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APPLICATION OF MILITARY METHODS IN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS TO ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE

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Abstract. *The study explores how military-inspired leadership principles and decision-making frameworks can be effectively integrated with business continuity and management practices to enhance organizational resilience. The aim is to investigate how combining military leadership models with BCM, Agile methodologies, and crisis communication strengthens an organization's adaptive capacity and recovery capability. Research objectives are: (1) to integrate BCM approaches — including PDCA, BIA, and recovery objectives (RTO, RPO, MTPD, MBCO) — with military decision-making models such as Mission Command and the OODA loop; (2) to examine Agile principles and STARCC as complementary frameworks; and (3) to synthesize recent literature (2020–2025) and practitioner insights (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025) to develop a holistic resilience model. Findings indicate that iterative planning, decentralized decision-making, rapid feedback loops, and structured communication significantly enhance organizational resilience. The study proposes an integrated framework combining military leadership, BCM tools, Agile methods, and crisis communication to sustain adaptability, performance, and competitive advantage.*

Keywords: *Organizational resilience, Business continuity management (BCM), Military leadership principles, Mission Command & OODA loop, Agile management, STARCC crisis communication, Integrated resilience model*

Introduction

In today's volatile environment—marked by pandemics, cyberattacks, and geopolitical conflicts such as the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian war—organizations must cultivate robust resilience to survive and thrive. Organizational resilience is an organization's capacity to absorb shocks, recover, and emerge stronger and more adaptable (Carmeli & Markman, 2011; Horne & Orr, 1998). Unlike traditional risk management, which focuses on prevention, resilience emphasizes proactive adaptation when adverse events occur (CDC, 2002).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the limitations of siloed continuity plans and showed that resilience depends on human resources, adaptive processes, and rapid decision-

making (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). Modern organizations integrate risk management, business continuity, crisis response, and leadership into cohesive resilience strategies (Horne & Orr, 1998; Nguyen et al., 2021).

Resilience is a multidimensional capability, encompassing structural, cultural, and relational aspects (Ruiz Martín, López Paredes, & Wainer, 2018; Duchek, 2020). For SMEs, proactive resource management and organizational learning enhance adaptability under environmental uncertainty (Nguyen et al., 2021). Economic disruptions, such as tariff changes, further demonstrate the need for resilient strategies, as supply chain interruptions affect productivity, capital allocation, and competitive advantage (Benguria, Saffie, & Waugh, 2022; Chae, 2019; Eugster, Jaumotte, MacDonald, & Piazza, 2022).

In "grey zone" business environments characterized by uncertainty and intermittent conflict, success depends not solely on resources but on adaptability (Boyd, 1987; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). Hierarchical models with centralized decision-making are often insufficient. Organizations increasingly adopt military-inspired principles emphasizing agility, decentralization, and mission-oriented command. For instance, NATO's Mission Command framework empowers personnel to make decisions aligned with strategic intent (Land Warfare Development Centre, 2017). These principles align with Agile management, which emphasizes adaptive, team-based responses and iterative learning cycles (Rigby, Sutherland, & Takeuchi, 2016).

Research Problem is exploration of the application of military-inspired methods and frameworks in business environments to strengthen organizational resilience. Specifically, object of the research is the integration of military command models—such as Mission Command and Boyd's OODA loop (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act)—with business continuity management (BCM) processes and Agile methodologies. In addition, the study considers the role of structured crisis communication through the STARCC model (Sympathy, Taking responsibility, Action, Reassurance, Commitment, and Contact) as a means of preserving stakeholder trust and legitimacy during crises (Reynolds, Galdo, & Sokler, 2002).

The aim of this research is to investigate how the integration of military leadership principles with established BCM and Agile frameworks can enhance organizational resilience in complex and uncertain environments.

