

Towards an integrative conceptual model of entrepreneurial resilience for SMEs: A literature-based approach

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Abstract

Resilience has become a valuable asset for navigating uncertainty and adapting to adversity. Despite the growing interest in resilience in the context of SMEs, its individual and organizational dimensions have largely been examined as separate constructs. To address this gap, this paper presents a comprehensive framework of entrepreneurial resilience that combines both individual and organizational dimensions. The study conducts a structured literature review of peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 to 2025, identified through Scopus and Web of Sciences. The proposed model is based on the integration of individual and organizational dimensions of resilience, offering a holistic view of this capacity within SMEs. Specifically, it outlines the relationship between a leader's individual resilience and organizational resilience, taking into account the moderating role of internal leadership. It also, conceptualizes the relationship between multi-level resilience and overall SME performance, shedding light on the influence of external social ties on the impact of organizational resilience on performance. As a result, five research propositions are formulated, linking individual resilience, organizational resilience, entrepreneurial leadership, external networks, and SME overall performance. The study provides a path for future empirical validation within the specific context of Moroccan SMEs, aiming to provide practical insights for both entrepreneurs and policymakers to foster more resilient business ecosystems.

Keywords: Individual resilience, organizational resilience, SMEs, performance, conceptual model.

JEL Classification : L26, M13, L25, M10.

Paper type : Theoretical Research.

Résumé

Dans un contexte marqué par une volatilité croissante, la résilience est devenue un atout essentiel permettant aux entreprises de faire face à l'incertitude et s'adapter à l'adversité. Cependant, les travaux existants ont tendance à aborder la résilience selon des perspectives individuelles ou organisationnelles distinctes, sans pour autant mettre en lumière les mécanismes qui relient ces deux niveaux d'analyse. Dans cette perspective, cette recherche propose un cadre conceptuel holistique de la résilience entrepreneuriale fondée sur une revue structurée de la littérature réalisée à partir des bases de données Scopus et Web of Sciences, couvrant les articles publiés entre 2015 et 2025. D'une part, le modèle proposé met en évidence le lien entre la résilience individuelle du dirigeant et la résilience organisationnelle, tout en tenant compte du rôle modérateur du leadership entrepreneurial dans cette relation. D'autre part, il conceptualise la relation entre cette résilience multiniveau et la performance globale des PME, en mettant en lumière l'influence des partenariats externes sur l'effet de la résilience organisationnelle sur la performance. L'étude aboutit à la formulation de cinq propositions de recherche articulant les relations entre résilience individuelle, résilience organisationnelle, leadership entrepreneurial, réseaux externes et performance globale des PME. Cette recherche fournit une base pour une validation empirique future dans le contexte spécifique des PME marocaines, avec pour objectif d'apporter des enseignements utiles tant aux entrepreneurs qu'aux décideurs publics, afin de contribuer au développement d'écosystèmes entrepreneuriaux plus résilients.

Mots clés : Résilience individuelle, résilience organisationnelle, PME, performance, modèle conceptuel.

JEL Classification : L26, M13, L25, M10.

Type du papier : Recherche Théorique.

1. Introduction

In an increasingly volatile and uncertain economic environment, resilience has become a critical asset for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to navigate uncertainty and cope with adverse conditions. According to the Moroccan Observatory of Very Small, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (OMTPME, 2025), Very Small, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (VSMEs) represent 99.5% of all active businesses and are major contributors to employment, value creation, and economic development. Given their central role in the national economy and their particular vulnerability to disruptions, strengthening their resilience has become a strategic priority, enabling them not only to withstand adversity but also to adapt, recover, and bounce back from disruptions.

The concept of resilience has evolved over time, moving from an individual perspective toward a broader, multilevel perspective. Drawing on a structured literature review of peer-reviewed articles from Scopus and Web of Science published between 2015 and 2025, this study proposes a multi-level framework of resilience that explains the mechanisms through which individual and organizational resilience interact, particularly in the context of SMEs.

Resilience operates on multiple levels, from the entrepreneur's personal and psychological attributes, such as endurance, determination, emotional strength, and decision-making under pressure, to organizational structures and capabilities that support ongoing adaptation (Southwick et al., 2017). However, the literature has often dealt with these levels separately; either by focusing on the entrepreneur's personal traits or by examining organizational dimensions. Although an increasing number of studies have called for a more integrated perspective on resilience (Korber & McNaughton, 2018), important gaps remain. In particular, medium-sized firms are often overlooked, and many conceptual frameworks struggle to capture the interaction between different levels of resilience. The adoption of a multilevel perspective sheds light on how these dimensions interact and collectively shape SME performance. In doing so, we respond to recent calls for more systemic approaches to understanding resilience in entrepreneurial contexts (Koporcic et al., 2025; Korber & McNaughton, 2018). Accordingly, this paper introduces an integrative conceptual framework that articulates the entrepreneur's individual resilience and the organization's resilience capabilities within a unified multilevel perspective.

This conceptual framework seeks to answer four interrelated research questions. The first question focuses on the mechanisms through which entrepreneurs' individual resilience contributes to organizational resilience. Building on this relationship, the second question examines the moderating role of entrepreneurial leadership in transforming individual psychological resources into collective adaptive capabilities. The third question investigates how individual and organizational resilience influence SME performance. Finally, the fourth question explores the contribution of external social ties and strategic networking to strengthening organizational resilience and enhancing firm performance, particularly in contexts characterized by limited institutional support.

Q1: How, and through what specific mechanisms, does the individual resilience of an entrepreneur (e.g., psychological capital and resourcefulness) translate into organizational resilience within SMEs?

RQ2: To what extent does entrepreneurial leadership play the role of a moderating factor in transforming personal psychological resources into collective adaptive capabilities and organizational routines?

RQ3: How do the individual and organizational dimensions of resilience influence the overall performance of SMEs, considering both financial indicators and subjective measures of strategic growth?

RQ4: What is the impact of external social ties and strategic networking on the relationship

between organizational resilience and firm performance, particularly in contexts characterized by limited institutional support?

The study makes both theoretical and practical contributions. From a theoretical perspective, it develops an integrative multilevel conceptual model that clarifies the relationships between individual resilience, entrepreneurial leadership, organizational resilience, external networks, and SME performance. From a practical perspective, the proposed model provides a path for future empirical validation within the specific context of Moroccan SMEs, aiming to provide practical insights for both entrepreneurs and policymakers to foster more resilient business ecosystems.

