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Team Resilience Development in Business Organizations: Wartime Operations Experience

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CONTENT

Abstract

This research studies team resilience as a core component of organizational resilience in the context of extreme and prolonged crisis. Organizational resilience is understood as a dynamic capability that give ablity for organizations to anticipate, overcome, adapt to, and transform internal processes in order to sustain survival, consistency and growth under conditions of uncertainty, volatility, and disruption. While existing literature identifies multiple interrelated components of organizational resilience such as leadership, strategy, operations, finance, culture, learning, and networks, this study focuses specifically on team resilience as a critical, underestimated launching mechanism.

The objective of the research is to analyse how managerial decisions and leadership practices influenced the development of team resilience in Ukrainian organizations during the full-scale war in Ukraine. The study explores how teams were stabilized, coordinated, motivated, and adapted under conditions of high uncertainty, time pressure, and emotional deformation, and how these processes contributed to develop organizational resilience.

Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative research design based on semi-structured interviews with business owners, top executives and senior managers from Ukrainian companies operating across different industries. The interview protocol was developed on the basis of prior theoretical work on organizational and team resilience and structured around key managerial domains, including leadership, decision-making, communication, goal-setting, motivation, learning, and innovation. Collected empirical data was analysed using systematic qualitative coding, cross-case comparison, and within-case pattern analysis.

The findings disclosed team resilience during crisis emerges not as a single practice, but as a configuration of interdependent managerial mechanisms. Leadership presence and sensemaking, rapid and reversible decision-making, intensified, transparent and fair communication, redistribution of responsibility, and meaning-based motivation were identified as primary resilience enablers during the initial shock phase. At the same time, the study highlights several crucial structural blind spots, including over-reliance on leadership centrality, delayed formalization of learning, communication saturation, unarticulated emotional labour, and uneven distribution of resilience capacity across organizational levels.

Based on these insights, the research proposes a multi-stage framework for strengthening team resilience as an integral part of organizational resilience. The framework combines immediate crisis-response practices with longer-term institutionalization mechanisms and provides actionable recommendations for organizations operating not only in wartime or crisis contexts, but also in environments characterized by continuous instability.

Keywords: organizational resilience, team resilience, managerial decision-making, crisis leadership, complex adaptive systems, learning and adaptation, Ukrainian organizations.

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

Over the past several decades global business environment went through a profound transformation. Just a couple of years ago managers used a VUCA world term — volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. But due to high velocity of world different dimensions development today more scholars increasingly argue that VUCA no longer fully describes the nature of contemporary disruptions. The acceleration of technological change, AI wide-ranged implementation, geopolitical instability, climate shocks, pandemics, wars, disinformation, social fragmentation and global supply chain failures have produced conditions that are not only more volatile but brittle, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible. This new configuration has been named as the BANI world (Cascio, 2020), where brittleness means systems can break suddenly and unexpectedly; anxiety reflects widespread emotional strain; non-linearity emphasises disproportionate cause–effect relations; and incomprehensibility highlights limits to predict or in business language term - forecast. Organizations increasingly operate in environment where disruptions are rather frequent than occasional, they overlap and cascade creating reality where stable assumptions are unreliable. In such an environment, efficiency-driven, optimisation-focused, bureaucratic and detailed process-based organisational models become fragile. One of examples where BANI world attributes can be clearly observed is political and economic environment of Ukraine in the period when russian full-scale invasion started. Very few of the companies have policies or procedures to operate in such conditions. In the same time now and them firms must contend with shocks that exceed the capacity of traditional risk management, leading scholars such as Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003) to argue that resilience, rather than stability, becomes the defining organisational requirement of the 21st century.

The concept of organizational resilience emerged as a central managerial capability arises within mentioned turbulences. Early usage of the term comes from engineering resilience—the ability to return to equilibrium after disturbance (Holling, 1973)—but organisational research quickly expanded the construct far beyond just “bouncing back.” Mallak (1998) introduced one of the first clear organizational definitions, describing resilience as the ability to absorb stress, recover functionality, and learn from adversity. Coutu (2002) later highlighted realism, meaning-making, and improvisation as core features of resilient systems. Lengnick-Hall, Beck and Lengnick-Hall (2011) broadened the concept by stressing attention that resilience itself represents more than recovery; it reflects a capacity for strategic renewal, based in cognitive, behavioural, and contextual capabilities that gives ability for organisations to adjust resources and create new logic for them during disruption. Folke (2006) describes resilience as an adaptive

and transformative capacity, allowing organisations not only to survive crises but to evolve and become stronger because of them. Across these perspectives, organizational resilience gradually transitioned from a passive recovery action plan to a dynamic, learnable capability process-based system (Duchek, 2020) that maintains long-term viability when volatility is the norm rather than the exception.

While resilience initially stated as an organisational-level construct, contemporary research show that organisations do not respond to crises as monolithic entities. The actual facing with threats, coordination of work, emotional regulation, adjustment of routines, improvisation under pressure and learning from unexpected events occurs first of all at the level of teams, which function as the basic operating units of organisations (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Therefore a clear causal chain can be built up: a turbulent VUCA/BANI environment generates pressure for organisational resilience, but organizational resilience itself is enacted through the functioning of teams (Meneghel, Salanova & Martínez, 2016). Organizational visions and targets, structures and strategies matter, however they materialize into actions only through the capacity of small groups of people remaining cohesive, maintaining coordinated action, interpreting uncertainty, communicating effectively and supporting one another under stress.

Scholars describe team resilience as a dynamic, emergent state reflecting a team's shared ability to withstand, adapt to and recover from adversity (Alliger et al., 2015). It is not simply the sum of individual traits; instead, it arises from interaction patterns, collective cognitions and shared emotional regulation (Driskell & Salas, 2013). Weick (1993) demonstrated that under extreme pressure, such as in wildland firefighting disasters, teams more likely collapse through disorganisation or rebuild through collective sensemaking, highlighting that resilience is not a product of individual wills or heroics but of shared interpretation. Carmeli, Friedman and Tishler (2013) show that teams with strong relational resources—trust, mutual respect, emotional safety—possess higher recovery capacity. Van der Vegt et al. (2015) stated team resilience as an emergent property created through shared mental models, collective efficacy, and adaptive coordination. These insights collectively demonstrate that team resilience is the mechanism through which organizations are able to withstand and adapt to high-impact events.

Because of this, many dimensions once related solely to organizational resilience are now understood more as team-level capabilities. Teams must grow and develop cognitive capacity, including shared situation awareness and accurate perception of risks (Stout et al., 1999). They must sustain emotional and relational capacity, such as psychological safety and collective emotion regulation, which saves teams

from fragmentation under pressure (Edmondson, 1999). They must exhibit behavioural capacity such as improvisation, role flexibility and real-time coordination (Burke et al., 2008). Finally, they must demonstrate learning and adaptive capacity, showing their ability to receive and analyse new information, reflect on past actions and adjust strategies (Argote, 2011). These team capabilities map directly onto the broader resilience processes described at the organizational level—anticipation, coping and adaptation (Duchek, 2020)—but occur on micro level of team interaction.

The managerial domains that shape these team-level resilience processes are multidimensional and interdependent. It is reasonable to highlight key ones of them: leadership, decision-making, goal-setting, team management, communication, motivation, learning, adaptation and innovation. Leadership definitely plays a pivotal role: resilient leaders provide meaning, stabilize attention and encourage empowerment during uncertainty (Boin & van Eeten, 2013). Decision-making processes determine whether teams as ability to respond with agility; the readiness to shift from hierarchical to decentralized decision-making is crucial in crises (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). Resilient goal-setting approaches are ones that can balance team focus between short-term withstanding or survival targets and long-term strategic path. Team management practices influence coordination, role and responsibilities clarity together with structural robustness. Communication merges shared understanding and affects whether teams develop coherence or confusion (Stoverink et al., 2020). Motivation—particularly intrinsic motivation and collective purpose—anchors sustained effort under adversity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Learning practices, such as after-action reviews and open knowledge sharing, are crucial for transforming disruption into organizational development (Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). Adaptation reflects the capacity of teams to update routines, shift strategies and evolve under new challenges. Innovation represents the proactive dimension of resilience, enabling teams to generate modern solutions when traditional approaches fail (Anderson, De Dreu & Nijstad, 2004).

Viewed this way, team resilience becomes an important critical mechanism linking environmental turbulence to organizational outcomes. Organizational resilience may be mentioned in strategies and executive narratives, but it materializes only on the teams level, when they collectively sense disruptions, remain emotionally stable, coordinate action, communicate clearly, maintain motivation, learn continuously and adapt creatively. This is especially true for organizations operating under extreme conditions, such as those in wartime Ukraine, where non-linearity, emotional strain and operational unpredictability empower the role of teams as the driver of organizational resilience. Investigating object

of the study through managerial domains such as leadership, decision-making, team management, communication, motivation, learning, adaptation and innovation therefore provides comprehensive and multidimensional framework for understanding how resilience is constructed in practice and how organizations develop the social and behavioural capabilities needed to navigate high-impact disruptions.

This research focuses on team resilience as a central and operative component of organizational resilience. To establish a robust theoretical foundation, the first part of the study presents a comprehensive literature review examining existing conceptualizations of team resilience, the perspectives from which the construct has been analysed, and the managerial domains through which leaders influence its development. Particular attention is given to how leadership behaviours, decision-making patterns, communication practices, motivational processes, learning mechanisms, and adaptive or innovative actions contribute to strengthening team resilience capacity. In the second part of the research, semi-structured interviews with senior leaders of Ukrainian organizations were conducted to explore how managerial behaviour manifested immediately prior to and during the initial phase of the full-scale Russian invasion. This empirical approach enables the identification of how extreme stress, uncertainty and operational pressure shape leaders' cognitive clarity, emotional regulation, decision-making and ability to support team resilience while navigating unprecedented disruptive conditions.

CHAPTER 2. Literature review

2.1 Early use of the terms “Resilience,” “Organizational Resilience,” and “Team Resilience”

Resilience as a concept comes through the evolution from the natural sciences into psychology, and later on into organizational studies, reflecting the increasing complexity and volatility of the environments in which modern organizations operate. The term resilience first emerged in ecology field with Holling’s (1973) seminal work, where he conceptualized resilience as a system’s ability to absorb disturbances and reorganize or align while undergoing change, retaining its essential functions. This ecological domain of the property disclosed an important conceptual shift from stability to adaptability, arguing that systems survive not because they resist change, but because they respond to it constructively.

