

Beyond Survival: The Resilient Entrepreneurial Organisation and the Microfoundations of Sustainable Strategic Renewal

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This conceptual article develops the Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox and the Resilient Entrepreneurial Organisation (REO) as a process theory of how organisations protect current functioning without destroying the entrepreneurial agency required for future renewal. The paradox arises because control-oriented responses can strengthen short-term absorption while, if prolonged, suppressing autonomy, experimentation and opportunity-oriented action. REO is defined not as another capability but as an organisational configuration in which protective and adaptive mechanisms are temporally and structurally coordinated so that preservation of current functioning does not permanently suppress entrepreneurial agency. The theory is organised around a parsimonious process - preparedness, interpretation, agency and renewal - with attention allocation, responsible renewal quality, financing resilience and institutional quality specifying selection, legitimacy and persistence conditions. The paper further theorises three temporal phases - acute disruption, adaptive transition and renewal - and introduces temporal misalignment to explain when crisis controls outlive their functional period. The complete Staniewski-related research stream contained in the underlying bibliography is retained and embedded within broader international conversations on strategic HRM, knowledge management, entrepreneurial microfoundations, the attention-based view, sustainability, finance and institutional quality. The framework contributes to resilience theory by extending resilience from preservation of functioning to regeneration of entrepreneurial agency; to entrepreneurship theory by conceptualising entrepreneurial agency as a mechanism preventing post-disruption organisational ossification; and to strategic management by explaining renewal as the temporal orchestration of protective control and entrepreneurial autonomy.</i> Keywords: organisational resilience; entrepreneurial renewal capacity; adaptive entrepreneurial agency; human-capital preparedness; knowledge circulation; strategic renewal; responsible adaptation; financing resilience.
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1. Introduction

Organisational resilience is commonly associated with survival, continuity, recovery and adaptation. Yet survival can conceal strategic deterioration. An organisation may preserve essential operations while becoming more centralised, more risk averse and less capable of experimentation. It may therefore survive a disruption while losing the entrepreneurial capacity required to create a viable post-disruption future. This distinction motivates the central question of this article: how can organisations preserve and regenerate opportunity-oriented

entrepreneurial action while simultaneously absorbing and adapting to significant disturbance?

Entrepreneurship theory emphasises new combinations, opportunity alertness and action under uncertainty (Schumpeter, 1934; Kirzner, 1973; Knight, 1921). Strategic management explains resource heterogeneity and capability reconfiguration (Barney, 1991; Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997), while organisational-learning research explains adaptation through exploration, exploitation and

knowledge revision (Argyris and Schön, 1996; March, 1991). However, these perspectives do not fully specify the organisational architecture through which entrepreneurial agency is protected or regenerated when crisis responses themselves may suppress autonomy and experimentation.

This article develops the Resilient Entrepreneurial Organisation (REO). REO is defined as an organisational configuration capable of preserving essential functioning while maintaining or regenerating the human, knowledge, behavioural and contextual conditions required for responsible entrepreneurial renewal. The focal dependent capability is entrepreneurial renewal capacity: the organisational capacity to preserve, reactivate and redirect opportunity-oriented entrepreneurial action under conditions of significant disruption.

The article uses the complete Staniewski-related corpus contained in the underlying bibliography. The studies are not treated as a single empirical programme. Instead, each is assigned a theoretical role consistent with its actual level of analysis: human-resource and knowledge studies inform preparedness and circulation; entrepreneurship studies inform microfoundations; digital studies inform adoption and attention; environmental and financial studies inform renewal quality and resource continuity; and institutional studies define boundary conditions.

2. Research Gap and Contributions

The central theoretical problem is not whether organisations can survive disruption, but whether the mechanisms used to secure survival preserve the capacity for future entrepreneurial action. Resilience and entrepreneurship research overlap in their concern with uncertainty but diverge in their focal outcomes. Resilience scholarship privileges continuity, recovery and adaptation; entrepreneurship scholarship privileges opportunity recognition, initiative and action. The missing bridge is temporal and behavioural: protective mechanisms that are functional during acute disruption may become dysfunctional when they persist into the phase in which experimentation and decentralised initiative are required.

The Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox is therefore the organising problem of the article. The paradox states that organisational mechanisms that strengthen short-term absorptive resilience may simultaneously weaken the entrepreneurial agency necessary for long-term strategic renewal. REO is the organisational response to this paradox rather than a competing focal construct.

The theory distinguishes four levels of explanation. REO is the organisational configuration. Adaptive entrepreneurial agency is the central behavioural mechanism. Entrepreneurial renewal capacity is the organisational capacity generated when preparedness and interpretation

are successfully converted into action. Sustainable strategic renewal is the outcome. This hierarchy prevents the concepts of resilience, agency, capability and renewal from being used interchangeably.

The paper makes three contributions. To resilience theory, it adds regeneration of entrepreneurial agency to preservation of functioning. To entrepreneurship theory, it treats entrepreneurial agency as a mechanism that prevents organisational ossification under adversity. To strategic management, it proposes that sustainable renewal depends on the temporal orchestration of protective control and entrepreneurial autonomy.

3. Theoretical Boundaries of the REO Construct

A Resilient Entrepreneurial Organisation is an organisational configuration in which protective and adaptive mechanisms are temporally and structurally coordinated so that preservation of current functioning does not permanently suppress the entrepreneurial agency required for strategic renewal. This ontological definition is important: REO is not another discrete capability. It is a configuration governing the relationship among protection, interpretation, agency and renewal.

REO is adjacent to but distinct from organisational resilience, dynamic capabilities, entrepreneurial orientation, organisational ambidexterity and strategic renewal. Organisational resilience primarily concerns continued functioning, recovery and adaptation. REO adds the requirement that entrepreneurial agency be preserved or regenerated. Dynamic capabilities explain sensing, seizing and reconfiguration; REO focuses on how crisis governance affects the behavioural capacity to enact opportunities over time. Entrepreneurial orientation describes innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking; REO explains whether such orientations can survive periods in which control and risk reduction intensify. Ambidexterity concerns exploration and exploitation, whereas REO specifies the disruption-specific temporal problem of moving from protection toward renewed exploration. Strategic renewal is the altered trajectory; REO explains the organisational configuration that makes that trajectory possible.

4. Method: Integrative Multi-Level Conceptual Synthesis

The study uses integrative conceptual synthesis for theory development. Sources are organised by theoretical function and level of analysis rather than treated as commensurable empirical tests. This is important because the corpus includes individual-level psychological research, organisational studies, behavioural-digital research, macro-environmental analysis, finance and institutional studies.

The synthesis assigns evidence to five functions: preparedness, circulation and interpretation, entrepreneurial enactment, opportunity selection, and sustainable-institutional anchoring. Macro-level environmental and institutional studies are used as boundary-condition evidence rather than translated into direct firm-level causal claims. This preserves level-of-analysis discipline while allowing heterogeneous research to contribute to a coherent multi-level model.

5. Three Resilience Functions: Absorption, Adaptation and Renewal

REO distinguishes absorption, adaptation and renewal as resilience functions. Absorption preserves essential operations and strategically critical resources during disturbance. Adaptation changes routines, resource deployment and interpretive frames in response to altered conditions. Renewal generates and implements new strategic options when restoration of the previous configuration is insufficient.

These functions are temporally differentiated. Acute disruption privileges absorption because organisational continuity is immediately threatened. Adaptive transition requires interpretation, selective decentralisation and resource redeployment. The renewal phase increasingly requires experimentation, opportunity pursuit and entrepreneurial autonomy. The same governance mechanism can therefore have different effects across phases.

This temporal logic introduces the concept of temporal misalignment. Temporal misalignment occurs when a crisis mechanism appropriate to one phase persists into a later phase in which its effects become dysfunctional. Centralisation may protect the organisation during acute disruption but become a source of strategic rigidity during adaptive transition or renewal. Absorption therefore does not automatically produce adaptation, and adaptation does not automatically produce renewal.