The paper is structured as follows. The first section presents the theoretical foundations of the study, namely the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV). It also reviews the literature on individual and organizational resilience, and how each relates to SMEs' performance. The second section presents the methodology adopted for the structured literature review. The third section outlines the proposed conceptual framework, detailing its core dimensions, internal logic, and the propositions that emerge from it. The fourth section discusses the theoretical contributions and implications of the framework. Finally, the paper concludes with the main findings and study limitations giving directions for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) offers a helpful lens for examining resilience within SMEs. According to (Barney, 1991), owning resources is not the only condition for firms to resist under pressure, but the challenge is to mobilize and leverage them effectively, especially in tough or unpredictable conditions. From this perspective, resilience is considered as a function of how internal resources are managed and put into action when pressure mounts. Duchek (2020) adds depth to this idea by classifying resources into three categories: temporal, financial, and human. The role they play depends particularly on the phase of the crisis. While financial slack and time matter most before and during the disruption, human resources such as entrepreneurial intuition, experience, and the ability to pick up on weak signals, tend to be more critical during and after the crisis unfolds. This approach deepens our understanding of entrepreneurial resilience by connecting it directly to the diversity and quality of resources possessed by SME leaders. Building on the RBV, Barney et al., (2001) suggest that instead of considering entrepreneurs as passive resource-holders, they play a crucial role in shaping how those assets are used and deployed. The authors highlight the influence of leaders' personal judgment, skills, and experience on the way firm adapts, makes decisions, and survives shifting conditions. From this perspective, resilience is seen as a dynamic capability that emerges from the ability to reconfigure resources in order to respond proactively to shock and uncertainty. It also reinforces the idea that in many SMEs, resilience is deeply tied to the entrepreneur's mindset and his ability to act under pressure.

This view is supported by several empirical studies. For instance, Seraj et al. (2022) use RBV to show how some core aspects of human capital such as entrepreneurial competencies and financial literacy, are linked to firm's sustainable performance, especially when resilience helps activate these intangible assets. Also, Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, (2011) emphasize the pivotal role played by managerial agency in enhancing the firm's ability to reconfigure and deploy its resources effectively, especially in times of crises. More recently, Hussain et al., (2022) extended this thinking into digital change. They consider entrepreneurial competencies as strategic, intangible resources during digital transformation. Technology adoption doesn't depend on infrastructure availability only, but also on resilience capacity of the entrepreneur

and his openness to change. This insight is particularly relevant for Moroccan SMEs, many of which are navigating digital transitions under mounting pressure and resource constraints.

2.2. Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV)

The Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) considers resilience as a process rather than a static trait or attribute firms passively rely on during crises. It is reviewed as something that can be built and developed over time through experience, learning, and the ability to adjust when conditions shift. Teece et al., (1997) describe dynamic capabilities as a firm's ability to reconfigure its internal and external resources to face disruption and bounce back from crises. This approach makes a lot of sense for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in uncertain or underdeveloped environments. Furthermore, sustainable performance can be achieved through the orchestration of organizational assets and entrepreneurial management, the combination of both provides the firm with the resilience required to navigate a global economy characterized by rapid innovation and constant change (Teece, 2007). As Zahra et al., (2006) point out, dynamic capabilities allow firms to shift direction and transform while operational routines guarantee business continuity. That's what makes them crucial for firm's survival especially in unpredictable and volatile contexts. Barreto, (2010) argues that dynamic capabilities outcomes shouldn't just be measured by short-term performance. Their concrete impact remains in developing the firm's long-term ability to adapt, grow, and keep moving through uncertainty. For SMEs, this framing suggests that far from being a static personal trait, resilience evolves through everyday decisions and the willingness to try new approaches that enhance firm's adaptation capacity. This perspective is particularly insightful for SME's operating in developing economies where this ability to adjust matters more than any initial advantage in funding or assets. Later, Wilden et al., (2013) shed light on three key processes of dynamic capabilities: sensing opportunities or threats, seizing them effectively, and reconfiguring resources accordingly. In other words, just having these capabilities is not enough on its own, firms need to be internally ready for change and aware of their contextual constraints such as market conditions and competitive dynamics. This underlines the necessity for resource constrained SMEs not only to develop dynamic capabilities, but to use them strategically, in ways that are responsive to the firm's specific circumstances. This connection between dynamic capabilities and resilience has been highlighted by Protogerou et al., (2012) who argue that dynamic capabilities measured through learning, coordination, and responsiveness, contribute to enhancing the firm's ability to renew its basic operational capabilities and then indirectly fostering sustainability. Overall, the dynamic capabilities view reframes entrepreneurial resilience as a proactive capacity, enhanced through experience, strategic foresight, and resource reconfiguration, instead of a passive reaction to disruption.

Taken together, these perspectives provide the theoretical foundation for the conceptual model proposed in this study by explaining the relationships between individual resilience, organizational resilience, and SME performance.

2.3. Entrepreneurial resilience : from an individual to a multilevel perspective

The concept of resilience was originally introduced in ecology to describe a system's ability to return to equilibrium after experiencing a shock (Seville et al., 2008). In the entrepreneurial context, resilience is considered as a multifaceted concept that includes individual, organizational, and systemic aspects. Initially, research focused on the personal traits of entrepreneurs that enable them to develop their capacity to deal with setbacks and bounce back after failure (Bullough & Renko, 2013). At the individual level, personal attributes like perseverance, optimism, and creativity often emerge as key enablers of resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003). This perspective emphasizes the psychological and mental resilience of entrepreneurs. However, resilience goes beyond a set of static personality traits. Later studies

expanded the view by incorporating structural, social, and contextual factors (Hayward et al., 2010; Hedner et al., 2011). This reflects an ongoing debate in the literature regarding whether resilience should be understood primarily as an individual disposition or as a dynamic process. According to Southwick et al. (2017) leadership plays an important role in cultivating resilience. They shed light on three main personal attributes of resilient leaders: a clear value system that facilitates decision-making under pressure, a balanced optimism that sustains a long-term vision while acknowledging present difficulties, and cognitive flexibility, which comprises the ability to tolerate ambiguity and drive innovation in challenging times.

At the organizational level, resilience reflects the company's ability not only to absorb and respond to disruption but also to anticipate market changes while staying aligned with its strategic goals and maintaining operational continuity. It entails a mix of agility, collaboration and the early detection of warning signs (Lee et al., 2013). This outlines two key components; planning and adaptation; the former helps prepare for change, while the latter ensures a rapid and effective response. Burnard and Bhamra,(2011) argue that resilience is an outcome of the company's internal capabilities. It requires a set of organizational abilities such as situational awareness, vulnerability management, and the restoration of key functions after a disruption. While Lee et al. (2013) emphasize preparedness through planning and anticipation, Burnard and Bhamra, (2011) place greater emphasis on adaptive capabilities, organizational learning, and recovery. Although these perspectives are complementary, they illustrate different conceptualizations of organizational resilience and highlight the absence of a unified framework. Viewed this way, organizational resilience becomes a strategic asset that enables businesses to turn crises into learning opportunities. In doing so, it enhances the firm's capacity to compete and survive in uncertain environments.

