

Title: Conceptualizing Organizational Resilience at an SME level

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Abstract: There seems to have greater interest in studying organizational resilience in recent years. Organizational resilience has mostly been understood as a unique organizational resource that can be deployed under stiff environmental conditions in order to survive, a traditional conceptualization of the subject phenomenon that put emphasis on the resources-based perspective. However, there seems to be less consensus over the conceptualization of organizational resilience specifically at small medium enterprise level of analysis. We present a dynamic shift from a traditional resource-based view of organizational resilience to a dynamic capability's perspective. Our findings suggest that organizational resilience necessarily entails dynamic processes of sensing, reconfigurations, and organizational learning that not only focuses on crises specific reactive strategies but also on the proactive aspects of preparedness.

Keywords: Organizational Resilience, Dynamic Capabilities View, Small Medium Enterprise, Organizational Learning, Pakistan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Small medium enterprises (SMEs) play an integral role towards economic growth; they provide goods and services, create employment opportunities and add value to the standard of living for both developed and growing economies (Taiwo, Ayodeji, and Yusuf 2012). However, the dynamic nature of the modern world has presented greater complexifications both at internal and external environmental conditions that are often hidden and only becomes apparent when they form crises. In such situations, SMEs cannot simply operate under conventional ways in order to cope up with economic downturns and uncertainties (Madsen 2010). Research has shown that more crisis-experienced SMEs tends to deploy unique proactive measures as a response to economic crises (Brzozowski, Cucculelli, and Peruzzi 2019).

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Most commonly, organizations that positively adapt to diverse internal and external environmental turbulence are recognized as resilience organizations (Britt et al. 2016). However, neither core resilience attributes nor generally applicable principles for resilience conceptualization exist in the small medium expertise sector (Kativhu, Mwale, and Francis 2018). Considerable evidence exist that highlight SME sector is affected the most in the times of crises while they are least prepared to cope up with external and internal complexifications of all the organizations (Ingirige, Jones, and Proverbs 2008). The current surge in the nationalization phenomenon and megatrends of 21st century has led to organizations facing challenges of postmodern society. Today, a greater challenge for (SMEs) is associated with the dynamic nature of varied challenges that has pressure on organizations to incorporate a sense of resiliency not only at operational but also within its strategic orientation (Vargo and Seville 2011).

Similar is the situation for SME sector in UK within the context of upcoming Brexit. While almost 99% of UK businesses are composed of SME sector having complicated supply chain networks and ties with EU (Sullivan-Taylor and Branicki 2011), Brexit represents a disruptive complexification at both internal (human resources) and external (supply chain network) levels. Same is the situation in Pakistan where SMEs constitute almost to 90% of all the organizations. SMEs in Pakistan employ 80% of the non-rural labor force while contributes 40% of GDP annually (Zafar and Mustafa 2017). Although, SMEs plays a pivotal role towards Pakistan's economic progress and creation of job opportunities (Syed et al. 2012), but research has shown that major economic disruptions, such as of global financial crisis of 2007-2008, had dire consequences for the growth of SME sector in Pakistan (Memon, Halepoto, and Shaikh 2012).

Primary work within the domain of organizational resilience has put greater emphasis on the resourcefulness factor, its proactive integration and the availability of organizational slack in the times of crisis as key drivers of resilience capacity within organizations (Cameron and Dutton 2003; Barasa, Mbau, and Gilson 2018). However, unlike large enterprises in the formal sector, SMEs are constrained by key financial and other resources. This doesn't mean however, that resilience based capacities cannot be developed within SME sector. In fact, recent scholarship has started to shift its theoretical lens from understanding organizational resilience from a resource-based perspective towards possession of dynamic capabilities (Pal, Torstensson, and Mattila 2014; Manfield 2016).

This notion is based on the view that organizational resources (both tangible and intangible) play a vital role towards its defense and survivability, however, they need to be upgraded, better yet, evolve keeping in view the nature of internal and external risks and opportunities the system is exposed to (Teece 2007). Teece (2007) highlighted that dynamic capabilities of organizations are not only weekend through poor diagnosis of the vulnerabilities but also failure of an organization to scan its competitive opportunities for future growth. Similarly, Danneels (2016) noted that second order organizational capabilities not only help organizations to cope up with the business environmental challenges but also enables them to use various technological and market related resources to grow into new directions. In this sense, dynamic capabilities view of organizational resilience presents a long term strategic maneuverability for SMEs growth in contrast to its traditional short-term survivability conceptualization. Naturally some questions emerge, how does some SMEs survive, yet prosper during the times of uncertain situations? Is it all about the possession or accessibility of valuable resources or is there something else that allows them to successfully maneuver within adverse times?