6. The Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox

Disruption frequently produces rational demands for tighter control: centralised authority, standardisation, risk reduction, cost containment and intensified monitoring. During acute disruption these mechanisms can strengthen absorptive resilience by reducing variance, preserving liquidity and stabilising essential operations.

The same mechanisms can, however, suppress local initiative, experimentation, dissent and opportunity recognition when they persist beyond the acute phase. The Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox is thus temporal rather than categorical. Control is not inherently opposed to entrepreneurship; its effect depends on phase, duration and

the organisation's ability to relax protective mechanisms when conditions change.

REO resolves the paradox through temporal orchestration. Protective control is intensified when absorption is paramount, but authority and experimentation are progressively restored as the organisation moves through adaptive transition toward renewal. A resilient entrepreneurial organisation is therefore distinguished not by permanent decentralisation, but by its capacity to change the balance between protection and agency at the appropriate time.

7. Human-Capital Preparedness

Preparedness is the first core construct in the parsimonious REO process. It combines human-capital readiness with the organisational capacity to make competence accessible beyond its original role location. Human-capital preparedness is defined as the extent to which strategically relevant competence is identifiable, redeployable and developable when existing role structures become inadequate.

Staniewski and Szczepankowski (2012), situated within the broader intellectual-capital literature, illuminate competence visibility: organisations cannot redeploy resources they cannot identify. Staniewski (2007), read within strategic HR architecture research, supports the redeployability dimension by treating human resources as strategically configured rather than homogeneous. Krochmal and Staniewski (2010) identify barriers to human-capital shaping and therefore illuminate constraints on development capacity. These contributions are not treated as a separate author-centred literature but as evidence within the broader strategic-HRM problem of whether competence can be mobilised under changing conditions.

The source bibliography also contains Staniewski (2027), concerning selected concepts of human-resource management. Its final publication status must be verified before journal submission. Its theoretical function remains the HRM foundation of preparedness.

8. Knowledge Circulation and Adaptive Interpretation

Preparedness becomes resilient capacity only when strategically relevant knowledge can circulate beyond the location in which it is initially embodied. Knowledge circulation is defined as the capacity to move relevant knowledge across organisational boundaries quickly enough to alter interpretation and action during disruption. It therefore integrates speed, cross-boundary transfer and interpretive consequence.

Dąbrowski, Kołodkiewicz and Staniewski (2002) and Staniewski (2004) are embedded here within the broader knowledge-management and organisational-learning literatures. Their relevance lies in organisational knowledge practices and sharing routines, while absorptive-capacity and knowledge-creation research explains how transferred knowledge is recognised, interpreted and recombined (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The integration of HRM and knowledge management is crucial: competence becomes resilient capacity only when the knowledge embodied in human capital can be circulated and recombined outside its original organisational location.

Adaptive interpretation is the second core construct in the REO process. It occurs when circulated knowledge changes how organisational actors understand threats, resources and opportunity sets. An organisation may possess abundant information yet remain strategically rigid if its interpretive frames do not change. Preparedness therefore influences renewal only insofar as competence and knowledge alter interpretation.

Szczepankowski and Staniewski (2009) provide a broader bridge between classical management coordination and knowledge-intensive economic conditions. Within REO, this work supports the need to reconcile enduring coordination problems with the increased speed and complexity of information environments.

9. Adaptive Entrepreneurial Agency and Relational Resilience Resources

Agency is the third core construct in the REO process and the principal micro-to-macro mechanism. Adaptive entrepreneurial agency is the capacity of actors to initiate, experiment and commit resources toward emerging opportunities while revising action in response to changing conditions. Preparedness supplies capability, adaptive interpretation supplies a revised understanding of the environment, and agency converts both into entrepreneurial action.

The microfoundational architecture contains individual dispositions, motivational mechanisms, self-efficacy, relational support and organisational autonomy. Staniewski (2016), positioned within entrepreneurial-microfoundations research, shows the joint relevance of organisational and psychological predictors of entrepreneurial success. Janowski, Staniewski and Awruk (2019) provide a dispositional foundation through the Entrepreneurial Dispositions Personality Inventory. These individual-level characteristics matter organisationally only when organisational conditions permit their expression.