However, despite the growing interest in entrepreneurial resilience, its individual and organizational dimensions have predominantly been studied separately. Consequently, the mechanisms through which individual resilience is translated into organizational resilience and contributes to SME performance remain underexplored. This lack of conceptual integration highlights the need for adopting a multilevel perspective that integrates these dimensions within a holistic conceptual framework.

2.4. The specific nature of resilience in SMEs

In his study on SMEs' resilience, Kotsios (2023) points out the decisive role of managers' competencies, especially soft skills, in building and fostering resilience. Entrepreneurs' capacities, such as reliability, integrity, and work ethics, are identified as vital during crises, acting as drivers of business survival and continuity. Moreover, soft skills such as communication, decision-making, risk identification and assessment, financial management, and planning are also considered as core contributors to SMEs' resilience. Furthermore, Zhou et al.(2023) argue that to become resilient, SMEs need to develop and foster specific organizational capabilities that can enable them to anticipate, absorb, and adapt effectively to unexpected disruptions. Koporcic et al.(2025) outline five key resilience drivers for SMEs: developing continuity plans, promoting a culture of resilience, utilizing appropriate technologies, adopting proactive production strategies, and forming strategic partnerships.

Adopting a more pragmatic approach, Sullivan-Taylor and Branicki,(2011) explain that far from being shaped by formal plans or complex strategies, SMEs' resilience relies primarily on their ability to improvise, resourcefulness under pressure, and fast decision-making. In summary, SMEs' resilience doesn't take a single form. It stems from the interaction between the entrepreneur, the organization, and its broader environment (Koporcic et al., 2025).

In summary, SMEs resilience doesn't take a single form. It stems from the interaction between the entrepreneur, the organization, and its broader environment (Koporcic et al., 2025). The combination of personal attributes, internal capabilities and social capital enhances the firm's

ability to absorb disruption, adapt to changing conditions, and even reinvent itself. However, the literature still provides limited explanations regarding how these different dimensions interact within an integrated conceptual framework, particularly in explaining their combined influence on firm performance.

2.5. Overall performance of SMEs

Despite the growing interest in implementing performance measurement systems, their adoption remains limited in SMEs (Garengo et al., 2005). This is due to both exogenous constraints, such as the lack of financial and human resources, and endogenous ones, including short-term strategic planning and the prevalence of informal practices. One of the main drivers of SMEs' performance is innovation. Ramdan et al.(2022) highlight the crucial role of innovation, especially when combined with contextual ambidexterity, in enhancing product quality, increasing a firm's responsiveness, and improving customer satisfaction. From another perspective, Hussain et al. (2022) argue that classic entrepreneurial traits, such as being proactive, willing to take risks, and having the capacity to innovate, must be backed by a strong digital culture to enable the firm to maintain and improve its performance. Other studies propose more targeted frameworks for assessing SME performance. Hadi Putra and Santoso (2020) for instance, suggests looking at performance from three complementary levels: operational, managerial and strategic. Expanding on this, Aftab et al. (2022) proposes a broader set of indicators that combines classic financial ratios, such as ROI and profit margins, with growth indicators, including market share, sales increases, and diversification across regions. Similarly, Supramono et al. (2025) emphasize the need for a holistic view of SME performance that extends beyond short-term financial outcomes to incorporate long-term sustainability indicators. In contrast, Suder et al. (2024) argue that although inter-organizational ties may appear less critical in stable environments, they become essential during periods of volatility by enhancing SMEs' agility, resilience, and capacity to cope with uncertainty.

Taken together, these insights suggest that measuring SME's resilience requires a combination of both tangible and intangible assets, in alignment with firm's strategic direction. However, achieving and sustaining performance depend on the firm's ability to cope with uncertainty, adapt to changing environments, and recover from disruptions. Therefore, resilience emerges as a strategic capability that enables entrepreneurs to transform individual resources into organizational capabilities that allow firms to adapt et ensure business continuity despite adversity. While previous studies have identified several organizational and contextual determinants of SME performance, the role of resilience remains insufficiently integrated into existing performance frameworks. This highlights the need for a multilevel perspective that explicitly links individual resilience, organizational resilience, and overall SME performance.

2.6. Summary of the reviewed literature

To provide a clear overview of the studies included in this literature review, table 1 summarizes the main contributions of the selected papers. It provides an overview of the concept of resilience at both levels of analysis, individual and organizational, and its relationship with firm performance. The table presents the main findings of each study, along with the authors, the level of resilience examined, and the methodological approach adopted. This synthesis highlights the multilevel nature of resilience and its relationship with firm performance across different contexts.

Table 1. Summary of the main studies included in the literature review

Title	Author	Methodology	Resilience level of analysis	Main findings
Be Innovative and Resilient: Empirical Evidence from Saudi Firms on How to Translate Entrepreneurial Orientation into Firm Performance	(Aloulou, 2023)	Quantitative	Organizational	Resilience is built and developed over time. Entrepreneurial Orientation and innovation capability play a critical role in developing and fostering the ability to recover from adverse situations.
Building organisational resilience capability in small and medium-sized enterprises: The role of high-performance work systems	(Zhou et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Organizational	High performance work systems contribute in building resilience through human capital value. Bounce forward resilience enables firms to survive and recover from disruptions which lead to superior performance.
Building resilience in hotels: Unveiling the nexus of entrepreneurial orientation, firm performance and fear of crisis	(Suder et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	In a reversed perspective, the study suggests that performance can lead to resilience, by reinforcing flexibility, diversification and digitalization.
Building Resilient Organizations: The Role of Technological Capability, Innovation Leadership, and Sustainability	(Rashed et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Resilience can be built through different combinations of technological and leadership capabilities. Innovation leadership plays a mediating role by aligning technological capabilities with sustainable organizational performance.
Driving market success: The roles of organizational creativity, resilience, and turbulence in Ghanaian manufacturing firms	(Cobbinah et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational creativity exerts a strong influence on firm performance, resilience plays a mediating role in this relationship. The link is also strengthened when firms operate in turbulent environments.
Effective Crisis Management during Adversity: Organizing Resilience Capabilities of Firms and Sustainable Performance during COVID-19	(Hu et al., 2022)	Qualitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience depends on a set of multiple capabilities including: cognitive, behavioral, and contextual capabilities. The effect of organizational resilience on firm performance depends on contextual factors and firm's characteristics.
Entrepreneurial Competency, Financial Literacy, and Sustainable Performance: Examining the Mediating Role of Entrepreneurial Resilience among Saudi Entrepreneurs	(Seraj et al., 2022)	Quantitative	Individual	Financial literacy and entrepreneurial competency positively affect resilience. Resilient entrepreneurs are better prepared to withstand challenges while maintaining venture growth.
Entrepreneurial Marketing and Marketing Performance in Gen Z Entrepreneurs: Exploring the Mediating Pathways to Entrepreneurial Resilience	(Hasanah et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Individual	At the entrepreneur level, resilience is considered as an attribute that enables coping with adversity, recovering from failure, and bouncing back after crises. Resilient entrepreneurs are able to transform the negative consequences of failure into personal growth for future ventures.
Entrepreneurial resilience and tourism business success during crises: The moderating impact of state intervention	(Yesuf et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Individual	Entrepreneurial resilience exerts a positive effect on business success, especially during crises. State intervention plays a critical role in strengthening this relationship.
Examining the effect of business model innovation on crisis management: the mediating role of entrepreneurial capability, resilience and business performance	(Salamzadeh et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience has a positive effect on firm capabilities and effectiveness. It emerges as a strategic resource enabling firms to sustain operations through business model and entrepreneurial capability.