Throughout the twentieth century, resilience gained prominence in psychology as scholars tried to explain why some individuals adapt positively to adversity and uncertainty while others deteriorate. Individual resilience was soon clearly understood as a process involving coping strategies, emotional regulation, and positive adaptation rather than innate strength. This shift—from a trait to a dynamic process—later proved foundational for organizational and team-level theorization.

At the organizational level, resilience began to attract more attention in the 1990s, particularly due to circumstances organizations faced more like turbulence due to globalization, technological change, and market volatility. Early organizational research, such as Weick’s (1993) analysis of breakdowns in sensemaking during major crises, showed that organizational survival based on collective interpretations and coordinated action during surprising, ambiguous events. Mallak (1998) was among the first to define organizational resilience, describing it as a proactive capacity to absorb stress, maintain functioning, and create meaningful vision following disruption. He emphasized that resilience is an active behavioural process shaped by decision-making, communication, and shared understanding rather than a static state.

The concept of team resilience developed later, followed by rising interest in teamwork, distributed work structures, and the increasing interdependence of organizational roles. By the early 2000s, scholars recognized that resilience does not relate only within individuals or organizations but is being showed by teams that face operational pressures together. Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003) positioned resilience as an organizational process running through interactions, reliability, and mindful organizing, clearly acknowledging the team’s role. Later, researchers such as Driskell and Salas (2013) and Alliger et al.

(2015) defined team resilience as a dynamic, emergent state arising from shared processes—coordination, emotional regulation, adaptation—that cannot be reduced in scale to one of individual traits.

Reviewed articles reflect the flow and progression clearly. Sommer et al. showed that resilience during organizational crises is formed by team-level affect and leadership behaviours, but not traits of exact individual members. Gucciardi et al. framed team resilience as a collective, dynamic capacity that evolves across the stages of preparation, response, and recovery. Edson's complex adaptive systems (CAS) approach further showed that resilience is not linear but emerges through interaction, self-organization, and communication links within a team. Dimas et al. demonstrated empirically that team resilience stabilize relationship between transformational leadership and team effectiveness, reinforcing the idea that resilience is a part of team processes rather than individual character.

By the 2020s, organizational resilience literature (Duchek, 2020; Georgescu et al., 2022; Evenseth et al., 2021) increasingly highlighted teams as the operational core of resilience capabilities such as anticipation, coping, and adaptation. Meanwhile, actionable frameworks such as the Australian Government's Organizational Resilience: Good Practice Guide further stated the idea that resilience is rather multi-level function then an individual or top-level, socially distributed capacity enhanced by coordinated team activity, communication, agility, and trust.

Therefore, historically and conceptually, the resilience construct has developed from describing physical properties of materials to defining a critical social and organizational capability. This path reflects increasing accepting that in a turbulent world—whether characterized as VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) or the more recent BANI (brittle, anxious, nonlinear, incomprehensible)—resilience must be taken as a multi-level adaptive process. The most actionable level of it is the team, where people collectively sense changes, interpret threats, emotionally support each other, and coordinate adaptive responses.

2.2 Team resilience as the operational core of organizational resilience

As it was mentioned in previous chapter resilience research moved from ecological systems to individuals and then to organizations, scholars increasingly recognized that the organizational level does not operate as an single autonomous entity. Organizations being collective cognitive entities respond to crises through teams—groups of interdependent individuals who observe disruptions, share interpretations, make

decisions, solve problems, and maintain performance under pressure. Therefore, although organizational resilience is defined at the macro level, its mechanisms are fundamentally driven at the micro level: in teams. Team resilience therefore constitutes the actual fuel for organizational resilience.

Studied literature consistently frames organizational resilience not as a structural attribute or a stable state, but as a dynamic, distributed capability that depends on coordinated action and shared cognition across groups. Duchek (2020) underlines anticipation, coping, and adaptation—the three temporary capabilities of resilient organizations—are in fact collective processes requiring team-level collaboration, interpretation, and behavioural flexibility. Likewise, the Australian Government's Organizational Resilience: Good Practice Guide identifies leadership, internal communication, coordination, and shared responsibilities as primary indicators of resilience—each of which depends more on how teams interact rather than on formal bureaucracy structures.

The key role of teams becomes even clearer when examining how organizations actually function during crises. Sommer et al.'s study of the Canadian healthcare system under extreme bed shortages illustrates that resilience during operational stress arises from the emotional states, communication practices, and leadership behaviours within medical teams of all levels. Their findings showed that transformational leadership enhances positive affect, that develops and strengthens team resilience. This demonstrates that resilience is shaped within teams through psychological and interpersonal processes rather than through organizational-level directives and targets.

Gucciardi et al. reinforce this perspective by stating team resilience as a "dynamic, emergent state" that evolves through social interaction, coordination, and shared agency. They insist teams develop resilience by navigating three stages—preparation, response, and recovery—and that movement through these stages depends on communication quality, trust, and psychological safety. In their concept, resilience is not a fixed individual trait but a collective developmental path shaped by how team members interpret adversity, support one another, and learn from experience.

A richer understanding comes out after being viewed through the lens of complex adaptive systems (CAS), as articulated by Edson. In her long-term work with a project team, resilience appeared not as an organizational policy or a formal procedure but as an emergent property arising from continuous communication, role negotiation, and mutual adjustment. CAS theory states that outcomes are nonlinear

and depend on interaction patterns rather than individual inputs. This position resonates strongly with team resilience research: resilience emerges from dynamic interdependencies, rapid information flows, and self-organizing behaviour within teams facing volatile conditions.

Leadership models further disclose team-level processes as the pathways through which resilience is formed. According to Sommer et al., transformational leadership—characterized by emotional support, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation — develops team affect and thereby strengthens resilience. Dimas et al. empirically demonstrated that team resilience is a cohesion between transformational leadership and team effectiveness, showing leadership's positive effects on performance flow through the team's collective resilience capacity. As alternative, passive leadership behaviours undermine resilience, slows down cooperation, and weaken the team's ability to overcome under stress.

These findings collectively uncover a crucial theoretical linkage: organizational resilience depends on resilience that practiced, accepted, and continually reconstructed within teams. Teams provide the structural and relational environment where threats are interpreted, where sensemaking takes place, where plans are adapted, where mistakes are studied, and where emotional burdens are collectively regulated. Even the most advanced organizational strategy is not able to compensate weak team processes, just as the most turbulent environment is not ale to destroy a tightly coordinated, trustful, adaptive team.

The literature on organizational culture and strategic human resource management adds another layer, showing how wider organizational systems shape team resilience indirectly. Georgescu et al. demonstrate that supportive organizational culture, learning-oriented HR practices, and employee development environments improve resilience by strengthening shared values, trust, and collaboration—factors that directly influence team dynamics. In this sense, organizational conditions serve as the "soil" for team resilience to grow.

Together, all these theoretical and empirical contributions converge on a central insight: team resilience is not merely just a component of organizational resilience—it is the mechanism through which organizational resilience becomes actionable. Teams are the units through which learning, adaptation, innovation, and coordinated response take place. They provide the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral infrastructure and environment that allows organizations to predict threats, absorb shocks, maintain functioning, and emerge stronger.

2.3 Dimensions and managerial domains of team resilience

As resilience studies has shifted toward collective processes, a huge amount of researches have examined the key dimensions and managerial domains that enable teams to withstand disruption, maintain functioning, and transform tribulations into strengthened capability. While definitions differ across studies, there is strong consensus that team resilience is multidimensional property, emerging from the interplay of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and adaptive processes. These dimensions are formed by managerial contexts and leadership behaviours, making resilience not a property of the team but a developmental outcome of sustained management action.

A) Cognitive and Sensemaking Dimensions

A foundational dimension of team resilience refers to how teams perceive, interpret, and make sense of threats. Resilient teams maintain shared mental patterns and collective situation awareness, enabling them to predict disruptions and navigate themselves through uncertainty. This cognitive dimension is visible across several of articles: Duchek's anticipation capability highlights scanning, interpreting signals, and predicting potential threats, while Gucciardi et al. describe how collective appraisals shape the trajectory from crisis to recovery. Sommer et al.'s study further shows that transformational leadership improves positive cognitive framing, which helps teams review and accept challenges as manageable and meaningful, thereby strengthening resilience. These insights align with Weick's broader sensemaking theory, which argues that resilient groups continuously reconstruct meaning to maintain alignment and avoid breakdowns. In practical terms, this dimension reflects the managerial domains of decision-making and sense-giving, where leaders form teams' understanding of adversity and paying direct attention toward constructive interpretation rather than fear-driven responses.

B) Emotional and Relational Dimensions

Equally important is the emotional state of the team—psychological safety, trust, cohesion, and collective emotional regulation. Research consistently shows that resilience is unreachable without supportive relational dynamics. The team resilience model by Gucciardi et al. highlights trust and high-quality relationships as enabling mechanisms at all stages of preparation, response, and recovery. Sommer et al. provide empirical support: transformational leadership enhances positive affect within the team, which operates as the psychological engine of resilience during prolonged crises. Emotional

safety enables trust between members and ability to discuss failures openly, request help, and accept uncertainty without fear of blame, which is in line with Edmondson's concept of psychological safety. This dimension aligns closely with the managerial domains of team management, motivation, and communication—domains that form and shape interpersonal climate and determine whether pressure leads to fragmentation or connection. Emotional resilience forms the skeleton for behavioural flexibility during crises.

C) Behavioural and Coordinative Dimensions

Team resilience also being observed through coordinated behavioural patterns—rapid role adjustment, improvisation, and flexible problem-solving. These behaviours are described in Edson's ethnographic study of the hackathon project team, where resilience appeared not from existing roles but from ongoing negotiation and adaptive action in a complex system. Behavioural coordination reflects the team's ability to maintain productivity even when tasks, resources, or limitations shift suddenly. Here, the relevant managerial domains are team management, decision-making, and adaptation, where leaders encourage cross-functionality, reduce tough hierarchy, and empower members to act swiftly without waiting for top-down instructions and orders. This capacity is particularly important in rapidly deploying crises, where waiting for formal approvals can cause substantial operational delays and lead to serious consequences.

D) Learning, Innovation, and Adaptive Dimensions

In literature learning consistently appears as the mechanism through which resilience develops over time. Duchek underlines adaptation as the final resilience stage, that depends on reflective learning, unlearning outdated routines, and experimenting with new solutions. Evenseth et al.'s systematic review enhanced this perspective, identifying organizational learning as the central driver in front of all forms of resilience—anticipation relies on learning from weak signals, coping depends on knowledge exchange, and adaptation requires capability transformation. Pujiarti's study of SMEs shows evidence that market turbulence strengthens the link between learning and innovation, showing that teams facing uncertainty generate new approaches only when learning structures are strong. These insights align with studied in this work domain of learning and innovation: resilient teams not only withstand disruption but use it to stimulate creative thinking, discover new practices, improve

performance and even become stronger in front of new challenges. Innovation is not an optional enhancement—it is a core adaptive behaviour that allows teams to move from recovery to development.

