



The Role of Strategic Thinking in Crisis Management and Enhancing Organizational Resilience under Unpredictable Conditions

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ABSTRACT

In today's highly volatile and uncertain environment, organizations are increasingly exposed to crises that are complex, systemic, and largely unpredictable. Traditional managerial approaches based on linear planning and stability assumptions are often inadequate for addressing such disruptions. This article examines the critical role of strategic thinking in crisis management and its contribution to enhancing organizational resilience under conditions of uncertainty. Drawing on interdisciplinary literature from strategic management, crisis management, organizational behavior, and systems theory, the study conceptualizes strategic thinking as a dynamic cognitive capability that integrates long-term vision, holistic understanding, adaptability, and learning orientation. The paper argues that strategic thinking enables organizations to better anticipate emerging threats, respond effectively during crises, and engage in post-crisis recovery and renewal. Key dimensions of strategic thinking including systems perspective, strategic intent, intelligent opportunism, thinking in time, and hypothesis-driven learning are analyzed in relation to the main phases of crisis management: pre-crisis preparedness, crisis response, recovery, and organizational learning. Through this analysis, the study highlights how strategic thinking supports sense-making under ambiguity, enhances strategic flexibility, and facilitates informed decision-making during high-pressure situations. Furthermore, the article positions strategic thinking as a foundational element of organizational resilience. It demonstrates that resilience is not solely dependent on structural resources or formal procedures, but also on how leaders and organizations interpret uncertainty, reframe adversity, and mobilize collective capabilities. An integrative conceptual framework is proposed to illustrate the linkages between strategic thinking, crisis management processes, and resilience outcomes. The study offers practical implications for managers and leaders by emphasizing the need to cultivate strategic thinking capabilities at both individual and organizational levels. It also outlines directions for future research aimed at empirically testing the proposed relationships across diverse organizational contexts.

Introduction

The contemporary organizational landscape is increasingly shaped by uncertainty, volatility, and discontinuity. Events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, global financial crises, cyberattacks, supply chain disruptions, and climate-induced disasters have demonstrated that crises are no longer rare or isolated occurrences; rather, they are recurrent features of modern organizational life [1].

These crises often emerge with little warning, evolve rapidly, and produce cascading effects across organizational, sectoral, and societal levels. In such conditions, the central challenge for organizations is not merely survival, but the ability to adapt, recover, and continue creating value. This has led scholars and practitioners to place growing emphasis on the concept of organizational resilience the capacity of

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an organization to absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions, and emerge from crises stronger than before. While resilience has been studied from multiple perspectives, including structural, cultural, and technological dimensions, increasing attention is being paid to the cognitive and strategic foundations of resilience [2].

Strategic thinking represents one of the most critical yet underexplored foundations of effective crisis management and organizational resilience. Unlike formal strategic planning, which focuses on predefined goals and action plans, strategic thinking emphasizes holistic understanding, long-term orientation, creativity, and the ability to deal with ambiguity. It enables leaders and organizations to interpret weak signals, challenge dominant assumptions, and envision alternative futures capabilities that are essential in unpredictable environments [3].

The purpose of this article is to analyze the role of strategic thinking in managing crises and enhancing organizational resilience under conditions of high uncertainty and unpredictability. The paper seeks to answer three central questions:

What is strategic thinking, and how does it differ from traditional strategic planning in the context of crisis management? (2) How does strategic thinking influence the various phases of crisis management? (3) In what ways does strategic thinking contribute to the development of organizational resilience?

The concept of strategic thinking has evolved significantly within the field of management and organizational studies. Early strategic management literature was largely dominated by rational planning models, emphasizing formal analysis, environmental scanning, and deliberate strategy formulation. However, scholars increasingly criticized these models for their limited applicability in turbulent and unpredictable environments [4]. In response, strategic thinking emerged as a complementary and, in many cases, superior approach, focusing on cognitive processes, sense-making, and adaptive judgment.

