train a positive way of thinking. But like many things in life that won't work just like that, by pressing a button. It's like learning a new language – you wouldn't expect yourself to be perfect in it from day one. You will first have to learn some grammar and some vocabulary and then you start with short texts. Learning positive thinking works in a similar manner. It can be trained in everyday life. For that I start out by checking my expectations: Do I tend to see the critical aspect in certain situations? Or do I imagine problematic scenarios?

And how can I stop myself from thinking in a negative way?

People who always tend to expect the worst can start by asking themselves: How probable is it that the worst case will happen? Replace words like "never" or "always" which express something definite by words like "often", "sometimes". Little changes in your vocabulary can help. If you cannot do that, a small word like „not yet" can help. Like say: I cannot do that yet, instead of saying: I cannot do that.

It is little measures like that which can support us in changing our thinking from "either/or" to "as well as". And they give us new, positive impulses. Or use your imagination – develop new, positive images for yourself and bring them in front of your inner eye, that way you enhance your own positive thoughts. Mindfulness exercises, relaxation programmes or meditation help you in that process and in

that change. Anything that increases our ability to get away from it all and to strengthen our concentration and mindfulness is useful.

Interview 10, Matthias, August 12, 2017, 20.45 h – 21.45 h

- age: 56

- gender: m

- workplace position: Personalfachreferent

- industrial sector: Fort- und Weiterbildung in einem Industriebetrieb

Before the interview, I had provided you with a summary of some organisational burnout programmes. Tell me about your overall impression of ideas presented in that summary.

That question is too broad for me. I could give you an entire lecture on that.

The term resilience is not defined, I do not know of any scientific definition, especially in the realm of business studies. So far, I have come across the term in the context of existential life crises such as war and flight.

How would you define a burnout?

Physical, cognitive, emotional state of exhaustion because of a long-term over-challenge of personal resources. External as well as internal ones. One can create a burnout out of the self, or it can be imposed on somebody from outside.

You are saying physical. Do you mean mental or psychological?

No, physical. For many, at least two of the elements mentioned will come together. By saying physical, I do not mean that you could not carry any heavy items any more or …. But rather the psychosomatic area. Bodily ailments due to mental reasons.

What does the term resilience mean to you?

It might be easier to define what resilience is not: an attitude that many leaders have adopted: obstinately obstinately denying the problem or unpleasant challenges and have them bounce off.

So that is NOT what it is. But what?

A constructive and positive handling of knowledge and competences and of emotional as well as personal challenges in the context of work-related tasks. For example, when people from Logistics waste thoughts on how Controlling handles things. Die machen sich dann einen Kopp über die ungelegten Eier der anderen.

After having read the summary: Which ideas presented in it do you particularly remember?

That the development of resilience cannot be a generalized – how can I put it – basic goal but that the individual conditions of that particular company and the organisational frames have to be taken into consideration. For example: enterprises that focus much on sales will possibly see a stronger competition and continued benchmarking as actually being the most important positive aspect of their business activities. That means, strong competition is a positive challenge and defeats are just part of the daily business.

Especially classic mid-sized industrial companies which may be less involved in competition and market strategies may have a different attitude. Challenging competition can appear existence-threatening for some companies, with respective consequences for managers and workers. It is then a small step from existential fear to burnout: „Wir müssen was tun, wir müssen was tun, wir müssen was tun.“

So, your focus is on competition and market.

Here is a point that I find important. A potential new apllicant should right away, as early as in his job interview, be given explanations about the existing corporate culture. Otherwise there will be unpleasant awakenenigs. Like, that extra hours do not only happen during peak phases but that they are the rule.

That means, resilience is not that important for you. According to what you just said, a person is either fit for the job or he/she is not.

Even though job market conditions may not be perfect I believe that too many employees are in wrong positions. And with that, dissatisfaction and negative burdens are being caused again and again. Many problems might be avoided through tactically and strategically well-designed HR planning and respective clear job- and task-descriptions. With the right man or the right woman on the right post, the risk of a potential burnout can be reduced – at least from the side of the enterprise. Less fluctuation, more satisfaction etc.

What if somebody was the right person for the job initially and then conditions at work changed?

Then it is a problem of personnel development. It has not worked out well, then. Starting from a certain level of business responsibilities I consider it unavoidable to carry out annual progress reviews, one-on-one meetings with agreement on objectives. Once a line-manager detects a possible unhappiness in a person with his or her position or tasks, they can react quickly and adequately, without – in a worst-case scenario – the need to dismiss somebody or to have to terminate a contract due to unhealthy overexertion.

