Examination of the Relationship between Organizational Resilience and Organizational Sustainability at Higher Education Institution*

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Abstract

As organizational environments become increasingly complex, uncertain and unpredictable, organizations face more crises and are forced to maintain their resilience in these circumstances. In spite of these situations, organizations that maintain their resilience try to secure their organizational sustainability by taking their existence one step further. According to the UNDP report, organizations can create a sustainable dynamic if they can make individuals and communities more resilient. Then it is obviously seen that organizational resilience and organizational sustainability concepts are related to each other. For this reason, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability at higher education isntitutions based on the literature. In this respect, the study was designed with a literature review. As the data collection, the a six-step research strategy was determined, and six steps of this strategy was applied. After then, it was occurred as far as was accessed, there was no study that directly quantifies the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability in higher education was found. However, it was seen that some of the studies mentioned below analyze the relationship between resilience and sustainability conceptually. For this reason, it was proved the importance of both handling organizational resilience and organizational sustainability together and handling this relationship at higher education institutions. In this context, some suggestions were presented.

Keywords: Educational organization; higher education institution; literature review; organizational resilience; organizational sustainability.

1. Introduction

Since organizational environments are becoming increasingly complex, uncertain and unpredictable, it is no longer possible to determine and predict how this will affect an organization's activities (Yilmaz-Börekçi, İşeri-Say and Rofcanin, 2015). For this reason,

organizations are increasingly challenged by today's business world. Many variables such as terror attacks, economic declines, global financial crises, uncertainties in competitive markets, quality wars, political and social conditions have become more threatening to the competitiveness and survival of organizations. In order to successfully overcome these conditions, organizations have to develop their resilience capacity (Bouaziz and Smaoui Hachicha, 2018). In addition, organizational resilience is now becoming more needed as leaders encounter constant pressure to control rising costs, to meet increasing quality expectations, to serve an increasing number of customers, and to redesign maintenance systems (Bowen, 2018).

In line with the reasons aforementioned, in today's business world, organizations face the pressure from the external environment due to rapidly changing business conditions, and crises, disasters and competition are intensifying each passing day. In such a context, reslience becomes a high concern for both theoreticians and practitioners (Kantur and İşeri-Say, 2015). For this reason, organizational resilience has become the most important basis for organization in order to both manage complexity, uncertainty, crises and overcome pressure, competition wars.

In its narrow sense, resilience refers to a broad concept that includes emotional, personal, relational, psychological, behavioral and cognitive regulation within the framework of organizational functioning (Day and Gu, 2014); while in its broader sense, it means to ensure that states, communities and global organizations work to empower and protect people (Malik, 2014). Organizational resilience is considered as the strength of an organization to resist negative and stressful situations, the ability to maintain its current position and the capacity to benefit from them by using negative conditions (Kantur and İşeri-Say, 2015). In this case, organizational resilience can be defined as the transformation of the negativities into opportunities by going beyond protecting an organization's current situation in the face of negative situations.

Organizational resilience is affected by material resources, preparation and planning, knowledge management, ways of collateral and redundancy, governance processes, leadership practices, organizational culture, human capital, social networks and cooperation factors (Barasa, Mbau and Gilson, 2018). Therefore, for an organization to become resilient, organizational resilience needs to be managed effectively. Especially nowadays where education is accepted as a development index (Nartgün, Sezen-Gültekin and Limon, 2017), it has become an important issue for educational organizations to become resilient.

Educational organizations are institutions that can be affected by a country's educational and other policies, its ideas and philosophical understanding, the resources it has, the existing competences and moreover, many different factors. For this reason, educational organizations can be more easily affected by any crisis or changing policy. This shows that educational organizations are in danger in terms of resilience. As a

result, the competitive world, which manifests itself in every field, has made itself felt in the education sector, especially in recent years, and has led educational organizations to enter into wars of existence. This situation has caused the education organizations to have concerns about how remain resilient, and how they can survive. Just because the purpose of all organizations is to maintain their existence (Helvacı, 2010) and in line with this aim, organizations are always in an effort to exist. For this reason, organizations sometimes make some efforts to protect their existence and sometimes to put their presence before other organizations.

When evaluated in terms of public and private sectors, it can be said that this situation occurs more in private sector. As the private sector by its very nature leads organizations to competition and therefore to the struggle for existence in this competition. On the other hand, the state of competition in the private sector may show itself to a lesser degree in the public sector as the resources are provided by the state and tasks are done on behalf of the state. This situation makes the public sector organizations' concerns and actions about existence more limited.