E) Structural and Resource Dimensions

Despite team resilience is deeply behavioural and relational, organizational structures and resources also can enable and strengthen or constrain and eliminate it. Duchek highlights organizational infrastructure — decentralized decision-making, flexible processes, and accessible knowledge systems—as basic environmental enablers of team-level resilience. The Australian Government's Good Practice Guide reinforces this view by showing resource availability, organizational processes, and communication systems as core indicators of resilience maturity. Georgescu et al. add that supportive HR practices strengthen team resilience indirectly by shaping culture, competence development, and aligned expectations. These structural components correspond mentioned managerial domains of leadership, team management, and decision-making, as they set and describe the boundaries within which teams operate and adapt.

F) Interdependence of Dimensions

A critical insight across all studied articles is that no dimension functions independently. Cognitive clarity cannot support resilience if emotional safety is absent. Behavioural flexibility is impossible without shared understanding. Learning can't produce adaptation without communication. Resilience is definitely a system of reinforcing mechanisms, not a list of isolated factors. This system-level interdependence is also reflected in complex adaptive systems theory, which describes how small changes in interaction patterns can produce large emergent changes in team capability. In practice, this means that resilience develops not from the strength of any single dimension but from the alignment and mutuality among cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and adaptive processes. Leadership, communication, and team management being highly dependent on managerial style and decisions taken become the coordinating forces that harmonize and align these elements into a consistent resilience capability.

Together, insights divided into dimensions show that team resilience is a layered, integrated construct generated by the cohesion of psychological, relational, structural, and behavioural forces. It appears when leaders cultivate shared understanding, maintain emotional safety, empower coordinated action, and create

learning-oriented cultures that encourage adaptation and innovation. Each managerial domain planned to study using methodology described in next chapter—leadership, decision-making, team management, communication, motivation, learning, adaptation, and innovation—is related directly onto one or more resilience dimensions, demonstrating that these domains are not peripheral but foundational to the development and expression of team resilience in uncertain environments.

2.4 Conclusion and best practices

The literature reviewed in this chapter discloses that resilience—across individual, team, and organizational levels—has developed from a narrow engineering analogy into a central mechanism for understanding how modern organizations survive and even grow under extreme uncertainty. While earlier definitions conceptualized resilience primarily as a capacity to "bounce back", modern scholars emphasizes its developmental and generative nature. Resilience is now widely understood more as a dynamic, emergent capability that integrates anticipation, coping, adaptation, and transformation rather than static one. Moreover, this shift reflects both the complexity of today's operating environments and the recognition that organizational performance in crises depends fundamentally on human systems and more complex structures - teams.

Across all analysed literature, team resilience appears as the operational core of organizational resilience. Organizations may create crisis protocols, redundancy mechanisms, or decision hierarchies, but it is teams who interpret weak signals, regulate emotions, coordinate actions, communicate under pressure, solve unexpected problems, and translate disruption into learning. The research shows that resilient outcomes are possible when leadership, structures, and cultural norms enable teams to work collaboratively and adaptively despite threat, overload, or resource constraints. Team resilience is not an optional psychological asset in this case but the mechanism that allows resilient organizations to function in real time.

The reviewed studies collectively highlight several best practices for enabling and developing team resilience.

First, leadership plays a consistently central role. Transformational leadership, as shown by Sommer et al. and Dimas et al., fosters positive affect, shared purpose, and psychological safety—conditions that shape how teams interpret turbulations and how willing they are to experiment, communicate openly, or support

one another. Reflexive and sensemaking-oriented leadership, as emphasized by Grote, becomes especially critical in volatile environments where uncertainty exceeds available information. Best practices include transparent communication, emotional support, empowerment, and modelling adaptive behaviour.

Second, resilient teams need strong relational foundations, including trust, cohesion, mutual respect, and psychological safety. Studies by Gucciardi et al. and Edson show that collective resilience cannot emerge in environments saturated with fear, blame, or isolation. Instead, teams must feel safe to express concerns, admit mistakes, improvise, and request help or support. Managers should therefore implement rituals and practices that reinforce psychological safety: regular check-ins, open forums, free-speech talks, structured reflections, and transparent discussion of failures.

Third, resilience depends on collective learning and adaptive knowledge. Duchek's framework and Evenseth et al.'s systematic review both demonstrate that learning processes—formal and informal—enable teams to transform disruptions into capability development. Learning involves not only gaining new knowledge but also unlearning or cancellation of outdated routines and experimenting with innovative approaches. Best practices include after-action reviews, cross-functional knowledge sharing, simulation exercises, and mechanisms to capture insights from crisis experience.

Fourth, resilient teams show behavioural flexibility, including adaptive role shifting, improvisation, and coordinated actions under pressure. Edson's work on complex adaptive systems illustrates that flexibility arises when hard but fragile hierarchies are weaken and when members are empowered to act autonomously within shared boundaries. Managers should therefore balance structure with decentralization—providing guidelines and clarity but still leaving space for self-organization when conditions change rapidly.

Fifth, resilient performance is supported by communication systems that ensure in-time information flow, shared situational awareness, and clarity during uncertainty. Across all studies from literature observed, communication emerges as a foundation basis for resilience. High-frequency, multichannel, transparent communication reduces ambiguity, aligns decisions, and maintains team cohesion showing shared values, targets and common development vector. Best practices include crisis-specific communication routines, short-cycle coordination meetings, and accessible channels adapted to certain conditions.

Finally, the scholars highlight the role of motivation and purpose. During prolonged crises such as war or systemic disruption, technical capabilities taken separately are insufficient. Teams overcome challenges when they are emotionally committed to the common mission and to one another. This sense of shared meaning, reinforced through leadership behaviours and organizational culture, sustains resilience during extended periods of pressure. Georgescu et al. demonstrate that supportive HRM (Human Resource Management) practices and culture amplify motivation and strengthen adaptive capacity.

As a general outcome we see team resilience is best cultivated through a holistic and integrated approach combining leadership, communication, trust-building, psychological safety, flexible decision-making, and continuous learning. Rather than viewing resilience as an innate individual trait or static property, organizations should treat it as a strategic capability, consciously developed across managerial domains and embedded into everyday practices. As organizations navigate environments marked by uncertainty, turbulence, and systemic shocks, team resilience offers not only protection against disruption in future but a pathway for renewal, development and innovation based on long-term sustainability.

CHAPTER 3. Research methodology

3.1 Research aim

The aim of this study is to explore how Ukrainian top managers across different industries established, sustained, and enabled team resilience during the extreme unpredictability caused by the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The research is to discover how managerial decisions, leadership styles, communication mechanisms, approaches to goal-setting, motivation, decision-making, and adaptation are shown in respondents' narratives, and how practices on the land align with theoretical models of organizational and team resilience identified in the literature review.

There are some major directions the study will focus on. They are: identifying common behavioural patterns across respondents, determining the differences between them, and analysing the internal logic within each individual interview. This includes comparing patterns fount within one respondent's answers to the patterns identified in others. A further objective is to uncover "blind spots" in the interviews, both topics that were underrepresented, avoided, or insufficiently discussed, as well as domains of team resilience that received minimal attention. Using this approach, the study is to give a comprehensive understanding of how team resilience emerges and operates through real-life managerial decisions and behaviour during deep crisis.

3.2 Methodological approach

The study process is based on a qualitative research design, which is best suited to capturing the multidimensional and context-dependent nature of team resilience. The qualitative paradigm was chosen because it allows exploration of complex psychological, social, and managerial dynamics that can hardly be described or transferred to numerical indicators without substantial loss of meaning. In conditions of extreme turbulence—such as those experienced during wartime—qualitative methods offer a unique ability to reconstruct real managerial actions, leadership logic, emotional states, informal decision-making processes, and the subtle behavioural shifts that quantitative data cannot underline.

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the primary data collection method. This technique combines a fixed set of questions with the flexibility during the process itself by asking clarifying follow-ups, and pursuing topics raised spontaneously by the respondent. Such flexibility provides both standardization

across interviews (crucial for subsequent coding and comparison) and deep contextual and even emotional exploration (necessary to capture the nuances of managerial behaviour). Semi-structured interviews therefore provide rich contextual material that is well-suited for developing a coding framework and for grounding interpretations within established theories of team resilience.

This method is particularly appropriate in research contexts where leadership behaviour, internal team dynamics, and responses to turbulence cannot be accurately reconstructed through documents or numerical indicators alone. During wartime, many key managerial actions happen in real time, often without formal procedures or established structures. Interviews thus make it possible to gather not only factual information but also the causative consecutive logic of crisis response, which forms a basic component of team resilience.

3.3 Sample description

The study uses purposive sampling and includes eight respondents occupying top and c-level executive positions who directly influenced the survival and operational decisions of their organizations during the crisis. All participants represent companies that continued their operations after February 24, 2022, despite differing levels of disruption and organizational transformation.

As it was said earlier, respondents hold senior roles—C-level executives, founders, co-owners, and directors—across a diverse set of industries: retail, FMCG, industrial trade, food production, building materials and fuel distribution. Such wide diversity enables the identification of both unique and universal patterns of resilience across organizational contexts.

The organizations vary significantly in size—from small and medium-sized enterprises to one of the largest Ukrainian corporations with more than 50,000 employees. This diversity allows to compare resilience practices across different businesses scales. All participants requested anonymity within the methodological section, which has been fully respected.

Thus, the sample reflects variation in business scale, industry conditions, operational risk levels, and managerial environments. What is common for all the respondents is their direct responsibility for leading organizations under conditions of extreme stress and uncertainty—and therefore their direct influence on

team resilience as well as fact that companies they worked in continued operations after the start of full-scale invasion.

3.4 Limitations

Several methodological limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the findings of this study.

First, the sample is non-representative by design, consisting of eight senior leaders whose organizations survived and continued operating during the war. As a result, the analysis primarily reflects successful or resilient organisational trajectories, while not taking into account organizations that closed, scaled down irreversibly, relocated abroad, or whose leaders chose not to engage into the operational process in new circumstances. This survival bias may influence how resilience is articulated and understood in the data.

Second, the sample is intentionally shifted toward top managerial positions. While this provides valuable insight into strategic decision-making and leadership behaviour, it does not reflects the perspectives of middle managers, frontline employees, or informal team leaders who may experience and enact resilience differently. Consequently, the findings reflect a leadership-centric perspective on team resilience.