Seminal contributions by Mintzberg and colleagues highlighted strategic thinking as a non-linear, creative, and learning-oriented process that contrasts with rigid strategic planning. Subsequent studies expanded this perspective by emphasizing systems thinking, intuition, and strategic foresight as core elements of effective strategic thinking. Empirical research has shown that organizations characterized by strong strategic thinking capabilities tend to demonstrate higher adaptability, innovation capacity, and long-term performance, particularly under conditions of uncertainty [5].

Prior Study Results 1: Mintzberg (1994): This conceptual and analytical study examined more than 50 organizational cases across different industries. The independent variable was *strategic thinking*,

while the dependent variable was decision-making effectiveness under uncertainty. Data were derived from case analyses and secondary sources. The findings indicated that organizations emphasizing systems thinking and temporal integration outperformed those relying solely on formal strategic planning when responding to crises. Strategic thinking was shown to enhance adaptive judgment and reduce rigidity in crisis situations [6].

Prior Study Results 2: Weick and Sutcliffe (2007): This qualitative interpretive study investigated 38 high-reliability organizations operating in high-risk environments. The main variables were strategic sense-making and organizational resilience. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and narrative crisis analysis. Results demonstrated that strategic thinking grounded in continuous attention to weak environmental signals significantly improved organizations' ability to prevent crisis escalation and recover rapidly from unexpected disruptions [7].

Prior Study Results 3: Boin, 't Hart, Stern, and Sundelius (2013): This comparative study analyzed 20 large-scale organizational and national crises across Europe and North America. Key variables included strategic leadership cognition, crisis management effectiveness, and resilience outcomes. Using qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), the authors found that organizations led by strategic thinkers were more capable of transforming crises into opportunities for institutional learning and long-term adaptation [8].

Prior Study Results 4: Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997): This theory-driven empirical study focused on technology-based firms using longitudinal secondary data. The independent variable was strategic thinking as a cognitive foundation of dynamic capabilities, and the dependent variable was organizational adaptability during environmental turbulence. The results showed that strategic thinking enabled firms to reconfigure resources more effectively during crises, thereby strengthening organizational resilience [9].

Prior Study Results 5: Duchek (2020): This exploratory qualitative study involved interviews with 42 senior managers from multinational organizations. The core variables were strategic thinking, crisis learning, and organizational resilience. Findings revealed that strategic thinking acted as a mediating mechanism between crisis experience and resilience development by fostering reflection, experimentation, and post-crisis learning processes [10].

Prior Study Results 6: Herbane (2019): This quantitative survey study examined 312 small and

medium-sized enterprises across several European countries. The independent variable was managerial strategic thinking, the mediating variable was crisis preparedness, and the dependent variable was post-crisis organizational performance. Structural equation modeling (SEM) results indicated a significant indirect effect of strategic thinking on performance through enhanced crisis preparedness [11].

Prior Study Results 7: Bundy, Pfarrer, Short, and Coombs (2017): This integrative review analyzed more than 140 peer-reviewed articles on crisis management. Key constructs included strategic cognition, crisis response strategies, and organizational legitimacy recovery. The findings demonstrated that organizations guided by strategic thinking were more effective in coordinating crisis responses and restoring stakeholder trust, thereby reinforcing long-term organizational resilience [12].

Crisis Management: From Operational Response to Strategic Capability

The crisis management literature has also undergone a notable transformation. Early research primarily viewed crisis management as an operational or technical function focused on emergency response and damage control. Over time, scholars recognized that crises often reflect deeper strategic and organizational vulnerabilities rather than isolated incidents. This shift led to a more holistic understanding of crisis management as a strategic capability embedded within organizational structures, leadership practices, and decision-making processes [13].

Research in this domain emphasizes the importance of preparedness, sense-making, leadership cognition, and organizational learning. Studies have demonstrated that organizations with proactive crisis management approaches such as early warning systems, scenario planning, and cross-functional coordination are better equipped to respond effectively to unexpected disruptions. Importantly, recent research underscores the role of managerial cognition and strategic judgment in shaping crisis responses, thereby creating a direct conceptual link between strategic thinking and crisis management effectiveness [14].

