

## Navigating Uncertainty: A Framework-Based Review of Organizational Resilience and Sustainability

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to consider the evolution of OR-sustainability relationship, taking into account the theoretical fragmentation and lack of empirical integration found in the current literature. The methodology consists of two components – bibliometric analysis of 216 works indexed in Scopus and systematic review of 77 scholarly articles on the subject. In order to conduct theoretical synthesis, the Theory–Context–Method model is employed, while ADO framework is used to analyze causality links between organizational capabilities and sustainable performance. The results suggest that the interest towards the topic is increasing, reaching its peak in 2025 and also implies the change from reactive crisis management to adaptive processes that are based on technology use. Furthermore, Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capability theory and Stakeholder theory are revealed to be major theoretical roots of the field. Finally, the findings demonstrate that capability-driven antecedents, leadership, organization context and environment determine strategic decision making, which positively impacts the sustainability results. Although the focus is narrowed only to English-language papers published in Scopus databases, this study offers an integral view of OR-sustainability connection and adds unique value through utilization of TCM and ADO models.

**Keywords:** Dynamic capabilities; Framework-based systematic literature review; Organizational resilience; Strategic decision-making; Sustainability integration; Thematic evolution.

### 1. Introduction

Organizational resilience (OR) has emerged as an essential capability for organizations to navigate increasingly turbulent environments marked by disruptions in the climate, geopolitics, technologies and public health. In general, resilience refers to an organization's capacity to anticipate and prevent disruptions, cope with and manage disruptions and respond to changing conditions and disruptions in ways that enable quick recovery and continuity of essential operations and strategic renewal. (Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Organizational resilience is the capacity of an organization to resist disruptions, adjust to changing circumstances and survive and thrive in times of crises while continuing to perform effectively. Various authors have defined organizational resilience as a multi-dimensional construct that helps organizations cope with uncertainty and perform well even in adverse circumstances. Chen and colleagues (2021) identified five critical facets of organizational resilience: capital resilience, strategic, cultural, relationship resilience and learning resilience; these dimensions collectively empower organizations to overcome crises and maintain stability. Organizational resilience functions not merely as a crisis management tool, but also as an ongoing process through which organizations anticipate challenges,

manage disruptions and adapt to evolving environmental conditions (Tennakoon & Janadari, 2021). Furthermore, in the contemporary VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) landscape, organizational resilience not only facilitates crisis survival but also fortifies organizations, enhancing their capacity to withstand future uncertainties (You & Gao, 2023).

Academics also emphasize the adaptive character of resilience. According to Pacheco-Mangas et al. (2020), resilience is known as the capacity of an organization to modify its behavior in reaction to disturbances, changes or unexpected events which enables the organization to adapt to the changing demands of the environment. Likewise, resilient organizations possess the capability to survive, adapt and develop during turbulent times through the use of cognitive, behavioral and relational capabilities (You, 2023). In the wake of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, organizational resilience has been associated with an organization's ability to sustain its functions while simultaneously deploying the requisite resources and competencies to adjust and glean insights from disturbances (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2022). Furthermore, studies spanning various sectors demonstrate that resilience facilitates operational continuity during emergencies, thereby underscoring the significance of preparedness and workforce attributes in fortifying resilience (Organizational Resilience Among Health Organizations in Israel, 2023).

Other researchers highlight that resilience involves the ability to "foresee potential threats, respond effectively to unexpected events and learn from past experiences, which helps organizations navigate crises and achieve lasting growth" (Akbari et al., 2022).

This perspective aligns with broader conceptualizations of resilience, which emphasize the capacity to foresee, ready oneself for, react to and rebound from detrimental occurrences. This capacity is bolstered by effective decision-making processes, robust risk management strategies and the availability of psychological resources within the organizational context (Organizational Resilience: 30 Years of Intellectual Structure and Future Perspectives, 2022).

In addition, resilient organizations have the capacity to "absorb shock, adapt to disruption and change their operations, when necessary, to ensure long-term survival and renewal" (Wut et al., 2022). By leveraging challenges as learning experiences, organizational resilience can also be a source of competitive advantage, improving adaptability and organizational performance (Guillén Mondragón et al., 2022). In the private and public sectors, resilience is a key factor that enables organizations to continue providing their services in the face of unexpected environmental changes (Gečienė & Raišienė, 2019).

Concurrently, sustainability has emerged as an essential attribute of organizations in recent times reflecting the interdependencies between economic, environmental and social well-being. (Elkington, 1997; United Nations, 2015). While the two constructs have been seen as separate and distinct in some literature with one focus on continuity in the face of disruptions and the other on long term impact and sustainability, recent literature points to an interdependent and interconnected understanding of the two constructs. (Hahn et al., 2015; Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016).

However, the link between organizational resilience and sustainability is complex and multi-dimensional and at times contested. For example, organizational resilience is seen to contribute to organizational sustainability by helping the organization cope with disruptions which impact organizational environmental and social performance and hence protect organizational long term investments in environmentally and socially responsible practices and promote organizational learning (Bhamra et al., 2011; Duchek, 2020). However, organizational sustainability focused strategies such as circular resource management, ethical supply chain management and stakeholder engagement contribute to organizational resilience by limiting organizational vulnerability to resource scarcity, organizational reputation management and regulatory uncertainty (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). However, at other times, organizational resilience and organizational sustainability may be at loggerheads with each other with organizational resilience strategies such as redundancy and quick recovery strategies potentially limiting organizational sustainability through increased resource utilization and negative stakeholder engagement (Hahn et al., 2015). This calls for a managerial choice rather than an automatic link between organizational resilience and organizational sustainability.

Within this framework, research has increasingly pointed towards the development of frameworks that can effectively explain the ways through which organizations can build resilience and achieve sustainability, especially under conditions of uncertainty and interdependence, particularly in the supply chain, community and ecosystem contexts (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). At the same time, however the existing gaps and limitations of the research and theoretical frameworks regarding the capabilities, approaches and leadership styles through which organizations can effectively operationalize the dual agenda of building resilience and achieving sustainability remain unaddressed. In this regard, the current article seeks to explore the concepts of organizational resilience and sustainability, particularly through the lens of the ways through which organizations can build resilience and achieve sustainability, especially through the development of strategies and capabilities that can effectively support adaptive capacity while ensuring the achievement of sustainable outcomes, by synthesizing the key findings of the existing research regarding the concepts of resilience and sustainability, so that a better understanding of the ways through which organizations can effectively respond to disruptions and environmental uncertainties, while remaining committed to sustainable approaches, can be obtained.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Organizational resilience***

Organizational resilience refers to the capacity of an organization to foresee potential shocks, withstand their impact, adjust to changing conditions and recover effectively while maintaining core operations and enabling renewal (Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Recent literature positions resilience as a dynamic, capability-based process rather than a fixed trait, built through routines such as sensemaking, rapid coordination, learning and reconfiguration. This view also emphasizes that resilience is enabled by internal resources and practices including flexible structures, empowered employees and strategic human resource management that supports agility under uncertainty (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

### ***2.2 Sustainability***

Sustainability literature indicates that organizations have the responsibility of earning their profits, protecting the environment and contributing positively to society. This concept can be explained by the concept of the triple bottom line. (Elkington, 1997) This concept has been reinforced by international policy frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals. (United Nations, 2015) Literature indicates that sustainability is implemented through good governance structures, involvement of stakeholders, innovation and performance management systems. However, it comes with some tensions, particularly between environmental and social responsibilities and profit. (Hahn et al., 2015).

### ***2.3 Linking resilience and sustainability***

However, the recent literature increasingly supports the idea that there is a mutual reinforcement effect between the two. Sustainability focused strategies may enhance organizational resilience by lowering the probability of regulatory, reputational and resource risks while organizational resilience capabilities may enable the sustenance of environmental and social pressures during organizational crises (Bhamra et al., 2011; Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). Nevertheless, the recent literature also indicates the possibility of trade-offs where organizational resilience strategies may focus on quick recovery or redundancy strategies at the expense of increased resource usage and the shifting of burdens to other organizational stakeholders (Hahn et al., 2015), which may be detrimental to organizational sustainability. RQ1: What are the publication trends, intellectual foundations and thematic clusters of the research on organizational resilience and sustainability? RQ2: What are the theories, research contexts and methodological approaches that are predominantly used in the development of organizational resilience and sustainability research? RQ3: What are the antecedents, strategies and outcomes that account for organizational responses to the integration of organizational resilience and sustainability for gaining a competitive advantage?

