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**THE ROLE OF CULTURE, LEADERSHIP, AND  
ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE LEVELS ON  
ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE: A CONCEPTUAL  
FRAMEWORK**

Ester C. Lim<sup>1\*</sup>, Amelita A. Gaerlan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines  
Email: ester.lim.gs@ust.edu.ph

<sup>2</sup> The Graduate School, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines  
Email: aagaerlan@ust.edu.ph

\* Corresponding Author

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**Abstract:**

The current pandemic of COVID-19 emphasizes the significance of organizational resilience. Companies that are resilient may be able to face and capitalize on crises to avoid bad consequences, survive, and progress. To truly weather the crisis, organizations, on the other hand, require resilient leaders. This research provides a conceptual framework that will be empirically examined to assess the degree of influence of the variables specified, namely leadership and organizational culture as independent variables and organizational resilience as a dependent variable. This paper poses the groundwork for future empirical research by proposing a conceptual framework, presenting hypotheses, and exploring implications for future research. It also provides important information on how to manage organizational resilience effectively. The empirical results will significantly benefit school administrators, human resource practitioners, academicians, researchers, and policy makers.

**Keywords:**

Organizational Culture, Leadership, Organizational Resilience

## Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic underlines the importance of organizational resilience. Resilience may help companies face and capitalize on crises in order to avoid negative repercussions, thrive, and advance. Organizations, on the other hand, must have resilient leaders in order to truly weather the crisis. A leader with strong levels of resilience will be able to respond positively to the situation. Leaders can strengthen the resilience of others around them by demonstrating resilience (Eliot, 2020).

The survival and effectiveness of any organization largely depend on the resilience of both the organization and its employees (Naswall et al., 2019). The concept of resilience stresses the need to elevate any system's continuity capability against instabilities (Sahebjamnia et al., 2018). Resilience in the existing literature has been known as the "capability of the organization to bounce back after confronting with hardship and challenges" (Ma et al., 2018).

Resilience is significantly essential during turbulent times and in dealing with adversities (Ma et al., 2018). During challenging times, resilient organizations have increased chances of survival. Resilience helps organizations not only to survive as well as to adjust and grow in difficulties and maintain stability within an uncertain environment. Since its conception in 1973 (Moussa et al., 2020), resilience has evolved in various fields and has been defined in numerous ways. Each discipline (e.g., psychology, engineering, organizational management, etc.) has its perspectives in defining the term, conceptualizations, and measures (Duchek, 2020; Ma et al., 2018; Ruiz-Martin et al., 2018). Due to some inconsistencies in the definitions of 'resilience,' the construct was described as an 'umbrella construct' (i.e., "broad concept or idea") (Duchek, 2019).

The organization's resilience is an effective alternative response for an organization experiencing an organizational decline (Moran, 2016). However, many factors (e.g., culture, leadership, etc.) influence organizational resilience (Seville, 2018). Previous studies have found these factors of organizational resilience to have a positive effect among smaller educational institutions during organizational decline (Morgan, 2016). Many previous studies also described organizational resilience as an interplay of different dimensions that made the construct multi-level. However, each level of resilience may or may not necessarily lead to resilience at one level (Ma et al., 2018).

This study proposes a conceptual framework which will be empirically tested to measure the degree of influence of the variables identified namely: leadership and organizational culture as the independent variables and organizational resilience as the dependent variable.

## Literature Review

### *Organizational Resilience*

Resilience is a broad concept (Anderson et al., 2019; Ma et al., 2018). It is varied across disciplines, with each discipline having its definition and description of the term (Ma et al., 2018; Ruiz-Martin et al., 2018). In the earlier conceptualizations of resilience, the term was defined as the "human capacity to rebound from diversity," but, in the most recent research, resilience is defined within and across disciplines differently (Richardson, 2002, as cited in Naswall et al., 2019). Despite diverse definitions, there seems to be agreement among

researchers that resilience is a complex and multifaceted concept, and it can be used to monitor people's ability to withstand stress and adversity (Kimhi et al., 2020). Being characterized by diverse interpretations and definitions, resilience is deemed an abstract concept (Conz & Magnani, 2019).

Previous studies unveiled how resilience is conceptualized at the organizational level (e.g., Conz & Magnani, 2019; Hillman & Guenther, 2020; Ruiz-Martin et al., 2018). Resilience in the organization was conceptualized into three main streams: as a feature of an organization, an outcome of an organization, and a measure of disturbance that an organization can tolerate. As a feature, organizational resilience was referred to as the 'ability, 'capacity,' or 'capability.' As an outcome, organizational resilience was connected to what it does for the organization. As a measure, resilience was associated with the magnitude of the level of disturbance that can be tolerated and still allow the organization to survive (Ruiz-Martin et al., 2018).