However, research within the field of management sciences is yet to reach a consensus over the specific nature of organizational resilience and academic efforts shedding light on its construct and dimensions remained in a form of a 'black

box' (Duchek 2014). Although, the term 'resilience' is a growing theme in business research, business practice, public policy and the popular press, its conceptualization have been quite varied across studies mainly because the concept itself is prodigious and fragmented within academic silos of resilient engineering, ecological studies, and supply chain management, economics, psychology and financial management (Annarelli and Nonino 2016). Conceptual similarities and differences among these streams have not yet been explored, nor have insights been gleaned into any possible principles for developing resilience (Linnenluecke 2013, 2017). Such form of conceptual fragmentation has resulted in lack of academic focus towards the development of possible conceptual framework for developing resilience capabilities within organizations, particularly at SMEs level. Therefore, this paper attempts to understand the nature and relationships of underlying processes pertaining organizational resilience at SME level.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conducting literature review within qualitative research has always been a forefront of scholarly debate. Traditionally, literature review is conducted prior to research methods sections. In this approach, scholars generally aim to shed some light on the subject phenomenon and review what has been already conducted on the topic (Cronin, Ryan, and Coughlan 2008). However, researchers also argue that conducting literature review prior to data analysis within qualitative research has the potential to bias thinking that often influence reading of themes (Glaser 2007). For some, conducting a comprehensive literature review should not be performed at all (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Even so, Savin-Baden and Major (2013) argues that literature review within qualitative studies brings numerous advantages, among the core is revealing what has been done previously and to further advance the field of study.

Trafford and Leshem (2008) further highlighted that conducting literature review should not only focus on describing what has been done but also providing a critique on what has been undertaken already. In other words, Major and Savin-Baden (2010) highlighted that synthesis of previously conducted studies should be the key part of reviewing literature as it often results in clarifying key underlying concepts and at times further avenues of study.

Keeping this view, this paper recognizes the importance of literature as it not only brings clarity by unveiling the complex nature of resilience but also synthesizes multidisciplinary viewpoints on the subject matter. Therefore, literature section within this paper is divided into three major sections. First section shed light on the multidisciplinary historicity of resilience studies while the second section attempts to focus on the management perspective towards building organizational resilience. Finally, the third section attempts to provide a synthesis towards both approaches in an attempt to understand the basic underlying principles of organizational resilience. This organization of literature is similar to what Torraco (2016) noted as integrative review of literature that aims to not only summarize previous empirical and theoretical researches but also provide a more comprehensive understanding of an organizational resilience.

Unveiling Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Organizational Resilience

Organizational Resilience is a multifaceted concept that can be seen at multiple level of analysis (Ponomarov and Holcomb 2009). The subject phenomenon has firm groundings within the domain of ecological studies that have acquired noticeable recognition from the seminal work of C. S. Holling (1973a) and (Walker et al. (2004a); Crawford S Holling 1973b; Walker et al. 2004b). At its base, resilience has been conceptualized as 'the ability/capability of the system/unit to return to a stable state after being changed' (Lance H. Gunderson 2000b; Lance H Gunderson 2000a). While others have defined resilience as

the systems property to sustain disturbances while simultaneously maintaining its core functions to work properly (Walker et al. 2004a; Walker et al. 2004b). Further research within the field have viewed ecological resilience as a consequence of complex human-environment interaction. Within this perspective, the concept of learning and adaptation has advanced the discussion on understanding resilience as an antecedent to avoiding uncertainty and risk (Adger et al. 2005). In short, socio-ecological studies defines organizational resilience as a capability of the environmental systems to maintain a stable state especially under stressful conditions that post direct threats to its survivability. While more recent literature within the area of socio-ecological studies put emphasis on nurturing diversity, both in intangible and tangible assets, for attaining higher organizational resilience (Bullock et al. 2017). Others shifts the emphasis on better understanding the environmental conditions and recognizing potential adversities that can impact the operations of a system (Falk 2017).

The second main category within the literature which discusses the concept of resilience is resilience engineering. Mainly, resilience engineering deals with the operational anomalies, disruptions, and minimizing of adverse impact on the system. Here, McManus et al. (2008) simply conceptualize resilient engineering as the capacity of a system to withstand disruptions and to be able to maintain its operations within thresholds. In other words, a resilient system is able to maintain its ability to function properly despite interruptions or failure (Catalan and Robert 2010). Similarly, Robert and Hémond (2015) presented three core components of resilient engineering. They are highlighted as follows;

- Development of appropriate levels of knowledge for maintain system operations
- Develop a system enduring capacity to withstand disruptions
- Develop adaptive capability that can allow the system to alter its ways in order to overcome problems

In other words, resilient engineering put emphasis on the pre-crisis phase by emphasizing on the proactive processes to detect and reduce the impact of adversities (Woods and Hollnagel 2017).

Economics is the third main literature domain where resilience has received considerable attention. Here, economic resilience is studied at regional level of analysis and considered as the ability of a region to maintain equilibrium state (internal stability through adaptation and change) within economic crisis (Christopherson, Michie, and Tyler 2010). Adaptation within this context is achieved through the policies that encourage innovation (Clark, Huang, and Walsh 2010), Policies that encourage knowledge dissemination and building industrial diversity within the economic system (Archibugi and Lundvall 2002), and availability of financial assets (Christopherson, Michie, and Tyler 2010).