### **3. Methodology**

The research adopted a two-phase approach, including bibliometric analysis and a systematic literature review (SLR) to explore the intellectual structure and empirical development of research on organizational resilience and sustainability. The review was conducted following the PRISMA guidelines, as illustrated in Figure 1 Figure 1 PRISMA Framework, to ensure transparency and replicability.

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

The Scopus database was chosen because of its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed research in business and management. The search string “organizational resilience” AND “sustainability” yielded 1,631 documents. After restricting the publication period to 2021–2026, 1,385 records remained. Limiting the subject area to Business and Management reduced the dataset to 594 documents. Applying the open-access filter resulted in 216 publications, which were used for bibliometric analysis. For the systematic review, further screening was conducted by restricting the document type to journal articles (181), refining keywords (83) and limiting to English-language publications. This process resulted in 77 articles included for in-depth qualitative synthesis.

In order to make the review transparent and reproducible, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were used. The inclusion criteria consisted of: (i) peer-reviewed articles, (ii) research on organizational resilience and sustainability simultaneously, (iii) articles written in English and (iv) research from the field of business and management.

The exclusion criteria consisted of: (i) studies examining only one of these concepts, (ii) research in the form of papers delivered at conferences, book chapters and editorials, (iii) articles not written in English and (iv) studies without any theoretical or empirical contribution.

Two stages of selection were conducted using the following methods: title and abstract screening and full-text screening.

#### **3.2 Bibliometric Analysis**

Bibliometric analysis was carried out using Biblioshiny (Bibliometrix R-package) and VOSviewer. Biblioshiny was utilized to carry out the descriptive analysis, citation analysis, thematic mapping and thematic evolution. On the other hand, VOSviewer was utilized to establish co-authorship network, co-citation network and keyword co-occurrence network. By employing these tools together, robust science mapping was achieved and the dominant research clusters were identified.

#### **3.3 Systematic Review Framework**

The final 77 studies were analyzed using the TCM (Theory-Context-Method) framework to identify the dominant theories, research contexts and methodological approaches. Furthermore, the ADO (Antecedents-Decisions-Outcomes) framework was utilized to synthesize the empirical findings and identify the causal links between the resilience building mechanisms and sustainability outcomes. This methodological framework provides a strong tool for systematically combining the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the research area.

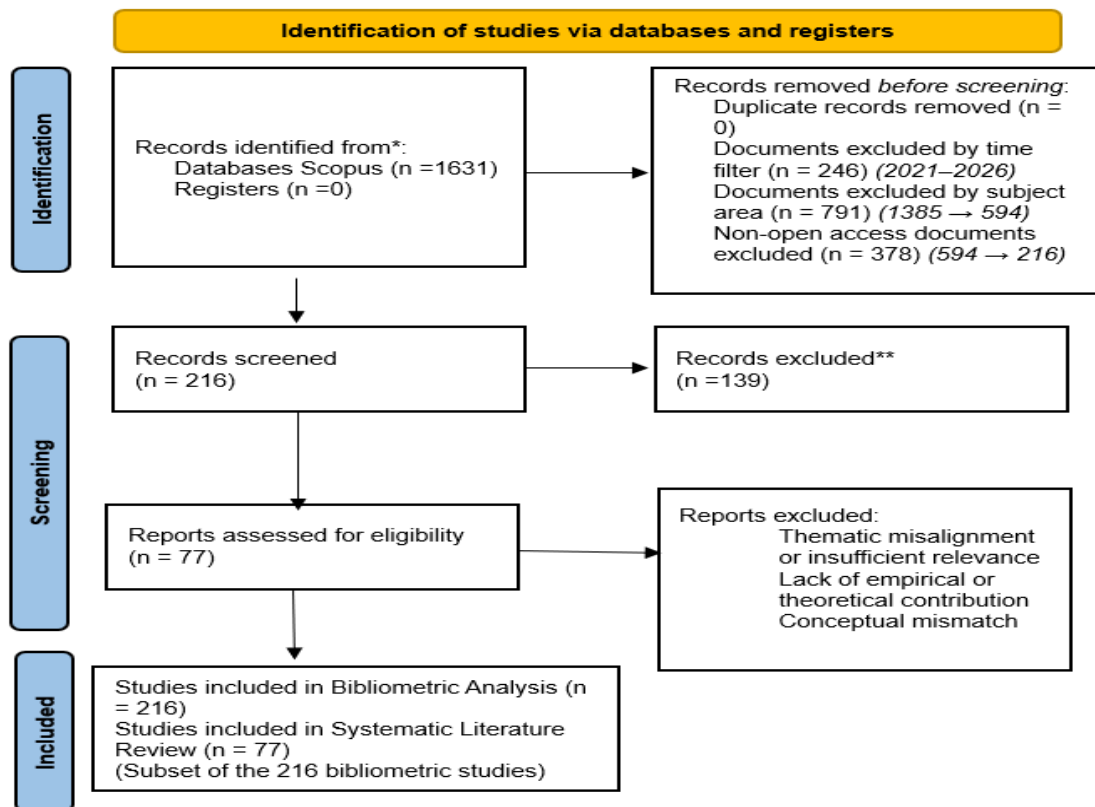


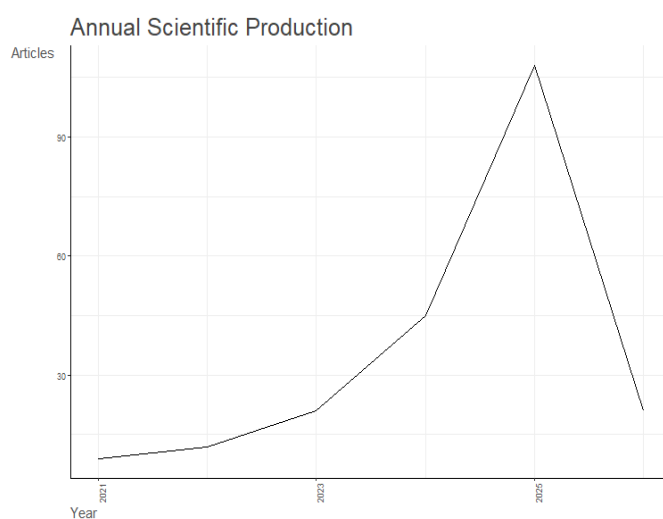
Figure 1 PRISMA Framework

4. Analysis and interpretation

4.1 Annual Scientific Production

Table 1 ARTICLES PRODUCED PER YEAR

Source: Author Computed



Year	Articles
2021	9
2022	12
2023	21
2024	45
2025	108
2026	21

Figure 2 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC PRODUCTION

Source: Author Computed

As illustrated in Figure 2, the annual scientific production shows a clear upward trend. Starting from 2021, it is evident that the number of publications is consistently increasing. A moderate increase is observed between 2021 and 2023. The increase is more prominent in 2024 and it is evident that the topic is gaining more and more attention in the academic community. Table 1 distribution of articles included in the study. The peak is observed in 2025, as it is the year with the highest number of published articles This is an indication that the topic has gained momentum and is widely discussed in the academic community. The decline observed in the latest year is probably due to the lack of data for the current year. This suggests a growing scholarly interest particularly between 2023 and 2025, although this trend should be interpreted cautiously given the limited time frame and dataset constraints.

