

RESILIENCE AS A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE: REDEFINING RETENTION FOR WORKPLACE STABILITY

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the critical role of human values in shaping workplace resilience, employee retention, and organizational stability. A qualitative focus group study involving 14 participants from diverse professional backgrounds examines responses to a case study contrasting two leadership styles within the same organization: a value-driven, relational approach under the founder and a results-oriented, authoritarian style under his successor. Thematic analysis revealed six interrelated themes: organizational stability and change, personal and collective resilience, empathy and ethical leadership, moral dilemmas and value conflicts, the purpose and meaning of work, and the limits of technology and monetary incentives. Findings suggest that resilience is not merely an individual trait but a culturally and relationally conditioned phenomenon, heavily influenced by leadership style, organizational values, and psychological safety. While financial incentives were initially perceived as primary motivators, participants ultimately emphasized the irreplaceable importance of trust, dignity, and ethical consistency in sustaining performance and retention. The study concludes that resilience must be reframed as a strategic imperative rooted in human values and that leadership transitions must be handled with emotional intelligence to preserve organizational integrity and long-term viability.

KEYWORDS: Management, Retention, Resilience, Human Values, Stability, Motivation, Strategies, Human Resources, Working Environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, employee retention has emerged as a critical factor influencing organizational success and workforce stability. Companies strive to maintain a competitive edge, understand the dynamics that contribute to employee loyalty and engagement. Managers' focus is to cultivate a resilient culture, enhance employee satisfaction and reduce turnover rates, thereby promoting long-term stability. Traditionally stability is related to low employee turnover; however, this does not seem to be the case nowadays as other factors have evolved. Stability within the workforce enhances collaboration, trust, and organizational identity, all of which contribute to a resilient and adaptable business ecosystem. Having a long-term job is only one aspect of job stability; other aspects include security, professional advancement, and alignment with the company's values. Employees are more likely to be engaged and motivated when they feel secure in their positions, which raises output and lowers attrition. Retaining staff over the long term preserves institutional knowledge, improves team chemistry, and lowers hiring and training expenses. Organizations may better develop and implement long-term plans, encourage innovation, and maintain organizational growth thanks to this continuity. Although just 33% of organizations have internal mobility plans, employees rank career progression and development as one of their top goals.

In organizations, resilience is frequently defined as the capacity to adjust and flourish in adversity and is essential for maintaining a steady workforce. Financial, manufacturing, and product-quality stability are all terms that can be used to describe holistic workplace stability. Does attaining this overall workplace stability have anything to do with employee retention and dedication, or is it the responsibility of the business owners? What about human values? Are these kinds of human values, such as respect, acceptance, consideration, appreciation, listening, openness, affection, and empathy, matter at work for either side of management or employees? Behaving as professionals yet as humans, valuing the opinions and comments of subordinates, and developing a professional work environment yet a positive organizational environment can create resilience and stability. Can workplace stability be created at times of constant change? This research will explore the relationship between human values, business rewards, resilience, stability, and employee retention. What is perceived and required by individuals? Through an investigation and analysis of various strategies and practices, this study will aim to provide valuable insights into how businesses can effectively crack the retention equation. By examining the multifaceted aspects of resilience, ranging from individual coping mechanisms to organizational support systems, this research will seek to illuminate pathways through which resilience may contribute to a more committed and stable workforce and vice versa. Furthermore, this article will delve into the case studies of organizations that successfully or unsuccessfully implemented resilience-building initiatives, showcasing the tangible benefits and potential pitfalls of prioritizing employee well-being. Ultimately, the findings will offer practical recommendations for organizations aiming to enhance employee retention strategies in an increasingly competitive and continuously changing environment, while balancing the need for resilience with the responsibility to cultivate supportive and sustainable workplace conditions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW STABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Every company that wants to succeed and obtain a competitive edge in the market must have stable, knowledgeable, and experienced employees (Leana & Barry, 2000). Companies are aware of the ever-changing nature of the world and the value of flexibility in responding swiftly to shifts in it. But stability is necessary for growth. Standardization and efficiency, continuity, and control are the hallmarks of stability (Janka, Heinicke, & Guenther, 2020). When people behave mindfully, have self-awareness and a distinct quality of consciousness, process information actively, exhibit cognitive differentiation, and pay attention to their thoughts in a variety of contexts without passing judgement, routine activities and practices are established in organizations and provide the desired stability (Shaik et al., 2021). Routine organizational actions and practices were historically associated with inertia and rigidity, which led to stability. However, these same routines are now thought to be associated with flexibility, change, and stability (Shaik, Nambudiri, & Yadav, 2021). According to existing research, stability and managerial innovation are negatively correlated. However, stability, development, and innovation can be attained when management acts effectively and efficiently, pursuing transparency, visibility, information sharing, and clear communication practices (Janka et al., 2000). According to Batool, Ishaq, and Akram (2014), unethical behaviour towards employees—verbally abusing them and/or publicly shaming others—has a detrimental effect on people's well-being and leads to unpleasant feelings, stress, a decline in productivity, attrition, and organizational failure. Employee disengagement, trust erosion, and resilience disruption are caused by toxic, bad, or negative management and unethical behaviour (Batool et al., 2014).