Research Objectives are:

- To examine and integrate established business continuity management (BCM) approaches — including the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, Business Impact Analysis (BIA), and recovery metrics such as Recovery Time Objective (RTO), Recovery Point Objective (RPO), Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD), and Maximum Business Continuity Objective (MBCO) — with military-inspired decision-making frameworks such as Mission Command and the Observe–Orient–Decide–Act (OODA) loop.
- To assess the applicability of Agile management principles and the Situation, Task, Action, Result, Communication, Coordination (STARCC) crisis communication model as complementary frameworks to business continuity and military-inspired methods.
- To synthesize recent academic research and practitioner approbation (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025) to develop a holistic framework for organizational resilience that integrates military leadership principles, business continuity planning, agile adaptation, and structured communication.
- To validate the proposed integrated resilience framework through illustrative practitioner case examples involving supply chain disruptions and crisis communication scenarios.

Hypotheses

H_1: The integration of military-inspired leadership, Business Continuity Management, Agile practices, and structured crisis communication enhances organizational resilience, preparedness, and crisis performance (Boyd, 1987; ISO, 2019; Rigby et al., 2016; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Jatautaitė et al., 2025).

H_2: Practitioner insights confirm the practical effectiveness and applicability of the integrated organizational resilience framework in real crisis contexts (Nguyen et al., 2021; Jatautaitė et al., 2025).

Relevance of the Study

This study addresses a critical gap in resilience research by linking military leadership philosophies with established business continuity and Agile practices, thereby proposing a holistic model for crisis preparedness. Given the increasing frequency of disruptions caused by geopolitical conflicts, economic volatility, technological change, and regulatory shifts, such integration is highly relevant. Practitioner approbation further ensures that the proposed framework is not only theoretically robust but also applicable and tested in real-world organizational contexts and practice (Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative integrative literature review methodology to explore the integration of business continuity management (BCM) and military-inspired leadership principles as a holistic approach to enhancing organizational resilience. This methodology is well suited to the subject because it allows for the synthesis of diverse academic frameworks, practitioner insights, and conceptual models, thereby enabling the creation of a nuanced and comprehensive resilience framework.

The review focuses on recent literature (2020–2025) to ensure that findings reflect contemporary challenges in organizational resilience, including evolving risk landscapes, technological advancements, and the increasing complexity of global supply chains. Key theoretical foundations are drawn from Jatautaitė, Radvilė, and Terminas (2025), whose work integrates BCM, enterprise risk management (ERM), incident response, and crisis communication. This foundation is complemented by peer-reviewed studies and industry practice documents addressing BCM, ERM, organizational resilience, and military-inspired decision-making frameworks such as Mission Command and Colonel John Boyd's OODA loop.

The methodology employs conceptual synthesis rather than primary empirical data collection. This involves:

Thematic literature synthesis — organizing knowledge into key resilience dimensions: BCM, adaptive leadership, and crisis communication.

Critical framework comparison — analyzing models such as the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle, Business Impact Analysis (BIA), Recovery Time Objective (RTO), Recovery Point Objective (RPO), Maximum Tolerable Period of Disruption (MTPD), Minimum Business Continuity Objective (MBCO), Mission Command, Agile methodologies, and the STARCC communication model.

Integration of case-based exemplars — applying theoretical insights to realistic scenarios (e.g., supply chain disruptions, crisis communication in the energy sector) to illustrate practical relevance.

The analytical process is structured to answer the following: How can the synergy of disciplined planning, adaptive decision-making, and structured communication strengthen organizational resilience? This is addressed by organizing the discussion around three interconnected dimensions:

Business continuity management as the foundational resilience layer.

Military-inspired leadership and agile decision-making as adaptive capacity drivers.

Structured crisis communication (STARCC) as a mechanism to sustain stakeholder trust during disruptions.

From Doctrine to Action: Adaptive Leadership in Uncertain Environments

While BCM provides a structured and proactive foundation for resilience, organizations facing dynamic and unpredictable crises must go beyond predefined plans. Effective crisis response requires adaptive leadership capable of making timely decisions under uncertainty, leveraging incomplete information, and maintaining operational momentum despite disruption. This is where military-inspired leadership principles become invaluable.