And how?

A prerequisite for such well-designed communication management is a respective qualification of all managers who are in charge of personnel or who lead teams. Observe, listen and understand. With respect to the workers – in many German enterprises this is not a competence that is common among managers and not sort of on their agenda. A line manager who listens attentively will realize changes and conflicts before even the worker him-/herself will notice them. The best prevention programmes like relaxation courses, sabbatical and the like will remain a flash in the pan if managers are not able to do what they should be able to do, which is lead. And with that I mean lead in a positive sense. At the same time, individual measures such as work- and time-management courses or situation-related coachings can be useful in certain challenging situations.

240

It says here, leaders are role models in the context of work and leisure time. That is an important point. I suppose that for most workers, their line-managers are a negative model. As if they said: "I never want to be like that person".

You have been talking about HR-professionals. What is the role of leaders and team supervisors with respect to resilience?

I am not sure and it has to be discussed whether the development of resilience ought to be part of the job description of managers and be explicitly implemented there. Leadership is not only a matter of job-related expertise. But also a social, human task. If I was a leader and approached challenges consciously, openly and communicatively, I would set a frame within my role as role model and give support to my team members. In German we say „nichts wird so heiß gegessen, wie es gekocht wird", which is something like „Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you". However, I can only expect that of a leader who was qualified for that.

As I am saying this, I come to think of the military: Leadership training in the Bundeswehr (German army) is just that: They must be able to do that. They cannot - while the grenades are flying, or the Taliban are coming - freak out. The commanding officers must be emotionally controlled. Which Management school would teach such good self-management? So, I will say it in a military way: Before I send the troops into battle, I must qualify the commanding officers. So they can lead.

Which ones of the tools in the summary are you familiar with? What is your experience with them? How useful were they?

Regardless of this special type of problem, I believe all measures that support workers' health are useful. These include back therapy trainings, relaxation techniques, ergonomics in the workplace, healthy food (despite of the cafeteria) and physical exercises for those who work sitting at a desk most of the time. All of these measures might not be looked at as specifically resilience related. Nevertheless, they contribute to personal stability even within the frame of a business performance process.

Concerning cost, just another idea: Experience has shown in fact, that when enterprises introduce such measures, they will not have to carry the costs alone. But that many workers are ready to participate and to contribute financially to them – within an acceptable boundary. In all of that, voluntary participation is central.

Measures that are forced on people will attract resistance and with that frustration. Then everybody will say: „Oh no, I have to go to that stupid course again".

Is there anything else you would like to say?

Resilience starts during pre-school-age. Education for resilience is not an enterprise task, but it is part of the responsibility for education that parents, kindergarten and schools have. It is an attended process of many years.

Resilience can be learned - but not in a crash course.

Appendix 5: Interview data - themes and cultural aspects

The table depicts the frequency of each theme: How many times did a person relate to that topic throughout the conversation? The table also links the themes to the interviewees.

	Business activities	Industry	Structures	Know-ledge	Psycholo-gical aspects
Angelika	1	1	5	3	1
Gina	1	1		1	3
Sabine	2	1	3		6
Ali	2	1	1		1
Andreas	1	1	2		1
Colin	4	1	3	1	2
Heiko	1	1	1	2	12
Kai	1	1	2	2	2
Ludger	1	1	2	2	2
Matthias	1	2	2	2	4
Merten	5	1	2		1
Peter	1	3	2	4	1

Victor	1	1	1		1
Volkan	0	1	5	6	5
total	22	17	31	23	42

Table about beliefs concerning resilience in relation to cultural backgrounds

country/ region	interviewees	Turning burnout into resilience: practical experience, opinions, suggestions
Germany	Andreas, Angelika, Colin, Heiko, Kai, Matthias, Merten, Peter, Sabine	Some of the organisations have Employee Assistance Programme or other internet-based platforms. Some interviewees like the tool, others are ambiguous about it, demand that management looks into the origins of those difficulties. Suggestion: Implement efficient working styles! Talking helps, get support from colleagues and managers, friends and family. Only psychologically trained professionals should help. Supervisors should listen to employees and be sensitive and personal, but not controlling. It is employer's duty to ensure that every worker will be safe. Importance of communication between hierarchy levels, supervisors have a protective function. Some interviewees are familiar with a step-by-step-reintegration programme.
UK	Gina	would appreciate a prophylactic programme
UK	Ludger	Dealing with a burnout patient "it is not a task for team leaders or other business professionals", complex reintegration programmes are "somewhat over the top".
USA	Victor	Organisation has internet-based mental health fitness plan