Third, the study covers a wide range of industries and organizational sizes, but the number of interviews per industry is limited. This shortens the ability to review sector-specific generalizations and means that differences observed between respondents may reflect individual managerial styles as much as structural or industry-based factors.

Fourth, the reliance on retrospective self-reporting brings potential recall bias and post-hoc rationalization. Leaders describing crisis events may unintentionally reconstruct their narratives through present-day interpretations, suppressing uncertainty, emotional complexity, or contradictions that were present in real time.

Fifth, the interviews were conducted during wartime, which may have shaped respondents' willingness to discuss failures, doubts, or internal organizational tensions or problems. Even with anonymity, some degree of social desirability bias is likely, especially concerning decisions that affected employees, safety, or long-term resilience.

Finally, qualitative interpretation inherently involves the researcher's analytical lens. Although coding procedures and methodological accuracy reduce subjective influence, complete neutrality cannot be assumed.

These limitations do not devaluate the findings but clarify the scope within which conclusions can be reasonably made. They also underline areas for potential future research, such as expanding the sample to include additional organizational levels, sectors, or companies that did not survive the crisis.

3.5 Interview procedure

All interviews were conducted synchronously via online videoconferencing platforms such as Zoom/Teams. Before each interview, respondents provided verbal consent for participation, audio recording, and the academic use of the data. Each interview lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes, depending on the depth of responses.

The interviews were structured around an instrument consisting of eighteen questions that cover the major domains of team resilience identified in the first chapter: leadership, decision-making, goal-setting, team management, communication, motivation, learning, adaptation and innovation. Questions were asked in the same sequence across all respondents, while the interviewer raised additional clarifying questions when necessary. This approach ensured both comparability and depth, allowing respondents to discuss more precisely on topics that were particularly relevant to their experience.

All audio recordings were transcribed from recorded audio file using Turboscribe.ai online service, preserving the full dialogic structure of "interviewer — respondent." Transcripts include markers for follow-up questions, pauses, unclear fragments, and logical breaks. These transcripts bring in the primary empirical dataset for further coding and analysis presented in the next chapter.

Ethical considerations were upheld at every stage of data collection, including respondent anonymity, voluntary participation, impartial data handling, and the exclusive use of the material only for academic purposes.

3.6. Respondent coding and anonymization

To ensure ethical compliance, protect respondents' confidentiality, and ensure ability of systematic qualitative analysis, all interview participants were anonymized using an alphanumeric coding system. Each person was assigned a unique identifier (R1–R8), which is used consistently over the whole the coding process, analytical chapters, and when presenting verbatim quotations.

The coding system serves several methodological needs. First, it keeps respondent anonymity while allowing the reader to follow analytical patterns across interviews. Second, it enables cross-case comparison without disclosing of personal identities or organizational belongings. Third, it supports analytical preciseness by ensuring tracking between empirical data, coded segments, and interpretative outcomes.

All respondents represent either senior executives or top managers operating in organizations of different sizes and industries, all of which continued functioning during the full-scale war in Ukraine. Although respondents differ in organizational scale, sector, and managerial roles, all share direct responsibility for decision-making, leadership, and team coordination under conditions of extreme crisis. To avoid potential identification, individual names and company names are not disclosed in the analytical sections of the study.

The respondent coding scheme is presented in the table below.

Table 3.1 Respondent coding scheme

Code	**Gender**	**Position**	**Industry**
R1	Male	Board-level executive	Large-scale national retail
R2	Male	Founder/Managing Partner	Industrial trade/manufacturing
R3	Male	Chief Operating Officer	HR technology/platform
R4	Male	Founder/Managing Director	Construction materials
R5	Male	Chief Executive Officer	Fuel retail network
R6	Female	HR Director	FMCG/consumer goods
R7	Female	Deputy HR Director	National electronics retail
R8	Female	Senior executive	National pet food producer

CHAPTER 4. Qualitative analysis of the interviews

4.1 Analytical positioning and focus of the study

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis of empirical data collected while conducting semi-structured interviews with senior executives of Ukrainian organizations operating under conditions after beginning of full-scale war. Based on methodology from Chapter 3, the raw interview material is being transformed into analytically structured findings using systematic coding and comparative qualitative analysis.

As it was mentioned throughout the study, focus of analysis is team resilience, taken not as an isolated phenomenon but as an embedded and operational component of organizational resilience. While organizational resilience is defined in the literature as an organization's capacity to absorb shocks, adapt to disruption, and continue functioning under extreme uncertainty, this study tackles team resilience as the mechanism through which mentioned organizational capacity is enacted in practice. In other words, organizational resilience is treated here as an emergent property that activates through leadership behaviour, team dynamics and interactions, decision-making processes, communication patterns, and learning practices within and across teams.

Current chapter serves as the empirical core of the study and fulfils three interrelated analytical objectives. First, it arranges managers live experiences of leading teams during wartime into a straight analytical structure grounded in the developed codebook. Second, it identifies existing patterns, configurations, and tensions in how team resilience is constructed, maintained, and challenged under long-term crisis conditions. Third, it discloses absences, contradictions, and under-articulated areas in respondents' answers, therefore showing both explicit and implicit dimensions of practice related to team resilience.

It is important to mention, in this chapter there are no predefined hypotheses tested or theoretical frameworks imposed directly onto the data. Moreover, it adopts an inductive appeared logic, allowing empirical patterns to emerge from respondents' narratives still remaining grounded by the resilience literature reviewed previously. This approach aligns with the qualitative research design described in Chapter 3, one that seeks depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization.

The analytical process flows through several levels. At the foundational level, interview transcripts were systematically coded to capture real-timed managerial actions, decision descriptions, emotional responses,

and interactional dynamics related to team functioning during crisis. At the next intermediate level, these codes were organized into core dimensions of team resilience, which combine multiple related practices and meanings without fragmenting them into narrow categories. At the last integrative level, patterns were examined both within individual cases and across cases, showing comparison between organizations of different industries, and governance cultures.

Analysis structuring connects rich empirical material and related theoretical discussion. It brings a transparent analytical flow from raw interview data to synthesized findings, which will be commented in relation to existing theories of organizational and team resilience in next chapter bringing valuable recommendations.

4.2 Development of the codebook

Developed codebook is to serve as the primary instrument for organizing, interpreting, and comparing qualitative data across all interviews. It was constructed to ensure analytical preciseness, transparency, and consistency together with keeping of contextual richness of respondents' narratives.

The development of the codebook followed a multi-stage process, combining sensitivity to prior theory with inductive openness to emergent empirical patterns. Instead of imposing a fixed theoretical model of resilience onto the data, the coding process allows empirical experience to shape the analytical structure, in line with the qualitative research methodology outlined in Chapter 3.

At the initial stage, all eight interview transcripts were read in full to achieve immersion in the data. During this stage, attention was paid to recurring themes, frequently used expressions, emotionally charged moments, and descriptions of concrete managerial actions related to crisis response, team functioning and management. Open coding was applied to identify meaningful units of text without predefining categories.

In the second stage, codes were clustered and refined through constant comparison across interviews. Codes that described similar practices or meanings, such as delegation under pressure, emergent decision-making, or enhanced communication, were grouped together. At this stage, redundancies were eliminated, overlapping codes were merged, and ambiguous labels were clarified to improve precision of the analysis.

In the third stage, codes were arranged into core dimensions of team resilience, which function as higher-level analytical constructs. These core dimensions do not represent abstract theoretical domains but united categories grounded in disclosed managerial behaviour and decision logic. Each core dimension covers several related practices and reflects how team resilience is enacted in real organizational operations during uncertainty.

Structure of the Codebook consists of three analytical levels: core dimensions of team resilience (second-level categories), analytical codes (first-level categories) and operational definitions explaining how each code was applied.

The table below presents the finalized codebook used in the analysis.

Table 4.1. Codebook for qualitative analysis of team resilience

Core Dimensions	**Analytical Code**	**Operational Definition**
Leadership under crisis	Leadership presence	Physical or symbolic presence of the leader during crisis (e.g. being in the country with the team, visiting regions, being accessible)
	Leadership role reconfiguration	Changes in leadership style, responsibility and authority distribution, shifts in managerial roles in response to the crisis
	Sense-giving	Actions done to interpret events, reduce uncertainty and create common meaning for all team
Decision-making and authority	Accelerated decision-making	Shortened decision-making cycles, elimination of long bureaucratic procedures
	Delegation expansion	Active distribution of authority to regional, local or other managerial level teams and team members
	Intuitive decision-making	Relying more on experience and gut feeling than formal analysis
Goal-setting and prioritization	Survival-oriented goals	Priorities focused more on short-term tasks to ensure safety and operational survival
	Temporary horizon compression	Shift from long-term and mid-term period of planning to short-term one
	Dynamic reprioritization	Agile adjusting of goals in relation to changing environment

Team management practices	Workforce stabilization	Actions targeted to retain employees and maintaining team continuity
	Roles flexibility	Temporary or permanent changing in roles, responsibilities and internal teams combinations
	Physiological safety practices	Managerial actions that addresses stress, fear, frustration and wellbeing
Communication dynamics	Communication intensity	Increased frequency of formal and informal communication practices
	Multi-channel communication	Use of multiple communication tools (messengers, chats, meetings, online platforms and applications)
	Transparency	Open sharing of information about risks, decisions and uncertainties
Motivation and trust	Collective mission framing	Focusing on shared purposes (e.g. social contribution, national resilience)
	Trust-based coordination	Reliance on mutual trust rather formal controls and procedures
Learning and reflection	Experiential learning	Learning based on real-time lessons
	Error tolerance	Acceptance of team's mistakes as part of adaptation
	Limited formal reflection	Absence or minimal usage of structured formal post-action reviews
Adaptation and innovation	Process adaptation	Alignment of routines, processes and workflows to demand of reality
	Structural reconfiguration	Changes in organizational structure
	Emergent innovation	New solutions, products and practices developed during and under the crisis circumstances

It is important to mention that the use of core dimensions gave ability to keep the analysis focused on integrated patterns of team resilience rather than isolated managerial actions. The codebook itself provides the foundation for assessing analytical reliability and thematic saturation.

Ensuring the reliability and analytical preciseness of qualitative research requires transparency in analytical procedures, internal consistency of interpretation, and evidence that the dataset is sufficient to support the identified patterns. In this study, reliability and saturation were addressed through a combination of methodological rigor, systematic coding procedures, and interaction with empirical material.

Analytical reliability itself in this research is grounded in the systematic use of a codebook, which was consistently applied across all interview transcripts. The codebook, presented earlier, provided clear operational definitions for each analytical code, reducing with it interpretive ambiguity and minimizing researcher bias during the coding process. All interviews were coded using the same analytical framework, ensuring consistency in the identification and interpretation of meaning units across cases.