Military doctrines such as Mission Command emphasize decentralized decision-making, empowering leaders at all levels to act in alignment with strategic intent rather than relying solely on rigid instructions (U.S. Army Doctrine, 2020). Similarly, Colonel John Boyd's OODA loop (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act) offers a dynamic decision-making framework that allows organizations to rapidly cycle through situational assessment and action. In volatile environments, the ability to "loop" faster than adversaries or competing forces becomes a critical advantage (Boyd, 1987).

Integrating these principles with BCM offers several benefits:

- Enhanced situational awareness is when Decision-makers continuously observe and orient to changing conditions, updating continuity strategies in real time.
- Empowered operational autonomy is when Leaders at different organizational levels make decisions consistent with strategic goals, reducing bottlenecks and increasing responsiveness.
- Resilience through adaptability is when The OODA loop ensures that organizations iterate and adapt their actions to evolving threats, strengthening both response and recovery capacity.

Agile management complements this approach by embedding iterative planning, cross-functional collaboration, and flexibility into crisis response. Agile practices — such as sprint planning, daily stand-ups, and retrospective reviews — align well with the PDCA cycle of BCM, creating a continuous improvement loop that enhances readiness and responsiveness.

Building Adaptive Resilience: Business Continuity as the Strategic Core

A robust organizational resilience program is fundamentally anchored in business continuity management (BCM) practices, and it ensures preparedness and adaptability in the face of uncertainty. According to ISO 22301, BCM constitutes a holistic management process that identifies potential threats and their impacts on business operations, and it provides a framework for building resilience and effective response (ISO, 2019). Put differently, BCM ensures that an organization can maintain essential operations during and after disruptive

incidents, and it transforms continuity from a static emergency plan into a continuous, organization-wide process embedded in corporate culture and strategy (Cerullo & Cerullo, 2004; Herbane, 2010). Importantly, BCM integrates planning with culture, and it functions proactively rather than reactively, thereby shifting continuity planning "from a costly insurance policy to a driving mechanism necessary for daily navigation through uncertainty" (Bird, 2018, p. 12).

Central to effective BCM is the principle of continuous improvement, and the ISO 22301 standard positions the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle as the backbone of a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) (ISO, 2019). The PDCA framework transforms BCM from a fixed set of instructions into a living system, and it ensures that continuity plans are iteratively tested, reviewed, and updated to remain relevant amid evolving risks and operational conditions (Herbane, 2010; Smith, 2020; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). Specifically, the Plan phase involves establishing continuity policies and objectives with top management commitment, conducting a Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and risk assessment to identify critical activities and potential threats, and determining recovery strategies such as Recovery Time Objective (RTO), Recovery Point Objective (RPO), and Minimum Business Continuity Objective (MBCO). Planning shapes preparedness, and it builds a framework for adaptive response, as Dwight D. Eisenhower famously observed: "Plans are worthless, but planning is everything" (Boyd, 1987).

The Do phase implements these strategies through detailed Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), crisis management protocols, IT disaster recovery procedures, and resource allocation, and it establishes clearly defined responsibilities for teams. The Check phase assesses plan effectiveness through training, tabletop exercises, simulations, audits, and management reviews, and it measures performance against organizational objectives. The Act phase addresses identified gaps, updates strategies accordingly, and integrates lessons learned, thereby maintaining adaptability and ensuring continuous improvement (ISO, 2019; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). A core component of planning, BIA systematically identifies critical functions and assesses the consequences of disruption, and it informs recovery objectives that set operational thresholds for resilience. Recovery objectives — including MTPD, RTO, RPO, and MBCO — define acceptable downtime and data loss, and they guide the selection of continuity strategies such as redundant systems, backup sites, alternative suppliers, and cross-trained personnel (Wallace & Webber, 2017; Smith, 2020; Armstrong & D'Agostino, 2018).