Awruk, Staniewski and Słomski (2026) extend the mechanism beyond formal organisational boundaries by examining intimate relationship communication,

knowledge and relationship satisfaction in entrepreneurial success, with self-efficacy and achievement motivation as mediators. This contribution supports the concept of relational resilience resources: extra-organisational social conditions capable of sustaining self-efficacy, achievement motivation, persistence and entrepreneurial commitment during adversity.

The micro-to-macro transition occurs when individual entrepreneurial actions become repeated, coordinated and supported sufficiently to generate organisational entrepreneurial renewal capacity. Thus, individual dispositions do not aggregate automatically. Their organisational consequence depends on autonomy, knowledge access, resource commitment and the capacity of the organisation to recognise and scale local initiative.

10. Responsible Entrepreneurial Resilience and Social Legitimacy

Responsibility is treated here not as another independent organisational capability but as a quality criterion applied to renewal. Renewal effectiveness concerns whether a new strategic trajectory functions economically and operationally. Renewal responsibility concerns whether that trajectory remains ethically, socially and environmentally legitimate.

Staniewski, Słomski and Rzyński (2015), embedded within the broader debate on entrepreneurship and ethics, support the claim that entrepreneurial action cannot be evaluated solely by successful opportunity exploitation. Organisational survival achieved through opportunism that destroys legitimacy is not equivalent to responsible resilience.

Awruk et al. (2023), concerning Warsaw students' views on LGBT+, is retained only at the contextual level. It does not provide evidence of organisational resilience or performance. Its theoretical role is to illustrate a changing social-attitudinal environment in which organisations seek workforce and stakeholder legitimacy. This limited use preserves level-of-analysis discipline while retaining the complete Staniewski-related corpus.

11. Digital Availability, Appropriation and Opportunity Selection

Digital conditions enter REO primarily through the attention bottleneck. Disruption can increase the number, novelty and ambiguity of signals precisely when managerial attention is constrained. More information therefore does not necessarily produce greater resilience. Resilience depends on the selective allocation of attention to strategically actionable signals.

Digital availability, appropriation and selection are treated as stages rather than independent core constructs. Szopiński

and Staniewski (2014), situated within technology-adoption research, illustrate the distinction between technical availability and routinised use. Xie et al. (2024), positioned within online innovation and the attention-based view of the firm, illuminate the selection problem by showing how user orientation affects attention allocation to new-product-development ideas.

Open innovation can expand the opportunity set (Chesbrough, 2003), but the resulting information abundance may intensify the attention bottleneck. Attention-allocation capability therefore conditions the transition from interpretation to opportunity selection: digital openness contributes to renewal only when organisations can distinguish strategically actionable signals from informational congestion.

12. Renewal Intensity versus Renewal Quality

Renewal is the fourth core construct in the REO process. It concerns the generation and implementation of a new strategic trajectory. The theory distinguishes renewal intensity from renewal quality. High renewal intensity cannot compensate for low renewal quality when innovation increases environmental exposure, stakeholder conflict or dependence on unsustainable resource trajectories.

Haseeb et al. (2021) are used at the macro-environmental level to establish environmental degradation as a material boundary condition. Adebayo, Staniewski and Uzun (2025) and Adebayo et al. (2025) connect technological innovation with material consumption, renewable energy and financial globalisation, demonstrating that technological renewal is embedded in material, energy and financial systems. These studies are not translated into direct firm-level causal claims.

Sadiq et al. (2025) provide a closer organisational bridge by examining environmental innovation, stakeholder pressure and open innovation in logistics firms together with managerial cognition and competitive advantage. This supports the view that renewal quality depends on how stakeholder and environmental signals are interpreted and incorporated into innovation choices.

Responsible renewal quality therefore acts as a criterion linking strategic renewal to stakeholder legitimacy. Effective adaptation answers whether the new trajectory works; responsible adaptation additionally asks whether it remains ethically, socially and environmentally defensible.