Organizational resilience was also conceptualized based on two approaches: trait-based view and developmental perspective. In the trait-based view, resilience is conceptualized based on a characteristic (i.e., the "ability of a system to return to an equilibrium state after a temporary disturbance") while in the process-based approach, resilience is conceptualized as a form of learning (Teo et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Conz and Magnani (2019) revealed a conceptualization of resilience that is related to time, such as resilience as a proactive attribute before an event, resilience as absorptive and adaptive attributes during an event, resilience as reactive attribute after an event, and resilience as a dynamic attribute before during and after an event.

Organizational resilience is not a static concept (Ruiz-Martin et al., 2018). The concept evolves. Most scholars described organizational resilience as a complex, all-inclusive, multidimensional, and multifaceted concept (Anderson et al., 2019; Ducheck et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2018). Organizational resilience is an organizational capacity that emerges at multiple levels (Tasic et al., 2019). The three levels of organizational resilience (i.e., individual resilience, team or group resilience, and organizational resilience) and the relationships among these levels are discussed in the following.

### ***Leadership***

Leadership is indispensable at all levels of an organization (Koohang et al., 2016). Recent studies on organizational resilience confirm that leadership is critical for nurturing the resilience-enhancing potential of diverse work units (Ducheck et al., 2020). Similarly, Southwick et al. (2017) insisted that an organization needed strong leadership that promotes cohesive and interdependent teams towards resilience.

An organization needs a high-caliber leader capable of inspiring and motivating employees (Morales et al., 2019). Resilience is directly related to leadership (Morales et al., 2018). Supportive leadership is positively associated with employee resilience (Cook et al., 2018). Hence, credits to the role of leadership in the employee resilience-building process have been given by previous researchers (Zhu et al., 2019). Eliot (2020) divulged that the solution to organizational crises was the leaders with high levels of resilience. By exhibiting high levels of resilience, they may be able to increase the resilience levels of those people around them.

### ***Organizational Culture***

Organizational culture comprises three layers: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions (Sawan et al., 2018). The first layer of culture is the ‘artifacts’ which may be visible or non-visible. Artifacts explain ‘how’ and ‘what’ is taking place in an organization. The middle layer is called the ‘espoused values’ that pertain to the ideal standards and goals that management or the entire organization can endorse and can be communicated through public documents. The core layer is the ‘basic assumptions’ or the unsaid, taken-for-granted beliefs and values. Basic assumptions explain why the espoused values may or may not be congruent with what is taking place at the level of artifacts.

Furthermore, organizational culture has six dimensions: dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, glue, strategic emphases, and criteria for success. Each of these dimensions has four culture types: adhocracy, clan, hierarchy, and market. Adhocracy concentrates on the external positioning of the organization with a high degree of flexibility and individuality. Clan focuses on internal maintenance with concern for people, sensitivity for customers, and flexibility. Hierarchy centers on internal maintenance needing stability and control. Market concentrates on external maintenance, also requiring stability and control (Batugal & Tindowen, 2019).

The concepts of organizational culture have been applied to various settings, including education. The construct had been utilized in studies involving public and private universities. Organizational culture is vital to effective management in universities (Zeqiri & Alija, 2016). The formation of culture begins with the leaders or founders (Shing & Xiaodie, 2017); thus, it controls the way members in the organization make decisions. Hence, school administrators and leaders play a critical role in culture formation in educational settings.