Reliability was further strengthened through constant comparison, where coded segments from different interviews were continuously compared to one another. This approach allowed to verify whether similar expressions, actions, or decision approaches were interpreted across respondents. When differences in interpretation emerged, codes were reviewed, merged, or redefined to better reflect the empirical material rather than theoretical expectations.

In addition, reliability was enhanced by the verbatim transcription of interviews and their careful translation into English before the analysis. This kept the original structure, vocabulary, and emphasis of respondents' narratives, reducing the risk of interpretive distortion. Analytical interpretations were therefore grounded directly in the respondents' own language and descriptions of their experiences.

Taking into account interpretive nature of qualitative analysis, researcher reflexivity plays a critical role in maintaining analytical reliability. The researcher's professional background and familiarity with Ukrainian organizational contexts provided valuable contextual sensitivity, however it also caused potential risks of over-interpretation or normalization of crisis-related practices.

To mitigate this risk, the analysis consciously focused on observable actions, decisions, and communication practices, rather than interpreted intentions or evaluative judgments. Codes were applied only when respondents explicitly described behaviours, processes, or decision rationales. Where ambiguity existed, the data were either coded conservatively or left uncoded, avoiding speculative interpretation.

Moreover, analytical conclusions were received from patterns repeating across multiple interviews, rather than from isolated or particularly single statements. This approach ensured that findings reflect shared empirical tendencies rather than anecdotal evidence.

Thematic saturation refers to the moment at which additional data no longer produce new analytical insights or substantially duplicate existing categories. In this study, saturation was assessed progressively throughout the coding process rather than as a single endpoint.

After coding the sixth interview, core dimensions of team resilience—such as leadership presence, accelerated decision-making, intensified communication, and experiential learning—were already consistently present across cases. The seventh and eighth interviews mostly legitimate these dimensions, adding depth and variation but not introducing fundamentally new categories. New material primarily refined existing codes, clarified boundary conditions, or showed individual specific expressions of already identified patterns.

This indicates that conceptual saturation was achieved at the level of core dimensions and analytical codes. As a result it may be stated while individual organizations differed in scale, industry, and structural complexity, the underlying mechanisms of team resilience demonstrated strong similarity across cases.

It is important to note that saturation was evaluated in relation to the research aim, which focuses on understanding how team resilience is enacted by top management during extreme crisis, rather than on endlessly noting all possible resilience practices. Within this analytical scope, the dataset was sufficient to support robust cross-case analysis.

Analytical credibility is supported by the cross-industry consistency of findings. Despite differences in organizational size, industry, and operational conditions, similar resilience mechanisms arise across interviews. This similarity strengthens the explanatory power of the analysis and suggests that the identified core dimensions reflect common patterns for number of organizations rather than anecdotical ones.

At the same time, variations across cases were kept and analytically acknowledged. Differences in planning horizons, formalization of learning, and innovation approaches were not treated as analytical noise but as meaningful highlights that enrich understanding of team resilience under crisis.

4.3 Cross-case analysis of team resilience core dimensions

In currents section a cross-case qualitative analysis of team resilience as enacted by top management during the full-scale war in Ukraine took place. Based on the codebook developed previously and guided by the analytical procedures created, the analysis focuses on core dimensions of team resilience that consistently presented across interviews. These dimensions include managerial behaviours, decision logics, and interaction patterns that collectively form team resilience as a component of broader organizational resilience.

The analysis follows a cross-case comparative logic, identifying shared patterns across respondents while keeping meaningful variation related to organizational size, industry, and governance structure.

Leadership presence and sensemaking. Across all interviews, leadership appeared not mainly as a formal role, point of power or hierarchical authority, but as visible presence and active sensemaking under uncertainty. Leaders consistently emphasized the importance of being physically or symbolically present for their teams during the initial shock of the invasion. This presence or keeping in touch with each team member served as a stabilizing signal, reinforcing continuity, responsibility, and collective purpose.

Rather than relying on abstract strategic narratives, leaders engaged in continuous live interpretation of unfolding events, translating external chaos into actionable internal priorities using different tools like meetings, chats and online platforms. Sensemaking took place through frequent interactions, real-time clarification of risks, and transparent acceptance of uncertainty. In several cases, leaders clearly rejected position of having predefined answers, instead putting themselves as co-participants in collective problem-solving.

This form of leadership contributed much to team resilience by reducing ambiguity, legitimizing need of rapid adaptation, and fostering trust. Importantly, leadership presence was not limited only to top executives; it spreaded through managerial layers as decision authority was redistributed closer to operational levels. Such behaviour was in line with total Ukrainian resistance charging team to act.

Here are some verbatims related to mentioned conclusions:

“I stayed in the city and did not leave. Later I started traveling to regions and discussing decisions directly on the ground. This created a sense of stability and understanding that the process was under control” (R1).

“We increased the frequency of communication significantly. Meetings became much more frequent, with shorter intervals. Using the same tools as before, but much more intensively, helped everyone understand what was happening and what needed to be done” (R5).

“In the first weeks we did not know what would happen next. There were no long-term plans. We lived day by day, making operational decisions and constantly adjusting them as the situation evolved” (R3).

Decision-making under extreme time pressure. Processes related to creation of decisions during the early stages of the war were characterized mainly by speed, reversibility, and pragmatism. Across all cases, respondents described a refusal from formalized approval chains and analytical procedures in favour of rapid, experience-based judgments. Decisions were often made with incomplete information and revised continuously as conditions developed.

A repeating pattern was the conscious acceptance the fact that imperfect decisions much preferable than inaction. Managers emphasized the importance of maintaining operational continuity even at the cost of inefficiencies or temporary losses. This logic reflects a shift from optimization to survivability as the dominant decision criteria.

Cross-case comparison disclose that organizations with higher levels of delegating culture adapted more effectively to local disruptions, particularly in logistics, staffing, and customer-facing operations. Decision-making therefore acted not only as a cognitive process but as a structural enabler of team resilience.

There are two verbatims below describing respondents’ answers in this dimension:

“At the beginning there were no long-term or even mid-term plans. We were surviving day by day, making purely operational decisions and duplicating infrastructure and resources just to hold on as long as possible” (R1).

“Everything worked differently than planned. The question was only the degree of deviation. We had to rebuild on the move and revise decisions very quickly as the situation changed” (R2).

Goal-setting and temporal reorientation. One of the most mentioned cross-case patterns in the interviews was the compression of planning horizons. Long-term and medium-term goals were either suspended or restructured into short, rolling objectives focused on daily or weekly survival. In several cases, respondents clearly stated that strategic planning became temporarily irrelevant during the initial phase of the crisis.

However, this short-term orientation did not cause cancellation of strategic intentions. Organizations adopted a layered approach: immediate operational goals were prioritized, while broader strategic directions remained implicit and agile. Over time, as conditions stabilized, some organizations gradually reintroduced medium-term planning, though often with reduced specificity and increased contingency.

This temporary reorientation contributed to team resilience by aligning expectations with reality, reducing cognitive overload, and allowing teams to focus on controllable actions rather than uncertain futures.

In these dimensions it's reasonable to state several respondents answers as basis for summary:

"In 2022 everything was absolutely unpredictable for us. We did not know how to act or what would happen next. There was no space for long-term thinking — we were solving issues as they appeared and adjusting step by step" (R3).

"The five-year strategy remained, the annual budget remained, and quarterly reviews remained as well. We did not change this fundamentally, but in reality decisions were made much closer to the ground and much faster" (R4).

"At the beginning of the war it was important not to overload people with distant goals. The focus shifted to what could realistically be done here and now, so the team could stay effective and not burn out" (R6).

Team management and redistribution of responsibility. Team resilience was strongly linked with changes in team management practices, particularly more deep distribution of responsibility and authority. Managers mentioned increased reliance on local teams, frontline supervisors, and regional units to make context-based decisions.

This shift was not framed as empowerment of regional roles and teams in a normative sense, but as a functional necessity driven by speed and information losses and flow delays. Teams closer to the

operational environment possessed more accurate situational awareness and were therefore better prepared to act effectively.

Cross-case analysis shows that this deep authority and responsibility distribution strengthened team ownership and initiative, even in organizations that had previously operated under strict centralized control. At the same time, it required leaders to accept inconsistency and refuse from detailed oversight—an adjustment that several respondents described as personally challenging but organizationally beneficial.

Below listed several verbatims related to the dimension:

“There was simply no time to coordinate decisions centrally. Local managers had to act immediately based on what they saw on the ground” (R7).

“I had to accept that decisions would be inconsistent and sometimes imperfect. But this was the price of keeping teams operational” (R8).

Communication intensity and transparency. All respondents highlighted intensified communication as a critical resilience enhancer. Communication frequency increased significantly, while formats became more flexible and informal. Regular updates, town halls meetings and direct messaging replaced scheduled reporting cycles.

Informing transparency emerged as a central principle: leaders shared not only decisions but also doubts, constraints, and own assessments. This openness contributed to shared situational awareness and mitigated rumours, fear, and disengagement.

Cross-case comparison indicates that communication effectiveness depended less on specific tools and more on context, consistency and authenticity. Where communication was perceived as performative or overly formalized, its impact on team morale decreased.

Mentioned respondents’ answers in the interviews show common patterns in team communications approaches:

“Communication became much more frequent. We were in constant contact — chats, calls, short updates — far beyond any normal reporting routines” (R4).

“We openly said when we did not have answers. It was important not to pretend control where there was none” (R2).

“It was important to explain what we could not do, not only what we planned to do” (R8).

“When communication stopped, people started filling gaps with rumours. Continuous updates prevented that” (R3).

Motivation, meaning, and collective responsibility. Motivational dynamics during the crisis differed from ordinary incentive-based models. Across cases, respondents described a shift toward internal and collective motivation, rooted in responsibility, solidarity, moral commitment and common dependence.

Many teams obtained motivation from the perceived societal significance of their work—whether maintaining supply chains, supporting communities, or ensuring employment continuity. Leaders rarely emphasized performance targets during the shock phase; instead, they reinforced purpose and mutual responsibility.

While tiredness and emotional strain were acknowledged, respondents generally reported high levels of engagement during the first year of the war. This suggests that meaning-making processes played a crucial role in sustaining team resilience under prolonged stress.

Here are some of respondents’ answers confirming stated summary per dimension

“At that point, bonuses or KPIs did not matter. What mattered was responsibility — to the team and to the people who depended on us” (R3).

“The team felt that their work had a broader meaning — not just business results, but keeping something important running for the country” (R8).