Inasmuch as, a general idea like "If there is a state, public institutions and organizations will also exist." seems to make existence no longer an issue in public organizations. It can be said that this claim is appropriate somehow. Because sustainability is more limited in the private sector since financial resources are on an individual basis, while the issue of sustainability can proceed in direct proportion to the survival of the government or the policy of the administration since the resource provider is largely the state itself in the public sector. However, considering competition and entrepreneurship have been reflected in every field with the impact of globalization, it can be said that existence even in public sectors has become an issue nowadays. For this reason, in order to maintain their existence in a rapidly developing and changing world order, organizations have to follow the strategies and policies appropriate to their aims and make them into behavior.

In this process, that organizations should survive in line with their goals and even go beyond these goals necessitates them not only to follow these strategies and policies, but also to base them on realistic and solid foundations. For this purpose, organizations must have a resilient structure in order to sustain their existence. Because, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2014 report, such conditions that strengthen human activity, and make individuals and communities more resilient should be created through sensitive organizations and effective policy interventions in order to form a sustainable dynamic structure.

While the concept of sustainability was dealt with only in the economic context by providing a framework for the integration of environmental policies and development strategies in the early years (Brundtland, 1987), this perspective changed in the following years and a broader definition of sustainability emerged. In this new definition,

sustainability is related to the economic, social and environmental impacts of an organization in the long term (Jeong, 2015); and it is addressed as a term which is not only an attitude that maintains itself by maintaining profitability; but also, the action that successfully balances people, prosperity and the planet by seeking a dynamic balance (Wals and Schwarzin, 2012). In this case, organizational sustainability can be defined as an organization's efforts to maintain its own existence in line with its goals rather than simply maintaining its existence for the purpose of interest, and to move in a balanced manner by carrying the logic of sustainability to all levels of the organization and to the outside world to which it belongs, and an effort to establish a future.

There is no short cut for sustainability and sustainability is a never-ending organizational initiative (Coblentz, 2000). In addition, it is unclear at what speed organizational sustainability will develop (White, 1999), and therefore educational organizations have to make constant efforts for their existence. In order for this effort to achieve effective results, it would be beneficial to act with a resilient structure.

As seen in the end, organizational structures can increase or decrease resilience; thus, it can be thought that their organizational sustainability is affected by this situation. Because, according to Hammond, real sustainability is about how the work is expanded in the future; resilience refers to how to protect things and to prevent problems. For this reason, sustainability is a more general and comprehensive strategy that includes the concept of resilience.

Moreover, since sustainability refers to optimism and resilience refers to realism (Lattimore, 2016), both are needed for educational organizations. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine these two concepts literally within the educational organizations, and thus to examine the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability at higher education institutions based on the literature. In this context, the research problems addressed in this study are as follows.

According to the literature,

- Is there any study handling the relationship between resilience and sustainability?

- Is there any study handling the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability?

- Is there any study handling the relationship between resilience and organizational sustainability?

- Is there any study handling the relationship between organizational resilience and sustainability?

- Is there any study handling the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability in educational organizations?

- Is there any study handling the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability in higher education institutions?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

This study was designed literature review. Hart (2018:31) states twelve purposes of review as (1) distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done, (2) discovering important variables relevant to the topic, (3) synthesizing and gaining a new perspective, (4) identifying relationships between ideas and practice, (5) establishing the context of topic or problem, (6) rationalizing the theoretical or practical significance of the problem, (7) enhancing and gaining the subject vocabulary, (8) understanding the origins and structure of the subject, (9) relating ideas and theory to problems and questions, (10) identifying the main methodologies, and data collection tools that have been used, (11) placing the research into historical context to show familiarity with developments, (12) having a body of knowledge to which you can relate your own research findings.

Similarly, according to Cooper (2010), literature review can be done for different aims like (a) engaging what others do or say, (b) criticizing the scientific studies done before, (c) connecting related concepts, and (d) definig basic concepts in a field (cited in Ercan, 2016). In this context, by following the researchers' statements, this study aims to connecting organizational resilience and organizational sustainability.