Moreover, Simmie and Martin (2010) highlighted that building adaptability is of utmost importance for local communities especially if the economic conditions are uncertain or turbulent. They further argued that building internal resilience is the key since mostly external economic factors are uncontrollable in nature and communities that are internal robust are more likely to survive turbulent shifts within economic systems. More recent research with the domain of economic resilience defined it as the resistant ability of a region (sensitivity of the system to external shocks), recovery capability (time it takes for a region to resume stable operations), and reorientation (extend to which the region is able to adapt to newer conditions) (Faggian et al. 2018; Xie et al. 2018).

Psychological resilience represents the fourth main category that abundantly discusses resilience. Here, the level of analysis shifts from regional to individual level. Psychological resilience is considered as the ability of an individual to positively adapt after exposure to traumatic conditions (Luthans 2002). Much of positive development psychology deals with the recovery

aspects of individuals after being exposed to severe situations. For instance, “the mastery motivation system” highlights the human tendency to learn difficult tasks and build key mastery within area which are challenging in nature. In short, psychological resilience taps the concept of positive transformations over long term as an outcome of a setback. In this view, resilience is considered as form of commutative characteristics that builds over time and through unique encounters to adverse situations (Masten 2007).

Management Discourse on Organizational Resilience

The concept of resilience has received considerable attention from academicians and scholars from range of management disciplines. Most considerable of which has been the area of supply chain management. In this domain, resilience supply chain has been recognized to have the property of ‘agility’, a core competency to supply chain network to respond quickly in the time of operational disruption (Christopher and Peck 2004). While other researchers within the field have conceptualized supply chain resilience in terms of system anticipation to detect anomalies, the developed processes to endure resistance, and recovery based approaches that requires financial slack resources (Kamalahmadi and Parast 2016). However, it is important to note that much of this scholarship has been mostly focused on addressing issues at operational level of analysis (Gaonkar and Viswanadharn 2007). While more recently, literature within supply chain management has emphasized on understanding organizational resilience from strategic viewpoint (Annarelli and Nonino 2016).

Similarly, human resource management has viewed organizational resilience from an individual (employee) level of analysis. For instance, Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2005) presented the concept of resilient employees that possess unique cognitive and behavioral routines which helps them to adapt towards several contextual adversities. This development view of employee resilience is further supported by the works of Näswall et al. (2015) who conceptualized organizational resilience as a form of employee capability to utilize existing resources in order to adapt positively to challenging situations. In a way, human resource management view of resilience is much similar to what advocates of psychological resilience has portrayed about the subject matter. In other words, the view that individuals learn from their difficult encounters within the confined organizational settings is common with both of the domains. However, few others scholars have argued that such an approach towards understanding resilience represents a recovery based approaches rather resilience based approaches. For instance, Bonanno (2004) argued that being resilient is different from being able to recover from adverse encounters since resilient systems (individuals) shouldn’t be decrement in functioning on the first place.

Another management field that has given considerable attention towards organizational resilience is crisis management domain. Within this domain, special attention has been given towards understanding the nature of crisis. Crisis is defined as the events that posts challenges towards high priority values of the organizations, provides narrow window of time to take corrective measures, and are difficult to anticipate (Hermann 1963). However, there seems to be a shift in the level of analysis within crisis management discourse from focusing on natural crisis phenomenon to discussing social forms of crisis (Rosenthal 2003). Another discourse within crisis management focuses on understanding the organizational responses to adverse and disastrous events. Here, the role of organizational resources has been emphasized to bring back stability into the system (Sommer and Pearson 2007).

While others have signified the role of adaptability in organizational practices towards achieving resilience. Seminal work by McManus et al. (2007) highlight three important characteristics namely; situational awareness, management of keystone vulnerabilities, and adaptability to be key characteristics of a resilient system. However, Koronis and Ponis (2018) argued

that traditional frameworks of crises management necessarily focus on recovery based approaches towards understanding organizational resilience, something that happens after crisis is struck, while these approaches undermine the strategic aspects of handling adversities and recovery after crisis. For them, such approaches towards crises handling are short-term in nature and doesn't incorporate strategic challenges that goes beyond recovery based approaches and resilient trajectories for building organizational resilience.

Synthesizing Multidisciplinary Discourse on Organizational Resilience

It is evident that both socio-ecological and engineering domains signifies the role of building resilient systems, however, the former focuses on learning from crisis while later focuses on prevention processes to minimize the impact of crisis. This phenomenon is somewhat similar to understanding resilience within management discourse. While supply chain management greatly emphasize on building situational sensing capabilities, on the contrary, human resource management highlights the role of post crisis event transformations. However, contemporary work within all research domains emphasized the need to study organizational resilience from a strategic management perspective (development of organizational resilience strategic capabilities) rather mere response based approaches to when crisis occurs. (Bonanno 2004; Annarelli and Nonino 2016; Britt et al. 2016; Koronis and Ponis 2018).