“Everyone was exhausted, but engagement was surprisingly high. People were holding on because the work made sense” (R5).

Learning, adaptation, and innovation. Learning processes during the crisis were mostly experiential and iterative. Rather than formal reviews or structured learning systems, organizations relied on rapid feedback loops used in daily operations. Mistakes were often tolerated as part of adaptive experimentation.

Cross-case analysis reveals variation in how learning was institutionalized. Very few organizations gradually formalized lessons learned, while others remained reliant on tacit knowledge and managerial memory. Innovation, when it occurred, was typically incremental and problem-driven rather than strategic or exploratory.

Capacity to learn from unfolding events as well as adjusting practices accordingly appeared to be as a low priority feature of team resilience across all cases. The main reason described by respondents was time shortage to analyse and follow any processes.

Analysis of last dimension shown in this part of the Chapter 4 is well illustrated by several verbatims by respondents:

“There was no time for proper analysis or reflection. Learning happened through daily decisions and immediate consequences” (R8).

“Mistakes were unavoidable. The main thing was not to stop because of them” (R7).

“We didn’t really document lessons learned. Most knowledge stayed in people’s heads” (R4).

4.4 Within-case patterns and inter-dimensional dynamics of team resilience

While the previous part of the chapter was focused on cross-case similarities and differences, this section shifts the analytical viewpoint inside to examine within-case patterns of team resilience. The aim is to understand how core dimensions of team resilience interact within individual organizations and respondents’ behaviours, how managerial actions evolves across phases of crisis, and how internal consistency or tension between dimensions form overall resilience capacity.

Rather than treating leadership, decision-making, communication, learning, and adaptation as isolated factors, this section analyses them as dependent mechanisms that equally reinforce or constrain one another within each case.

Consecutive activation of core dimensions. Across interviews, team resilience did not emerge simultaneously across all dimensions. Instead, respondents' narratives show a consecutive activation behaviour. In most cases, leadership presence and rapid decision-making dominated the earliest phase of the crisis, functioning as stabilizing mechanisms during uncertainty peak.

Communication frequency followed almost the same time, serving to translate decisions into shared understanding and coordinated actions. Only after a minimum level of operational stability was restored did learning, reflection, and innovation become at least visible. This consecution suggests that certain dimensions act as foundational enablers, while others operate as secondary amplifiers of resilience. R1 states in the interview: "At first, everything was about decisions and presence. Only later we started thinking about what we could learn from this experience."

Within-case analysis indicates that attempts to activate learning or innovation before stabilizing leadership and decision authority were established leaded to generate confusion rather than resilience.

Coherence versus fragmentation across dimensions. A key within-case distinction concerns the degree of coherence between dimensions. In cases of conscious team resilience maintenance and development, leadership style, decision logic, communication tone, and team management practices were aligned around a shared crisis logic. For example, decentralized decision-making was actively supported by transparent communication and trust-based leadership behaviour.

Instead, some cases disclosed partial fragmentation, where formal structures changed faster than managerial mindsets. In such situations, delegation was announced but not fully enacted, or communication increased in frequency without corresponding clarity of priorities. These internal misalignments limited team resilience by creating ambiguity about roles, responsibilities and expectations. This is well illustrated in R7 response: "We said we were delegating decisions, but people still waited for confirmation from the center."

This finding underscores that team resilience is not merely a sum of practices but a function of their internal consistency.

Leadership as a coordinating super-dimension. Within individual cases, leadership functioned as a super-dimension that shaped how other dimensions were enacted. R5 states on this issue: "How leaders behaved

determined how everything else worked — decisions, communication, even motivation." Leadership behaviour influenced whether decision-making was experienced as empowering or stressful, whether communication was perceived as supportive or overwhelming, and whether learning was encouraged or slowed down.

It's important to mention leadership was most effective when it combined decisiveness with openness maintaining direction while inviting feedback and adjustment. In cases where leadership remained strict or over centralized, other dimensions struggled to compensate, even when operational practices were adapted.

This pattern reinforces the view of leadership not as a standalone dimension but as a coordinating driving mechanism that integrates multiple aspects of team resilience.

Trade-offs between speed and reflection. Within-case narratives also reveal repeating trade-offs between speed and reflection. During the most volatile periods, rapid decision-making often came at the cost of systematic learning. "We made decisions very fast, but we rarely stopped to reflect on them"

(R4). Respondents acknowledged that many actions were taken without time for structured evaluation, resulting in repeated mistakes or missed opportunities for improvement.

Over time, organizations differed in their ability to rebalance this trade-off. More resilient teams tried to return reflection mechanisms as formal or informal processes. Less resilient configurations remained locked in reactive modes, limiting their capacity for deeper adaptation. Moreover discussion over the reflection caused confusion from these respondents side in the answer showing underestimation of the process itself.

This dynamic highlights the timeframe dimension of team resilience: effectiveness depends not only on what is done, but on when and in what order and timing.

Emotional regulation and psychological containment. Another within-case pattern relates to emotional regulation but at the team level. Leaders who actively and openly acknowledged fear, fatigue, and uncertainty—while maintaining a sense of control—created psychological containment that gave ability

for teams to function under long-term stress. R6 mentioned: “People were scared, and it was important to acknowledge that openly.”

In contrast, cases where emotional dynamics were ignored or minimized showed signs of delayed strain, including team members’ burnout and disengagement. These effects often became visible only after the most sharp phase of the crisis had passed.

This suggests that emotional containment operates as a hidden dimension of team resilience, interacting with communication, leadership, and motivation over time.

Path dependency and organizational memory. Within-case analysis also disclosed strong path dependency effects. Organizations’ prior experiences with crises, decentralization, or rapid growth explained how quickly and effectively team resilience mechanisms were activated. Teams with prior exposure to instability adapted faster and relied more confidently on informal procedures, coordination and trust. R5 mentioned prior experience working in crisis: “Previous crises taught us how to act without waiting for instructions.”

Organizational memory thus functioned as a resilience source, enabling quicker sensemaking and reducing the cognitive stress of adaptation. Conversely, organizations got used to develop in stable environments faced steeper learning curves during the crisis.

4.5 Blind spots, tensions, and underdeveloped components of team resilience

While the analysed cases in previous part of Chapter 4 demonstrate substantial adaptive capacity and resilience under extreme conditions, the qualitative data also reveal a number of systematic blind spots, internal tensions, and underdeveloped components that limited team resilience. This section critically examines these limitations, not as failures, but as structural vulnerabilities inherent to crisis-time driven organizational adaptation. Moreover, these limitations are one of growth points to empower team resilience development process.

Over-reliance on leadership centrality. One of the most prominent blind spots across cases is the over-reliance on individual leaders as primary core of resilience. While strong leadership presence proved

essential during the initial shock phase, further long-term dependence on a single-person or small group of decision-makers created risks of cognitive overload, burnout, and delayed delegation.

In several interviews, resilience narratives indirectly equated organizational stability with the physical and emotional availability of top leaders. This concentration of responsibility, while effective in the short term, limited scalability and damaged sustainability over extended crisis periods. It was well mentioned in R7 response: “At some point I realized that too many decisions were still coming to me personally. It worked at the beginning, but later it became physically exhausting and slowed everything down.”

This finding suggests that leadership-driven resilience, when not distributed over the long period, can even weaken long-term team resilience.

Delayed formalization of learning processes. Another repeating tension concerns the gap between experiential learning and institutionalized learning. Although teams accumulated significant implicit knowledge through continuous problem-solving, only few organizations translated these experiences into formalized processes, routines, or documented practices during the crisis.

Learning remained largely informal, episodic, and person-dependent. As a result, knowledge retention depended heavily on individual team member memory rather than organizational systems. This created vulnerability to turnover, role changes, and tiredness.

The absence of structured reflection mechanisms limited organizations’ ability to convert action-based resilience into design-based one. “Most lessons stayed with specific people. If someone left or changed role, part of that knowledge simply disappeared” – stated R8.

Communication saturation and cognitive overload. While intensified communication was widely mentioned in interviews as a resilience enabler, several cases exposed a opposite effect: communication saturation. Increased frequency of meetings, updates, and messaging channels sometimes overloaded teams, spoiling clarity rather than enhancing it.

In these situations, the challenge was not lack of information but of prioritization. Teams were misfocussed by critical signals and background noise, especially when communication was not in cooperation with decision-making authority. The good example proving the conclusion can be show in

R5 verbatim: “Communication increased a lot, but sometimes it created noise. People were informed, but not always aligned on priorities.”

This highlights an important boundary condition: communication contributes to team resilience only when it is directed, holistic, purposeful, and hierarchically aligned.

Unarticulated emotional labour. A less visible but significant blind spot relates to emotional labour. Leaders frequently provided emotional support, reassurance, and psychological containment, yet these efforts stayed largely implicit and unrecognized as part of formal managerial responsibility.

Because emotional labour was neither named nor systematized, it’s formed generally based on individual empathy and stamina. Over time, this invisibility increased the risk of possible emotional exhaustion among key team members, particularly middle managers. “Middle managers were holding emotions from both sides. Upwards and downwards. That pressure was invisible, but very heavy” (R7).

The studied data suggest that emotional resilience at the team level was often maintained despite organizational systems, not because of them.

Tension between flexibility and consistency. Another underdeveloped area concerns the balance between flexibility and consistency. Rapid adaptation often required bypassing established procedures, which improved responsiveness but sometimes destroyed shared standards and predictability.

In some cases, long-term procedural flexibility led to ambiguity around accountability, performance expectations, and fairness. Teams adapted locally but hardly reintegrated into coherent organizational routines once sharp pressure decreased. R4 stated in the interview: “We bypassed many rules to move faster. It helped at first, but later people were confused about what was still mandatory and what was optional.”

This tension indicates that resilience built through improvisation must eventually be enforced by stabilization mechanisms to avoid long-term fragmentation.

Uneven distribution of resilience capacity. Finally, within organizations, resilience capacity was unevenly distributed across teams and hierarchical levels. Core teams closer to decision centres demonstrated higher adaptability and clarity, while peripheral or regional units experienced greater uncertainty and far slower

response times. It is well shown in R1 response: “Teams closer to headquarters adapted much faster. Regional units waited longer simply because they had less information and slower feedback.”

This asymmetry suggests that team resilience was often contingent on closeness to leadership and information flows, rather than uniformly embedded across the organization. Such unevenness limits the organization’s overall resilience structure and increases vulnerability in extended or multi-front crises.