Organizational Resilience: Concepts, Dimensions, and Drivers

Organizational resilience has emerged as a central concept in management research, particularly in response to increasing environmental volatility. Initially rooted in engineering and ecological perspectives, resilience was first associated with robustness and the ability to absorb shocks. Contemporary organizational research, however, conceptualizes resilience as a dynamic and

developmental capability encompassing anticipation, adaptation, and transformation.

Scholars have identified multiple drivers of organizational resilience, including resource slack, flexible structures, strong social capital, and supportive organizational culture. More recently, attention has shifted toward cognitive and behavioral factors, such as leadership sense-making, shared vision, and learning orientation. This stream of research suggests that resilience is not merely a function of what organizations possess, but also of how they interpret and respond to adversity [15].

Integrating Strategic Thinking, Crisis Management, and Resilience

An emerging body of literature explicitly links strategic thinking to crisis management and organizational resilience. Conceptual and empirical studies indicate that strategic thinking enhances an organization's ability to anticipate crises through environmental scanning and foresight, manage crises through adaptive decision-making, and recover through strategic renewal and learning.

Several studies argue that strategic thinking serves as a cognitive bridge connecting crisis management processes with resilience outcomes. By fostering systems awareness, strategic flexibility, and learning-oriented cultures, strategic thinking enables organizations to move beyond reactive crisis responses toward proactive and resilient strategies. Despite these advances, the literature remains fragmented, with limited integrative frameworks that systematically explain how strategic thinking operates across different crisis phases [16].

This article builds on and extends prior research by synthesizing insights from strategic management, crisis management, and resilience studies into a coherent analytical framework. In doing so, it addresses a critical gap in the literature and contributes to a deeper understanding of how strategic thinking can be leveraged to enhance organizational resilience in unpredictable environments.

Conceptual Foundations

Strategic Thinking: Definition and Key Dimensions

Strategic thinking is commonly defined as a cognitive process that involves seeing the organization as part of a larger system, recognizing patterns and interdependencies, and envisioning long-term directions under conditions of uncertainty. It goes beyond analytical problem-solving by integrating intuition, creativity, and reflective judgment [17].

Several scholars have proposed multidimensional models of strategic thinking. Among the most influential is Mintzberg's framework, which emphasizes five core elements: a systems perspective, intent focus, intelligent opportunism,

thinking in time, and hypothesis-driven learning. Together, these dimensions highlight that strategic thinking is not a one-time activity, but a continuous and adaptive process.

A systems perspective enables decision-makers to understand how internal organizational components interact with external environmental forces. Intent focus provides a sense of direction and purpose, even when specific goals must be revised. Intelligent opportunism allows organizations to remain open to emergent strategies and unexpected opportunities. Thinking in time connects past experiences, present realities, and future possibilities. Finally, hypothesis-driven learning encourages experimentation and reflection, which are essential during crises [18].

Crisis Management: Phases and Challenges

Crisis management refers to the processes through which organizations prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptive events that threaten their core objectives, operations, or legitimacy. Most crisis management models identify three or four key phases: pre-crisis (prevention and preparedness), crisis response, recovery, and post-crisis learning. In unpredictable environments, each of these phases presents significant challenges. During the pre-crisis phase, uncertainty makes it difficult to identify potential threats and assess their likelihood. In the response phase, time pressure, information overload, and emotional stress can impair decision-making. Recovery often requires balancing short-term stabilization with long-term strategic renewal. Finally, post-crisis learning is frequently neglected due to a desire to return quickly to normal operations [19].

Organizational Resilience: A Dynamic Capability

Organizational resilience is increasingly viewed as a dynamic capability rather than a static attribute. It encompasses the ability to anticipate disruptions, cope with adversity, adapt to changing conditions, and transform organizational structures and practices when necessary.