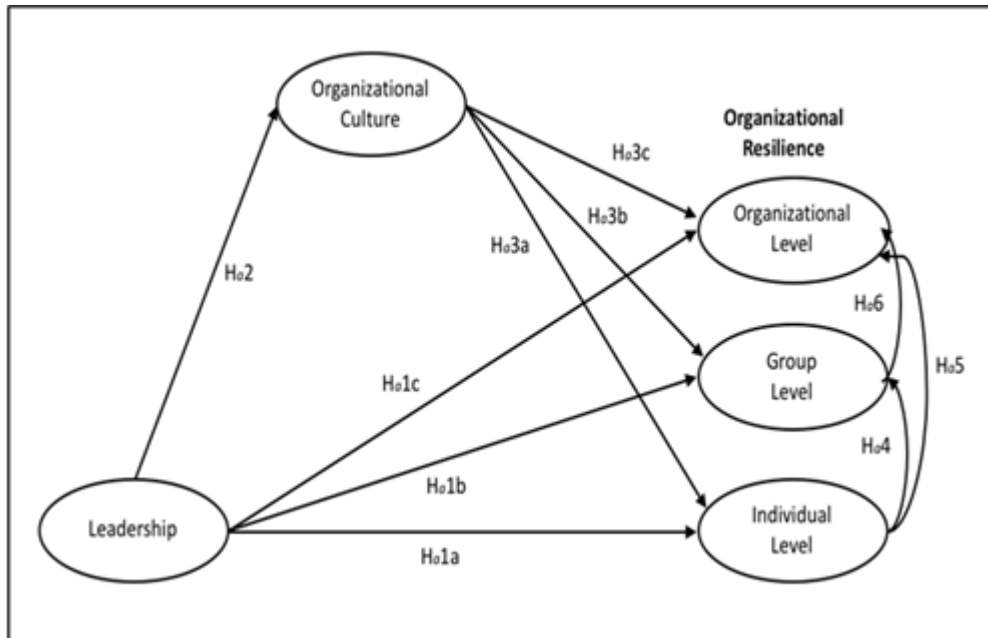
Experts believe that culture is a cure for many organizational problems like organizational decline. Culture can be affected by lots of factors, including leadership. Leaders influence organizational culture through their values, strategies, and leadership style (Warrick, 2017). When the leader and employees agree to the core values, beliefs, and behaviors, a strong culture emerges (Sow et al., 2017).

Organizational response during a crisis depends on the prevailing organizational culture and leadership (Bowers et al., 2017). Organizations can recover from a crisis if the leadership is the best fit for the organization’s culture specific dynamics at a given crisis. Organizational culture and leadership can work together to form shared values, beliefs, and assumptions that can shape the organization’s behaviors (Sow et al., 2017).

Culture is indeed associated with resilience, according to Morales et al. (2019). It was confirmed that the resilient organizations’ development is based on organizational culture, which is aligned to the people’s values and attitudes. A work culture formed by the leader embeds the organization’s mission, values, principles, and visions, gives a sense of identity, introduces acceptable behaviors, and becomes the groundwork of the leader’s driving force (Morales et al., 2019). Organizations can better respond to crises by adjusting their culture (Bundy et al., 2017; Tasic et al., 2019). The culture of the organization can also enhance or erode employee’s resilience (Seville, 2018).

## Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual model is the outcome of an extensive review of literature from previous studies conducted by experts, academicians, and researchers.



**Figure 1**  
**The Proposed Framework**

The proposed conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1 presents the hypothetical relationships to wit:

*Ha1*: Leadership significantly influences each organizational level, namely individual level (*Ha1a*), team/group level (*Ha1b*), and organizational level (*Ha1c*).

*Ha2*: Leadership significantly influences organizational culture.

*Ha3*: Organizational culture significantly influences each organizational level, namely individual level (*Ha3a*), team/group level (*Ha3b*), and organizational level (*Ha3c*).

*Ha4*: Individual resilience significantly influences team/group level resilience.

*Ha5*: Individual resilience significantly influences organizational level resilience.

*Ha6*: Team resilience significantly influences organizational level resilience.

*Ha7*: Organizational culture mediates the relationship between leadership and each organizational level, namely individual level (*Ha7a*), team/group level (*Ha7b*), and organizational level (*Ha7c*).

## Research Method

In order to conceptualize the research framework, this study reviewed and synthesized previous empirical articles conducted by experts and academicians in the field of leadership, organizational culture, and organizational resilience. A total of 29 articles were subjected to through analysis to structure the proposed conceptual framework and present the hypothesized relationships of the variables. The synthesis of the reviewed articles identified the independent variables used in this study which were then utilized to develop the hypotheses and eventually the conceptual framework.

## Conclusion

It can be gleaned from the reviewed literature that leadership is essential for cultivating diverse work units' resilience-building capacity. An organization needs to have leaders who inspire and motivate. Studies have shown that leadership influences organizational resilience. Moreover, leaders with high levels of resilience are able to direct the organizations in times of crises. As regards culture, it can address organizational issues like organizational decline. Culture is influenced by leadership. The response to organizational crises depends on the kind of culture and leadership that the organization have. Adjusting the culture positively affects the organizational and employee resilience.

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