4.6 An integrative model of team resilience as a core component of organizational resilience

This section of Chapter 4 summarizes integrative synthesis that positions team resilience as a foundational and generative component of organizational resilience. Bssed on the qualitative evidence from eight interviews, the analysis demonstrates that organizational resilience emerges through the dynamic interaction of team-level processes embedded within wider structural and leadership contexts.

Team resilience as a generative mechanism. The findings suggest that team resilience operates not only as an outcome of organizational design but as a mechanism that actively generates organizational resilience. Teams functioned as the frontline objects where uncertainty was interpreted, decisions were created, and adaptive behaviours were translated into coordinated action.

In this sense, organizational resilience did not existed before team resilience; rather, it was continuously enacted through teams’ capacity to maintain functioning, coherence, and learning under conditions of log-term disruption.

Core dimensions and their integrative function. The analysis identified a set of core dimensions—leadership enactment, decision-making dynamics, goal-setting flexibility, team management practices, communication patterns, motivation and trust, learning mechanisms, and adaptation and innovation. These dimensions, while analytically individual, functioned as an interdependent system.

Rather than operating in isolation, the dimensions reinforced and effected one another. For example, adaptive decision-making depended on communication quality; learning processes were activated through leadership development; motivation and trust were sustained through transparent goal-setting and consistent managerial behaviour.

This systemic interdependence explains why resilience was strongest in organizations where these dimensions were aligned rather than selectively and independently developed.

Temporal dynamics of resilience. An important insight concerns the temporal or time-framed nature of team resilience. During the initial sharp phase of crisis, resilience was characterized by centralization, speed, and improvisation. As the crisis persisted, effective teams made efforts to transit toward greater distribution of authority, procedural stabilization, and more procedural reflective learning.

Organizations that failed to make this transition risked resilience tiredness, leadership overload, and structural brittleness. Therefore, team resilience must be determined as a dynamic capability that evolves over time, not as a static attribute.

From improvisation to institutionalization. The model highlights a critical transition from action-based resilience design-based one. While early responses relied on improvisation and personal commitment, long-term resilience required development of institutionalization of successful practices into routines and norms.

Where this institutionalization was absent or delayed, resilience stayed fragile and one-person-dependent. Conversely, organizations that managed to integrate at least basic elements of learning and to redistribute resilience capacity across teams demonstrated greater sustainability.

Boundary conditions and structural enablers. Team resilience was enabled and also limited by organizational structures, cultural norms, and leadership configurations. Excessive centralization, communication overload, and informal emotional labour emerged as limiting factors, even in high-performing teams. This proves the argument that team resilience still must be supported by intentional organizational choices, including role clarity, decision rights, and mechanisms for psychological support.

Proposed integrative model of organizational resilience. Based on the findings, organizational resilience can be conceptualized as a multi-level construct in which: team resilience functions as the primary operational layer; leadership provides direction, meaning, and coherence; organizational structures enable scaling and sustainability; learning mechanisms ensure continuous renewal.

CHAPTER 5. Managerial recommendations for strengthening team resilience

5.1. Introduction: from empirical insights to managerial action

This chapter develops empirical findings presented in Chapter 4 into a practical operational set of managerial recommendations aimed at strengthening team resilience as an environment enabling organizational resilience. In previous chapters we've focused on conceptual development and empirical qualitative analysis of the interviews. Chapter 5 shifts accent from explanation to application. Its purpose is to demonstrate how resilience-related insights can be transformed into precise managerial action, particularly at the level of teams where resilience is enacted in practice.

The recommendations developed in this chapter are grounded in three interrelated sources. First, they build directly on the qualitative analysis of senior leadership interviews presented in Chapter 4, including within-case and cross-case patterns as well as identified blind spots. Second, they draw on the studied literature on resilience, sensemaking, organizational learning, and complex adaptive systems. Third, they include reflective insights derived from the interview process itself, which provided additional contextual understanding of how managerial decisions are interpreted and enacted under real-world crisis conditions.

A targeted analytical focus is placed on team-level resilience. Although organizational resilience is often discussed at a macro level—through structures, strategies, and resources—the empirical findings of this study demonstrate that resilience is being activated primarily through micro-level processes occurring within teams. Leadership presence, redistribution of roles, informal coordination, and collective sensemaking emerged as decisive mechanisms forming organizational responses to crisis. Teams therefore represent a particularly powerful leverage point through which senior leaders can steer organizational resilience in practice.

To structure the recommendations, this chapter takes a temporal and contextual perspective, dividing process between three analytically individual conditions: stable periods before crisis, the initial shock phase of crisis, and prolonged or controlled crisis conditions. These contexts correspond to different configurations of coping, adapting, and learning capabilities. Importantly, these are not rigid stages, but overlapping ones in which different resilience mechanisms become more or less important and efficient. The central argument advanced in this chapter is that senior leaders can intentionally design organizational conditions in exact period that directly enable teams to mobilize these capabilities effectively across time.

5.2. Before crisis: strengthening team resilience in stable conditions

Stable conditions represent a critical yet frequently underestimated opportunity to build the basis for team resilience. Both the empirical findings and the literature converge on the conclusion that resilience does not emerge immediately during crisis; rather, it is activated through relational, structural, and cognitive capacities developed far in advance. Teams that demonstrated higher resilience during disruption were parts of organizational environments characterized by trust, distributed authority, and shared understanding long before the crisis happened.

A foundational component of team resilience in stable conditions is relational infrastructure, psychological safety and relational coordination. Interview indicates that during crisis situations, employees relied primarily on trust-based relationships and informal communication channels rather than on formal procedures. From a theoretical perspective, psychological safety enables early problem detection, collective sensemaking, and adaptive responses under stress, while relational coordination enables rapid alignment across interdependent roles. Senior leaders can strengthen this infrastructure by institutionalizing regular leader–team dialogue, empowering upward voice, and enhancing cross-functional interaction. Over time, these practices reduce fear of speaking up and create channels through which either weak signals can be seen before they escalate into full-scale crises or upward communication can seamlessly flow during the crisis itself.

A second critical milestone concerns the design of decision-making authority. Many organizations in the study operated under highly centralized management models, reflecting both growth-stage dynamics and contextual limitations typical for developing economies. While such models may support efficiency in stable periods, resilience theory suggests that excessive centralization reduces adaptability by creating bottlenecks and ineffective bureaucracy. In stable conditions, senior leaders should intentionally redesign decision-rights architectures, clarifying which decisions can be made autonomously at the team level and defining escalation thresholds. Frameworks such as RAPID or DACI allow abstract decentralization principles to be translated into concrete managerial practice and prepare teams to act independently when quick responses are required.

Role flexibility and overlapping construct another foundational element of team resilience. Teams that coped more effectively during crisis were those in which critical knowledge and responsibilities were distributed rather than concentrated in a small number of individuals. Despite overlapping may appear

inefficient from a short-term optimization perspective, resilience research conceptualizes it as a buffer that enhances absorptive capacity under shock. Senior leaders can support this capacity by sponsoring cross-training initiatives, shared ownership of key processes, and scenario-based stress tests that simulate partial team absence or unavailability.

Finally, stable conditions provide an opportunity to develop expectational sensemaking capabilities. While the literature emphasizes weak-signal detection and assumption testing as core resilience mechanisms, such practices were largely absent in the empirical cases. Senior leaders can address this blind spot by input structured assumption reviews and scenario discussions into regular management routines, encouraging teams to articulate and periodically reevaluate their basic assumptions about the environment.

Table 5.1 illustrates mentioned recommendations into an actionable pre-crisis plan for senior leadership.

Table 5.1Action plan for leader to develop team resilience during stable conditions

Strategic Objective	Key Managerial Actions	Managerial Framework	Tools/ Software
Build relational infrastructure	Institutionalize leader-team dialogue, enhance upward voice	Psychological safety; relational coordination	Online/offline meetings; sessions with corporate psychologist (MS Teams, Zoom)
Enable expectational sensemaking	Conduct assumption reviews, weak-signal discussions	Sensemaking; scenario planning; premortem	Managerial meetings; discussion clubs (Miro, Notion, MS Teams)
Redesign decision rights	Create map of decision domains, delegation boundaries	RAPID; DACI; RACI	Creation of decision-making policies (SharePoint, Notion etc.)
Increase role flexibility	Cross-train key roles, ensure backup coverage	Overlapping principle; job rotation	Creation of internal wikis, project-based approach implementation (LMS platforms)
Strengthen cross-team coordination	Create communities of practice	Relational coordination; cross-functional projects	Cross-functional meetings, top-level projects (MS Teams, Notion, OKR)
Prepare team for disruption	Run crisis simulation	CAS	Meetings, discussion-clubs (MS Teams, Miro)

5.3. Shock phase of crisis: overcoming and stabilizing

The shock phase of a crisis is characterized by extreme uncertainty, increased emotional pressure, and the rapid breakdown of established routines. During this phase, team resilience is enacted primarily through the ability to stabilize meaning, coordination, and emotional balance while maintaining basic functioning. The empirical findings demonstrate that formal crisis plans alone are ineffective; instead, leadership behavior and real-time coordination mechanisms become crucial.

A central leadership task during this phase is sense-giving. Consistent with sensemaking theory, teams coped more effectively when leaders provided fair interpretive frames showing clearly what was known, what remained uncertain, and what actions were prioritized. Regular, structured communication reduced anxiety and prevented fragmentation of meaning across teams. Importantly, credibility depended not on certainty itself, but on transparency and consistency. Leaders who openly acknowledged uncertainty while outlining short-term priorities enabled teams to maintain orientation and focus under extreme conditions.

Coordination during the shock phase often requires temporary structural reconfiguration. Resilient teams abandoned strict role definitions in favor of ad hoc arrangements that enabled rapid problem-solving. Such flexibility proved most effective when explicitly legitimized by leadership through the definition of temporary crisis roles, simplified priorities, and shortened communication chains. This reflects the role of minimal structures in resilience theory: simple, flexible arrangements that support coordination without unnecessary rigidity.

Decision-making dynamics during shock further highlight internal conflict between control and adaptability. While crises often trigger a re-centralization reflex, excessive top-down control can slow response and overwhelm senior leaders. Effective crisis leadership involves centralizing intention or vision and limits itself while decentralizing execution to teams closest to the problem. This balance enables speed without sacrificing alignment.

Emotional containment constructs another critical dimension of team resilience during shock phase. Leaders who acknowledged stress, normalized emotional reactions, and modeled calm behavior helped prevent cognitive overload and early burnout of their teams. By adjusting work rhythms, legitimizing recovery, and visibly supporting team well-being, senior leaders kept teams' coping capacity during the most volatile phase of the crisis.

Table 5.2 gathers recommendations into an action plan for senior leaders during the shock phase.