Exploring the Interplay Between Individual and Organisational Resilience in the Construction Sector: A Comprehensive Analysis	(Mitansha & Potangaroa, 2025)	Qualitative	Individual and organizational	Improving individual resilience and organizational resilience helps organizations better prepare for crises and maintain business continuity despite disruption. Individual resilience does not automatically translate into organizational capabilities, it must be activated through leadership, team culture, and learning orientation.
Exploring the relationship between entrepreneurial resilience and success: The moderating role of stakeholders' engagement	(Santoro et al., 2020)	Quantitative	Individual	Entrepreneurial resilience is linked to perceived success. This relationship is strengthened when stakeholders are actively engaged during adverse conditions.
Firm resilience as a moderating force for SMEs' innovation performance: Evidence from an emerging economy perspective	(Pilav – Velic et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Organizational	Firm resilience positively moderates the relationship between both explorative and exploitative innovation and overall innovation performance. This moderating role is particularly stronger in small economies, where SMEs face resource constraints and environmental volatility.
How does big data analytics capability affect firm performance? Unveiling the role of organisational resilience and environmental dynamism	(Lin et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Big data capabilities enhance both proactive and reactive resilience that relate to the firm's ability to anticipate, adapt to, and cope with adversity. These capabilities are decisive in times of disruptions and have a direct positive effect on organizational outcomes, including both cost efficiency and customer-related performance.
How entrepreneurial resilience generates resilient SMEs	(Branicki et al., 2018)	Qualitative	Individual and organizational	Entrepreneurs influence SME resilience directly, through their personal resilience attributes, and indirectly, by fostering organizational processes, routines, and a resilience-supportive culture.
How Environmental Turbulence Shapes the Path from Resilience to Sustainability: Useful Insights Gathered from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	(İbrahimcioğlu & Kitapçı, 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience measured through the combination of four dimensions that include: learned resourcefulness, original agility, practical habits and behavioral preparedness exerts a positive effect on sustainability performance of SMEs.
Influence of emotional intelligence on enterprise performance with mediating role of entrepreneurial resilience: a case of SMEs in Pakistan under the light of Covid-19	(Khan et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Individual	Entrepreneur emotional intelligence significantly relates to firm performance, entrepreneurial resilience acts as a mediator in this relationship.
Information technology capabilities and organizational ambidexterity facilitating organizational resilience and firm performance of SMEs	(Trieu et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Organizational	Information technology capabilities and organizational ambidexterity facilitate resilience and performance. Organizational resilience plays a mediating role in the relationship between the IT capabilities and SMEs performance.
Innovative configurations for organizational resilience: Bridging the proactive and reactive capability in volatile environments	(Shojaee et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Resilience can be developed and fostered through a set of capabilities such as: flexibility, responsiveness and recovery. In turbulent environments, the combination of both proactive and reactive capabilities is required.

Interplay of entrepreneurial failure experience, entrepreneurial resilience, and re-entrepreneurship performance : Evidence from China	(Lyu, 2024)	Quantitative	Individual	Entrepreneurial resilience is triggered by failure experiences, which enables recovery and promotes performance despite challenging circumstances.
Knowledge-oriented leadership and organizational resilience in SMEs during a crisis: The mediation role of innovation quality	(Khin Khin Oo & Rakthin, 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	High quality innovation is the key driver of organizational resilience in the context of SMEs, while absorptive capacity and knowledge-oriented leadership enhance resilience by improving innovation quality rather than through direct effects.
Leveraging Innovation Capability and Organizational Resilience for Business Sustainability Among Small and Medium Enterprises: A PLS-SEM Approach	(Olaleye et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Organizational	Resilience and sustainability are closely connected and essential for long-term survival, particularly in challenging economic environments.
Organisational resilience as a determinant of the development of innovative service enterprises	(Woźniak et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Resilience enables companies to innovate, develop new products, and improve processes, linking resilience directly to business growth. Strong resilience contributes to better financial results, and improved market performance.
Organisational resilience, ambidexterity and performance: the roles of information technology competencies, digital transformation policies and paradoxical leadership	(Trieu et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Organizational	Paradoxical leadership has a positive effect on resilience and performance, whereas ambidexterity allows firms to innovate while remaining stable.
Organizational resilience and social-economic sustainability: COVID-19 perspective	(Rai et al., 2021)	Quantitative	Organizational	Through anticipation, robustness, recoverability, organizational resilience positively supports both social and economic sustainability. Organizations that are both resilient and sustainable recover faster and perform better during crises.
Organizational Resilience of Family Businesses	(Ingram & Bratnicka-Myśliwiec, 2019)	Quantitative	Organizational	Resilience is a complex construct that includes both community robustness and creative agility. Organizational resilience is positively linked to competitive advantage.
Path Constitution : Building Organizational Resilience for Sustainable Performance	(Tang et al., 2023)	Qualitative	Organizational	Resilience can be understood as a process of continuous development that implies dynamic interaction with environmental resources.
Positions and Delimitations Regarding the Financial Performance -Sustainability Relationship in the Context of Organizational Resilience	(Neacsu & Georgescu, 2024)	Structured Literature Review	Organizational	Sustainability and organizational resilience are closely interconnected and multidimensional. Sustainability practices enhance resilience and organizational growth. Still, Performance, sustainability, and resilience remain conceptually debated.
Postdisaster Social Capital, Adaptive Resilience and Business Performance of Tourism Organizations in Christchurch, New Zealand	(Chowdhury et al., 2019)	Quantitative	Organizational	Social capital, more specifically, relational capital is a driver of adaptive resilience which in turn has a significant positive influence on business performance
Psychological resilience of entrepreneurs: A review and agenda for future research	(Hartmann et al., 2022)	Systematic Literature Review	Organizational	Resilience is a dynamic process of adaptation to varying severity of shocks. Although psychological resilience is an individual-level construct,

