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## Connecting Organizational Learning Strategies to Organizational Resilience

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## Connecting Organizational Learning Strategies to Organizational Resilience

**Purpose:** The objective of this study is to analyze the conceptual and domain overlap of organizational learning and organizational resilience; specifically, the adaptation or renewal domain in organizational resilience. From the findings, strategies to foster collective learning leading to organizational resilience are identified and outlined.

**Design/Methodology:** Recent organizational resilience conceptual models were analyzed to identify the conceptual overlap between the renewal and adaptation domain of organizational resilience and organizational learning. From the analysis of the models, implications were drawn based on the conceptual overlap found in organizational learning and the adaptable or renewal domain of organizational resilience.

**Findings:** To build the renewal or adaptation domain of organizational resilience, organizations must embody learning into a capability. Systems are then required for learning to remain continuous and foster knowledge acquisition, distribution, interpretation, and organizational memory that leads to dynamic capabilities for renewal and adaptation. The learning strategies must then focus renewing what is known in traditional approaches to organizational learning that supports experiential learning, developing systematic approaches to learning, and creating contexts to facilitate organizational learning. When this knowledge is aggregated to an organizational level, it contributes to resilience.

**Originality:** As organizational resilience grows in attention and importance; it is necessary to investigate similarities and conceptual domain overlap. This study contributes to this need and identifies what can be implemented in learning strategies for organizations' resilience capacity.

*Keywords:* organizational resilience, organizational learning, knowledge management

## Connecting Organizational Learning Strategies to Organizational Resilience

Organizational resilience is a multidimensional concept that emerged from the capability of an organization to cope with uncertain and volatile conditions while leveraging strengths and adapting to survive turbulent environments. As a complex concept, organizational resilience is developed through resources and capabilities that support renewal, adaptation, and learning. The renewal domain focuses on the organization fostering dynamic capabilities that improve and adapt internal skills and capabilities (Hillmann and Guenther, 2021). Organizations face challenges today where previous knowledge and strategies cannot guarantee success. The renewal domain of organizational resilience is vital for the necessary adaptations to face the challenges requiring learning and creativity to increase dynamic capabilities, skills, and learning. Thus, to achieve resilience organizations need a focus on strategies that support knowledge, skill, and ability development to then develop the dynamic capabilities and routines within the organization (Douglas, 2021; Hillman and Guenther, 2021; Rydstedt Nyman, 2019).

As we work to understand organizational resilience, it is necessary to investigate similarities and conceptual domain overlap (Hillmann and Guenther, 2021). Organizational learning and the renewal domain of organizational resilience both consider the continuous increase of skills and knowledge of individuals that are then aggregated to the collective, organizational level. The objective of this study is to analyze the conceptual and domain overlap in organizational resilience and organizational learning. From the analysis, implications are drawn to develop strategies for building individual learning and aggregating this to the collective organizational level as a guide for incorporating learning and renewal for greater organizational resilience. First, to understand the alignment and conceptual overlap similarities between organizational learning and the renewal domain of organizational resilience are explored. The

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3 relationship and correlation between the concepts are noted and outlined. Strategies are then  
4  
5 identified to implement organizational learning that also fosters organizational resilience.  
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### 7 **Organizational Learning and Organizational Resilience Overlap**

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10 Learning is central to the adaptive capacity of an organization. In developing  
11  
12 organizational resilience, adaptation involves developing capabilities to change and learn  
13  
14 through reflection and action to increase knowledge and capability in mitigating negative  
15  
16 consequences from unexpected events. The goal of learning through this collective and dynamic  
17  
18 process is for organizational advancement (Duchek, 2020). The renewal domain of resilience  
19  
20 involves anticipation and sensemaking capabilities accessed through the organization's resources  
21  
22 to lead to adaptation and learning (Hillmann and Guenther, 2021).  
23  
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26 An organization's capacity for resilience is then achieved through strategies fostering  
27  
28 individual competencies that are aggregated to an organizational level. The capability of an  
29  
30 organization to absorb, disseminate, and utilize new knowledge is a determinant of sustainable  
31  
32 competitive advantage. With knowledge being a competitive advantage for organizations,  
33  
34 learning increases the organization's performance and is a precondition for resilience (Rydstedt  
35  
36 Nyman, 2019). If organizational learning is limited, so too is the organization's capacity for  
37  
38 resilience. By identifying the conceptual overlap between the renewal domain of resilience and  
39  
40 organizational learning, strategies for supporting learning are identified and should be  
41  
42 implementing to foster the organization's resilience capacity.  
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### 47 **Learning Strategies for Resilience Capacity**

48  
49 Building resilience requires organizations to embody learning into a capability (Hillman  
50  
51 and Guenther, 2021). This requires systems for organizational learning to happen and remain  
52  
53 continuous (Evenseth *et al.*, 2022). Such systems need to foster knowledge acquisition,  
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3 distribution, interpretation, and organizational memory to develop the dynamic capabilities  
4  
5 leading to renewal and adaptation (Duchek, 2020; Hillmann and Guenther, 2021). A resilient  
6  
7 organization continually learns, improves, and adjusts through adaptation emphasizing a  
8  
9 knowledge base and how knowledge is managed within the organization (Duchek, 2020;  
10  
11 Evenseth *et al.*, 2022). To do this, strategies must focus on experiential learning, developing  
12  
13 systematic approaches to learning, and creating contexts to facilitate organizational learning  
14  
15 (Evenseth *et al.*, 2022). When this knowledge capital is aggregated to an organizational, it  
16  
17 contributes to the organization's capability for resilience (Douglas, 2021).  
18  
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21  
22 With the need for systems in organizations that allow continuous learning, improvement,  
23  
24 and adjustment; organizations need to adopt strategies emphasizing knowledge acquisition,  
25  
26 distribution, and interpretation. The emphasis on building a knowledge base and managing  
27  
28 knowledge within the organization are then formalized and solidified through organizational  
29  
30 memory strategies. The implications identified in the following sections support building  
31  
32 resilience through capturing and the embodiment of learning into a capability.  
33  
34