Moreover, mature organizations integrate BCM with Enterprise Risk Management (ERM), and they foster a unified resilience culture where risk assessments are translated into actionable continuity measures (Frigo & Anderson, 2011; Buzzao & Rizzi, 2023). This integration transforms resilience into an organization-wide competency, and it ensures that every employee understands their role in sustaining continuity. While recovery objectives define operational thresholds, adaptive leadership philosophies complement them by enabling organizations to respond dynamically to crises. Mission Command, rooted in military leadership, emphasizes decentralized execution, clarity of intent, and subordinate initiative, and it empowers teams to act decisively without waiting for rigid instructions (Shamir, 2011; U.S. Army, 2012). Corporate examples such as Amazon and Netflix demonstrate that empowering employees within broad strategic guidelines fosters innovation and agility (Denning, 2018).

Closely aligned with Mission Command is the OODA loop (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act), which enables iterative decision-making under uncertainty, and it embeds continuous feedback into operations (Boyd, 1987; Richards, 2004). Agile management complements these principles by promoting adaptability, cross-functional teamwork, and rapid iteration, and it

aligns with Mission Command and OODA by fostering decentralized execution and continuous learning (Rigby, Sutherland, & Takeuchi, 2016). The convergence of these frameworks creates a coherent logic for resilience, and it translates military doctrines into corporate decision-making practices that function effectively in crises (Jatautaitė et al., 2025).

Ultimately, a comprehensive resilience program integrates BCM recovery objectives, adaptive leadership philosophies, and iterative decision-making frameworks into a unified whole, and it embeds them in crisis communication and organizational learning processes. Effective communication sustains situational awareness, reinforces shared understanding, and preserves trust, while after-action reviews transform disruption into an opportunity for improvement (Coombs, 2015). Thus, resilience emerges not as a static state but as a continuously evolving capability, grounded in preparation, empowered by adaptive leadership, and sustained by iterative learning.

Crisis Communication and the STARCC Model

Having examined the core components of resilience—robust continuity planning (BCM/ERM + PDCA/BIA), adaptive leadership and decision frameworks (Mission Command, OODA, Agile), and effective crisis communication (STARCC)—it becomes evident that true organizational resilience emerges not from any single element but from the deliberate integration of all three. Each element addresses a distinct aspect of resilience: BCM provides structure, processes, and resources; adaptive leadership principles enable flexibility, empowerment, and rapid decision-making; and STARCC communication builds and sustains stakeholder trust during turbulence. Together, they form a cohesive model in which operational readiness, adaptive capacity, and transparent communication reinforce each other to sustain organizational performance in crisis (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Integrating the Approaches: A Synergistic Resilience Model (Developed based on Boyd, 1987; ISO, 2019; Herbane, 2010).

Preparedness depends on comprehensive BCM planning and training, which establish structured processes for crisis readiness, and it is enhanced by Mission Command leadership, which empowers teams to act decisively under uncertainty. This preparedness also includes developing communication protocols and STARCC message templates so that when a crisis occurs, the organization is both operationally equipped and communicatively prepared to respond effectively.

Response builds on these preparations by combining structured planning with adaptability. While pre-established structures ensure coordination, empowered teams must have the authority to make rapid decisions guided by OODA loops, and communication must be

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continuous and guided by STARCC principles. This combination creates a response that is both coherent and agile, enabling the organization to adapt to evolving circumstances while addressing stakeholder concerns.

Recovery focuses on restoring critical services as identified through Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and on rebuilding stakeholder confidence. Recovery is accelerated by prior investments in redundancy and by Agile problem-solving, and it requires transparent communication to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. Recovery is therefore not merely a return to normalcy but an opportunity to strengthen systems and processes so the organization emerges stronger from the crisis.

Learning completes the cycle of resilience. Post-incident reviews, including after-action reports, feed back into PDCA cycles, capturing technical lessons and process improvements. This continuous learning fosters dynamic capabilities that enhance the organization's ability to absorb shocks and adapt to future disruptions (Figure 2).