				it has direct and indirect implications across all stages of the entrepreneurial process.
Research on Impact Mechanism of Organizational Resilience on Sustainable Competitive Advantage of Enterprises	(Liu & Zhang, 2024)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience has a positive effect on firms' competitive advantage. This relationship is moderated by environmental dynamism and network digital atmosphere.
Resilience and Performance Among Vietnamese Business Organizations in Turbulent Environments: How Do Digitalized Management Accounting Systems and Organizational Mindfulness Matter?	(Hung et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Organizational	By enabling firms to identify risks and respond rapidly, organizational mindfulness significantly enhances organizational resilience. Resilient organizations adapt effectively to changing conditions and achieve superior performance outcomes.
Resilient Leadership, Innovation, Executive Incentives, and Sustainable Business Performance: An Empirical Study	(Shuhua Nan & Kanokporn Chaiprasit, 2023)	Quantitative	Individual	Sustainable business performance is positively influenced by resilient leadership. Enterprise innovation plays the role of a mediating mechanism in this relationship, while executive incentives exert a moderating effect.
Searching for resilience: the impact of employee-level and entrepreneur-level resilience on firm performance in small family firms	(Santoro et al., 2021)	Quantitative	Individual and organizational	When coupled with a strong entrepreneur resilience, employee-level resilience has a positive influence on firm performance.
Social media use, corporate entrepreneurship and organizational resilience: A recipe for SMEs success in a post-Covid scenario	(Martín-Rojas et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience fully mediates the relationship between entrepreneurial capabilities such as self-renewal and performance financial outcomes in particular: return on sales, return on investment and return on assets.
Strategy-Performance Relationship Through Organizational Resilience: The Analysis of Tourism SMEs	(J. Anwar & Raza, 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Strategy positively influences organizational performance. Organizational resilience fully mediates the strategy / performance relationship
Strengthening resilience and performance through business continuity management: insights from central java tour operators	(Yulianto et al., 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Resilience plays a crucial role in maintaining a sustainable financial and non-financial performance, especially when business continuity management practices are embedded.
The impact of entrepreneurial resilience on the success of small and medium enterprises in South Africa	(Fatoki, 2018)	Quantitative	Individual	Entrepreneurial resilience is positively and significantly correlated with both individual and organizational success, particularly in emerging economies.
The Impact of Organizational Resilience on Hotel Performance during Pandemic COVID-19	(Mohammad et al., 2022)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience is conceptualized as a combination of sensing and reconfiguring assets, that has a direct positive impact on performance during external disturbances.
The Impact of Proactive Resilience Strategies on Organizational Performance: Role of Ambidextrous and Dynamic Capabilities of SMEs in Manufacturing Sector	(Pertheban et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Organizational	Proactive resilience strategies, particularly, visibility and predefined plans, significantly influence organizational performance by improving: decision-making, operational efficiency, risk management, adaptability and customer satisfaction. Ambidextrous capabilities (exploitation, exploration) play the role of mediators in this relationship.

The Influence Factors of Organizational Resilience from a CSR Perspective and Their Impact on Business Growth	(Chen et al., 2023)	Qualitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience is positively influenced by: change readiness, corporate culture and values, social responsibility, resource information linkages, and leadership. The combination of these elements plays a pivotal role in developing and fostering resilience at the organizational level.
The key role of innovation and organizational resilience in improving business performance: A mixed-methods approach	(Garrido-Moreno et al., 2024)	Mixed-methods	Organizational	Resilience is conceptualized as a dynamic process that reflects the firm's capacity to adapt and recover from adversity. Organizational resilience has a positive and significant effect on organizational performance.
The Mediating and Moderating Effect of Organizational Resilience on Competitive Advantage: Evidence from Chinese Companies	(Wang et al., 2022)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience plays a critical role in gaining sustainable competitive advantage. This relationship is fully mediated by organizational learning.
The role of adaptive resilience on the financial performance of Philippine hospitality and tourism enterprises: amid a disrupted business environment	(Guliman-Qudsi et al., 2024)	Quantitative	Organizational	Planned resilience contributes to adaptive resilience, enabling the firm to anticipate, respond to and recover from disruptions. Adaptive resilience significantly influences financial success especially in volatile environment.
Tourism employee resilience, organizational resilience and financial performance: the role of creative self-efficacy	(Prayag & Dassanayake, 2023)	Quantitative	Individual and organizational	Employee resilience enhances financial performance with organizational resilience acting as a mediator. Employee and planned resilience are developed through creative self-efficacy.
Unlocking Sustainable Economic Development in Saudi Arabia through the Coffee Industry	(Al Shammre, 2024)	Quantitative	Individual	Resilience has a significant positive effect on the economic, social, and environmental performance. Entrepreneurial resilience plays the role of a mediating mechanism in the relationship between commitments and economic, social, and environmental performance.
Unveiling the nexus of organizational intelligence, resilience capacity and financial performance	(Keskin et al., 2026)	Quantitative	Organizational	To achieve better financial performance, firms need to combine both organizational intelligence and resilience capacity which enable the firm to adapt continuously, and respond to contextual pressures. Organizational resilience capacity is the key bridge between organizational intelligence and performance, environmental factors shape how effectively this works.
Weathering a Crisis: A Multi-Level Analysis of Resilience in Young Ventures	(A. Anwar et al., 2023)	Quantitative	Individual and organizational	The resilience of top management team members and inter functional coordination exert a positive influence on organizational resilience. As a result, resilient firms are more likely to achieve better performance outcomes in time of crisis.
Weathering the Unforeseen: The Interplay of Resilience and Innovation in Start-Up Performance Amidst Crisis	(Kansheba & Marobhe, 2025)	Quantitative	Organizational	Organizational resilience plays a critical role in enhancing start-ups performance, particularly, during severe disruption. Business model innovation acts as moderating mechanism in this relationship.

3. Methodology of the literature review

To realize this literature review, a focused but flexible approach was adopted. Rather than trying to cover every publication in the field, the aim was to highlight the key concepts, understand how they work, and connect insights across different areas of research. The main intention is to construct a clear and connected framework that emphasize how resilience actually works in small and medium-sized firms, especially when it comes to their performance. In doing so, the review follows a line of thinking encouraged by scholars like Webster and Watson (2002), Torraco (2005), and Baumeister and Leary (1997), who argue that a good conceptual paper should bring together what's already out there and offer a framework others can build on.