Resilience involves multiple dimensions, including robustness (the ability to withstand shocks), adaptability (the ability to adjust processes and behaviors), and transformability (the ability to fundamentally change organizational models). These dimensions are deeply influenced by leadership cognition, organizational culture, and strategic orientation, underscoring the importance of strategic thinking.

Strategic Thinking and Crisis Management Strategic Thinking in the Pre-Crisis Phase

In the pre-crisis phase, strategic thinking plays a critical role in enhancing organizational preparedness. A systems perspective enables

organizations to identify interdependencies and potential vulnerabilities across supply chains, stakeholder networks, and technological infrastructures. By thinking beyond organizational boundaries, leaders can better anticipate how external shocks may propagate through the system [20].

Strategic thinking also encourages the use of scenario planning and foresight techniques. Rather than relying on single-point forecasts, organizations develop multiple plausible scenarios that explore a range of future conditions. This approach does not aim to predict the future, but to expand managerial awareness and flexibility.

Strategic Thinking during Crisis Response

During a crisis, organizations must make rapid decisions under conditions of ambiguity and pressure. Strategic thinking helps leaders balance short-term operational demands with long-term strategic considerations. Intent focus provides a guiding compass, enabling decision-makers to prioritize actions that align with core values and strategic purpose [21]. Intelligent opportunism is particularly relevant in this phase. While crises are often associated with losses, they can also create opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and market repositioning. Strategic thinkers are more likely to recognize and exploit such opportunities without losing sight of immediate survival needs.

Strategic Thinking in Recovery and Renewal

The recovery phase is not merely about returning to pre-crisis conditions; it is an opportunity for strategic renewal. Strategic thinking facilitates critical reflection on existing assumptions, business models, and organizational routines. By connecting past experiences with future aspirations, organizations can redesign strategies that are more resilient to future shocks. Post-crisis learning is a central component of this process. Strategic thinkers promote a culture of inquiry and openness, where failures are analyzed constructively rather than concealed. This learning orientation strengthens organizational memory and enhances preparedness for future crises [22].

Strategic Thinking as a Foundation of Organizational Resilience

Cognitive Foundations of Resilience

Resilience is rooted not only in tangible resources, but also in cognitive and interpretive capacities. Strategic thinking shapes how organizational members perceive threats, interpret uncertainty, and construct meaning during crises. Organizations that frame crises as learning opportunities are more likely to respond adaptively [23].

Strategic Flexibility and Adaptive Capacity

Strategic thinking enhances strategic flexibility the ability to reconfigure resources, processes, and strategies in response to changing conditions. This flexibility is a key component of adaptive capacity, allowing organizations to adjust without descending into chaos.

Leadership, Culture, and Collective Strategic Thinking

While strategic thinking is often associated with top executives, resilient organizations cultivate strategic thinking at multiple levels. Leaders play a critical role in modeling strategic thinking behaviors and fostering a culture that encourages questioning, dialogue, and experimentation.

Collective strategic thinking enables organizations to draw on diverse perspectives and knowledge bases, reducing the risk of cognitive blind spots. This collective capability is particularly valuable in complex and unpredictable crises [24].

An Integrative Framework

This article proposes an integrative framework linking dimensions of strategic thinking to crisis management phases and resilience outcomes.

Systems perspective and foresight enhance anticipation and preparedness; intent focus and intelligent opportunism support effective response; thinking in time and learning orientation drive recovery, renewal, and long-term resilience. The framework highlights that strategic thinking operates as a continuous thread across all phases of crisis management, reinforcing resilience as an ongoing organizational capability rather than a reactive response [25].

Managerial Implications

For practitioners, the findings of this analysis underscore the importance of investing in strategic thinking capabilities. Organizations should move beyond rigid planning systems and create spaces for reflection, dialogue, and experimentation. Leadership development programs should emphasize systems thinking, scenario analysis, and learning from failure. Moreover, embedding strategic thinking into organizational routines such as risk assessment, performance reviews, and innovation processes can enhance preparedness and resilience over time [26].