Table 5.2 Action plan for leader to develop team resilience during shock phase of the crisis

Strategic Objective	Key Managerial Actions	Managerial Framework	Tools/ Software
Stabilize meaning	Establish structured crisis communication	Sense-giving; crisis communication models	Online/offline leaders' meeting with teams (MS Teams, Zoom etc.)
Enable rapid coordination	Set up crisis cell with fixed agenda and frequency	Incident command system; minimal structures	Crisis team meetings, requests application tools (MS Teams, WhatsApp etc.)
Reconfigure roles	Define temporary crisis roles and priorities	Agile, Scrum	Project-based approach in management (Jira, Notion, Trello)
Balance control and autonomy	Centralize vision, decentralize execution	Complexity leadership	OKR approach
Contain emotional strain	Normalize stress and protect teams' energy	HRO principles	Teams' surveys, town-halls, HRIS
Maintain fairness	Communicate decisions criteria	Procedural justice	Policies and procedures, arguments, leadership letters (MS Teams, Outlook, SharePoint)

5.4. Controlled crisis phase: developing team resilience in long-term conditions

As crises develops into long-term or controlled phases, the accent challenge shifts from immediate coping to sustained adaptation and learning. While many teams adapted intuitively, the empirical analysis revealed a significant gap in systematic learning and capability development.

A key milestone in this phase is the transition from improvisation toward adaptive routines. Continuous improvisation is cognitively fragile and ineffective; teams benefit from reinvented coordination rhythms such as short planning cycles and regular alignment meetings. These routines reduce cognitive load, enhance predictability, and support sustained performance without returning to over-rigid pre-crisis structures.

Structural adaptation also becomes crucial. Consistent with modularity theory, resilient organizations redesign around relatively autonomous teams with clear interfaces, supported by distributed leadership. Such structures reduce dependency on individual actors and enhance endurance under long-term stress. Rather than returning to pre-crisis designs, resilient organizations selectively reconfigure structures to fit new environmental realities and needs.

A major blind spot identified in Chapter 4 concerns organizational learning. Despite broad crisis experience, most organizations failed to institutionalize learning mechanisms. Introducing after-action reviews and retrospectives enables teams to engage in double-loop learning by surveying basic assumptions, not simply adjusting actions. To ensure durability, learning must be embedded into organizational memory through decision logs, resilience playbooks, and shared repositories.

Finally, prolonged crises place sustained deformation of team identity and ethical standards. Leaders play a critical role in reinforcing purpose, recognizing collective effort, and articulating non-negotiable principles guiding behavior under pressure. Teams that kept a strong sense of "who we are" were better able to sustain engagement and avoid performance drop.

Table 5.3 illustrates a structured action plan for sustaining team resilience over long-term crisis periods.

Table 5.3. Action plan for team resilience in long-term crisis conditions

Strategic Objective	Key Managerial Actions	Managerial Framework	Tools/ Software
Stabilize adaptive routines	Reintroduce short-planning cycles	Agile; Scrum; adaptive routines	Redesigned meeting schedule (MS Teams, Jira, Notion, Asana)
Redesign structure	Build modular teams with clear interfaces	Modularity theory	New organizational structure design
Institutionalize learning	Run retrospectives and AARs	Double-loop learning	Learning routines interaction activities (MS Teams, Miro)
Build organizational memory	Write down and save decisions and lessons	Organizational memory theory	Meetings, discussion events sharing experience (MS Teams, SharePoint, Notion)
Sustain meaning	Reinforce purpose and identity	Identity theory	Town-halls, global teams' meetings (MS Teams)

Maintain guardrails	Define red lines/ non-negotiables	Risk governance	Compliance policies and infrastructure (SharePoint)

5.5. Summary, theoretical contribution, and directions for further research

The research set out to study team resilience as a core operational component of organizational resilience, using wartime operations of Ukrainian companies as an extreme empirical context. The findings confirm that team resilience is not an episodic response activated only under shock, but a dynamic, multi-dimensional capability that can be intentionally developed, sustained, and scaled beyond crisis situations.

Chapter 5 translated the qualitative results from Chapter 4 into actionable managerial guidance, structured along the time framed logic of crisis development. The recommendations demonstrate that team resilience arises through different configurations of leadership behaviour, decision-making logic, communication practices, and learning mechanisms depending on contextual conditions. In stable environments, resilience is built through relational infrastructure, distributed authority, role flexibility, and expectation-oriented sensemaking. During the shock phase of crisis, resilience is enacted through leadership presence, rapid sense-giving, simplified coordination structures, and emotional keeping. In prolonged or controlled crisis conditions, resilience depends on the ability to institutionalize learning, review balance between improvisation with stability, redesign structures, and strengthen collective meaning and identity.

Across these phases, a central conclusion of the study is that team resilience functions as a driving mechanism of organizational resilience rather than as a supportive or secondary attribute, environment for it to happen. Organizational resilience does not occur before team resilience in practice; instead, it is continuously enacted through team-level processes of sensemaking, coordination, emotional regulation, and adaptive learning. Leadership, in turn, operates as a coordinating super-dimension that integrates these processes and determines whether resilience remains concentrated and fragile or becomes distributed and sustainable.

At the same time, the study shows critical blind spots that constrain the long-term effectiveness of team resilience. Over-reliance on leadership centrality, delayed formalization of learning, communication saturation, unarticulated emotional labour, and uneven distribution of resilience capacity disclose structural vulnerabilities that retain even in organizations that demonstrate high adaptive performance. These limitations indicate that resilience achieved through improvisation and personal commitment must

afterwards be transformed into design-based resilience supported by organizational systems, routines, and shared norms.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to resilience literature by empirically reinforcing the view of team resilience as an emergent, temporally dynamic capability embedded within complex adaptive systems. It empowers understanding by merging managerial domains (leadership, decision-making, communication, motivation, learning, adaptation, and innovation) with integrated core dimensions of team resilience, and by demonstrating how these dimensions interact across. The wartime context boosts these dynamics but does not fundamentally change them, suggesting that the identified mechanisms are relevant beyond extreme crises.

These findings open several important directions for further research. First, future studies could expand the analytical lens beyond top management perspectives to include middle managers, frontline employees, and informal team leaders, thereby capturing how resilience is enacted and experienced across hierarchical levels. Second, deeper research designs would allow examination of how team resilience develops after the crisis phase, particularly how improvised practices are institutionalized or abandoned over time. Finally, there is a strong need for research exploring how team resilience can be developed intentionally in non-crisis conditions, integrating resilience practices into everyday organizational routines, leadership development programs, and performance management systems.

In conclusion, this study states team resilience not as an exceptional capability reserved for times of disruption, but as a strategic organizational competence with relevance for long-term sustainability, adaptability, and development. By shifting accent from reactive crisis response to proactive resilience design, organizations can leverage the lessons of extreme conditions to build teams that remain effective, cohesive, and adaptive even in the absence of immediate threats.

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Annexes

Annex 1 Questionnaire for the semi-structured interview with business leaders

1. How would you describe the level of preparedness or flexibility of your organization prior to the full-scale invasion?

→ In particular: were there any contingency plans, alternative ways of operating, internal process flexibility, or flexibility in decision-making before February 24, 2022?

2. What were the first critically important actions your organization took after the invasion began, and what principles or capabilities guided these decisions?

→ That is, what did you do first—evacuation, communication, financial measures, support for employees?

→ What were these decisions based on: prior experience, organizational values, logistical considerations, advice from partners?

3. Looking back, were there early decisions or actions that did not work as planned? How did your organization capture and disseminate the lessons learned from this experience?

→ Did you conduct error analysis, team discussions, or draw conclusions that influenced subsequent actions? How was this experience used later?

4. What specific leadership behaviors or priorities did you change in order to respond effectively to the crisis?

→ For example, did your leadership style, decision-making approach, level of delegation, communication tone, or interaction with the team change?

5. How did you balance short-term survival with long-term stability when making key decisions? What helped you learn and adjust your actions over time?

→ How did you prioritize between “what must be done now” and “what is needed for the future”?

→ How did your approach change as you gained new experience or information?

6. How did the war change your approach to goal-setting—for example, planning horizons, priorities, or ways of measuring success?

→ Did goals become shorter-term or more flexible?

→ Did your understanding of "success" itself change?

7. How did you communicate new goals or revised priorities to the team and ensure alignment in rapidly changing conditions?

→ How were changes communicated—personally, through meetings, messengers, regular updates?

→ How did you make sure everyone understood them in the same way?

8. Were there leadership decisions or approaches to goal-setting that later proved ineffective or required reconsideration?

→ Were there mistakes in prioritization, communication, or motivation that later had to be corrected?

9. How did motivation and trust within the team change during the first year of the war, and what actions helped strengthen or restore them?

→ What did you do to ensure people remained united, avoided burnout, and retained a sense of meaning in their work?

10. Which communication practices or rituals proved most effective in maintaining shared understanding and team morale?

→ For example: weekly meetings, morning briefings, informal chats, leadership addresses, or other ways of staying connected and fostering unity.

11. As a leader, what personal actions did you take to support psychological safety and emotional resilience within your team?

→ For example, how did you respond to employee stress, provide moral or emotional support, and what worked best?

12. Were there team management or communication actions that did not deliver the expected results or produced unintended consequences? What changed afterward? How would you describe your organizational culture during the war—did shared values and norms strengthen or weaken resilience?

→ In other words, what did not work in team interaction?

→ Did organizational culture change (e.g., trust, mutual respect, willingness to help)?

13. What mechanisms or practices helped your organization continuously capture lessons learned and translate them into concrete improvements during the crisis?

→ Were there regular debriefings, "after-action reviews," or internal meetings after critical events to identify what worked and what did not?

14. Can you share an example of an organizational or managerial innovation that emerged during the war? Were there established practices or procedures that had to be abandoned or "unlearned" because they no longer worked under wartime conditions?

→ For example, did you introduce new work formats, products, or communication methods?

→ Did you discontinue old procedures that became ineffective?

15. Were there new initiatives or experiments that failed? How did the organization use these failures for further improvement?

→ Which "unsuccessful attempts" provided the most valuable learning and triggered change?

16. Based on your experience, which aspects of resilience—such as leadership, learning, preparedness, or adaptability—proved most important for the organization's survival and growth?

→ What constituted the "core" of resilience for you: people, structure, values, strategy?

17. Were there widely promoted management or “best practice” approaches that turned out to be ineffective or required rethinking in the context of the war in Ukraine?

→ For example, ideas or models from business literature or international experience that did not work in practice under wartime conditions.

18. If you could rethink your organization’s resilience strategy today, what would you change?

→ Which decisions, structures, or approaches would you design differently based on the experience gained?