According to Creswell (2016), the fundemantal reason of qualitative study is that the study is explorative which is preferred when there is not sufficient review of the study or the population (cited in Ercan, 2016). For this reason, this study tries to shed light on the literature and explore relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability especially at higher education institutions.

2.2. Research Strategy

There are many opinions on research stragey for literature review. For example, on one hand, Demirci (2014) states that literature review can be done through following steps respectively: (a) planning, (b) researching and finding resources, (c) examining resources and preparing literature document, (d) transferring literature to text, writing.

On the other hand, Boote and Beile (2015) states some more detailed steps for literature review: (a) defining keywords, (b) by keeping in mind these keywords, searching them in the nearest libraries or catalouges such as journals and books, (c) finding least 50 resources for study subject, (c) glancing at the first group of resources and getting copies of the related ones, (d) designing a literature map, (e) preparing summaries of the most relevant sources, (f) after summarizing the literature, combining

the literature review which has been re-organized with important terms and structured thematically (cited in Ercan, 2016).

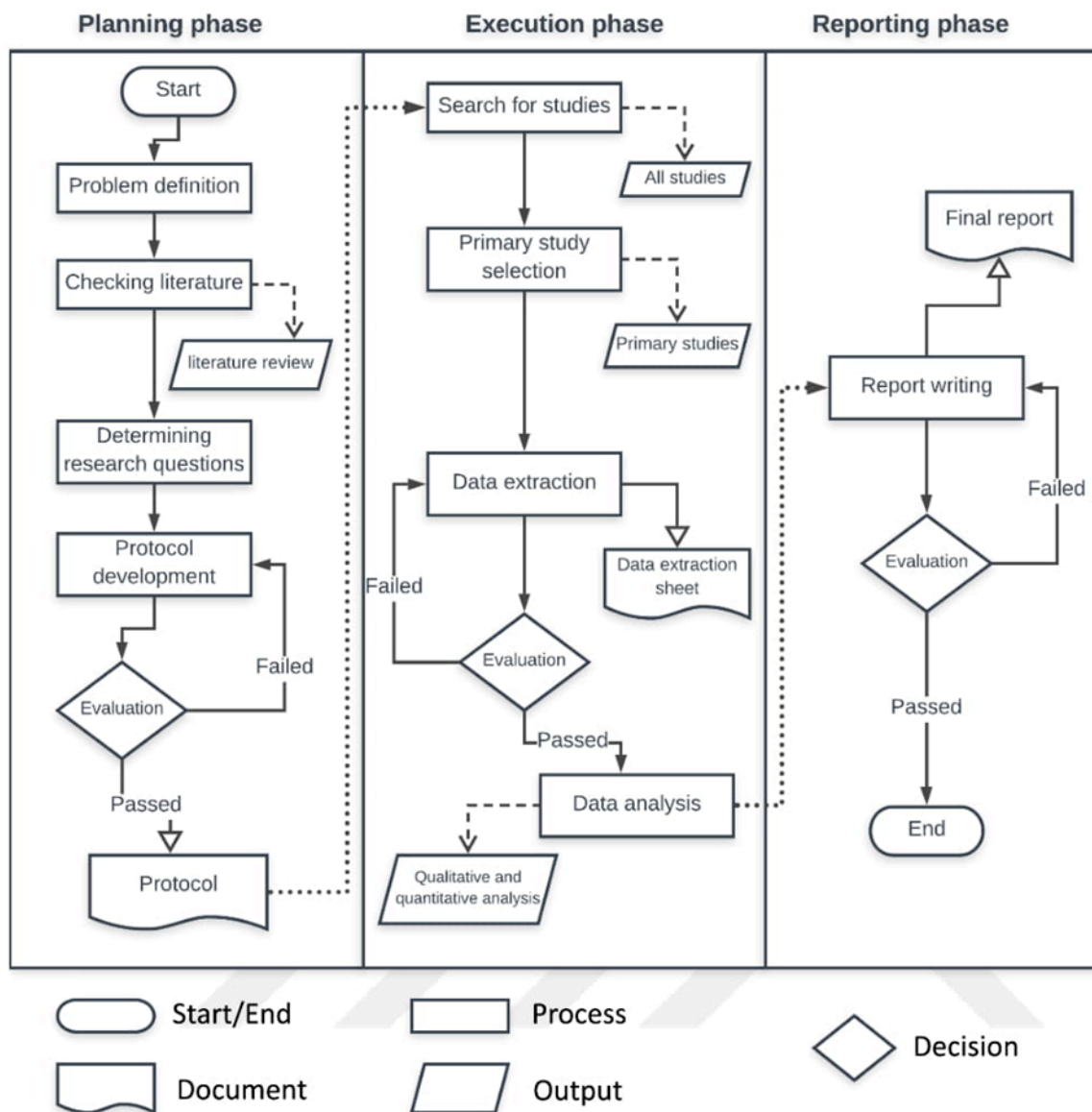**Planning phase**   **Execution phase**   **Reporting phase**