3.1. Search strategy

A structured search was conducted through two main databases, Scopus and Web of Science, covering papers published from 2015 to 2025, a period corresponding to the growing development of the concept of resilience.

Keywords were selected and combined carefully using Boolean operators, it covered various terms, including:

- ("resilience" AND "SMEs")
- ("organizational resilience" AND "SMEs")
- ("individual resilience" AND entrepreneurship)
- ("entrepreneurial resilience" AND performance)
- ("dynamic capabilities" AND resilience)
- ("entrepreneurial leadership" AND resilience)
- ("organizational resilience" AND performance)

To expand the scope, we employed a snowballing method to review the bibliographies of selected papers, obtaining additional leads and ensuring that important references weren't missed.

3.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To ensure the relevance of the review, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to select articles that aligned with the research objective.

Inclusion criteria

- Publications indexed in Scopus or Web of Science;
- Studies published between 2015 and 2025;
- Articles written in English;
- Studies that offered either conceptual insights or empirical findings on resilience, whether at the entrepreneur's or the organizational level;
- Studies that examined how resilience affects SME performance.

Exclusion criteria

- Books and book chapters;
- Editorials, commentaries, dissertations, and unpublished working papers;
- Studies focusing on resilience outside the fields of entrepreneurship, management, or SMEs;
- Duplicate records identified across databases.

Following the database search, the application of inclusion and exclusion, criteria, and the screening of retrieved papers, 49 articles were included in the review.

3.3. Evaluation of the selected studies

The selected studies were assessed based on their methodological rigor, theoretical relevance, and contribution to the research objective. Particular attention was paid to the following criteria:

- The clarity and coherence of the conceptual framework;
- The methodological rigor of empirical studies;
- The relevance of the findings to the individual, organizational, or multilevel dimensions of resilience; and
- The contribution of each study to understanding the relationship between resilience and SME performance.

This critical evaluation aimed to ensure that the included studies provided a robust foundation for developing the conceptual framework, taking into account their relevance and theoretical contributions.

4. Results

4.1. An integrative conceptual model of entrepreneurial resilience

Based on the literature review, this study proposes a multi-level model, explaining how different levels of resilience contributes to SME performance. The model combines individual, organization and relational dimensions within an integrated framework and identifies the mechanisms through which these dimensions interact.

The model suggests that entrepreneur's individual resilience represents a key internal resource that enables the firm to develop and foster its organizational resilience. Leadership acts as a moderating mechanism by facilitating the translation of individual psychological attributes into collective organizational capabilities. Organizational resilience, in turn, contributes to SME performance by enhancing adaptability, innovation and agility. Finally, by providing access to complementary resources, and collaborative opportunities that strengthen the firm's adaptive capacity despite disruptions, external strategic networks reinforce the effect of organizational resilience on performance outcomes.

Accordingly, the model integrates three interconnected levels of analysis:

- Individual level: individual resilience;
- Organizational level: entrepreneurial leadership, organizational resilience, and SME performance;
- Inter-organizational level: strategic networks and external partnerships.

Figure 1. Integrative conceptual model of resilience and its relationship with SME overall performance



Source: Authors

Solid arrows represent direct relationships between constructs, dashed arrows represent the moderating effect of entrepreneurial leadership on the relationship between individual resilience and organizational resilience, and of strategic networks on the relationship between organizational resilience and SME performance.

4.2. Individual and organizational resilience

Individual resilience relies on a combination of psychological traits, including cognitive flexibility, self-confidence, optimism, and emotional intelligence (Korber & McNaughton,

2018). These attributes become decisive when leaders face failure or must make tough decisions under pressure. Recent work by Conduah and Essiaw (2022) describe resilience as a dynamic process that evolves through motivation, emotional resources, and an entrepreneur's network of relationships. Most studies agree that individual and organizational resilience are tightly linked (Conduah & Essiaw, 2022). According to the resource-based view approach, the entrepreneur's psychological capital, is considered a rare and valuable asset for the whole company especially in time of crisis (Barney, 1991; Southwick et al., 2017). Therefore, resilient entrepreneurs are seen as key change agents who enable organizational learning and help reshape routines when the environment shifts unpredictably. Based on the above, there are three key ways personal resilience links to organizational strength. First, an aligned strategic perspective and a shared purpose can align individual efforts toward common organizational goals. Next, a resilient leader inspires a culture that encourages experimentation, innovation, and change. Finally, strong internal social ties help the company to adjust quickly and coordinate effectively during crises. Ultimately, organizational resilience can be seen as an extension of the entrepreneur's mindset, emotional stability, and social capital. The combination of these personal attributes affects the firm's ability to adapt and thrive.

Proposition 1: The more resilient the entrepreneur, the stronger the organization's resilience. When leaders remain focused, emotionally steady, and agile during challenging times, they directly cultivate collective resilience, enabling the SME to face disruption with confidence.

4.3. Leadership as a moderator of internal dynamics

According to Southwick et al. (2017), instead of merely reacting to adversity, resilient leaders develop and share an inspiring vision, cultivate realistic optimism, and are genuinely invested in collective transformation. This kind of leadership reshapes the company's culture, pushing not only to survive but also to develop despite challenging conditions. Furthermore, while Supramono et al. (2025) argue that MSME actors must proactively respond to environmental dynamics to ensure long-term sustainability, the broader dynamic capabilities literature suggests that effective leadership plays a pivotal role in activating and deploying the routines of sensing, seizing, and transforming that enable firms to adapt and sustain their competitive performance. Burnard and Bhamra, (2011) view managerial engagement of leaders as a key driver of adaptive capabilities, especially when facing unexpected events. In the same perspective, Demmer et al. (2011) argue that SMEs' resilience depends on the leader's ability to actively manage the company's core competencies and his strategic vision regarding business innovation. According to the literature, a moderator influences the strength or direction of the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable, while a mediator explains the mechanism through which this relationship occurs (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the present study, entrepreneurial leadership is conceptualized as a moderator rather than a mediator. It is expected to influence the strength of the relationship between individual resilience and organizational resilience. Therefore, this positive relationship is expected to be stronger when entrepreneurial leadership is highly developed. Rather than directly generating organizational resilience, leadership influences the strength of the relationship between individual resilience and organizational resilience. Entrepreneurial leadership is expected to positively moderate the relationship between individual resilience and organizational resilience. In other words, the positive effect of entrepreneurs' resilience on organizational resilience becomes stronger when entrepreneurial leadership is highly developed.