Moreover, organizational capability to adapt in the face of uncertain situation seems to be common across all streams of literature. It seems that adaptability represents the nexus of organizational resilience concept. However, there seems to be less consensus towards understanding what adaptability means. It is very interesting that to see that disciplines that are closer towards hard sciences seems to put emphasis towards pre-crisis aspects of dealing with adversities such as building crisis anticipation processes (Gaonkar and Viswanadharn 2007). While disciplines that are more oriented towards social aspects seems to signify the role of post-crisis management systems such as learning and transformation (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, and Lengnick-Hall 2011).

Lastly, much of resilient scholarship has discussed the subject phenomenon at a more operational level of analysis. While contemporary field within the respective domains are now calling for studying resilience as strategic initiative rather than dealing with day to day issues (Annarelli and Nonino 2016). This idea highlight a paradigm shift in the theoretical understanding of resilience from being reactive tactic of organizations to building a more rejuvenating dynamic system of resilience capabilities such as ongoing processes and routines of anticipation, adaptation, and transformation in coping with ever changing environmental complexities (Blechschnitt and Brauer 2016; Mandal and Pattni 2016; Doerfel and Prezelj 2017).

III. RESEARCH METHOD

PROCEDURE

Participants for the study were informed about the research two weeks earlier. Informed consent was shared with all the participants before the start of information collection process. Participants were telephoned after one week for the purpose of seeking their confirmation regarding their willingness to participate in the study and a date was made with the participants who agreed. Individual interviews took place at their respective offices and informed consent formed was taken for the audio to be recorded.

PARTICIPANTS

Five participants aged between 45 to 65 years were recruited. Participant selected for the study are CEO of five different small medium expertise (SME) and represent a minimum of 25 years of working experience. CEOs were selected as a proxy representative of their organizations since they are responsible for the strategic maneuverability of their respective organizations in the face of environmental turbulence. Their selection as participants of the study should provide a more reliable view of strategic processes pertaining organizational resilience (Papadakis and Barwise 2002). Five SME's CEOs represented the professional service sector organizations of education, tourism, branding, business consultancy, and architectural organizations. Reason for the selection of professional service firm's CEO is related to the view that these type of organizations operate within relatively dynamic environment subject to high degree of both internal and external complexifications (Løwendahl and Revang 1998). Snowball sampling has been used for identifying the CEOs of professional service organizations that are seen as resilient by previous respondents. Although, five participants represent a very small sample size for the study. However, given the nature of this study being phenomenological, and due to the limited opportunity for interviewing top management professionals, 5-6 participants represent the minimum criteria for sample size (Creswell and Poth 2017). Following table highlights the brief profile of the participants.

Table 1: Participants' Profile

Participant Code	Industry	Age	Experience
Participant A	Management Consultancy	58 years	33 years
Participant B	Textile and Branding	45 years	26 years
Participant C	Management Education	50 years	22 years
Participant D	Architectural Consultancy	46 years	25 years
Participant E	Travel Agency and Tourism	60 years	35 years

Apparatus

Interview protocol included 8 semi-structured questions about organizational resilience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted due to three specific reasons (Major and Savin-Baden 2012). First, due to the limitation of a single opportunity for conducting interviews from CEOs. Second, to confine responses within the domain of organizational resilience experiences. Third, to probe discussion and flow of ideas from a general view of resilience to a more specific view of resilience at organizational level. The nature of the questions focused on defining organizational resilience, an assessment on describing the level of their organizational resilience, and the opportunity to provide an example of how the organization responded when faced with unique internal and external challenges. The interview questions were developed for the purpose of initiating, but not limiting, dialogue about adaptation in response to different types of complexifications. The interview protocol was developed keeping in view the theoretical underpinnings of organizational resilience highlighted by Coutu (2002) and Witmer

and Mellinger (2016). Overall, the semi-structured interview session took on average of 35 minutes to complete. Appendix-A highlights the nature and sequence of questions asked during unstructured interviews.

Analysis

Thematic analysis is the most commonly used procedure for qualitative data analysis. For this purpose, each data collection point has been analyzed separately while associated themes have been identified and aggregated under a single source document. Thematic analysis of the acquired information was completed in six steps as proposed by Liamputtong (2019). For the purpose of performing thematic analysis, detailed manuscripts of each data collection point have been separately prepared. Initial coding schemes have been prepared for the purpose of arranging data into meaningful manner. Appendix-B highlights the details of codes extracted initially from the rich interview data. Table 1 highlights the process of searching for subthemes and ultimately final themes. The subsequent section highlights the results obtained from thematic analysis in a systematic fashion.

IV. RESULTS

Collection of information from semi-structured interviews resulted into the extraction of 6 major themes. Details of these themes and respective findings are highlighted below.

