

Over the years, resilience theory has become increasingly popular in the fields of risk mitigation and business continuity management. Burnard & Bhamra (2011) define resilience as the ability of an element or a system to return to a stable condition after a disruption. Similarly, Denyer (2017) argues that a resilient organization is able to cope with the complexity, volatility, and uncertainty of its modern business context, by responding effectively to sudden disruptions, leveraging opportunities, as well as effectively adapting its function in a manner that improves its sustainable organizational performance.

3. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE APPROACH

3.1 The New Paradigm of Resilient Organizations

Given the ambiguity and uncertainty that is ever-present in the modern organization's business environment, the need to develop flexible and adaptive capabilities can be equated with survival. The structure of the traditional top-down organization often proves rigid and inflexible in addressing the increasing rate of change, as well as the complexity that is embedded in the organization's internal and external environment (Espejo & Gill, 1997). To this extent, the development of the distinct but complementary capabilities of strategic agility and resilience capacity is critical to the organization's capacity to deal with a continuously evolving business environment (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2009).

In systems terms, organizational resilience is not a condition that emerges from a static process. Instead, the process itself must change in response to the volatility of the external environment and as the capabilities of the organization transform over time. In this regard, the organization's ability to respond to unforeseen risks and develop its business continuity competences, is directly proportional to its increase of focus on resilient structures, and the investment made to support these structures (Gibson & Tarrant, 2010). Given that a genetic "fit for purpose" organizational resilience model is not available, both public and private organizations (of any size or structure) can develop and implement a resilience approach by applying to their individual circumstances a specific framework of principles, attributes and activities that are prescribed in guidelines and standards¹ published by prominent International Standards Organizations (NSW Government Treasury, 2018).

In short, building an agile organization that embodies organizational resilience, requires management intervention and reconfiguration of existing strategies, structures, processes, and technologies. An agile structure calls for building a dense network of empowered teams within a people-centered culture and implementing an interrelated network of coherent relations, which reflect and support the way in which the organization co-creates value for its stakeholders. It also requires adopting high standards of alignment, accountability, expertise, transparency, as well as maintaining coordination and collaboration within the organization. It is important to note that key to any restructuring initiative, is a focus on achieving the organization's goals and objectives effectively, while at the same time balancing stability and change in an uncertain and complex environment (Wouter, et.al., 2018).

¹ These Standards include: BS 65000:2014 "Guidance on Organizational Resilience" published by the British Standard Institution (BSI); ISO22316:2017 "Security and Resilience – Guidelines for Organizational Resilience"; and ISO 22301: 2019 "Security and Resilience – Business Continuity Management Systems - Requirements" published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