Figure 3.1: Overview of the systematic literature review process

Similarly, Kitchenham and Charters (2007) state that (a) planning the review, (b) conducting the review, (c) reporting the review is the fundamental steps for a systematic review. In this context, according to Figure 1 (Mohamed, 2020), the first step should include identification why it is important to review, commissioning a review, identifying research problems, making a review protocol, evaluating this protocol in order to plan the

review. The second step should consist of specifying of research, determining of primary studies, identfiying research quality assessment, data extraction and monitoring, data synthesis in order to conduct the review. The third step should include how to determine dissemination mechanism, how to format the main report, how to evaluate the report.

When examined the different opinions, it can be said that there are main steps for literature review although there are also many detailed steps for it. Therefore, in this study, the following steps were carried out respectively:

1. The keywords were determined by planning the review. In this context, resilience and sustainability conecpts were grounded, and the keywords were defined as organizational resilience and organizational sustainability. Since the main problem of the study to reveal the relationship between these keywords, they were searched separately and together like "organizational resilience", "organizational sustainability", "resilience and sustainability", "resilience and organizational sustainability", "organizational resilience and sustainability", "organizational resilience and organizational sustainability", "organizational resilience and organizational sustainability at educational organizations", "organizational resilience and organizational sustainability at higher education institutions". These words were searched both in the titles of the study directly and in their main texts. By doing this, it was aimed not only to detect the sub-problems of the study, but also to establish the relationship directly and indirectly, quantitively and qualitatively.

2. The keywords were searched in different books and databases such as Turkish Higher Education Institution National Dissertation Center, Sakarya University Central Library, Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, Thomson Reuters, ULAKBİM, ProQuest, EBSCO, PsycINFO, SSCI, Online catalogue, etc. After this search, only the related resources were tried to find.

3. The found resources was checked in terms of the research problems, and the copies of the relevant studies were got.

4. Based on the copies, the studies were summarized separately, and the literature map was determined by designing how this study contributes to the field. By doing this, three different documents were opened, and one of them was used for summarizing the studies for organizational resilience, one of them was used for summarizing the studies for organizational sustainability to collect the indirect relationships, and the last one was used to summarizing the studies connecting their relationships directly.

5. After summarizing, the findings found in these summaries were structured and combined according to the research problems.

6. The results were presented comperatively as a separate part in the continuation of the study. In this point the idea of Creswell (2016) were followed. According to Creswell (2016), there are some models to for literature review. Literature can be presented (a) in introduction part to edit problem, (b) in a separate part as a review, and (c) at the end of study to compare similaries and differences between findings (cited in Ercan, 2016). Therefore, third model was used in this study to present the relational ideas on organizational resilience and organizational sustainability in the other studies examined.

3. Results and Discussion

In this study, it was aimed to investigate organizational resilience and organizational sutainability literally within the educational organizations, and thus to examine the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability at higher education institutions based on the literature. In this context, a literature review was made, and by following the research strategy, the results were presented in this part.

When the literature is examined, as far as can be accessed, no study that directly quantifies the relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability in higher education was found. However, it was seen that some of the studies mentioned below analyze the relationship between resilience and sustainability conceptually. For this reason, it was proved the importance of both handling organizational resilience and organizational sustainability together and handling this relationship at higher education institutions.

In this context, some suggestions were presented. At this point, it was found that the opinions of Wals and Schwarzin (2012), UNDP (2014), Malik (2014), Brock, Mäler and Perrings (2001), Kantur and İşeri-Say (2012; 2015), Carayannis, Sindakis and Walter (2015), Baldwin (Melkonyan, Gottschalk and VP (2017), Egeland, Carlson and Sroufe (1993), Wildavsky (1991), Nawaz and Koc (2018), Bell (2002), Campbell and Radford (2014), Robb (2000), The opinions of Çoban Kumbalı (2018), Horne III (1997), Dobie and Schneider (2017), Mallak (1998a; 1998b), Yilmaz Borekci, Rofcanin and Gürbüz (2015) support the research problems of this study.