Theme Number 1: Resilient Sensing

All five respondent emphasized 22 times on the need for developing resilient sensing processes within organizations. Sensing in this sense, referred to the processes of identifying and being aware of the dynamic shifts within external environment of the organization. Such processes composed of understanding the changing customer trends, technological and process changes, and respective industrial changes pertaining economic and social development resulting in the emergence of new areas of activity and decline in traditional sectors. Furthermore, respondents highlighted the need of not only detecting potential anomalies preemptively before it's too late to successfully adapt but also understanding the potential impact of such events on current business feasibility. For respondents, sensing entails preparedness that there are no surprises for organizations when it comes to understanding the current and future challenges of their respective industries.

Theme Number 2: Resilient Reconfiguration

The most common theme found refers to successfully reconfiguring organizational strategy in the face of internal or external disruptions. All five respondents referred to this theme on a total of 76 times. Key here is to understand that respondents referred to reconfiguration as a key business strategy not rarely deployed but actually practiced by SMEs on regular basis. There are two key constituting elements of this theme. First, behavioral flexibility which respondents described as the capability of the organization to be flexible in decision making processes and being able to modify (adapt) its current behavior in response to the internal and external changes and obstacles in the environment. Some of the key features of this concept entails moving with the change, timely response, changing line of action, innovation, and taking corrective actions under stiff environmental changes. Second, endurance capacity of the organizations to withstand the impact of crisis resulting from both internal and external anomalies. Endurance in organizational context is identified as form of 'shock observer' that allows the organizations to transform based on situational basis of unprecedented events resulting from either changes in customers, employees, or vendors' preferences. However, all respondents identified that endurance and behavioral flexibility is not about

making a compromise under turbulent situations but actually about the willpower and determination to achieve the organizational goals (profitability) by being able to continuously adapt to more favorable positions.

Theme Number 3: Organizational Learning Processes

Four respondents highlighted 23 times the need for organizations to learn from its interactions with its environment. Respondents identified knowledge as a key resource for organizations that can be acquired as an outcome of dealing with changing demands of customers, organizational mistakes, and environmental situation of the organization. All respondent who contributed towards this theme identified organizational learning as a continuous process of reflexivity on each action the organization makes. Respondent further emphasized on the importance of knowledge assets acquired from organizational learning processes that helps the organization to not only successfully detect potential anomalies but also be able to adapt given the nature and severity of the situation.

Theme Number 4: Resilience Ethos

Four respondents emphasized 20 times the need of building a culture of resilience ethos. For respondents, resilience ethos refers to the unique kind of organizational culture that can effectively support the underlying processes of organizational resilience. Key features identified in this theme refers to the development of employees' psychological safety at all levels of hierarchy so that they can contribute in decision making process, role of organizational leadership in promoting resilience mindedness, systems thinking, and increasing communication levels (sharing of knowledge) at all organizational levels. All respondents identified resilience ethos as a necessary condition or a prerequisite to organizational resilience.

Theme Number 5: Availability of Organizational Slack

Four respondents emphasized 11 times the need for organizations to make slack resources available that can be deployed quickly to bring in a successful change. Key resources identified are financial as well as knowledge based resources that organizations can utilize under dynamic environment. However, respondents relatively emphasized more towards the availability of knowledge resources over financial resources when it comes to the level of importance of different types of slack resources. For respondents, knowledge based resources can be developed by making sure that organizations have at all-time presence of knowledge workers within its human resources. For respondents, the utilization of knowledge workers should be done in way that they are able to go beyond their normal job activities in order to find key solutions to problematic situation as they emerge. Table 2 highlights some of the important quotes from the respondents and associated themes.

Table 2: Creation of Themes through Thematic Analysis of Initially Coded References

Initial Code References	Subthemes	Extracted Themes	Reference Quotes
R1, R2, R3	Building Situation Awareness	(T1) Resilient Sensing	“The most important of all is that you have to sense a change in the environment. If you cannot sense the change in an environment, you cannot become resilient.”
R20, R21, R22	Preparedness		“Even if the uncertainty is resolved or things get better, you have to prepare at your fullest to possible problems that could happen or about to happen or have happened. You have to be mentally prepared. If I assume that issue would be resolved itself or things would get better and I don’t need an immediate solution for the problem, than my staff would get even lazier than me.”
R4, R5, R6, R7, R8 R24, R26, R27, R28, R29, R30, R31	Behavioral Flexibility Timely Adaptation	(T2) Resilient Reconfiguration	“In order to generate these finances (profits) one have to sometimes exhibit diplomacy or sometimes have to bend their rules. When it is required to bend the rules in order to find a way ahead, this behavior can be seen as resilience”
R25	Endurance Capacity		“I believe that a person should know how to transform his/her personality like water. If you pour water in the jug it transforms itself like the shape of the jug. If you pour water in a glass, it will change its shape like it. The personality of the business should also be like that of water.