Organizations are being forced to respond to these challenges by adopting more aggressive strategies, which will reduce their profits and, ultimately, their sustainability, due to the increasing competition in the markets, financial innovations, and information technology advancements (Testa, D'Amato, Singh, & Festa, 2024). As a result, managers and executives are concentrating on many areas, including modernizing and fortifying their procedures, rules, and risk-taking methods (Testa et al., 2024). Although employee training is widely acknowledged as a tool, it has not received much scientific scrutiny as a means of enhancing organizational performance, gaining a competitive edge, and strengthening the stability of organizations (Testa et al., 2024). The reason for this is that training is necessary to build people's soft skills in addition to their technical talents (Testa et al., 2024). Additionally, employees' perceptions, creative motivations, and behaviours are greatly impacted by the social assessment of the organization (organizational stigma), which frequently serves as a destabilizing factor (Zhou, Zheng, & Liu, 2024). Emotional labour is when people intentionally manipulate their emotions to fit the demands of the organization, suppressing and controlling their own emotions to produce a publicly visible facial and physical display in the workplace, rather than expressing their true feelings about their organizations' activities, explicit or implicit rules, and job expectations (Zhou et al., 2024). Because of their association with the stigmatized organization, employees may face discrimination, self-deprecation, and risks to their self-esteem due to organizational stigma (status, reputation, defamation, celebrity, and validity) (Devers, Dewett, Mishina, & Belsito, 2009). When employees engage in deep action, they try to generate what they need or expect and keep pleasant emotions inside of themselves, which maintains emotional coordination. In contrast, the repercussions of emotional dissonance or tension can have numerous detrimental implications (Devers et al., 2009).

It is becoming more widely acknowledged that organizational stability is a prerequisite for worker performance and well-being. People may invest confidently in skill development and long-term professional goals when they have a stable job, which promotes psychological safety and security (Choi, 2024). Lower stress levels, more job satisfaction, and economic confidence are all experienced by workers who feel safe in their positions; these attributes support long-term productivity and organizational success (Choi, 2024). Conversely, the absence of job stability disrupts these benefits, leading to elevated anxiety, reduced focus, decreased performance, and diminished morale among the employees (Choi, 2024). Job stability not only serves the psychological needs of employees but also strengthens broader organizational outcomes by promoting retention, motivation, and collective resilience (Choi, 2024). An interrelated construct aligned with job stability is the psychosocial safety climate (PSC), which is defined as employees shared perception that senior management prioritizes psychological health and well-being (Dollard & Bakker, 2010; Amoadu, Frempomaa Agyare, Doe, & Abraham, 2025). Recent investigations underscore PSC as a proactive organizational mechanism that informs job design, optimizes resource availability, and mitigates psychosocial hazards such as high demands, bullying, and burnout (Amoadu et al., 2025; LaMontagne, Keegel, Louie, & Ostry, 2023). High PSC environments are associated with enriched job resources, reduced job demands, lower burnout, and enhanced resilience and performance (Amoadu et al., 2025). These findings substantiate PSC's buffering role, preventing stress escalation and facilitating workplace stability by promoting transparent communication, ethical leadership, and supportive policies. In tandem with job stability, PSC thus provides a dual foundation: job security anchors individual assurance, while systemic PSC fosters organizational resilience and employee well-being.

According to empirical research, workers who have steady jobs report far lower stress and burnout levels while also exhibiting greater levels of loyalty and job satisfaction (Nemteanu, Sadiq, & Alananzeh, 2021). Because stable individuals are more likely to be profoundly engaged in their roles, which increases productivity and lowers turnover, these mental health benefits have a beneficial impact on organizational results (Smith & Lee, 2023; Gallup, 2023; SHRM, 2022). A high-quality psychosocial safety atmosphere is a hallmark of a stable workplace, and it supports individual stability by integrating organizational safeguards for workers' well-being. On the other hand, unpredictable work settings are linked to more psychosocial risks, such as emotional tiredness and bullying (Dollard et al., 2023). Therefore, intentional policy,

supportive leadership, and a systemic emphasis on mental health—all of which together serve as the foundation for employee security and performance stability—are what create organizational stability, which is not solely a function of contract or tenure (Dollard & McTernan, 2011; Dollard, Clune, & Siami, 2024).

In contemporary business environments marked by volatility and rapid technological changes, individual resilience is essential for creating sustained performance and psychological well-being. Resilience enables employees to adapt positively to workplace stressors, maintain motivation, and recover from setbacks without compromising productivity (Lu, 2023). El-Sayed et al. (2024) found that resilience significantly predicts job satisfaction and work engagement; where there are resilient employees, they are more likely to report higher levels of dedication, focus, and emotional stability. This foundation aligns with the Conservation of Resources theory, which posits that individuals who possess and protect psychological resources such as optimism and coping flexibility are better equipped to thrive under pressure (El-Sayed et al. 2024). By continuing to operate at high levels even in the face of organizational uncertainty, resilient personnel help ensure business continuity. Additionally, work environments that offer social and emotional support strengthen resilience. Fairness, constructive criticism, and autonomy that foster psychological empowerment, all of which enhance resilience, are characteristics of positive work settings (Lu, 2023). Leaders who value and nurture their staff members' abilities promote both short-term flexibility and long-term personal development (Breevaart & Van Woerkom, 2024). People with resilience are able to persevere through difficult cycles of invention and problem-solving, maintaining performance in the face of uncertainty or failure. Accordingly, resilience is a dynamic result influenced by leadership interactions and work design rather than only being an individual feature (Breevaart & Van Woerkom, 2024).