While organizational sustainability contributes to a more sustainable world, it also has a normative basis that makes an organization or a community sustainable (Wals and Schwarzin, 2012). According to Hammond, sustainability is a future-oriented concept where opportunities and jobs are being increased apidlyr (cited in Lattimore, 2016). Based on this definition, organizational sustainability can be defined as an action which is not only an organization that saves its day, but rather tries to make its existence focused on the future; and which establishes a balanced organizational structure by taking into account the current planet, the welfare of the society and its employees as

well as the interests of the organization. In this context, it can be asserted that an organization must be resilient on the day it lives in order to continue its existence successfully in the future.

Because, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2014 report, such conditions that strengthen human activity, and make individuals and communities more resilient should be created through sensitive organizations and effective policy interventions in order to form a sustainable dynamic structure. In this context, organizational structures and norms can increase or decrease resilience (Malik, 2014). In this case, it can be said that the characteristics of the organizations affect their ability to cope with difficulties and to survive in a durable way by creating opportunities from threats. Therefore, it can be stated that organizational resilience can be a determining factor for organizational sustainability. Because the sustainability of any organization depends on the characteristics of the stability area related to that organization and this situation can be analyzed directly with the resilience of the system (Brock, Mäler and Perrings, 2001). As a matter of fact, organizational resilience has become a central concern in order to ensure sustainability and future success in organizations especially in the field of strategic management (Kantur and İşeri-Say, 2015) and has also been of particular importance for higher education institutions. In the light of these views, it can be considered that there is a positive relationship between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability.

According to Carayannis, Sindakis and Walter (2015), organizations are open systems operating under conditions of significant turbulence, risk and uncertainty, and moreover, they seek to balance stability and consistency in the search for organizational sustainability. Baldwin (2015), on the other hand, states that resilience and sustainability are related, and that reslience and sustainability will be more intertwined for organizations to become more effective and to control the conditions at a global level. In this context, it can be said that higher education institutions are more likely to encounter turbulences and uncertainties since they are open systems, and therefore their sustainability will be affected negatively. Although it is easier to control all system elements in closed systems, the existence of an organization may end due to an entropy.

For this reason, organizations try to preserve their existence as open systems by reversing negative entropy. However, in this case, each element can become a potential threat to uncertainty due to quite different variables in open systems. If so, power loss may occur in higher education institutions that cannot effectively manage any uncertainty that may occur in the system elements. It can be foreseen that these organizations may be in danger for sustainability as it will not be possible for them to have a resilient structure due to this entropy. In this context, it can be thought that organizational resilience is related to organizational sustainability.

On the other hand, considering that higher education institutions need to keep up with the requirements of the age and be open to innovations to go beyond the age, they must both ensure stability and follow changes to compete on a global level. During this period, it can be said that acting with a resilient structure through taking advantage of these relations between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability will make it easier for them to achieve a sustainable structure. As a result of this study, it is concluded that organizational resilience and organizational sustainability are related.

According to Melkonyan, Gottschalk and VP (2017), resilience provides a solid foundation for sustainability. Resilience is treated as insulated and based on a limited number of indicators; while in contrast, sustainability represents a wider, adaptable, and dynamic system that guarantees growth even in unstable and uncertain border changes. In this context, it can be said that resilience is an important determinant of sustainability and therefore the two concepts are interrelated.

According to Egeland, Carlson and Sroufe (1993), adaptation in the face of challenging conditions, i.e. resilience, is also thought to strengthen an organization's present day as well as its future. According to Wildavsky (1991), this does not mean that the situation that emerged in a period fully predicts subsequent situations. Rather, the situation in one period increases the likelihood of the situation in the next period (Cited in Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007). In other words, resilience not only shapes the situations that occur in today's conditions, but also increases the likelihood of this occurring in the future. In this context, it can be claimed that organizational resilience is related to organizational sustainability that shapes the future of the organization. For this reason, it can be thought that higher education institutions that cannot cope with crises and cannot successfully overcome the difficult conditions will put their existence at risk in the future.