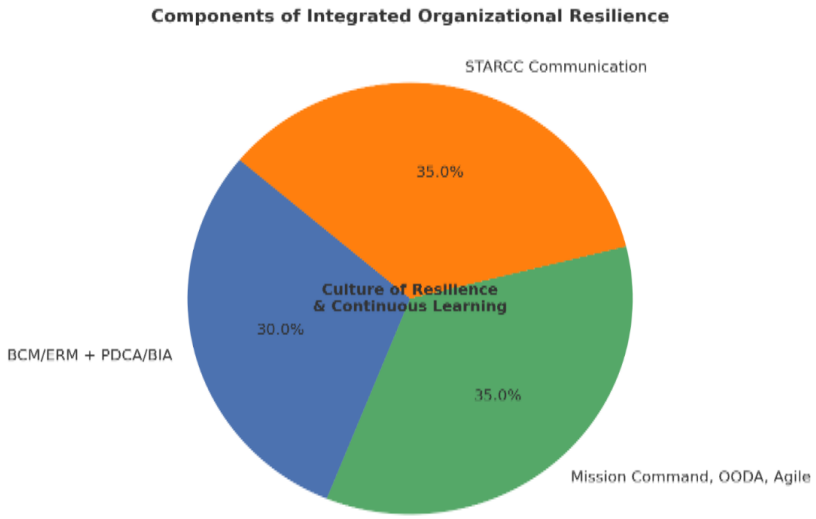

Figure 2. Components of Integrated Organizational Resilience (Developed based on Frigo & Anderson, 2011; Buzzao & Rizzi, 2023).

In today's increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world—often compounded by brittleness, anxiety, nonlinearity, and incomprehensibility (BANI)—resilience must extend beyond structural preparedness to emphasize both absorptive and adaptive capacities. Military-inspired methods, such as empowered local decision-making and situational awareness, strengthen organizational agility and enable frontline teams to act effectively in unpredictable conditions. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations established cross-disciplinary crisis teams empowered to exercise OODA loops at the organizational level, thereby accelerating decision-making and response.

All in all, resilience is not a static capability but a dynamic system that thrives on integration. The combination of robust continuity planning (BCM/ERM + PDCA/BIA), adaptive leadership frameworks (Mission Command, OODA, Agile), and structured crisis communication (STARCC) creates a synergistic model in which each element strengthens the others (Figure 3).

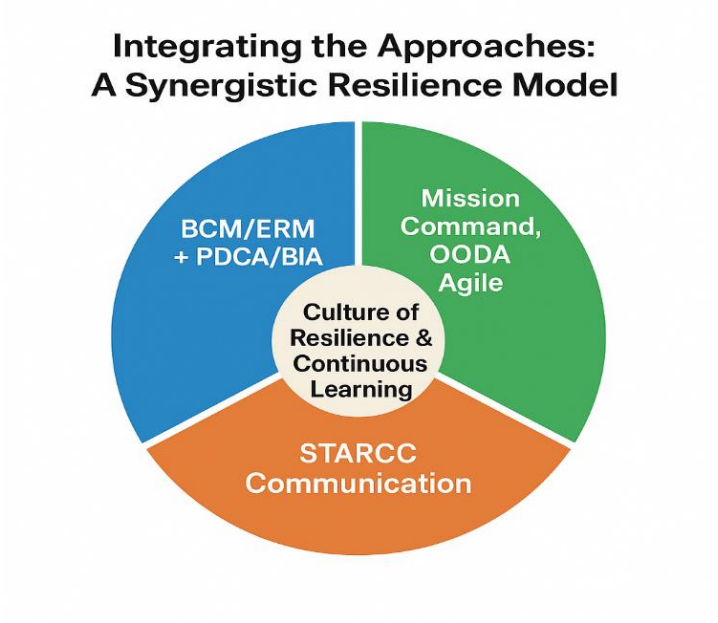

Figure 3. A Synergistic Resilience Model Integrating BCM, Leadership Frameworks, and Communication (Developed based on Boyd, 1987; U.S. Army, 2012).

Preparedness provides the foundation, adaptive leadership enables flexibility and rapid decision-making, and STARCC ensures clarity, empathy, and trust in stakeholder relationships. Together, they form a holistic resilience framework that allows organizations to withstand disruption, adapt under pressure, and emerge stronger.