Furthermore, leadership plays a pivotal role in embedding resilience throughout the organization. Strengths-based leadership, characterized by recognizing and leveraging employees' talents, has been proven to foster both engagement and resilience (Breevaart, & Van Woerkom, 2024). Leaders who communicate a clear vision, provide autonomy, and demonstrate emotional intelligence create an environment where employees feel safe to take initiative and recover from errors and challenging situations. Ramadhani, Sobandi, and Santoso (2024), in their systematic review, emphasized that resilient organizations are often led by individuals who model adaptive behaviors and promote a culture of learning from impediments rather than penalizing them. This leadership style contributes not only to employee resilience but also to the overall capacity of the organization to navigate industry shifts, market disruptions, and strategic transformation. From the management's standpoint, building organizational resilience involves creating systems and structures that enable the business to absorb shocks, adapt processes, and maintain core functions. High-performance work systems may include core practices such as cross-training, participatory decision-making, and continuous development (Adjei, Nyarko, Abakah, & Yeboah, 2023). These kinds of high-performance systems increase organizational agility by equipping employees with the capabilities and flexibility needed to respond to continuously evolving challenges. Adjei et al. (2023) noted that high-performance systems positively influence organizational resilience and employee well-being, particularly when individual employee resilience is already at high levels. This indicates that employers must strategically align human capital development with resilience-building efforts.

3. STABILITY IN TIMES OF CONTINUOUS CHANGE

In the face of continuous organizational change, stability has emerged as a crucial psychological and structural anchor for employers and employees. From the employer's standpoint, maintaining organizational stability amidst volatility is vital for sustaining productivity, preserving stakeholder confidence, and avoiding disruptions to core operations (Burnes, 2017). Stability is often ensured through strategic change management frameworks that emphasize adaptability while reinforcing consistent leadership and organizational values (Cameron & Green, 2019). Firms that embed flexibility into their structures without eroding the foundational norms and routines are better positioned to respond to change while retaining a coherent organizational identity (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015).

According to Kuntz, Malinen, and Näswall (2016), stability for employees is not only the lack of change but rather the existence of psychological safety, role clarity, and job security in a changing environment. Without clear communication and encouraging leadership, employees who undergo frequent changes may experience role uncertainty and stress (Vakola, 2014). According to research, people feel stable when they have faith that their company will support them, uphold fair standards, and provide clear expectations even in the event of structural changes (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Accordingly, consistency in organizational behaviour has a stronger correlation with perceived stability than does the lack of external change. However, tension may arise from the conflicting demands of stability and flexibility. Companies may find it difficult to strike a balance between the necessity for ongoing innovation and their attempts to keep a steady workforce and predictable business practices. Restructuring or changing technology too frequently without investing in employee training might cause instability and resistance (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). Employees may become less engaged, be more likely to leave, and have a weakened sense of organizational commitment if there is too much change without stability cues like clear decision-making or trustworthy leadership (Bordia, Restubog, Jimmieson, & Irmer, 2011). This emphasizes how change projects must be planned to maintain procedural and relational continuity.

The concept of "adaptive stability," which involves both the employer and employees committing to flexible adaptation while maintaining certain stable features like core values, leadership behaviors, and communication norms, is crucial in balancing these conflicting demands (Gifford, Graham, Ehrhart, Davies, & Aarons, 2021). By building trust, encouraging constant communication, and communicating how changes are in line with the organization's mission, leaders play a critical

role in maintaining this equilibrium. Achieving adaptive stability makes organisations more resilient and increases the likelihood that workers will view change as an opportunity rather than a threat, allowing both sides to prosper in dynamic settings.

Another key element in understanding stability amidst change is the role of organizational culture in shaping how change is perceived and absorbed by employees. A strong, adaptive culture can act as a stabilizing force by providing a shared sense of purpose, behavioral norms, and continuity in values even as strategies and structures evolve (Schein, 2010). Cultural stability enables employees to anchor their identity and work behaviors, reducing uncertainty and increasing tolerance for change (Denison, Hooijberg, Lane, & Lief, 2004). For employers, cultivating a culture that embraces learning and innovation without sacrificing core values can mitigate resistance and foster engagement during transitions. Conversely, a misaligned or rigid culture may exacerbate instability by amplifying disconnects between employee expectations and organizational direction (Kotter, 2012). Thus, cultural congruence, where employees perceive alignment between the organization's values and its change initiatives, becomes a critical determinant of stability in change-saturated environments.

4. HUMAN VALUES AND REWARDS

Employees' core human values, such as dignity, respect, and trust, are fundamental to fostering well-being and engagement in the workplace (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022). When an organization acknowledges and upholds these intrinsic values, employees experience greater psychological health and fulfilment, which aligns with occupational safety and health goals (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022; Tuin & Schaufeli, 2021). Respect fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, enabling individuals to voice ideas and collaborate without fear of judgement (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022; Faulkner & Laschinger, 2008). Similarly, organizational environments that promote and build trust and equity support employee dignity and aid in psychological resource development, contribute positively to well-being and performance (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022; Newman, Donohue, & Eva, 2017). The alignment between personal values and organizational values plays a semantic role in determining employee commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction. Across diverse industries, congruence between individual and corporate values consistently correlates with higher engagement and reduced turnover (Al-Marri, Majid, & Abdullah, 2023). A study revealed that while human values directly enhanced work outcomes, this effect was significantly strengthened when managers also experienced organizational pride (Ling, Ng, & Zhai, 2025). This outcome emphasizes the importance for organizations to hire value fit and cultivate cultures that promote emotional attachment to shared values to support both personal and organizational success (Ling, Ng, & Zhai, 2025).