According to Robb (2000), although the world remains stubbornly flawed, organizational resilience is a journey for organizations to develop their ability to sustain themselves in the new world order. In this context, it can be said that organizational resilience is a premise in achieving organizational sustainability. Similarly, in their comprehensive and comparative literature review, Nawaz and Koc (2018) reached the conclusion that although organizations and senior management acknowledge the importance of sustainability, the lack of specific definitions and a resilient framework hinders the management of sustainability in organizations. In other words, even if organizations accept the importance of sustainability, the obstacle to organizational sustainability will not be removed if the organizational resilience framework is not established. In this case, it is not enough to accepting the importance of organizational sustainability in higher education institutions unless it is acted within the framework of organizational resilience.

According to Kantur and İşeri-Say (2012; 2015), the concept of resilience in ecology is mostly perceived as the resistance and flexibility capacity of the systems to ensure

sustainability, while organizational resilience ensures the improvement, adaptation, continuity and renewal of an organization in the process of organizational evolution. In this context, it can be said that organizational resilience is a determinant during the period in which organizations maintain their existence cyclically. Thus, it can be said that higher education institutions, which can exhibit a durable stance in the face of negative conditions and turn this into a cycle, also provide a solid foundation for organizational sustainability.

According to Horne III (1997), organizational resilience constitutes a framework of sustainability through communication, coordination, competencies, commitment, reputation, connections, and communities within the organization. Therefore, according to Dobie and Schneider (2017), if sustainability efforts are asked to be effective within a community, then resilience issues should be included in these efforts. Similarly, according to Mallak (1998b), resilience is needed for organizations to preserve judgment and survival; while, according to Pulley (1997), resilience is associated with flexibility, vitality and adaptation, and is the key skill for survival and development in many changes. If so, according to Bell (2002), resilience is a pattern for the survival of organizations in the 21st century, the main pattern. According to Campbell and Radford (2014), resilience should be developed especially in problem-oriented solutions in order to ensure sustainability.

The most basic ability of living things to sustain themselves is to protect themselves by taking proactive dangers and acting proactively. In this case, just as living things can survive by being proactive through their immune systems, organizations can develop their own immune systems as social creatures, protect them from possible effects, or eliminate these effects or try to build a better future for themselves (Çoban Kumbalı, 2018). Resilience is the only sustainable strategic plan (Stoltz, 2004). In this case, it can be thought that the higher education institutions, which employ strategic plans effectively, take an effective step for sustainability. For this reason, it can be underlined that organizations need a resilient organizational structure in order to build a sustainable future.

4. Suggestions

When the literature is examined, it is seen that organizational resilience concept predominantly evaluates the physical or psychological resilience of an organization. However, in the 21st century working environment that is rapidly changing, globalizing and competitive, the integrity of an organization as a whole is also important. Ultimately, an organization that does not have a resilient structure cannot stabilize and sustain its existence in future. For this reason, organizations should act quickly in situations they encounter, seek different solutions to problems, turn negativity into opportunities, struggle against difficulties, continue their path without giving up and most importantly

act as a whole. However, for doing this, organizations should address organizational resilience and organizational sustainability together since it was proved that these terms are related to each other.

In this respect, educational organizations should set both organizational resilience and organizational sustainability to work together in order to build their future. At this point, since playing a bridge between science, society and industry, and having the opportunities mentioned in UNDP 2014, it can be said that the most sensitive organizations that can create a sustainable dynamic are especially higher education institutions. For this reason, it can be suggested that higher education institutions which want to provide a dynamic sustainable structure should also provide organizational resilience. For this, higher education institutions should act as a whole by pressing their stakeholders into service to work out the problematic situations experienced in their own system or in the system they live in; benefit from adversity in the interests of the organization; and act quickly by producing different solutions. For this purpose, a committee can be established in universities. By keeping the pulse of the university and the systems in which the university is located, this committee can detect the possible situations not only in times of crisis but also at other times, and can enable the university to act as a resilient organization in case of a possible problem. Besides, this committee should ensure sustainability awareness in all areas such as environment, economy, culture, social life, and management practices. For this reason, this committee can inform their stakeholders, make information meetings and awareness practices, and organize cultural and social activities. By this way, the committee can mingle resilience and sustainability. Thus, it can cope with the factors that jeopardize its existence. In this way, the universities that have achieved a resilient and sustainable structure will pave the way for them to continue their existence in the future.

Acknowledgements

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