Proposition 2: When entrepreneurial leadership is grounded in resilience and transformation, individual strengths translate more effectively into collective adaptive capabilities, enhancing the SME's strategic flexibility and its readiness to face disruption.

4.4. Organizational resilience and performance

In the context of SMEs, organizational resilience stems from the interaction between structural resources, evolving capabilities such as learning, innovation, and improvisation, and a culture that truly values adaptability (Duchek, 2020; Erol et al., 2010). Burnard and Bhamra, (2011) highlight the impact of resilience on managerial and organizational processes, considering it as a driver of sustainable competitive advantage. It is not just about surviving and adapting to crises, but also about developing and fostering agility through adaptive strategies that enable firms to thrive in the face of uncertainty. Building on the same base, Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2021) argue that organizational learning plays a key role in empowering the firm's ability to transform adversity into an opportunity for value creation. Along similar lines, Trieu et al. (2023) views resilience as a bridge between a firm's internal capabilities and its ability to stay competitive despite changing environmental conditions.

Proposition 3: Organizational resilience plays a key role in driving SME performance. By fostering collective learning, encouraging innovation, and enabling timely responses to disruption, it not only ensures continuity but also nurtures long-term competitive advantage and contributes to strategic growth over time.

4.5. Individual resilience and SME performance

Beyond its indirect influence through organizational resilience, entrepreneurs' individual resilience may also exert a direct effect on SME performance. Entrepreneurs' personal attributes, such as persistence, creativity, and adaptability, not only help them to cope but also fuel organizational resilience, which in turn enhances performance (A. Anwar et al., 2023). Duchek (2018) argues that, by enhancing entrepreneurs' ability to adapt, bounce back from failure, and ensure business continuity despite the crises, resilience plays a crucial role in sustaining long-term entrepreneurial performance, especially in volatile contexts. Furthermore, Haddoud et al. (2022) describe the connection between entrepreneurs' resilience and firm performance through a multistep process where the entrepreneur plays a pivotal role. A resilient leader has the ability to foster a climate of psychological safety and shared purpose, which then fosters collective resilience, lifting productivity, cohesion, and efficiency across the board. This idea aligns with the standpoint of Southwick et al. (2017), who emphasize the impact of internal mindset, supportive social networks, and context-aware management practices on fostering individual resilience. The combination of these aspects helps transform crises into learning opportunities, especially in extremely changing environments. Based on their longitudinal study, Ayala and Manzano (2014) defines entrepreneurial resilience through three main specific traits: psychological hardiness, optimism, and resourcefulness. The latter stood out as the most consistent driver of success. These traits have a positive impact on both objective measures and subjective perceptions of growth. Consequently, proposition 4 complements proposition 3 by distinguishing the entrepreneur's direct effect from the organizational mechanisms captured by organizational resilience.

Proposition 4: The entrepreneur's individual resilience is a key driver of SME performance. By staying grounded, focused, and steady under pressure, resilient leaders cultivate cultures that can respond to uncertainty and sustain growth over time.

4.6. Networking as a strategic lever of organizational resilience

Investing in strategic networking offers more than just business opportunities; it provides access to complementary resources, critical information, unlocks collaboration opportunities, and facilitates collective problem-solving that individual firms would struggle to access on their own (Ates & Bititci, 2011; Koporcic et al., 2025). Similarly, Southwick et al. (2017) emphasize the crucial role of social capital in promoting both individual and collective resilience. Strong partnerships enable the firm to better respond to pressure, strengthen team cohesion, and

facilitate coordination in times of uncertainty. Similarly, Ribeiro et al. (2025) argue that in the absence of institutional support, informal collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and community norms, social capital often steps in to sustain entrepreneurial activity. As Iyengar et al. (2021) stresses, interorganizational collaboration leads to greater flexibility and better shock absorption, helping the firm to maintain its business continuity despite uncertainty. Expanding on this, Haddoud et al. (2022) emphasize the critical importance of personality traits and family-based trust in enhancing resilience through more collaborative relationships. Through a more recent lens, Suder et al. (2024) argue that while inter-organizational ties may seem secondary in stable environments, they become vital during periods of volatility for boosting SMEs' agility and coping capacity.

Proposition 5: Strengthening strategic networks and partnerships enhances the resilience of SMEs by expanding their access to resources, accelerating collective learning, and enabling more adaptive responses to change. These external connections play a crucial role in building sustainable competitive advantages and achieving long term performance, particularly in times of uncertainty.

To facilitate the interpretation of the conceptual framework and research propositions, Table 2 presents each proposition by highlighting the variables involved, the corresponding level of analysis, and the expected relationships. It clarifies the proposed relationships among individual resilience, organizational resilience, entrepreneurial leadership, strategic networking, and SME performance.

Table 2. Research propositions

Proposition	Variables involved	Level of analysis	Expected relationship	Main theoretical foundations
Proposition 1	Individual resilience ; Organizational resilience.	Individual and Organizational	Resilient entrepreneurs are better able to transform individual attributes into collective organizational assets for the firm.	Resource-Based View
Proposition 2	Individual resilience; Entrepreneurial leadership; Organizational resilience.	Individual and Organizational	The positive effect of individual resilience on organizational resilience is strengthened by entrepreneurial leadership.	Dynamic Capabilities View
Proposition 3	Organizational resilience ; SME performance.	Organizational	Organizational resilience enhances firm performance, particularly in turbulent environments.	Dynamic Capabilities View
Proposition 4	Individual resilience ; SME performance.	Individual	Entrepreneur resilience directly contribute to SME performance through persistence, adaptability, resourcefulness, and the ability to maintain continuity despite disruptions.	Resource-Based View
Proposition 5	Organizational resilience; Strategic networking; SME performance.	Organizational	By providing access to complementary resources, strategic networks strengthen the effect of organizational resilience on SME performance.	Resource-Based View and Dynamic Capabilities View

Source: Authors

5. Discussion

By integrating the individual and organizational dimensions of resilience, this study offers an integrative conceptual model that addresses the structural and operational challenges faced by