4.2 Three Field Plot

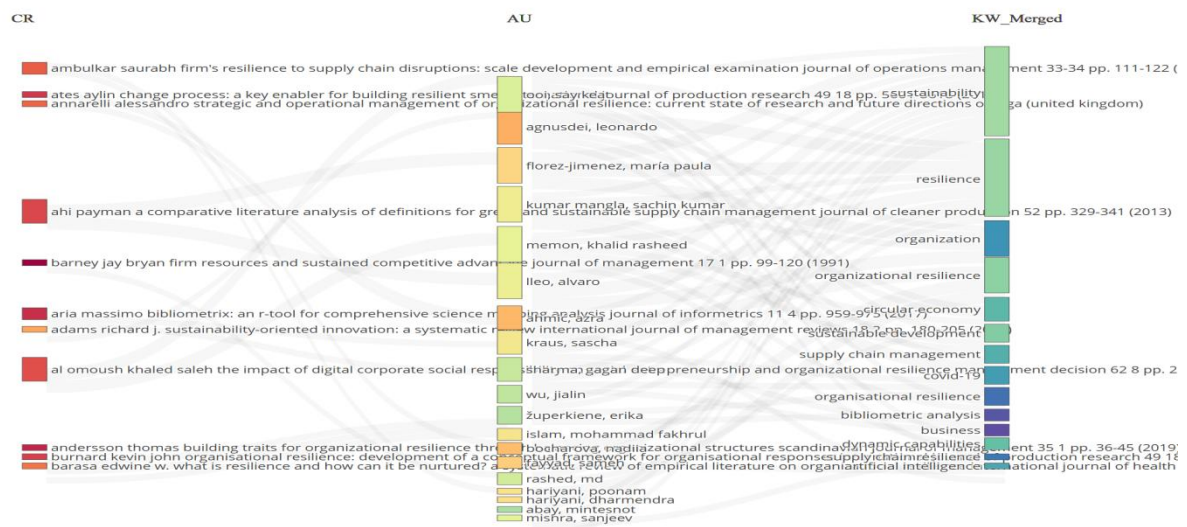


Figure 3 THREE FIELD PLOT

Source: Author Computed

Figure 3 presents the relationships among cited references, authors and keywords in the domain of resilience and organizational studies. On the left side, the "Cited References" (CR) field identifies the intellectual foundations that have impacted the development of the intellectual structure of the domain. Studies such as Barney (1991) on the resource-based view, Ahi and Searcy (2013) on sustainable supply chain management, Ambulkar et al. on the development of the supply chain resilience scale and Annarelli and colleagues on organizational resilience literature reviews form the theoretical foundations of the body of literature. This shows that the body of literature on the study of resilience has been heavily embedded with strategic management and sustainability theories.

The middle field labeled "Authors" (AU) points to prominent scholars who have greatly contributed to the advancement of resilience research. Notable authors including Sachin Kumar Mangla, Sascha Kraus, Khalid Rashed, Oliver Lleo and many others are the intellectual links between the classical theoretical foundations and modern-day practical applications of resilience research. Their works demonstrate a strong integration of resilience theory, supply chain management, sustainability and other related disciplines. Moving to the right the "Keywords" (KW) field presents the significant thematic focus of resilience research. Major keywords in the field of resilience research include "Resilience," "Organizational Resilience," "Supply Chain Management," "Sustainable Development," "Circular Economy," "Dynamic Capabilities" and "COVID-19." These prominent keywords suggest a shift in resilience research from a mere conceptual idea to a multidisciplinary area of study, particularly strengthened by the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide. In conclusion, this reveals a strong theoretical base in the resource based and dynamic capability perspectives complemented by modern day practical applications in sustainability and supply chain management. Strong interlinks between the foundational

references, prominent authors and prominent keywords in the field of resilience research underscore a highly developed and rapidly expanding field of study.

4.3 Most Relevant Sources

Table 2 ARTICLES PRODUCED BY SOURCES

Source: Author Computed

Sources	Articles
Business Strategy And The Environment	12
Administrative Sciences	11
Sustainable Futures	9
Cogent Business And Management	8
Corporate Social Responsibility And Environmental Management	6
Problems And Perspectives In Management	6
Business Ethics And Leadership	5
Revista Venezolana De Gerencia	5
Global Journal Of Flexible Systems Management	4
Frontiers In Sports And Active Living	3

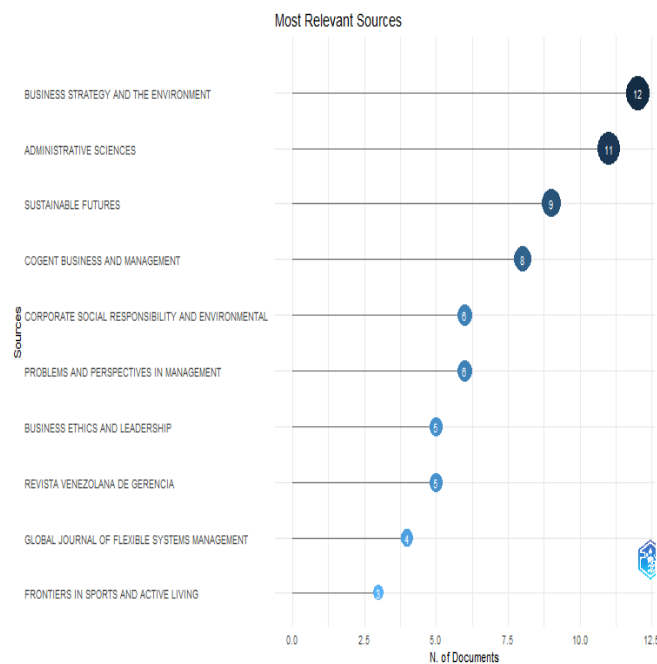


Figure 4 MOST RELEVANT SOURCES

Source: Author Computed

Figure 4 and Table 2 present the most relevant sources contributing to the research domain. The results show that *Business Strategy and the Environment* is the most impactful journal, with 12 published articles, followed by *Administrative Sciences* with 11 articles. The journal *Sustainability (Switzerland)* is the third most impactful journal having published 9 articles. The *Journal of Cleaner Production* has published 8 articles which is consistent with the strong focus on sustainability and the environment evident in the research domain. Other impactful journals include *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management and Problems and Perspectives in Management* which have published 6 articles each. These journals are also contributing to the research domain with their strong focus on the topics of resilience, sustainability and strategic management. Other journals, such as *Business Ethics and Leadership and Review of Managerial Science* highlight the ethical and managerial focus of the research domain. Journals such as the *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management* and *Frontiers in Organizational Psychology* highlight the systems and behavioral approaches.