Inclusive values such as diversity, fairness, and non-discrimination emerge as powerful enhancers of employee engagement. Mansoor, Tran, and Ali (2021) demonstrated that valuing diversity at the organizational level fosters a positive diversity organizational environment, which in turn enhances job satisfaction and organizational identification. Similarly, research in healthcare shows that empowerment, fairness, and psychological safety values are closely aligned with organizational justice, positively influencing trust, affective commitment, and discretionary efforts among employees (Mayo Clinic data, 2019). These findings suggest that organizations that proactively promote social inclusion and equitable treatment benefit from elevated employee morale, citizenship behaviors, and reduced withdrawal (Mayo Clinic data, 2019).

Beyond social values, the experience of perceived organizational support (POS) significantly influences employee outcomes. Grounded in organizational support theory, POS represents the employees' belief that their organization values their contributions and well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Meta-analytic evidence confirms that high POS is positively related to job performance, organizational commitment, and citizenship behaviors, while negatively is related to stress and high turnover intentions (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Furthermore, when employees perceive alignment between company practices (e.g., training, recognition) and their values, they exhibit stronger psychological empowerment and job satisfaction, particularly when working in learning-oriented organizational cultures (Cao et al., 2024; Hassan, 2007). Management's embodiment of human values such as integrity, empathy, fairness, and respect has a profound impact on employees' motivation, trust, and organizational commitment (Cao et al., 2024). Leaders who consistently demonstrate fairness and ethical conduct foster a culture and environment of psychological safety and credibility, which increases employees' trust in management and their willingness to contribute beyond formal job roles (Newman et al., 2017; Tuin & Schaufeli, 2021). Moreover, respectful managerial behaviors enhance employees' sense of dignity and belonging, which are foundational to engagement and intrinsic motivation (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022). When managers genuinely value employee well-being and development, workers are more likely to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors and exhibit lower turnover intentions (Lu, 2023). These findings align with self-determination theory, which emphasizes that leadership practices supporting autonomy and relatedness promote stronger internal motivation and job satisfaction (Lu, 2023).

The alignment between managerial values and employee expectations also plays a significant role in shaping workplace outcomes. Employees tend to respond positively when they perceive their managers as value-driven and consistent in upholding shared moral principles (Hassan, 2007). A study by Breevaart and van Woerkom (2024) found that strengths-based leadership characterized by focusing on individual talents and fostering meaningful relationships enhances employee resilience and engagement, particularly when managers demonstrate authenticity and ethical concerns. Furthermore, when

leaders integrate values such as transparency and inclusiveness into their decision-making, employees are more likely to feel respected, valued and empowered, which contributes to both psychological well-being and enhanced performance (Ramadhani et al., 2024). Consequently, the human values held by managers do not merely shape the ethical climate of an organization; they actively condition the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of employees.

Likewise, well-designed reward systems encompassing financial, social, and intrinsic incentives can significantly enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2013). A meta-analysis by Stajkovic and Luthans (2013) found that combining monetary reward, social recognition, and feedback led to a 45 % improvement in task performance, compared to a 23 % improvement with monetary incentives alone. Complementary empirical studies in manufacturing and service sectors reaffirm that both intrinsic rewards (e.g., autonomy, recognition) and extrinsic rewards (e.g., pay, promotions) are positively linked to improved performance (Nawaz, Jahanian, & Mahmood, 2017; Siems & Nell, 2021). Additionally, social recognition such as praises and peer acknowledgment boosts morale and reinforces desired behaviors effectively (Dan-ish & Usman, 2010; Flynn, 1998). Overall, such multifaceted reward systems help catalyze employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.

The concept of “total rewards” has become central to human resource management, reflecting a holistic approach that integrates financial compensation with learning opportunities, flexible work arrangements, and meaningful recognition. Perry (2007) noted that total reward systems evolved as firms acknowledged that remuneration alone is insufficient to sustain motivation. Total rewards systems have been positively linked with recruitment effectiveness, innovation, and retention (Chowdhury, 2003; Thompson & CIPD, 2002). Studies show that aligning reward structures with employees’ psychological needs such as autonomy and competence increases job performance and commitment (Noorazem et al., 2021; Karayanni & Nelken, 2022). Nevertheless, rewards can lead to positive outcomes but may also inadvertently undermine intrinsic motivation and workplace stability if detached from human values such as integrity, fairness, and respect (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Cognitive Evaluation Theory posits that contingent monetary rewards can diminish internal motivation, especially when perceived as controlling (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). Empirical findings support that performance-contingent payment schemes in nonprofit organizations have been linked to decreased autonomy and motivation, as well as in monotonous roles, pay-for-performance structures have reduced well-being (Shirom, Westman, & Melamed, 1999). Additionally, inequitable reward practices can lower job satisfaction and stimulus attrition among both underpaid and overpaid groups performing similar work (Carr & MacLachlan, 1996). Therefore, in the absence of ethical leadership and fairness, reward systems can erode trust and breed organizational volatility.

5. LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE (LMX) THEORY

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) developed the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, which holds that leaders develop distinct, dyadic relationships with each subordinate that differ in quality. While formal, transactional interactions are indicative of low-quality exchanges, mutual trust, respect, and obligation are characteristics of high-quality LMX partnerships. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that high LMX quality has had a favourable impact on both individual and organisational outcomes during the last 20 years. Because they feel more socially supported and psychologically safe at work, employees who have good LMX interactions are more likely to exhibit psychological resilience (Liu, Wang, & Liao, 2013). Strong LMX linkages generate an environment where employees feel empowered and respected, which is conducive to resilience, which is described as the ability to bounce back from adversity (Harland, Harrison, Jones, & Reiter-Palmon, 2005). Furthermore, open communication and constructive criticism—two crucial elements in enhancing resilience during times of organizational change or uncertainty—are frequently made possible by high LMX interactions (Walumbwa, Peterson, Avolio, & Hartnell, 2010).

In addition, to enhance resilience, high-quality LMX relationships contribute significantly to organizational stability. Stability, in this context, refers to consistency in performance, low turnover intentions, and a predictable workplace climate. High LMX fosters commitment, role clarity, and job satisfaction, all of which are predictors of a stable and positive work environment (Gerstner & Day, 1997). Employees who are involved in these kinds of relationships often receive more resources and support and have more developmental opportunities, which not only promote individual growth but also reduce role ambiguity and conflict (Dulebohn et al., 2012). However, a potential downside arises from the differential treatment inherent in LMX dynamics. When certain employees are favored, perceived inequalities and discrimination can generate workplace tension, mistrust, and reduced cohesion among the team members, potentially destabilizing team unity and long-term morale (Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2009). Therefore, while LMX can be a steadying force for those employees within the “favorable in-group,” it may simultaneously undermine cohesion for the individuals in the “out-group,” especially when perceptions of favoritism or bias go unaddressed.

The quality of LMX relationships also influences rewards, both extrinsic and intrinsic. According to empirical data, views of fairness in reward distribution, bonus access, promotion, and recognition are all positively correlated with high LMX (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employees may be very motivated to continue delivering excellent work and being loyal. However, the overall equity of the organization may suffer because of this reward asymmetry. Demotivation decreased engagement, and even retaliatory actions may be experienced by workers who believe they are involved in low-quality interactions, which can undermine the validity of reward systems (Scandura, 1999). Furthermore, because employees may be afraid of endangering their relationship with their leaders, awards that are seen as dependent on relational quality rather than performance merit can inhibit innovation and discourage risk-taking. These results point to a complicated paradox:

although LMX can help certain people have a strong, secure, and rewarding work environment, it can also spread injustices and dissatisfaction that reduce group effectiveness.

5. METHODOLOGY

The current study employed a qualitative focus group methodology integrated with a case study prompt to explore participants' collective interpretations and analytical reasoning. Focus groups are widely used as a qualitative method that facilitates in-depth discussion among participants, allowing researchers to capture a range of perspectives, social interactions, and shared meanings (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1998). This method is particularly effective when the goal is to explore how individuals collectively make sense of and/or perceive complex issues (Acocella, 2012). The researcher aimed to investigate the relationship between human values, business rewards, and organizational outcomes such as resilience, stability, and employee retention. Specifically, it explored employees' perceptions of their needs and expectations, as well as employers' beliefs regarding the strategies necessary to achieve organizational stability, profitability, and resilience. The research sought to compare and contrast these perspectives to identify potential gaps or alignments.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a more diverse range of perspectives relevant to the case study topic. Inclusion criteria included prior experience with the subject matter, and participants represented a mix of demographic characteristics. In all, 14 individuals from different backgrounds, between ages 23 and 37, were recruited and engaged in a single, synchronous group session for three and a half hours the first time and one hour at the second session. While traditional focus groups typically involve 6–12 participants, larger groups can also be effective when managed carefully, especially when the discussion is structured around a central stimulus (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The sample included three male and eleven female participants; two ladies were over thirty, and only one was around twenty-five. Seven out of eleven male participants were over twenty-seven, and the rest (four) were between ages twenty-three and twenty-six.

The two sessions were conducted at a university conference room where it was convenient for all individuals to attend. At the first session participants were first presented with a case study that illustrated two real-world scenarios relevant to the research topic, stressing the issues under study. The case catalyzed discussion, encouraging participants to reflect, analyze, and debate the issues presented. The researcher moderated the session, who facilitated the discussion using a semi-structured guide to ensure that key themes were addressed while allowing for a smooth dialogue. The interaction among participants was central to the data collection process, as it enabled the emergence of group dynamics, consensus, and dissent elements that are often critical in understanding collective meaning-making (Bloor et al., 2001). The second session took place at the same premises the following week to give participants time to think over the first weeks' discussion and finalize all thoughts, decisions, and perceptions on the issues that were presented and investigated.

The researcher acted as a neutral facilitator, encouraging and directing individuals to a balanced participation and minimizing personal bias. The discussion was not audio-recorded, as not everybody agreed; therefore, the researcher was taking down the minutes that were detailed and transcribed that same evening for better results. Data was analyzed with attention to both individual contributions and group-level patterns. The analysis also considered the sequence of responses, participant interactions, and non-verbal cues to deepen the understanding of group discourse (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Several strategies were put into place to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary themes with participants to validate interpretations. Thick description was used to provide detailed contextual information, supporting the transferability of findings to similar settings. All participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research. Given the group setting, additional care was taken to ensure that participants understood the limits of confidentiality and were comfortable sharing their honest views in a collective environment. All data were anonymized and stored securely in encrypted files.

6. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the key findings that emerged from a qualitative focus group discussion involving 14 participants, following the presentation of a case study designed to explore issues of workplace stability, resilience, and human values. The case study served as a catalyst for reflection, prompting participants to share personal experiences, perceptions, and insights related to the challenges and values that shape their professional environments. The focus group, composed of individuals from diverse professional backgrounds, provided a rich and nuanced dialogue that illuminated both shared and divergent perspectives. Through thematic analysis, several core themes emerged, shedding light on how individuals navigate instability, cultivate resilience, and uphold human values in the workplace. The analysis of the focus group discussion revealed several interrelated themes that reflect participants' experiences and perceptions regarding workplace stability, resilience, and the role of human values. These themes were identified through a process of thematic coding and iterative review, allowing for both convergence and divergence in participant narratives to be captured. The following sections present these themes in detail, illustrating the depth and diversity of participant perspectives.

The case study presented a medium-sized corporation (including headquarters and three branches) created and run successfully by its owner for more than forty years. After he passed away, the company was run by the daughter of the owner. The first owner (Mr Burton) created a strong "humanistic" culture in the organization and treated his employees like a part of his family; he valued and respected his employees, took care of them, often asked for their advice, and spent

much time listening to their ideas and complaints. Findings showed that the company during the first forty years of operation was presenting only growth rates, did not lose important employees, and turnover was at the lowest percentage. Another interesting issue detected was that Mr. Burton never forced his people nor demanded to increase their productivity by specific percentages.

However, following Mr Burton's passing three years ago, the circumstances changed. Since Helen was completely dissatisfied with the way her father was handling the company and its employees, she took over as CEO and made significant changes. Immediately after taking over, Helen began to treat the staff as the hired help that they were. She changed the operational processes without consulting the staff, established goals to boost productivity since she felt they weren't working hard enough, and informed them that they would not be eligible for any future profit-sharing plans because the owner alone should receive them. Helen's announcement to her staff that those who did not enhance their productivity by 10% would have an equal pay cut from their wage was another significant detail found in this case. At this very moment, this company exhibits a bad organizational culture of distrust, fear, and rage, high turnover and marginal production reports.

6.1 THE KEY THEMES THAT EMERGED AND WERE FINALIZED AFTER THE SECOND SESSION: STABILITY, INSTABILITY, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

One of the most noticeable themes that emerged was the contrast between the long-standing stability under Mr. Burton's leadership and the ensuing instability under Helen's tenure. Participants consistently identified stability as a product of relational trust, consistent values, a positive environment, a strong culture, and participative leadership. Conversely, the abrupt transition in leadership style created uncertainty, disengagement, and a loss of psychological safety. Participants underlined that change, itself, does not necessarily threaten stability; rather, it is the way change is managed, particularly when it lacks empathy and consideration for people, that can deeply unsettle the organization and harm workplace harmony.

PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE

The significance of resilience, both individually and collectively, was the second major subject that surfaced. Participants talked about how they overcame challenging adjustments, frequently relied on coworkers' support, found fresh perspectives on obstacles, and maintained a stronger sense of purpose in their jobs. Most participants stressed and concurred that resilience encompasses both the organisational environment and overcoming adversity. They observed that resilience thrives in environments where leaders exhibit the openness, vulnerability, and adaptability that they believed Helen's leadership style lacked. Meanwhile, it was noted that many companies are run and managed in a manner similar to Helen's in the modern corporate world.

EMPATHY AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

The difference between Mr. Burton and Helen brought to light the importance of empathy and moral leadership in creating a devoted and resilient team. Participants frequently emphasized how Helen's leadership style ignored the ethical and emotional realities of the workplace in favour of performance and outcomes. For the majority of participants (12 out of 14), it was evident that leaders who truly care about their employees and who value their humanity rather than merely their productivity are much more likely to cultivate long-term organizational health, loyalty, and intrinsic motivation.

MORAL DILEMMAS AND VALUE CONFLICTS

All participants identified ethical tensions in the case, particularly around the issue of fairness in pay cuts and the revocation of the profit-sharing scheme. They viewed these changes not only as demotivating but also as a violation of the implicit psychological contract between employer and employee. The introduction of punitive productivity measures raised moral concerns about coercion and the instrumental treatment of workers. For most participants such practices echoed an unfortunate growing pattern in modern workplaces where people are treated less as valued contributors and more as tools to be managed, often at the expense of their dignity and morale. Eight of the participants answered that they would leave the company as soon as these measures were announced. The other six participants said they would think about how to act; many would try to find another job and then quit. All participants agreed that such a situation drives employees to decrease their productivity levels.

PURPOSE AND MEANING OF WORK

Another powerful theme that emerged was the sense of purpose and meaning that employees derived from their work during Mr. Burton's time. Participants perceived and described a workplace where people were genuinely seen, valued, heard, and appreciated, not just for what they produced, but for who they were. In contrast, Helen's approach showed disrespect towards people and no empathy, and she just saw the people as "tools" to do her job. This type of shift was felt to erode employee well-being and weaken the social and emotional fabric of the organization.

TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS AND INCENTIVE-BASED MOTIVATION

Surprisingly, ten participants in the first session responded (after the case study was presented) that modern technology

may help stabilize the company under Helen's "threatening" leadership and provide her with the 10% productivity boost she wants. However, only six participants said that they would be able to work with modern technology under those conditions and Helen's demanding behaviour if they were paid handsomely. All participants concluded at the end of the second session that financial incentives may boost output, but only if they are a part of a larger system of equity and acknowledgement. Participants were advised that monetary rewards by themselves would not be sufficient to make up for the erosion of mutual respect and trust. From the start of the first session until the completion of the second, just one participant, a 37-year-old woman, demonstrated that human values are crucial for attaining stability and well-being and that technology by itself cannot provide stability or boost productivity.

INTEGRATING INSIGHTS: REFLECTIONS ON THE FINDINGS

The results of this conversation confirm that workplace culture and leadership philosophy are closely related to organizational resilience. Relationships and human dignity were given top priority under Mr. Burton's leadership, which had a noticeable impact on employee retention and business expansion. On the other hand, Helen's detached and domineering style of leadership damaged the organization's cohesiveness and produced subpar performance results. It becomes clear that human values are fundamental to organizational success rather than a byproduct. Stability and productivity are the outcomes of sincere, moral relationships, a common goal, openness, and a mutually respectful culture rather than only being the consequence of strategic management. This case's leadership change serves as a warning about the dangers of ignoring the moral and emotional economy of the workplace. In order to promote stability, resilience, and ethical integrity inside organizations, this chapter emphasizes how crucial it is to match leadership approaches with human-centered ideals. According to the findings, organizations should view change as a cultural and relational issue in addition to a structural adjustment. Future leadership changes should be handled with care to maintain the values and emotional heritage that uphold the organization's long-term viability and mission.

7. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illustrate that the resilience and stability of an organization are fundamentally linked to the values embedded within its leadership and culture. Participants repeatedly emphasized that trust, respect, fairness, and dignity are not peripheral but foundational elements for a workplace to thrive. These human values shape employee well-being, influence motivation, and foster long-term commitment. Without them, organizations become susceptible to instability, disengagement, and attrition (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022; Newman, Donohue, & Eva, 2017; Tuin & Schaufeli, 2021). This observation aligns closely with Organizational Support Theory, which posits that when employees perceive strong support and fairness from the organization, they reciprocate with higher commitment and loyalty (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The transition from Mr. Burton's humanistic leadership to Helen's control-driven style represented not just a managerial shift but a moral and cultural rupture. This shift disrupted the psychological contract between employer and employee, undermining trust and ultimately damaging the social fabric of the workplace (Ling, Ng, & Zhai, 2025).

Initially, many participants believed that monetary rewards and technological advancements could resolve the company's challenges. However, after engaging in dialogue around the case and reflecting on personal experiences, they came to recognize that rewards alone are insufficient in environments marked by fear, coercion, and distrust. Participants expressed that even high pay would not compensate for a toxic culture or lack of respect. This realization directly supports the Self-Determination Theory, which asserts that extrinsic motivators (like money) are effective only when the individual's intrinsic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are also fulfilled (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Perry, 2007; Lu, 2023). Respect, autonomy, and meaningful recognition emerged as equally critical motivators, without which even the most generous financial schemes fall short of sustaining engagement.

The study further revealed the nuanced role of leadership style in shaping relational dynamics. Mr. Burton's approach, characterized by listening, inclusion, and emotional presence, fostered psychological safety and motivated employees not just through external incentives but also via a shared sense of purpose and belonging (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022; Faulkner & Laschinger, 2008). His leadership style aligns strongly with the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, which highlights the importance of trust-based, high-quality relationships between leaders and subordinates in fostering employee motivation and performance (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Conversely, Helen's leadership style, detached, hierarchical, and performance-obsessed, isolated employees and provoked both moral and practical resistance. Her actions were widely perceived as unjust, destabilizing the organization at its core (Newman et al., 2017; Ramadhani et al., 2024). This shift engendered a culture of mistrust, fear, and cynicism, illustrating the detrimental impact of leadership that neglects the human dimension of organizational life (Tuin & Schaufeli, 2021).

Participants who had strong professional relationships with their leaders talked about feeling strong, resilient, and eager to go above and beyond in their positions. The LMX Theory, which contends that positive interactions foster not only loyalty but also role expansion and civic engagement, provides more insight into this experience (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). According to Breevaart and van Woerkom (2024) and Liu, Wang, and Liao (2013), there are differences in these connections that can also be sources of conflict and unfairness. Under Helen's leadership, some workers felt ignored, isolated, and undervalued. Strong leadership ties can improve performance and loyalty for some, but poor-quality exchanges can cause resentment and isolation for others, according to a study (Scandura, 1999; Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2009). This dual

nature of leader-member exchange was in line with this research. It was believed that treating all employees fairly and with respect—not just those who were favorable—was essential to the well-being, positivism, and cohesiveness of the company (Harris, Li, & Kirkman, 2009; Scandura, 1999).

The study also confirms that resilience is not just a quality that people have to acquire on their own. According to Harland, Harrison, Jones, and Reiter-Palmon (2005) and Walumbwa, Peterson, Avolio, and Hartnell (2010), resilience is instead influenced, encouraged, and hindered by the organizational environment. According to the Organisational Support Theory, people's capacity to manage stress and uncertainty at work is much improved by their perceptions of the organization's fairness and concern (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees are better able to handle change and uncertainty when they work in an environment with moral leadership, common ideals, and encouraging relationships. On the other hand, harsh penalties, a lack of openness, and emotional distance from the leadership reduce resilience and foster instability (Hassan, 2007). Participants pointed out that although resilience is frequently talked about as a personal attribute, in practice, it is heavily influenced by structural and social elements in the workplace.