<p>R9,R10,R11, R12,R13,R14</p>	<p>Continuous Learning</p>	<p>(T3) Organizational Learning Processes</p>	<p>“When a person is born, he knows nothing. That person learns from its surroundings and the world. When I started the work I only knew things related to interior designing. When I started I didn’t had any education, study, or theoretical support. All I have learned is from my surroundings and my environment.”</p>
<p>R23, R19, R16, R18</p>	<p>Employees Psychological Safety, Communication at all levels, Leadership Commitment, Systems Thinking</p>	<p>(T5) Resilience Ethos</p>	<p>“I have to listen to everyone and same is in the office. I am like a mother to all of my workface and I have to manage them. I have to listen to everyone and keep everyone motivated.”</p>
<p>R32, R33</p>	<p>Availability of Financial Resources Availability of Knowledge Resource</p>	<p>(T6) Availability of Organizational Slack Resources</p>	<p>“For this reason, either knowledge or financial assets should be present in an entity to be adaptive. Our elders use to say that if one has a skill (tacit knowledge) that person (entity) will never die of hunger”</p>

V. DISCUSSION

The generation of five major themes resulted into the confirmation of existing knowledge as well as new findings pertaining current organizational resilience theory. This study entails originality from the perspective that it focuses on organizational resilience within Pakistani context of professional services organizations. In our sample, most notable identified theme has been the processes of resilient reconfiguration of SMEs in the face of dynamic environmental shifts. Three underlying processes of this theme has been level of behavioral flexibility, adaptability, and endurance. Interestingly, previous studies within the domain of disaster management have also identified flexibility and adaptability as a key feature of organizational resilience (Coutu 2002; McManus et al. 2007; McManus et al. 2008). While research within the domain of resilient engineering has also emphasized on the capacity of organization to withstand the impact of external disruptions (Robert and Hémond 2015). Similarly, underlying processes of developing preparedness and situational awareness within the theme of resilient sensing has also been numerous referred by previous researchers within multidisciplinary research domains such as resilient engineering (Woods and Hollnagel 2017), resilient economics (Xie et al. 2018), and supply chain management (Annarelli and Nonino 2016).

Although, both resilient sensing and resilient reconfiguration have been the nexus of multidisciplinary research domains and confirmed through our findings, one notable contribution of this study has been the identification of organizational learning processes as a key process of resilient organizations. Historically, learning has been identified as a key feature of resilient personality trait within the domain of developmental psychology where it is identified as an ability of individuals to ‘positively transform’ over the course of human development as a result of dealing with uncertainties and hardships (Masten 2007). From an organizational level of analysis, the view of positive transformation is similar to the (Luthans 2002) understanding of resilience as a capability of organizational employees to transform or positively adapt to adverse situations. However, we argue that there is a clear difference between conceptualizing resilience as an ability of organizations to simply learn from their mistakes without change in their existing mental frameworks (single-loop learning) versus higher-order learning that aims to change the long held underlying assumptions and beliefs of the organizations (Cope 2003).

This essentially means that reconfiguration (adaptability, endurance, and behavioral flexibility) dimension of organizational resilience conceptualization represents the reactive feature rather than forward looking aspect that can be seen in historical changes in trajectories or paths that SMEs takes to deal with uncertain situations (Galatzer-Levy et al. 2011). Yet, another distinctive feature of organizational resilience would be the capability of SMEs to bring change within its long held beliefs and core capabilities as a result of higher order (2nd order) learning processes that are present and exercised on continuous basis.

Participant 5: *“One should always make a habit of reconsidering their actions. Reconsideration should be the part of your life. You should be able to change your situation and conditions. One should always ask questions such as “How can this be possible? It is possible if I reconsider my actions and my doings”. You have to reconsider both good and bad events and outcomes. When you are doing business, both positive and negative people and situations will come to you. Everything should be reconsidered in your life. Your actions, your beliefs, your behavior, and your outcomes should always be reconsidered by yourself”*

Although, resilience trajectories approaches tend to examine the time it takes by organizations to “bounce back” from adversities, other scholars have argued that such approaches represent aspects of recovery rather than resilience; being resilient

shouldn't be confused with being able to only recover because resilient as a characteristic doesn't entail being decrement in functioning on the first place (Bonanno 2004). Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2005) presented a more comprehensive view of the organizational resilience and highlight the importance of organizational transformation, beyond adaptive capability feature, as a form of internal mechanism of change. It is important to note here that all three identified themes (resilient sensing, resilient reconfiguration, and organizational learning) represent a process view of organizational resilience due the nature of their relationship as being systematically linked with each other. However, since double loop learning entails feedback loops cycles (Argyris 1977), we propose that organizational learning within resilient SMEs directly feeds into the sensing processes that helps organizations to not only better prepared but can also change its long held assumptions regarding external industrial environment and internal capabilities required to successfully adapt. For instance, Nikolić et al. (2019) reported that entrepreneurs who consider external business environmental factors (political, social, and technological) as important drivers of SME performance have relatively higher levels of recovery after economic crises. Therefore, we propose that moving beyond organizational ability to adapt requires understanding organizational resilience as dynamic capability of SMEs that allows timely strategic maneuverability through higher order learning processes that often result in change of core organizational processes, routines, and resource base while this also allows the SMEs to better prepare and make sense of its surroundings.