4.4 Source Production Over Time

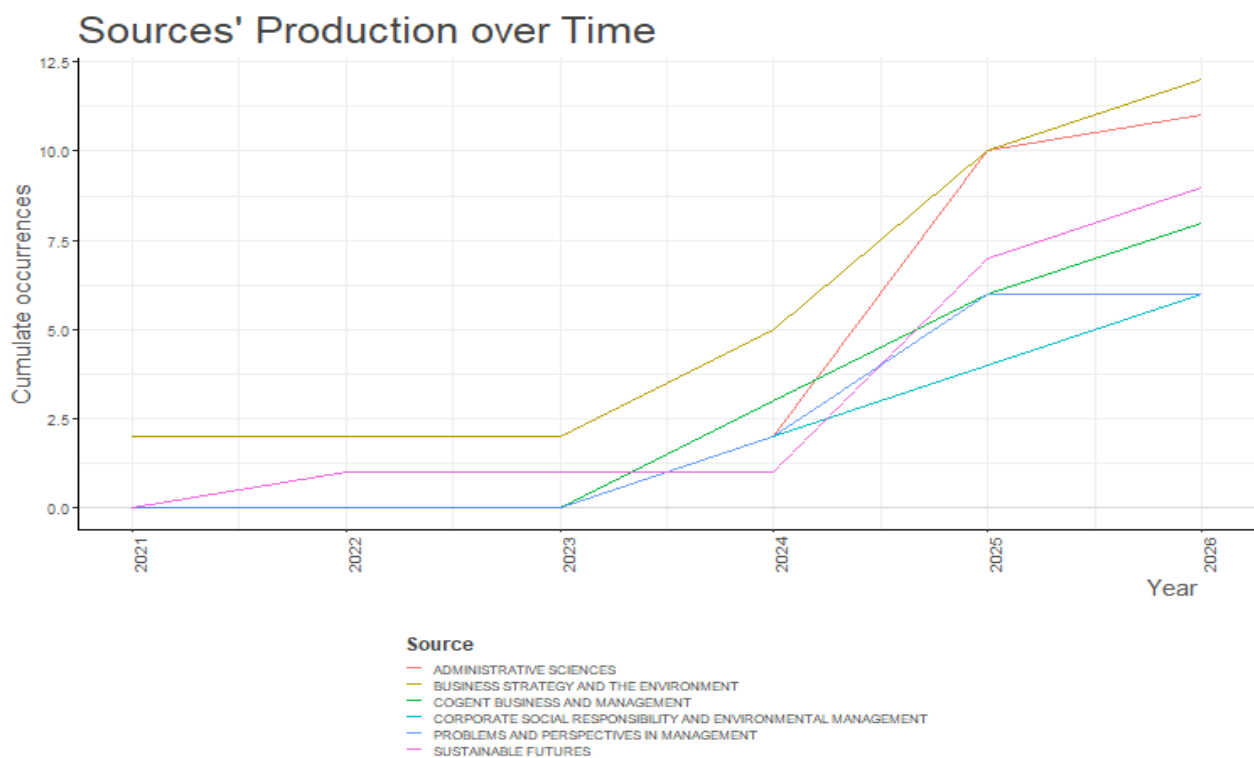


Figure 5 SOURCE PRODUCTION OVER TIME

Source: Author Computed

Figure 5 illustrates a steady upward trend in research output, indicating growing scholarly interest in the field. From the year 2021 up to 2023, the output has been rising slowly though it picks up quite rapidly from the year 2024 especially for journals such as *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *Administrative Sciences* and *Sustainability (Switzerland)*. This shows that the focus of the scholarly community has been rising with regard to the concept of resilience and the development of sustainability oriented management. This shows that the rising output for the publications has been rising indicating that the research has been consolidating as a rising area with regard to strategic and organizational studies emphasizing the need for interdisciplinary integration and the development of broader scholarly collaborations.



Figure 6 WORD CLOUD

Source: Author Computed

As illustrated in Figure 6, sustainability is the most dominant keyword in the research domain, followed by resilience and organizational resilience. This suggests that the literature has fully integrated long term sustainability goals with organizational resilience or flexibility and survival capabilities. The dominance of certain keywords such as sustainable development, digital transformation, supply chain management and circular economy suggests that the field is not only conceptual in nature but is applied as well. The presence of dynamic capabilities, innovation, artificial intelligence and COVID-19 suggests that the research is theoretically sound and applicable to the current scenario as a result of various disruptions faced by the world as a result of digital revolution or advancements. Overall, the visualization suggests that the domain is becoming more interdisciplinary in nature as it integrates sustainability, strategic management and digital transformation theories to study organizational resilience for sustainable competitive advantage.

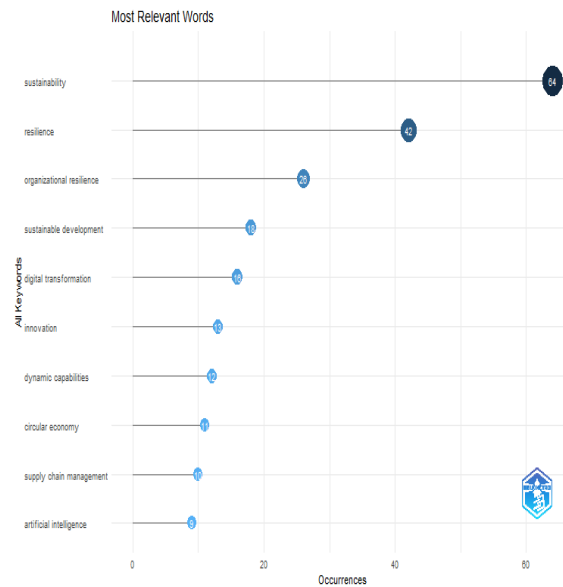
4.6 Most Relevant Words

Table 3 WORDS – OCCURRENCES

Source: Author Computed

Words	Occurrences
Sustainability	64
Resilience	42
Organizational resilience	26
Sustainable development	18
Digital transformation	16
Innovation	13
Dynamic capabilities	12

Circular economy	11
Supply chain management	10
Artificial intelligence	9



**Figure 7 MOST RELEVANT WORDS**

*Source: Author Computed*

Figure 7 shows that the keyword “sustainability” dominates the frequency list with 84 occurrences, thus confirming its central role in the research domain. It is followed by the keyword “resilience” with 42 occurrences which together with the keyword “organizational resilience” with 28 occurrences underlines the strong conceptual integration between the notions of sustainability and resilience. Other prominent keywords such as “sustainable development” with 18 occurrences, “digital transformation” with 16 occurrences and “innovation” with 13 occurrences suggest that the relevant literature increasingly associates the goals of sustainability with the advancement of technological capabilities. The presence of the keyword “dynamic capabilities” with 12 occurrences underlines the theoretical anchoring of the field to the relevant perspectives of the capabilities approach. As shown in Table 3 , other prominent keywords such as “circular economy” (11 occurrences) and “supply chain management” (10 occurrences) reflect the operational applications of these concepts. Emerging keywords such as “artificial intelligence” with 9 occurrences underlie the growing influence of the relevant technological advancements in enhancing the resilience of the organization.

**4.7 Trend Topics**

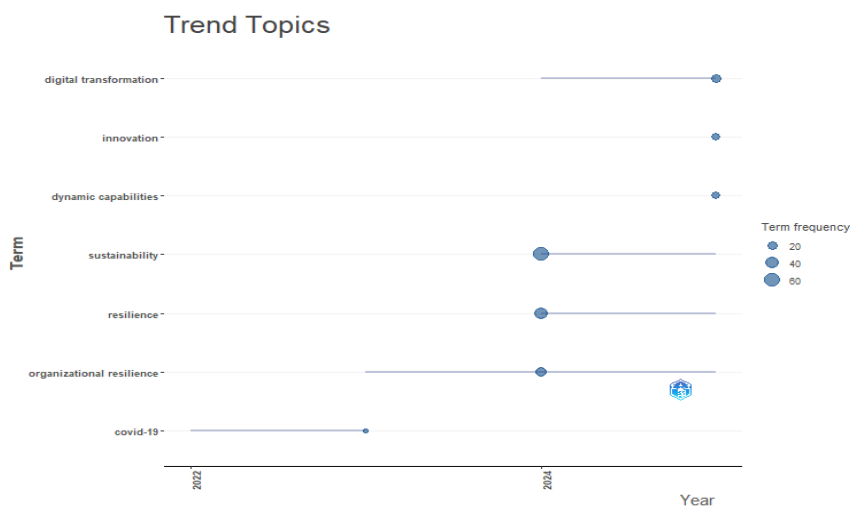


Figure 8 TREND TOPICS

Source: Author Computed

As presented in Figure 8, the trend topics analysis shows how research topics have evolved over time within the dataset. The visualization indicates that sustainability and resilience are the dominant topics of research which have continued to gain momentum over the years especially towards 2024 as indicated by the increased bubble sizes and the longer time period on the axis. Additionally, organizational resilience is indicated as a topic of research that has continued to gain momentum over the years implying that it is a topic of research that has continued to gain momentum over the years.

COVID-19 is indicated as a topic of research that was introduced towards 2022 implying that it was a topic of research that was introduced as a result of the pandemic but later declined as a topic of research on its own as shown in Table 4. More recent themes, such as digital transformation, innovation and dynamic capabilities, show increased salience in the latest period and is supported by the increasing frequency of keywords such as digital transformation (16 occurrences) and artificial intelligence (9 occurrences), indicating a growing emphasis on technology-enabled resilience. Overall, the results of the trend analysis suggest that the field has moved from crisis-centered research towards more digitally focused and capability-centered approaches, which supports the idea that the field is developing towards the incorporation of the sustainability, resilience and digital transformation paradigms for organizational competitiveness.