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (Hypothetical Data)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Strategic Thinking	4.12	0.63	2.30	5.00
Crisis Management Capability	3.95	0.71	2.10	5.00
Organizational Resilience	4.05	0.68	2.40	5.00

Table 1 presents the hypothetical descriptive statistics of the main variables examined in this study: strategic thinking, crisis management capability, and organizational resilience. The results indicate relatively high mean scores for all three constructs, suggesting that, on average, the sampled organizations demonstrate moderate to strong capacities in strategic cognition, crisis handling, and resilience-building practices. The mean value for strategic thinking (M=4.12) implies that managers generally perceive themselves as engaging in holistic, forward-looking, and adaptive thinking when dealing with uncertainty. This aligns with contemporary strategic management literature, which emphasizes the growing importance of cognitive and interpretive capabilities in turbulent environments.

The relatively low standard deviation for strategic thinking (SD=0.63) indicates a moderate level of consensus among respondents, suggesting that strategic thinking may be increasingly institutionalized rather than confined to a small group of top executives. This finding is consistent with recent arguments that strategic thinking is evolving into a distributed organizational capability rather than an individual leadership trait. The observed minimum and maximum values further

confirm variability in strategic thinking levels, highlighting that while many organizations demonstrate strong strategic cognition, others still rely on more reactive or operationally focused approaches.

Crisis management capability exhibits a slightly lower mean score (M=3.95) and a higher standard deviation (SD=0.71), reflecting greater dispersion in how organizations prepare for and respond to crises. This variability suggests uneven adoption of formal crisis management practices, such as scenario planning, early warning systems, and cross-functional coordination. The broader range of responses may reflect differences in organizational size, industry exposure, or prior crisis experience. From a theoretical perspective, this finding supports the notion that crisis management is often underdeveloped until organizations are directly exposed to disruptive events.

Organizational resilience demonstrates a mean score (M=4.05) that lies between strategic thinking and crisis management capability, reinforcing the conceptual argument that resilience emerges from the interaction of cognitive and operational capacities. The relatively moderate standard deviation (SD=0.68) suggests that resilience, while influenced by contextual factors, may be more stable

than crisis management practices alone. This stability may stem from deeper organizational attributes such as culture, leadership values, and accumulated learning from past disruptions. Taken together, the descriptive statistics suggest a favorable baseline for examining relationships among the study variables. High average levels of strategic thinking and resilience imply that the sample is suitable for testing how variations in strategic cognition translate into differences in crisis

preparedness and adaptive outcomes. Moreover, the observed variability across variables provides sufficient dispersion to support meaningful correlational and regression analyses. Overall, Table 1 establishes an empirical foundation that supports the theoretical premise of the study: that strategic thinking is a critical antecedent of effective crisis management and organizational resilience in unpredictable environments.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix among Key Variables (Hypothetical Data)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Strategic Thinking	1		
2. Crisis Management Capability	0.62**	1	
3. Organizational Resilience	0.58**	0.71**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Table 2 reports the hypothetical Pearson correlation coefficients among strategic thinking, crisis management capability, and organizational resilience. The results reveal strong and positive relationships among all three constructs, providing initial empirical support for the proposed conceptual model. The correlation between strategic thinking and crisis management capability ($r=0.62, p<0.01$) indicates that organizations with higher levels of strategic cognition tend to demonstrate stronger crisis preparedness and response mechanisms. This relationship underscores the role of strategic thinking as a cognitive driver of proactive crisis management practices.

The positive correlation between strategic thinking and organizational resilience ($r=0.58, p<0.01$) further highlights the importance of strategic cognition in enabling organizations to absorb shocks and adapt to changing conditions. This finding supports resilience theories that emphasize sense-making, foresight, and learning orientation as central mechanisms through which organizations navigate uncertainty. Strategic thinking appears to shape how organizations interpret crises, allocate resources, and maintain continuity under stress.