### 35 **Knowledge Acquisition**

36  
37 To enhance knowledge acquisition, traditional practices must be adapted and customized to  
38  
39 focus on sharing of knowledge along with knowledge creation. Practices such as performance-  
40  
41 related rewards through effective performance management systems, training, and learning,  
42  
43 knowledge-based recruitment, and selection should be designed to enhance knowledge  
44  
45 acquisition within the organization. Adapting recruitment and selection of employees for more  
46  
47 emphasis on knowledge creation provides a channel for knowledge acquisition.  
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52 By shifting recruitment and selection away from focusing only on current knowledge, skills,  
53  
54 or experience to selection based on potential, an organization creates a channel for knowledge  
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3 acquisition. Individuals with high potential are more likely to be capable of learning the  
4  
5 knowledge necessary for an adaptive, agile, and innovative organization. Knowledge-based  
6  
7 recruitment and selection should rely on not just choosing candidates with relevant knowledge.  
8  
9  
10 More emphasis should be on the potential for learning and networking capabilities (Douglas,  
11  
12 2021).  
13

14 Employee training and development are also necessary; specifically, activities optimizing  
15  
16 employees' present and needed knowledge and skills. The shift to knowledge-based training and  
17  
18 development must involve regular assessment of current depth and breadth of employees'  
19  
20 knowledge while also personalizing training to fit the changing organizational needs.  
21  
22 Performance management systems are also essential to adapt to foster greater knowledge  
23  
24 acquisition. Assessing performance based on criteria related to knowledge sharing, creation, and  
25  
26 application along with employee growth and learning provides motivation and incentive for  
27  
28 acquiring knowledge. As such, compensation plans must also revolve around knowledge  
29  
30 acquisition. Such compensation policies promote knowledge acquisition within the organization  
31  
32 that motivate employees in sharing, creating, and applying knowledge acquired.  
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### 38 **Knowledge Distribution**

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40 Knowledge acquired is effective when individuals share and generate new forms of  
41  
42 knowledge in others. The knowledge acquisition must move to distribution for the individual's  
43  
44 knowledge to be leveraged and aggregated to the organizational level. Organizations can utilize  
45  
46 employee recognition and reward strategies to incentivize knowledge sharing and distribution.  
47  
48 Through reciprocity employees experience a mutual give-and-take of knowledge facilitating  
49  
50 sharing and distribution leading to a perception of value for sharing knowledge. Real and  
51  
52 perceived rewards resulting from sharing of knowledge provide motivation; thus, when  
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3 performance management systems reward and incentivize sharing acquired knowledge it can  
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5 increase motivation to do such.  
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### 8 **Knowledge Interpretation**

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10 When employees share and incorporate aspects of their knowledge that are not common to  
11 everyone, there is a shared understanding as well as coordinated decision making that is  
12 achieved. While employees must acquire and distribute knowledge, interpretation is achieved  
13 when individuals can share and generate further knowledge from others. Strategies that foster  
14 and encourage knowledge interpretation include: (a) developing a partnership orientation with  
15 employees, (b) localizing decision-making power, (c) creating fluid team-based work and job  
16 design, (d) building relational rather than transactional relationships with employees, (e) creating  
17 a climate of open communication and collaboration, and (f) encouraging problem-solving  
18 processes collaboratively and tied to organizational learning. The overarching intent of such  
19 strategies is to create a workplace where employees are confident in their ability to explore  
20 options by utilizing the knowledge they have and sharing information. The main objective is to  
21 create space for collaboration and innovation through knowledge interpretation to promote  
22 agility and adaptation in the organization. Knowledge interpretation is a critical system for  
23 resilience as challenges increase for organizations. Interpretation provides the system for  
24 learning and dynamic capability development for organizations to adapt to challenges.  
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### 44 **Organizational Memory**

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46 The final step to building systems that promote continuous learning and adaptation from the  
47 knowledge base and knowledge management in an organization is solidifying such into  
48 organizational memory. Referring to the storage of knowledge for future use, organizational  
49 memory develops through formalized procedures promoting the retention of information. To be  
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3 resilient, organizations need to develop and retain the knowledge base through formalization that  
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5 happens with organizational memory (Duchek, 2020). By internalizing this knowledge through  
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7 formal procedures such as policy development, the organization begins to formalize their  
8  
9  
10 resilience capability.

### 11 12 **Conclusion**

13  
14 An organization's knowledge base and management of knowledge aligns and supports  
15  
16 the needed adaptation and renewal for resilience to occur at the organizational level. Learning  
17  
18 contributes to the organization's dynamic capabilities and change necessary for the  
19  
20 organization's resilience.  
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