Table 4 Temporal Distribution of Key Research Topics (2021–2026)

Source: Author Computed

Term	Frequency	Year (Q1)	Year (Median)	Year (Q3)
covid-19	8	2022	2023	2023
sustainability	64	2024	2024	2025
resilience	42	2024	2024	2025
organizational resilience	26	2023	2024	2025
digital transformation	16	2024	2025	2025
innovation	13	2025	2025	2025
dynamic capabilities	12	2025	2025	2025

4.8 Treemap



Figure 9 TREEMAP

Source: Author Computed

Figure 9 presents the treemap chart, illustrating the hierarchical distribution of keywords based on their frequency within the research field. It is evident that the theme of sustainability dominates the entire field with 64 instances or 16% of the total dataset followed by the theme of resilience which indicates 42 instances or 10% of the total dataset thus affirming the inherent integration of sustainability and adaptive capacity. The themes of organizational resilience and sustainable development indicate 26 instances or 6% and 18 instances or 4% respectively thus affirming the strategic and developmental focus of the research domain. The newly emerging yet significant themes indicate a focus on the newly emerging areas of digital transformation with 16 instances, the theme of innovation with 13 instances, the theme of dynamic capabilities with 12 instances and the theme of circular economy with 11 instances, thus affirming the newly emerging focus on technological advancements and capability based theories for ensuring sustainability. Operational and contextual themes such as supply chain management, artificial intelligence, leadership, Industry 5.0 and COVID-19 emerge with a moderate level of recurrence, thus affirming the growing shift towards a more interdisciplinary research orientation. Overall, the treemap demonstrates that the field is strongly anchored in sustainability–resilience integration while progressively incorporating digitalization, strategic capabilities and technological innovation signalling a maturing and multidimensional research landscape.

4.9 Keyword Co-occurrence

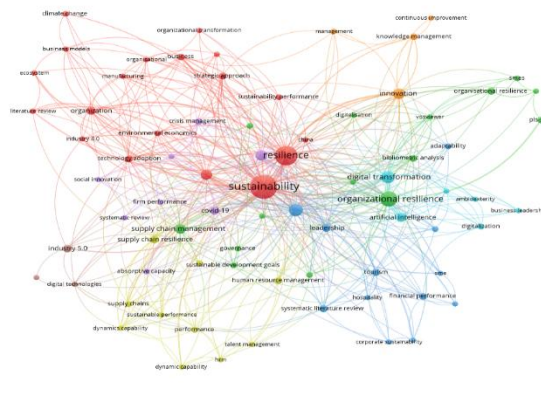


Figure 10 . KEYWORD COOCCURRENCES

Source: Author Computed- VOSviewer

Figure 10 illustrates the co-occurrence network, presenting the relationships among key research themes identified in the dataset. The nodes represent the keywords with the node sizes reflecting the keyword frequency. The strength of the relationship is represented by the co-occurrence links. The visualization shows that the positions of sustainability and resilience are the most central and dominant positions in the network map which forms the intellectual core of the research.

Clearly, some thematic clusters can be easily identified. One of the main thematic clusters is the one that ties together the notions of sustainability and climate change, business model, strategic approach, environmental economics and organizational transformation. The second main thematic cluster is the one that ties together organizational resilience, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, organizational leadership and organizational adaptability. The third main thematic cluster is the one that ties together supply chain management, supply chain resilience and sustainable performance. Furthermore, some thematic areas such as dynamic capabilities, human resource management and governance can be considered as "bridges" between different thematic clusters.

On the other hand, the high interconnectedness and overlapping clusters reveal that this is a very interdisciplinary and mature research domain. The structure of this network reveals that the research domain of sustainability and resilience has moved from isolated themes to an integrated approach that encompasses strategic management, digital transformation, supply chain systems and organizational capabilities for sustainable performance.

#### 4.10 Network Analysis of Countries

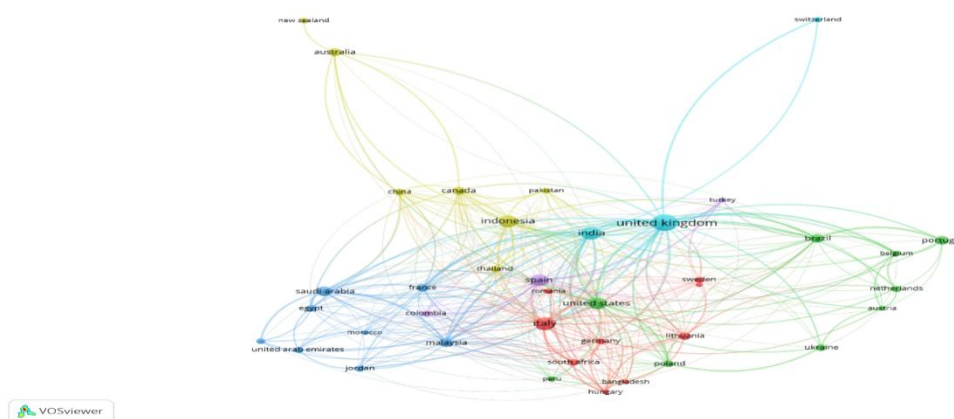


Figure 11 BIBLIOGRAPHIC COUPLING OF COUNTRIES

Source: Author Computed- VOSviewer

Figure 11 presents the country collaboration network, showing the global structure of research collaboration in the field. The size of the nodes is proportional to the amount of publications, while the connections between them represent the level of international co-authorship collaboration. The United Kingdom appears as one of the main and powerful nodes in the structure, having high collaboration with other countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas. The same applies to the United States and Italy, which have high connectivity and are powerful pillars in the worldwide research collaboration structure.

The emerging economies of India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brazil show high collaboration links too signifying the geographical diversification of this field. The European countries of Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Poland and Sweden show high connectivity within this structure, signifying high intra-regional collaboration. Meanwhile, the countries from the Middle East and Africa such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and South Africa, contribute to this collaboration structure too.

Overall, the level of interconnection between the developed and developing countries suggests a highly interlinked research domain and the presence of multiple regional clusters connected to each other through central hubs,

including the UK and the USA, suggests a highly integrated global knowledge network, thereby indicating that sustainability and resilience research is beyond geographical boundaries and has strong academic collaborations between countries.

4.11 Keywords Across 2021–2026



Figure 12 KEYWORDS – WORDCLOUD

Source: Author Computed

Figure 12 presents the overall keyword trend from 2021 to 2026, revealing thematic consistency with gradual conceptual development rather than a drastic shift in research direction. Throughout the years, the dominant presence of the words “resilience,” “sustainability,” and “organizational resilience” in the word cloud suggests an overarching research focus centered on the theme of organizational long-term adaptability, sustainable development and organizational survival in an ever-changing environment.

Firstly, the consistency of the concept of sustainability and the concept of resilience across all years indicates that the literature is increasingly acknowledging and addressing resilience as a part of sustainable organizational systems. This is a holistic research paradigm wherein all aspects such as environmental, social and operational are interconnected.

Secondly, the trend of the years indicates a paradigm shift from a conceptual to a more applied and capability based understanding of the concept of resilience. For example, the early years of the literature (2021-2022) place more emphasis on words such as systems thinking, organizational design and structural resilience. On the other hand, the later years of the literature (2023-2026) place more emphasis on words such as absorptive capacity, dynamic capabilities, innovation, digital transformation, collaborative networks and organizational change.

Thirdly the appearance of context-specific words like "COVID-19," "supply chain," "circular economy" and "climate change" in the literature indicates that resilience research has become increasingly sensitive to issues of global disruptions and sustainability. This indicates that recent studies have been contextualizing resilience in crises, environmental uncertainty and technological change.

Furthermore, the rising use of words like "leadership," "training," "innovation" and "collaboration" in recent years indicates an apparent shift towards a multi-level perspective of resilience which considers individual, group and organizational levels of resilience. This shift may have been in line with the overall extension of the field of resilience to other disciplines like management, sustainability, technology and organizational behavior.