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in volatile environments. Rather than treating individual and organizational resilience as separate constructs, the proposed model conceptualizes SME resilience as the process through which individual attributes are translated into organizational capabilities and ultimately contribute to firm performance. This research contributes to the literature in several ways and provides important implications for future research and managerial practice. By bringing together the two core dimensions of entrepreneurial resilience rooted in both individual and organizational aspects, we contribute to the existing literature by offering an integrative conceptual model of SMEs' entrepreneurial resilience. The theoretical implication of this perspective lies in the fact that resilience at the individual and organizational levels cannot be fully understood separately. While individual resilience provides the psychological resources necessary to cope with adversity, it cannot automatically be translated into organizational resilience. The latter depends on the extent to which individual attributes are transformed into collective behaviors, routines, and adaptive capabilities. The adoption of a multilevel perspective sheds light on how these dimensions interact and collectively influence the performance of SMEs. In doing so, we respond to recent calls from scholars advocating for more systemic approaches to understanding resilience in entrepreneurial contexts (Koporcic et al., 2025; Korber & McNaughton, 2018). Our model focuses on SMEs by highlighting their unique structural and operational challenges, including limited resources, unstable markets, and uneven institutional support. These constraints make the translation of individual resilience into organizational resilience particularly critical. In resource constrained environments, the entrepreneur's ability to mobilize, coordinate, and convert personal resilience into organizational practices may determine whether resilience remains an individual attributes or develops into an organizational capability. By exploring the mediator role played by leadership in bridging entrepreneurs' personal resilience and organizational resilience, we outline the critical importance of leaders' ability to transform individual traits, such as persistence or adaptability, into collective behaviors. Accordingly, the model suggests that entrepreneurial leadership should not be viewed merely as an additional organizational resource, but as a mechanism that shapes how individual resilience is converted into organizational resilience. By doing so, SME leaders contribute to integrating resilience across the company.

Furthermore, the incorporation of strategic networks into the conceptual framework highlights the role of external partnerships and collaboration in reinforcing organizational resilience. By providing firms with access to complementary resources, the development of strategic networks enables them to better leverage their resilience during periods of disruption and enhance its positive effect on performance.

5.1. Study limitations and contextual considerations

The applicability of the proposed model depends on the context. Since it focuses on SMEs, the suggested relationships cannot be automatically applied to larger firms, where strategic decision-making and leadership responsibilities are not concentrated in the hands of owner-managers. Second, the relative importance of individual resilience, organizational resilience, and external networks may vary depending on the firm's stage of development, available resources, and exposure to environmental uncertainty. Similarly, in contexts where institutional support is limited, informal networks and collaborative partnerships may play a more important role than in environments with stronger institutional support.

These contextual factors highlight the need for future empirical research to examine whether the proposed relationships remain valid across different organizational and institutional contexts.

5.2. Implications for future research

As this paper examines entrepreneurial resilience by exploring the interplay between individual and organizational dimensions, several future research possibilities can be pursued. Initially, in order to validate the propositions and the developed conceptual framework, rigorous empirical evidence is required. In addition, it would be insightful to explore how external contextual factors related to the entrepreneurial ecosystem, such as institutional support, public policies, and sector-specific challenges, are likely to shape both the development and expression of resilience within SMEs. As such, these research directions outline the emergence of entrepreneurial resilience, not as a static trait, but as a process shaped by personal, organizational, and contextual factors. This approach is particularly relevant in volatile environments.

5.3. Managerial implications

From a managerial perspective, our conceptual model emphasizes the importance of enhancing entrepreneurial leadership and developing strategic partnerships to promote resilience and improve performance outcomes. In practice, these priorities need to be translated into concrete actions that can be implemented and monitored by SME managers and public and institutional actors. For entrepreneurs, the model identifies key individual and organizational capabilities that are essential for building resilience. On a personal level, it highlights the importance of developing and cultivating coping skills and psychological resilience, especially during times of uncertainty. At the organizational level, it emphasizes the crucial role of cultivating a culture of innovation, shared learning, and responsiveness in building and enhancing strategic agility in volatile contexts. The operationalization of these recommendations requires the implementation of crisis management trainings, leadership development activities and knowledge-sharing practices. Relevant indicators may include indicators such as, the participation rate in training activities, the number of implemented improvement initiatives and the time required to respond to significant changes in the business environment. At the firm level, the model sheds light on the internal drivers of entrepreneurial resilience, including corporate culture, governance structures, and management practices. Managers can therefore translate these principles into practice by clarifying decision-making processes, establishing continuity plans, and reviewing the firm's critical resources and vulnerabilities. For public and institutional actors, the model outlines the strategic role of external support in enhancing SMEs' ability to weather and adapt to disruption. This implies setting up support mechanisms adapted to the specific constraints of SMEs; these programs may include financial subsidies and targeted training or mentoring programs. To make these mechanisms more operational, policymakers and support institutions could implement resilience-oriented training programs, and mentoring networks that connect SMEs with experienced entrepreneurs and experts.

6. Conclusion

Our conceptual model is the result of a literature-based approach that provides a comprehensive perspective on resilience by articulating how individual and organizational dimensions interact across multiple levels. The SME leader is at the center of this framework, playing a pivotal role in developing adaptive responses to navigate uncertainty effectively. Furthermore, our framework highlights the interaction between internal organizational factors such as culture, leadership practices, and strategic orientation, and external influences, including institutional support and market dynamics, in shaping how resilience ultimately affects firm performance. The main theoretical contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing the relationship between individual and organizational resilience as process rather than a separate construct. The proposed model also highlights the process through which individual attributes may be

translated into organizational capabilities with entrepreneurial leadership acting as a moderating mechanism. It further emphasizes the contribution of external networks to the relationship between organizational resilience and SME performance. By connecting individual, organizational, and inter-organizational dimensions within a single conceptual framework, the model extends the existing resilience framework.

The present study, while providing valuable insights, has certain limitations. Firstly, while we present an integrative conceptual framework for understanding entrepreneurial resilience in SMEs, it remains theoretical in nature. Moreover, future research should convert this model into quantifiable constructs through measurable variables that could be tested across different sectors and regions. The literature review also presents methodological limitations. Despite the structured approach that was adopted to identify and analyze relevant studies, the review does not strictly follow a systematic review methodology according to the PRISMA protocol. Therefore, the selection and interpretation of the literature may be subject to researcher selection bias, particularly in relation to the databases consulted, the search strategy, and the inclusion of the selected studies. Lastly, a longitudinal research design could give additional insights into how the interaction between individual and organizational levels of resilience may have tangible effects on firm performance in both the short and long term.

An empirical validation of the model is planned within the specific context of Moroccan SMEs. This validation will be conducted through a quantitative study targeting Moroccan SMEs in the Tangier region. Data will be collected from owner-managers or senior managers through a structured questionnaire. The empirical phase will follow the refinement and operationalization of the proposed constructs and the development of measurement scales, followed by pilot testing and the collection of data from the target sample. The empirical analysis will focus on testing the proposed relationships and research propositions, including the mediating and moderating mechanisms identified in the model. This research agenda is expected to be implemented in the next stage of the research project, following the completion of the conceptual development and measurement instrument.

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