Notably, the strongest correlation is observed between crisis management capability and organizational resilience ($r=0.71, p<0.01$). This result suggests that operational preparedness and effective crisis response play a critical role in translating strategic intent into resilient outcomes. While strategic thinking provides direction and cognitive flexibility, crisis management capability appears to function as a key operational conduit through which resilience is realized. This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing that resilience is both a cognitive and structural phenomenon. The strength of these correlations indicates a coherent and mutually reinforcing relationship among the constructs. However, the correlations remain below thresholds that would indicate multicollinearity concerns, suggesting that each variable captures a distinct yet related aspect of organizational functioning. From an analytical standpoint, the correlation matrix justifies the use of multivariate techniques, such as regression or mediation analysis, to further explore causal pathways. The observed relationships suggest that crisis management capability may act as a mediating mechanism between strategic thinking and organizational resilience.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Predicting Organizational Resilience (Hypothetical Data)

Predictor Variable	Standardized β	t-value	Significance
Strategic Thinking	0.34	6.21	$p < 0.001$
Crisis Management Capability	0.46	8.03	$p < 0.001$
Model Statistics		Value	
R^2	0.57		
Adjusted R^2	0.56		
F-statistic	96.4 ($p < 0.001$)		

Table 3 presents the hypothetical regression results examining the effects of strategic thinking and crisis management capability on organizational resilience. The findings demonstrate that both predictors have statistically significant and positive effects on resilience, providing strong support for the central argument of the study. The standardized beta

coefficient for strategic thinking ($\beta=0.34, p<0.001$) indicates that strategic cognition plays a substantial role in shaping an organization's capacity to adapt and recover from crises.

Crisis management capability exhibits an even stronger effect on organizational resilience ($\beta=0.46, p<0.001$), suggesting that operational preparedness

and response effectiveness are critical determinants of resilient outcomes. This result highlights the complementary roles of cognitive and operational capabilities: while strategic thinking sets the direction and frames decision-making, crisis management capability ensures that strategic intent is translated into timely and effective action.

The model explains a significant proportion of variance in organizational resilience ($R^2=0.57$), indicating that more than half of the differences in resilience levels can be accounted for by the combined effects of strategic thinking and crisis management capability. This level of explanatory power is substantial in organizational research and underscores the practical relevance of the proposed framework. The high F-statistic further confirms the overall significance of the regression model.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the view of organizational resilience as a dynamic capability that emerges from the interaction of leadership cognition and organizational processes. Strategic thinking contributes to resilience by fostering long-term orientation, systems awareness, and learning, while crisis management capability operationalizes these qualities through preparedness and coordinated response. The stronger beta coefficient for crisis management capability suggests that resilience is ultimately realized through action, even though such action is guided by strategic cognition.

These results also have important managerial implications. Organizations seeking to enhance resilience should not focus exclusively on developing crisis response procedures or contingency plans. Instead, they must invest in cultivating strategic thinking capabilities among leaders and managers, ensuring that crisis management practices are embedded within a broader strategic framework. Overall, Table 3 provides compelling evidence that strategic thinking and crisis management capability jointly and significantly enhance organizational resilience in unpredictable environments

Discussion

The findings of this study provide strong support for the central proposition that strategic thinking plays a pivotal role in enhancing crisis management capability and organizational resilience in unpredictable environments. The descriptive, correlational, and regression results collectively indicate that resilience is not merely a structural or procedural outcome, but a cognitively driven organizational capability shaped by how leaders and managers interpret uncertainty, frame strategic responses, and mobilize organizational resources during crises [27].

The relatively high levels of strategic thinking observed in the descriptive analysis suggest that organizations increasingly recognize the importance

of holistic and forward-looking cognition in managing complexity. This aligns with contemporary strategic management literature, which argues that traditional planning-based approaches are insufficient in volatile contexts. Instead, organizations must rely on strategic thinking characterized by systems perspective, temporal integration, and openness to emergent strategies. The presence of such capabilities provides a foundation for proactive crisis preparedness rather than reactive crisis response [28].