On the one hand, the longitudinal keyword pattern suggests that the research domain is developing from a theoretical and system-based underpinning towards a more interdisciplinary, capability-based and practice-focused approach. Although the emphasis on resilience and sustainability persists, the growing emphasis on

adaptive capabilities, digitalization and change management suggests a developing focus on the proactive development of resilience in organizations facing complex and uncertain environments.

**4.12 TOP 10 HIGHLY CITED ARTICLES**

*Below is the list of top highly cited papers (Table 5)*

**Table 5 TOP CITED ARTICLES - Source: Author Computed**

Total citations	Authors	Title	Journal	Year
444	Negri, M.; Cagno, E.; Colicchia, C.; et al.	Integrating sustainability and resilience in the supply chain: A systematic literature review and a research agenda	Business Strategy and the Environment	2021
103	Edwards, M.G.	The growth paradox, sustainable development and business strategy	Business Strategy and the Environment	2021
50	Williams, A.; Whiteman, G.	A call for deep engagement for impact: Addressing the planetary emergency	Strategic Organization	2021
47	Howard-Grenville, J.	Caring, Courage and Curiosity: Reflections on our roles as scholars in organizing for a sustainable future	Organization Theory	2021
46	Florez-Jimenez, M.P.; Lleo, A.; Ruiz-Palomino, P.; et al.	Corporate sustainability, organizational resilience and corporate purpose: a review of the academic traditions connecting them	Review of Managerial Science	2025
46	Ciasullo, M.V.; Chiarini, A.; Palumbo, R.	Mastering the interplay of organizational resilience and sustainability: Insights from a hybrid literature review	Business Strategy and the Environment	2024
46	Howard, M.; BÅhm, S.; Eatherley, D.	Systems resilience and SME multilevel challenges: A place-based conceptualization of the circular economy	Journal of Business Research	2022
43	Lopes de Sousa Jabbour, A.B.; Latan, H.; Chiappetta Jabbour, C.J.; et al.	Does applying a circular business model lead to organizational resilience? Mediating effects of industry 4.0 and customers integration	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	2023
41	Sharma, G.D.; Kraus, S.; Talan, A.; et al.	Navigating the storm: the SME way of tackling the pandemic crisis	Small Business Economics	2024
40	RodrÃ­guez-GonzÃ¡lez, R.M.; Madrid-Guijarro, A.; Maldonado-Guzman, G.	Digital organizational culture and absorptive capacity as precursors to supply chain resilience and sustainable performance	Journal of Cleaner Production	2023

5. Systematic review

Table 6 ADO FRAMEWORK- Source: Author Computed

Component	Category	Constructs Identified in the Literature	Theoretical Anchoring
ANTECEDENTS	Capability-Based Drivers	Dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, reconfiguring); Digital transformation capability; Innovation capability; Knowledge management & absorptive capacity; Strategic flexibility	Resource-Based View (RBV); Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV); Knowledge-Based View
	Leadership & Organizational Foundations	Transformational/entrepreneurial leadership; Adaptive/resilience culture; Human capital; Psychological capital; Employee resilience	Upper Echelons Theory; Micro-foundations of Strategy; Organizational Behavior
	Institutional & Environmental Context	Institutional pressures (regulatory, stakeholder); Corporate governance mechanisms; Environmental uncertainty; Technological turbulence; Crisis shocks (e.g., COVID-19)	Institutional Theory; Contingency Theory; Stakeholder Theory
DECISIONS	Strategic Transformation Decisions	Digital adoption and implementation; Business model innovation; Resource reconfiguration; Strategic alliances and partnerships	Strategic Management; Business Model Theory
	Sustainability-Oriented Decisions	CSR initiatives; Circular economy adoption; Sustainable supply chain practices; Environmental management practices	Sustainability Theory; Triple Bottom Line
	Crisis & Risk Management Decisions	Risk mitigation strategies; Contingency planning; Crisis response mechanisms; Supply chain redesign	Risk Management Theory; Resilience Theory
	Knowledge & Organizational Decisions	Knowledge-sharing systems; Internal communication mechanisms; Organizational learning systems	Knowledge-Based View; Organizational Learning Theory
OUTCOMES	Core Capability Outcome	Organizational resilience (adaptability, robustness, recovery capability)	Resilience Theory; Dynamic Capabilities
	Performance Outcomes	Firm performance (financial, productivity); Operational performance; Innovation performance; Sustainable performance	Performance Theory; Competitive Advantage
	Strategic & Survival Outcomes	Competitive advantage; Market positioning; SME survival; Crisis recovery; Long-term viability	RBV; Survival Theory

***5.1 Antecedents–Decisions–Outcomes (ADO) Framework***

This research extends the systematic review of the bibliometric sample by developing a structured framework based on the Antecedents–Decisions–Outcomes (ADO) model presented in Table 6. The use of the ADO framework facilitates a more integrated approach to the fragmented research by highlighting the key drivers of change, the decisions made by organizations and the outcomes of these decisions, which can be linked to the development of sustainability- and resilience-focused research and the opportunities for future theoretical development.

***5.1.1 Antecedents***

The review recognizes three major categories of antecedents which include capability based, leadership and organizational and institutional environmental conditions.

First, capability based antecedents appear to strongly feature in the literature. The concept of dynamic capabilities such as sensing, seizing and reconfiguring is highly emphasized in the literature as foundational capabilities that allow organizations to adapt to disruptions in the environment. Other related concepts such as digital transformation capability, innovation capability, absorptive capacity and strategic flexibility further support the significance of capability-based antecedents in enabling adaptability in organizations. The strong presence of these related concepts in the literature is an indication of the theoretical foundation of the field in Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV).

Secondly, leadership and organizational foundations are highlighted as micro-level factors. For instance, transformational and entrepreneurial leadership have been found to be positively associated with proactive change orientation. Adaptive organizational culture, employee resilience, human capital and psychological capital have been highlighted as micro-foundations of resilience and have been found to enable collective capacity to cope with and bounce back from adversity. This indicates that organizational flexibility may have behavioral and cognitive dimensions.

Third, institutional and environmental factors serve as contextual antecedents. For example, regulatory pressures and stakeholder expectations on governance serve as antecedents for organizational commitment to sustainability and organizational resiliency. Environmental uncertainty, technological turbulence and crisis factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic serve as exogenous triggers for organizational resiliency. These contextual factors align with the institutional theory and the contingency theory which argue that organizational strategies are a result of external pressures and environmental uncertainty. The antecedents collectively create the enabling conditions for the formulation of organizational strategies.

***5.1.2 Decisions***

The second component of the ADO framework is the decisions related to managerial and strategic decisions. These decisions are taken in response to antecedent conditions. Literature has grouped such decisions into four main domains. These are strategic transformation, sustainability integration, crisis and risk management and knowledge-oriented practices.

Decisions related to strategic transformation include digital adoption and implementation decisions. This includes business model innovation and resource reconfiguration. Business model innovation encompasses diversification and development of new revenue streams. This can be considered a strategic transformation to ensure future competitiveness. Similarly, resource reconfiguration and partnerships can help companies adapt to changing circumstances. Digital platform adoption and implementation include automation and data driven systems.

Sustainability oriented decisions form the second domain. CSR activities, CE strategies and sustainable supply chain management are included in the strategic decision-making process. Sustainability oriented decisions reveal a shift in the paradigm of strategic decision making from reactive to proactive sustainability. Sustainability oriented decisions reveal the extent to which environmental and social challenges are embedded in business processes. Decisions in crisis and risk management form the third domain. Contingency planning and supply chain management are included in the strategic decision-making process in response to environmental shocks. Sustainability oriented decisions are included in post-pandemic studies as a product of resilience. Knowledge and

organizational decisions include knowledge sharing systems and organizational communication systems. These decisions facilitate learning and coordination in business processes. These decisions enhance organizational learning and speed in responding to crises. Taken together, these decision domains represent strategic choices through which firms operationalize their capabilities and respond to contextual pressures.