Furthermore, our findings also highlighted variety of organizational contextual variables as necessary drivers to organizational resilience process. At first, it seems that discussing what enables organizational resilience goes beyond the focus of this study. However, there are many reasons why studying organizational resilience in isolation to its supporting mechanism marginalized its conceptual understanding. Conceptualizing organizational resilience as a dynamic capability naturally raise the discussion regarding the aspects that supports or nurture such form of capabilities. We face similar situation during the conduct of semi-structured interviews where further probing lead to participants also shedding light on the 'ways' organizations could build and further strengthen their resilient capabilities. These antecedents to building dynamic capabilities is what Teece (2007) refers to as 'micro-foundations' of developing higher order capabilities (dynamic capabilities).

We identified two themes namely "availability of organizational slack resources" and "resilience ethos" as prerequisite to building resilience organizations. These findings are also consistent from the seminal works of Vogus and Sutcliffe (2007) who emphasized on the need for building organizational slack resources for nurturing organizational resilience. However, we argue that although organizational slack resources are necessary requirement for successful adaptation, they are merely useful in implementing a unique strategic response. While the thoughtful processes and decision that lead to the selection of a unique response, what Preble (2003) refers to as strategy formulation process, entails dynamic organizational resilience capability. Since, organizational structure and strategy are inheritably linked (Grinyer and Yasai-Ardekani 1981), studying organizational resilience in isolation to understanding organizational structures that supports resilience only gives a partial view of the subject phenomenon. Fig. 1 represents our understanding of the conceptual framework underlying organizational resilience.

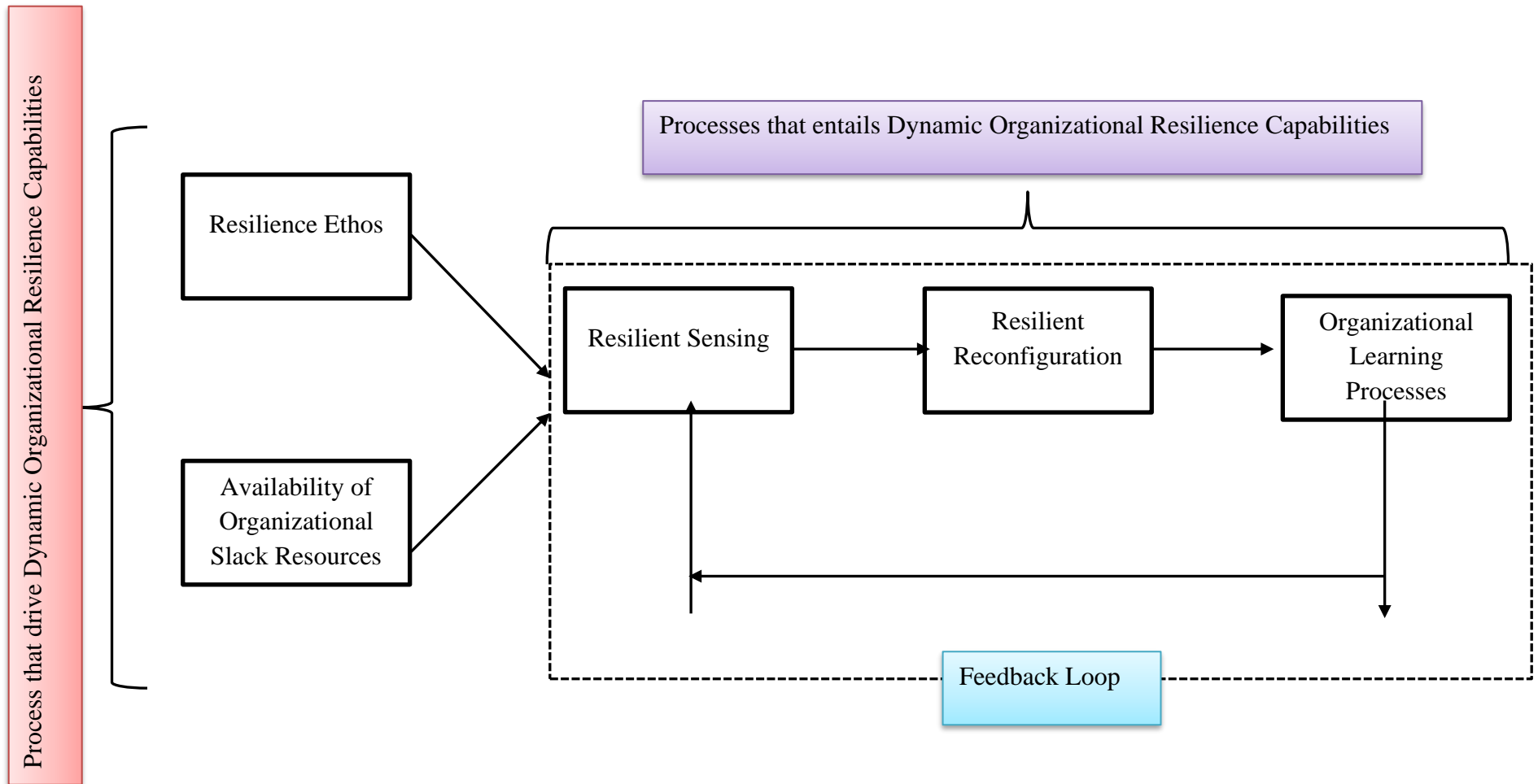


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Organizational Resilience within SME