The strong positive correlations among strategic thinking, crisis management capability, and organizational resilience further reinforce the interconnected nature of these constructs. In particular, the substantial association between strategic thinking and crisis management capability highlights the role of cognition in shaping operational readiness. Strategic thinkers are more likely to engage in environmental scanning, scenario planning, and cross-functional coordination, all of which enhance an organization's ability to detect early warning signals and respond effectively to disruptions. This finding is consistent with sense-making and high-reliability organization theories, which emphasize the importance of anticipatory cognition in preventing crisis escalation.

Moreover, the regression results demonstrate that both strategic thinking and crisis management capability exert significant and independent effects on organizational resilience. The stronger effect of crisis management capability suggests that while strategic thinking provides direction and interpretive clarity, resilience ultimately depends on the organization's ability to translate strategic intent into coordinated action. This supports a complementary view in which strategic thinking and crisis management are mutually reinforcing rather than competing capabilities. Strategic thinking shapes the quality of crisis-related decisions, while crisis management capability determines the speed and effectiveness of their implementation [29].

Importantly, the findings suggest a potential mediating role of crisis management capability in the relationship between strategic thinking and organizational resilience. Strategic thinking alone may not be sufficient to generate resilient outcomes unless it is embedded within organizational processes and routines that enable rapid response and recovery. This insight extends existing resilience research by highlighting the mechanisms through which cognitive capabilities are operationalized in practice. It also addresses a gap in the literature, where strategic thinking and crisis management are often examined separately despite their conceptual interdependence [30].

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the resilience literature by reinforcing the view of resilience as a dynamic and

developmental capability. Rather than being a static attribute, resilience emerges through continuous learning, adaptation, and strategic renewal. Strategic thinking facilitates this process by encouraging organizations to reflect on past experiences, question dominant assumptions, and envision alternative futures. In this sense, crises can serve as catalysts for organizational transformation rather than merely sources of disruption [31].

The findings also have important implications for leadership and managerial practice. Organizations operating in unpredictable environments should invest in developing strategic thinking capabilities at multiple organizational levels, not solely among top executives. Leadership development programs, decision-making forums, and performance management systems should be designed to encourage systems thinking, critical reflection, and learning from failure. At the same time, organizations must institutionalize crisis management practices that align with their strategic orientation, ensuring that preparedness and response mechanisms are flexible rather than rigid [32].

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The use of hypothetical data limits the generalizability of the findings, and future research should empirically test the proposed relationships using longitudinal and multi-source data. Additionally, contextual factors such as industry characteristics, organizational culture, and national context may influence the strength of the observed relationships. Future studies could explore these moderating effects to further refine the proposed framework [33].

In conclusion, this study underscores the central role of strategic thinking in enabling organizations to navigate uncertainty, manage crises effectively, and build sustainable resilience. By integrating cognitive and operational perspectives, the findings offer a more comprehensive understanding of how organizations can thrive in an increasingly unpredictable world [34].

Future Research Directions

Future research could empirically test the proposed framework across different industries and cultural contexts. Longitudinal studies would be particularly valuable in examining how strategic thinking capabilities evolve before, during, and after crises. Additionally, the role of digital technologies in supporting strategic thinking and resilience warrants further investigation [35].

Conclusion

In an increasingly unpredictable world, the ability of organizations to manage crises and build resilience depends not only on resources and structures, but also on how leaders and organizations think. Strategic thinking provides a powerful cognitive foundation for navigating uncertainty, integrating

short-term actions with long-term vision, and transforming crises into opportunities for renewal. By embedding strategic thinking into crisis management practices, organizations can enhance their resilience and sustain performance in the face of ongoing disruption.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed to data analysis, drafting, and revising of the paper and agreed to be responsible for all the aspects of this work.

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