### ***5.1.3 Outcomes***

The last element of the ADO framework relates to outcomes of organizations. The review indicates that organizational resilience is the core outcome of strategic decisions in an organization. Resilience is defined as the ability of an organization to anticipate, absorb, adapt to and rebound from disruptions while maintaining operational continuity. Resilience, however is not just an outcome but a higher order dynamic capability that mediates the link between strategic decisions and outcomes. Apart from resilience, the literature indicates that performance outcomes in organizations are multidimensional including financial, operational and innovation performance which can be used to measure the outcomes of strategic decisions and sustainability integration in organizations. Sustainable performance which relates to environmental and long term viability, is an outcome of the integration of economic and environmental objectives in organizations. Competitive advantage is an outcome that relates to strategic outcomes of resilience-oriented decisions in organizations.

For SME, survival and post-crisis recovery outcomes are of particular interest. Growth and stability post-crisis are clear indicators of the effectiveness of resilience. These studies provide clear evidence that resilience not only aids recovery but also supports long-term competitive position.

### ***5.1.4 Integrative Logic of the ADO Framework***

Synthesizing the above studies, the ADO framework illustrates a clear causal structure - capability-based, leadership and institutional antecedents influence strategic outcomes which in turn affect organizational resilience and by extension, performance outcomes. Resilience has clearly emerged as a key mediating factor between strategic outcomes and sustainable competitive advantage. Notably, the inclusion of sustainability and digital transformation under the decision domain highlights the development of resilience research towards a more technologically enabled and sustainable form of adaptability. The framework has clearly advanced the current scholarship by unifying fragmented research under a clear explanatory model.

ADO structure not only summarizes the prior studies but also provides a foundation for conducting future empirical tests. This encourages scholars to explore cross-level interactions and mechanisms of mediation and boundary conditions which may shape the resilience performance nexus. This helps in the theoretical maturation of the sustainability and organizational resilience literature.

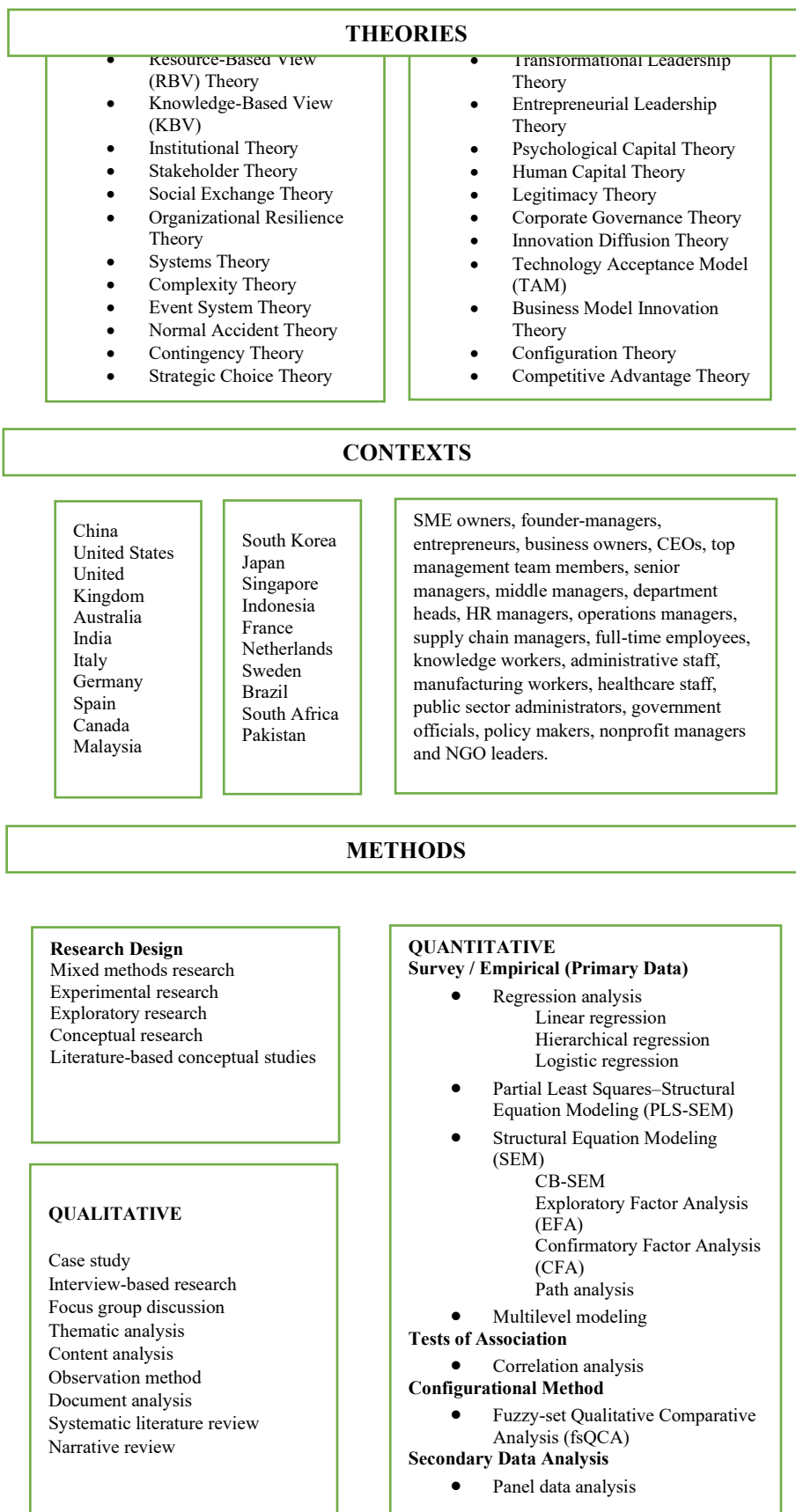


Figure 13 TCM FRAMEWORK- Source: Author Computed

## 5.2 TCM Framework

Figure 13 presents the TCM framework, offering a structured understanding of the intellectual foundations of the literature on organizational resilience and sustainability. The dominant theories, settings and methodological approaches have been synthesized to reflect the maturity, direction and fragmentation of the field.

### 5.2.1 Theoretical Landscape (T)

The theoretical underpinning of the literature appears to be mostly based on capability based and strategic management theories. Dynamic Capability Theory, the Resource Based View (RBV) and the Knowledge Based View (KBV) seem to be the most commonly adopted approaches by the literature. Institutional Theory and Stakeholder Theory add another dimension to the understanding of sustainability by explaining the impact of pressures from the environment such as regulatory, normative and mimetic pressures, on sustainability practices. Upper Echelons Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory and Entrepreneurial Leadership Theory suggest that leadership plays a critical role in facilitating adaptive and resilient behavior.

Furthermore, innovation and technology driven theories such as Innovation Diffusion Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) capture the salience of the digital transformation for enhancing sustainability and resilience outcomes. The domain is rich and fragmented. Capability driven theories are the mainstay which is not necessarily utilized holistically. There is a lack of progress on the development of integrative frameworks that incorporate strategic, institutional, behavioral and technological theories. It is a call for theoretical convergence and integrative model building.

### 5.2.2 Contextual Landscape (C)

The contextual analysis shows that there is a lot of geographical diversity and the research has been conducted in various developed and emerging economies including China, the United States, the United Kingdom, India, Italy, Germany, South Korea, Japan, Brazil and many more. This shows that the subject of organizational resilience and sustainability is of global significance.

The dominant organizational context of the literature is related to SMEs, manufacturing firms, healthcare organizations, supply chain systems and public sector organizations. At the managerial level, the dominant context is related to CEOs, top management teams, senior managers, HR managers and supply chain managers.

The geographical diversity of the literature is good, but the literature is limited to the organizational and managerial levels. There is a need to explore multi-level integration which is related to individual, team and organizational levels. Similarly, deep and detailed research related to industries is limited.

### 5.2.3 Methodological Landscape (M)

Methodologically, the field has largely been dominated by quantitative empirical research, especially surveys. Sophisticated statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), hierarchical regressions and path analyses are commonly used techniques. In addition, configurative approaches such as fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) and multilevel modeling have increasingly gained popularity.