Future Directions

The notion of conceptualizing organizational resilience as a unique form of dynamic capabilities is consistent with the views of Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) who emphasized that dynamic capabilities are higher order organizational capabilities that are manifested within knowledge intensive tasks of strategic decision making process in which managers capitalize on their personal expertise to make strategic choices (strategic formulation processes) that defines organizational strategic posture. We argue that resilient processes within organizations holds strategic value (Annarelli and Nonino 2016) as they allow the organizations to make emergent strategic choices.

In other words, the challenge is not to find the solution of every problem that organizations face under uncertain environmental conditions, but actually to develop such form of capabilities which enable them to act preemptively and continue to do so by incorporating new knowledge towards its routines and activities (Burnard and Bhamra 2011). By integrating dynamic capabilities perspective into organizational resilience scholarship, further research attempts can validate or improve our preliminary findings.

1 Appendix-A

Nature and Sequence of Semi-structured Interview Questions
1. What do you think about when I state the word resilience?
2. In your opinion is the organization you are a part of a resilient organization? Why or why not?
3. Can you recall a story that provides an example of organizational resilience in action in your organization?
4. External environmental complexification can be both advantages or disadvantages for the firm. Such complexifications can be, a change in customers' needs and wants, government rules and regulations, law and policy change, technological change, or economical change that can directly or indirectly affect the organization's ability to perform. Can you describe an example(s) of a time that the organization improvised, or did not improvise when faced with an external environmental changes?

5. Internal environmental complexification can be both advantages or disadvantages for the firm. Such complexifications can be, a change in organizational human resources, required knowledge to perform business operations effectively, and change in organizational physical resources that can directly or indirectly affect the organization's ability to perform.

Can you describe an example(s) of a time that the organization improvised, or did not improvise when faced with an internal environmental changes?

6. Can you talk about how the organization remains aware of and adaptes to shifts in the environment that could impact the organization?

7. Can you describe an example(s) of a time that the organization had to change its approach or rethink of new ways in order to achieve its goals?

8. Is there anything I missed that you would like to add about resilience and your organization's ability adapt to funding changes?

2 Appendix-B

Name of Initial Codes	Assigned Code References	Emphasis on the Codes by Respondents
Aware of the potential impact of current situations	R1	1 Respondents highlighted 1 times
Continuous Situational Awareness	R2	5 Respondents highlighted 9 times
Understanding Trends in Customer Needs	R3	4 Respondents highlighted 7 time
Behavioral Flexibility	R4	4 Respondents highlighted 10 time
Flexibility in dealing with relationships	R5	1 Respondents highlighted 2 time
Flexibility in Decision Making	R6	1 Respondents highlighted 3 times
Rule Switching	R7	1 Respondents highlighted 5 time
Diplomatic in communication	R8	1 Respondents highlighted 6 times
Resilience as continuous practice	R9	3 Respondents highlighted 5 times
Resilience is embedded into a system	R10	1 Respondents highlighted 2 time
Learning from Environment (Exploration)	R11	1 Respondents highlighted 4 times
Learning new things required by the market (Exploration)	R12	1 Respondents highlighted 4 times
Learning from mistakes (Exploitation)	R13	1 Respondents highlighted 1 times
Reflection on every action (Exploitation)	R14	1 Respondents highlighted 2 times

Dynamic (Stiff) Environment	R15	1 Respondents highlighted 5 time
Employee Psychological Safety	R16	2 Respondents highlighted 6 time
Increase communication at all levels	R18	2 Respondents highlighted 4 times
Leadership Commitment	R19	1 Respondents highlighted 1 times
Forward Thinking	R20	1 Respondents highlighted 2 times
Impact of being prepared	R21	1 Respondents highlighted 1 times
No Surprises	R22	1 Respondents highlighted 1 times
Systems Thinking	R23	1 Respondents highlighted 8 time
Change line of action	R24	2 Respondents highlighted 3 times
Endurance Capacity	R25	3 Respondents highlighted 17 times
Getting into action (not being static)	R26	3 Respondents highlighted 5 times
Immediate Response	R27	3 Respondents highlighted 6 time
Innovation (Finding a way out)	R28	4 Respondents highlighted 9 times
Moving with the change	R29	4 Respondents highlighted 7 times
Right place right time	R30	1 Respondents highlighted 1 times
Taking Corrective Measures	R31	2 Respondents highlighted 2 times
Availability of Finances	R32	2 Respondents highlighted 3 times

Availability of Knowledge assets	R33	3 Respondents highlighted 8 times
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