Meaning and purpose were additional themes that emerged with significant clarity. During Mr. Burton's time, participants described the organization as one where people felt seen, heard, and valued (Lu, 2023). Their work held emotional and social significance beyond productivity metrics, reflecting the importance of intrinsic motivation as emphasized in Self-Determination Theory (Deci et al., 1999). Under Helen, that sense of meaning was lost. Her leadership reduced employees to tools for output, eroding the emotional contract and leaving them feeling expendable. For several participants, the values espoused by Helen contradicted their own personal ethics, leading to feelings akin to moral injury, where working under such conditions was not only demotivating but also ethically distressing (Carr & MacLachlan, 1996).

While technology and productivity as incentives initially appealed to participants, their views shifted when the broader context of Helen's management style was considered. The consensus became clear: no amount of technological efficiency or financial reward can substitute for a lack of dignity, inclusion, and moral leadership (Chowdhury, 2003; Perry, 2007). Determination Theory's argument that sustainable motivation requires alignment with intrinsic psychological needs (Deci et al., 1999; Nawaz et al., 2017). Technology may assist in achieving certain operational goals, but it cannot repair cultural damage or rebuild trust. Participants concluded that incentives must be embedded within a larger system of fairness and human recognition to be meaningful and effective (Deci et al., 1999; Nawaz, Jahanian, & Mahmood, 2017).

Moreover, findings hold important implications for leadership practice. First, leadership transitions must be managed with cultural and emotional intelligence. Sudden shifts that disregard the existing values and relationships within an organization can lead to deep-seated instability and high turnover rates (Ling et al., 2025). Second, reward systems must be designed with ethical coherence. While financial incentives can drive performance in the short term, they must be perceived as fair, transparent, and part of a broader framework of respect and inclusion (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2013; Noorazem et al., 2021). Finally, organizations must understand resilience as a collective and cultural phenomenon, not simply as an individual responsibility (Mayo Clinic data, 2019). This view aligns with Organizational Support Theory which supports that employee well-being and adaptability are contingent on the organizational structures and leadership values in place (Cao et al., 2024; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Newman et al., 2017).

The study underscores the importance of integrating theories of motivation, leadership, and organizational support when examining workplace dynamics (Deci et al., 1999; Graen & Uhl- Bien, 1995; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Self-Determination Theory, Leader-Member Exchange Theory, and Organizational Support Theory collectively illustrate how deeply human values are intertwined with outcomes like retention, performance, and resilience. These findings suggest that building a resilient organization is not about commanding performance but about cultivating conditions where people feel valued, supported, and inspired to contribute. Ultimately, the findings of this research reaffirm that human values are not secondary to business success; they are central to it. When leadership is guided by empathy, fairness, and ethical consistency, organizations become more than systems of production; they become communities capable of adapting, growing, and sustaining long-term human well-being (Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022; Lu, 2023). The case of Mr. Burton and Helen offers a poignant reminder: in the pursuit of performance, it is the human factor that determines whether organizations can merely survive or truly flourish and become strong, stable, and sustainable.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the valuable insights generated by this study, some limitations should be acknowledged to contextualize the findings and guide future research endeavors. First, the sample size may limit in a way the generalizability of the results; therefore, further investigations using quantitative re- search methods are suggested. The research was conducted within a specific geographic region, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across different sectors or cultures. Em- ployee perceptions of stability, leadership, human values, and rewards can vary widely depending on cultural norms, economic conditions, and organizational structures (Choi, 2024; Guillemin & Nicholas, 2022). Therefore, replicating this study in varied settings would strengthen the external validity of the findings.

The design of this study captures perceptions and experiences at a single point in time. Organizational stability, employee resilience, and leadership dynamics are fluid constructs that evolve, especially during ongoing change processes (Burnes, 2017; Gifford et al., 2021). Longitudinal studies may provide a richer understanding of how these variables interact and develop, shedding light on causal relationships and the sustainability of adaptive practices. Finally, future research is

encouraged to address these gaps by employing mixed-method approaches, extending investigations across multiple organizational contexts and industries, and incorporating longitudinal data. Such efforts will deepen understanding of how organizations can strategically balance stability and change, foster resilience, and uphold human values to achieve sustainable success.

9. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study emphasizes that resilience and retention are not products of rigid strategies or financial incentives alone but outcomes of deep, value-based leadership. In addition to being moral principles, human values like empathy, justice, respect, and trust have become strategic imperatives that are necessary to establish stable, high-performing, and psychologically safe workplaces. When management and organizations neglect these values, as seen in the case of Helen's leadership, the consequences are immediate and far-reaching: rising turnover, declining morale, and a weakened organizational fabric. Leaders like Mr. Burton demonstrate that when people are seen, heard, and respected, they respond with loyalty, resilience, and commitment that no reward system alone can generate and prove that maximization of productivity is achieved with ease and without being demanded.

In the end, this study urges a reinterpretation of workplace success that centres organizational life around integrity and human dignity. Resilience must be developed through moral relationships, shared meaning, and emotionally intelligent leadership rather than through fear or control in a time of constant change and high strain. In addition to being more humane, organizations that value their people and align their structures accordingly are also more inventive, sustainable, and long-term viable. A blueprint for not only keeping people but also keeping them energized, involved, and firmly rooted in the mission of their job can be found by redefining retention through the prism of resilience and values.

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