Qualitative research methods such as case studies, interviews, thematic and content analyses are also part of the research landscape, albeit less frequent compared to quantitative surveys. Conceptual studies, although contributing to the expansion of the theoretical domain, are less frequent compared to empirical research studies.

This profile of the research methods demonstrates a high degree of analytical sophistication yet the dominance of cross-sectional research designs hinders causal research and the ability to conceptualize time. Longitudinal research, experimental research and mixed methods are underutilized and future research could benefit from the application of configurative, longitudinal and multi-method research designs.

The TCM analysis of the research also shows that research into organizational resilience and sustainability is:

- Theoretically robust but fragmented
- Globally distributed yet managerially concentrated
- Methodologically advanced but predominantly cross-sectional

The field demonstrates growing maturity, particularly in integrating sustainability with digital transformation and strategic capability perspectives. However, greater theoretical integration, deeper contextual specificity and methodological diversification are required to advance cumulative knowledge development.

Although the conceptualization provided by the TCM and ADO approaches is organized, there exist certain weaknesses that arise from the literature review. The field of theoretical development appears disjointed due to the strong prevalence of the capability approach, while there are few studies that integrate theories of institutions and behavior into their work. In addition, the decision dimension in the ADO approach lacks elaboration especially in terms of time and cognition.

## **6. Discussion**

This review combines the Theory-Context-Method and Antecedents-Decisions-Outcomes frameworks to integrate the fragmented literature on organizational resilience and sustainability. The findings suggest that the literature has witnessed substantial theoretical development and methodological complexity although the development is uneven. While several antecedents, strategic decisions and performance outcomes have been established few studies have empirically supported the full A→D→O model using a comprehensive framework.

The theoretical development is wide but fragmented, with a strong focus on dynamic capabilities, the resource-based perspective and institutional theory. In terms of context, the literature is represented globally but is limited to the firm and managerial levels. In terms of methods, the literature is dominated by cross-sectional survey methods and SEM-based approaches which are limited to static and correlational analyses.

One major conclusion that can be drawn from the review conducted above is that there is a conditional relationship between organizational resilience and sustainability that is influenced by managerial intentions. Contrary to past studies that assume that both organizational resilience and sustainability have a synergistic relationship, this study shows that the results of resilience efforts are heavily reliant on managerial intentions and strategic focus.

In this regard, the decisions made by managers regarding environmental challenges and their strategies for addressing such challenges can either lead organizations towards achieving efficiency-related stability or sustainable transformations. It implies that managerial intentions serve as the primary mechanism through which antecedent factors become organizational results.

## **7. Future Research Directions**

### ***7.1 Theoretical Directions***

Future studies should emphasize multi-theoretical integration in the form of dynamic capability theory, RBV, stakeholder theory and institutional theory to propose complete explanatory models. Conceptual clarity is also needed in the relationship between organizational resilience as a mediator or higher order capability or outcome in organizational performance. Furthermore, micro-macro integration should also be strengthened in future studies to link employee resilience, psychological capital and leadership cognition with strategic sustainability decisions.

### ***7.2 Contextual Directions***

The research is also lacking in comparative studies across countries in spite of its geographical diversity. Future studies should also investigate contextual moderators in developed and emerging countries. Furthermore, sectoral studies on industry-specific dynamics should also be conducted in the energy sector, digital platforms and artificial intelligence-based sectors. Multi-level contextual analysis should also be conducted to understand the dynamics from individuals to ecosystems.

### ***7.3 Methodological Directions***

The dominance of survey research limits the temporal dimension. Longitudinal and panel data research are critical to understanding dynamic capability development and sustainability transitions. Experimental and quasi-experimental research could improve causal research. Moreover, configurative research (fsQCA) in combination

with SEM could identify multiple paths to sustainable performance. Mixed-method research could improve explanatory robustness through a combination of qualitative process research and quantitative modeling.

#### ***7.4 Future Research on Antecedents (A)***

Various antecedents have been recognized in the literature, which include dynamic capabilities, DT capability, leadership orientation, organizational culture, institutional pressures and environmental uncertainty. However, in the majority of the literature, these antecedents have been studied individually. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies focus on exploring the concept of bundled antecedents and examine how these antecedents collectively influence sustainability-oriented strategies. In addition, the role of micro-foundations which include employee resilience, psychological capital and learning orientation and their interrelation with other antecedents should receive greater attention in future studies. This would provide a holistic understanding of the mechanisms for building resilience. Future studies should focus on exploring the concept of context-sensitive antecedents and examine how the institutional environment and cultural settings and the intensity of crises, influence the antecedents.

#### ***7.5 Future Research on Strategic Decisions (D)***

Decisions on digital adoption, business model innovation, risk management strategies, sustainability initiatives and strategic alliances provide the core mechanism through which the antecedents drive the outcomes. However, decisions are considered a static variable rather than a dynamic process. Future studies need to differentiate between decisions for managing short-term crises and those for managing long-term sustainability transformations. Investigating the dynamics of decisions during environmental disruptions is also a significant area for gaining a better understanding of the theory. Finally, the mediating effect of decisions on the A-D-O relationship needs to be tested. Future studies may also seek to investigate the phenomenon of paradox management especially on how organizational performance is balanced with environmental and social sustainability.

#### ***7.6 Future Research on Outcomes (O)***

The outcomes identified in the current literature are organizational resilience, firm performance, innovation performance, competitive advantage, sustainable performance and crisis recovery. Nevertheless, measurement inconsistency and conceptual ambiguity are of major concern.

The future research should focus on:

- Developing standardized and validated scales of organizational resilience
- Evaluating the long-term performance paths of firms
- Evaluating the trade-offs between short-term financial gains and long-term sustainability
- Evaluating multi-level outcomes such as employee well-being, organizational survival and ecosystem stability

In addition, researchers need to determine whether organizational resilience is considered an outcome or a mediating capability that links sustainability practices to competitive advantage.

### **8. Theoretical Implications**

This review makes a theoretical contribution through the synthesis of existing knowledge into a comprehensive TCM-ADO model. It also underscores the need for a move away from the application of isolated theories and towards integrative multi-level and dynamic conceptual models. By stressing the interdependence of antecedents, decisions and outcomes, the research also improves knowledge on the translation of sustainability into organizational resilience and competitiveness. The model also prompts researchers to think of organizational resilience not only as a state but also as a capacity embedded in organizational systems.

Theory development is achieved by the inclusion of the concept of managerial intent as an important yet neglected factor in explaining the link between resilience and sustainability. Literature on the subject matter has paid more attention to the impact of factors such as structure and capability and less focus has been paid on managerial intent.

The introduction of managerial intent as a moderating/mediating variable in the study adds another dimension to the already existing ADO approach. Managerial intent affects the way antecedents like dynamic capabilities and leadership, among other variables, translate into strategic intentions that affect sustainability and performance. In effect, resilience does not automatically result into sustainability; managerial intent decides the fate of this resilience process.

### **9. Practical Implications**

The results have significant implications for managers and policymakers. For managers, it is recommended that organizational leaders should invest in building dynamic capabilities, digital transformation competencies and resilience-oriented cultures to enhance the sustainability of their organizations in the long term. It is critical that strategic alignment of sustainability efforts and business goals should be achieved to avert any trade-offs in the short term. For policymakers, it is recommended that they should design mechanisms that incentivize capability building, as opposed to compliance-driven approaches to sustainability adoption, while it is recommended that managers should use a multi-stakeholder approach and strategic alliances to enhance ecosystem resilience.

### **10. Conclusion**

Current research on organizational resilience and sustainability has reached a point of conceptual richness, yet it has also remained fragmented in terms of its theoretical contribution and methodologically constrained. Although considerable progress has been made in understanding the antecedents, strategic decisions and outcomes, the lack of integrative and longitudinal models has hindered the development of cumulative knowledge. By integrating the TCM and ADO frameworks, this review has provided a roadmap for the future development of the field which will be critical for organizations to successfully navigate the uncertain future while delivering sustainable and competitive performance in a more complex global environment.

#### **Declarations**

##### **Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate**

Not applicable.

##### **Consent for Publication**

Not applicable.

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##### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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