Therefore, Figure 4 presents an Integrated Organizational Resilience Framework that brings together four critical domains of resilience into a central culture of resilience and continuous learning. The framework emphasizes how Business Continuity Management/Enterprise Risk Management (BCM/ERM) combined with the Plan–Do–Check–Act/Business Impact Analysis (PDCA/BIA) provides a structured process for risk identification, continuity planning, and systematic improvement. On the leadership side, Mission Command, the OODA (Observe–Orient–Decide–Act) loop, and Agile methodologies contribute adaptability, decentralized decision-making, and rapid response to uncertainty. In parallel, STARCC communication principles (Simple, Timely, Accurate, Relevant, Credible, and Consistent) highlight the role of effective information sharing during crises. Finally, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery mechanisms ensure that organizations not only anticipate disruptions but also effectively manage them and recover sustainably.

At the center of the model lies a Culture of Resilience and Continuous Learning, symbolizing that resilience is not simply a process or set of tools, but an embedded organizational mindset. The arrows indicate that all four components—management systems, adaptive leadership, communication strategies, and preparedness practices—interact dynamically and reinforce each other in shaping long-term organizational resilience (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Integrated Organizational Resilience Framework (Developed from ISO, 2019; Herbane, 2010; U.S. Army, 2012; Boyd, 1987; Rigby et al., 2016; Coombs, 2015; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; FEMA, 2011; Alexander, 2013).

Ultimately, resilience depends not only on the technical capacity to respond but also on the ability to communicate transparently and lead decisively—ensuring that, even in the face of uncertainty, organizations can sustain trust and emerge stronger.

Conclusion

Organizational resilience in contemporary business environments requires an integrated, capability-based approach rather than reliance on static continuity plans. This study demonstrates that combining structured Business Continuity Management (BCM) with adaptive leadership, Agile practices, and strategic crisis communication creates a more robust and dynamic foundation for navigating disruption. BCM provides the essential structural backbone through systematic planning, Business Impact Analysis (BIA), recovery objectives, and PDCA-driven continuous improvement (ISO, 2019; Buzzao & Rizzi, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on leadership models that enable rapid sense-making and decentralized action under conditions of uncertainty.

Military-inspired leadership principles—particularly Mission Command and the OODA loop—enhance organizational agility by empowering teams to act within clear strategic intent while responding flexibly to evolving circumstances (Boyd, 1987; U.S. Army, 2012; Jatautaitė, Radvilė, & Terminas, 2025). When combined with Agile management practices, these models strengthen responsiveness, iterative learning, and cross-functional coordination, enabling organizations to translate continuity strategies into effective operational responses during crises (Rigby, Sutherland, & Takeuchi, 2016; Highsmith, 2013).

A central contribution of this research lies in highlighting the interdependence of the "hard" and "soft" dimensions of resilience. Formal systems, technologies, and procedures must be reinforced by adaptive leadership, empowered teams, and a culture of learning in order to function effectively under stress (Duchek, 2020). The proposed integrated framework bridges strategic intent and operational execution, positioning resilience as a continuous cycle of anticipation, response, recovery, and learning rather than a one-time preparedness exercise.

Crisis communication emerges as a critical enabler of resilience and organizational legitimacy. Structured communication frameworks, such as the STARCC model, support

transparency, empathy, and credibility, thereby maintaining stakeholder trust during disruptive events (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Coombs, 2007). Operational recovery without effective communication risks reputational damage, whereas timely and consistent messaging strengthens organizational credibility and long-term resilience outcomes.

Overall, the findings align with contemporary resilience scholarship that conceptualizes resilience as an adaptive organizational capability grounded in learning, leadership, and strategic integration (Duchek, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021). By integrating BCM standards, military leadership philosophies, Agile practices, and crisis communication, organizations can move beyond defensive risk management toward proactive and strategic resilience.

For practitioners, the implications are clear: resilience should be institutionalized as an enterprise-wide capability supported by empowered leadership, iterative learning mechanisms, and integrated communication strategies. Organizations that adopt this holistic approach are better positioned not only to withstand disruption but to leverage crises as opportunities for renewal, innovation, and sustainable competitive advantage. In an era characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, resilience becomes not merely a protective mechanism but a strategic enabler of long-term organizational success.

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