13. Financing Resilience as a Resource-Continuity Mechanism

Strategic renewal requires access to capital across time. Financing resilience is defined as the capacity to maintain access to strategically aligned capital during conditions of

market stress. It is therefore a resource-continuity mechanism rather than a generic environmental factor.

Meo and Staniewski (2024) provide the sustainable-finance architecture through their work on green bonds and sustainable finance. Meo et al. (2026) analyse the resilience of green bonds during market turmoil. Together these contributions support the argument that sustainability-oriented renewal depends not only on internal opportunity recognition but also on financing arrangements capable of persisting through adverse market conditions.

14. Institutional Quality as a Boundary Condition

Internal entrepreneurial-resilience capability can generate different outcomes under different institutional conditions. Institutional quality affects transaction costs, investment horizons, uncertainty and the allocation of entrepreneurial effort.

Abu et al. (2022), including Staniewski, analyse the long-term response of FDI to insecurity and corruption in Nigeria. Ruiz Estrada, Staniewski and Ndoma (2018) examine corruption through a socio-economic development degrowth index in Guatemala. These studies remain at their appropriate macro-institutional level and are used to define boundary conditions rather than direct organisational mechanisms.

Baumol's (1990) distinction among productive, unproductive and destructive entrepreneurship reinforces this logic: entrepreneurial ability can be redirected by institutional incentives. The same internal REO configuration may therefore generate different renewal outcomes across institutional settings.

15. The Revised REO Causal Architecture and Propositions

The final REO process theory is deliberately parsimonious. Its central sequence is Preparedness -> Interpretation -> Agency -> Renewal. Preparedness combines identifiable and redeployable competence with knowledge circulation. Interpretation concerns the revision of threat and opportunity frames. Agency converts interpretation into committed entrepreneurial action. Renewal concerns the generation and implementation of a new strategic trajectory.

Three sets of conditions surround this sequence. Attention allocation affects the transition from interpretation to opportunity selection. Responsible renewal quality affects the relationship between renewal and stakeholder legitimacy. Financing resilience and institutional quality affect whether renewal persists. The Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox operates across the temporal transition from protection to agency: control supports absorption

during acute disruption but can undermine renewal when it persists beyond that phase.

- ❖ P1: Human-capital preparedness positively affects adaptive interpretation when strategically relevant knowledge can circulate across organisational boundaries.
- ❖ P2: Adaptive interpretation positively affects entrepreneurial renewal capacity through adaptive entrepreneurial agency.
- ❖ P3: Relational resilience resources strengthen the positive relationship between individual entrepreneurial agency and organisational renewal capacity.
- ❖ P4a: Control-oriented crisis responses positively affect absorptive resilience during the acute phase of disruption.
- ❖ P4b: Persistence of control-oriented crisis responses beyond the acute phase negatively affects entrepreneurial renewal capacity by reducing autonomy and experimentation.
- ❖ P4c: Timely decentralisation strengthens the transition from adaptation to strategic renewal.
- ❖ P5: Attention-allocation capability strengthens the relationship between digital opportunity availability and opportunity-selection quality.
- ❖ P6: Responsible renewal quality strengthens the relationship between strategic renewal and stakeholder legitimacy.
- ❖ P7: Financing resilience and institutional quality strengthen the persistence of strategic renewal.

The process can therefore be expressed as Disruption -> Protection -> Interpretation -> Agency -> Selection -> Renewal -> Persistence, with feedback from renewal into organisational knowledge. The paradox is concentrated in the Protection -> Agency relationship; the attention bottleneck in Interpretation -> Selection; responsibility in Renewal -> Legitimacy; and finance and institutions in Renewal -> Persistence.

16. Managerial Implications

Managers should evaluate resilience beyond continuity metrics. A resilience dashboard should distinguish competence visibility, redeployability, knowledge-circulation speed, entrepreneurial autonomy, digital attention quality, stakeholder legitimacy and financing continuity.

The Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox implies that crisis governance should have an exit logic. Centralisation and tighter controls may be justified during acute stabilisation,

but organisations should specify when authority, experimentation and local initiative will be restored. Otherwise, temporary absorption mechanisms can become persistent barriers to renewal.

HRM, knowledge management and entrepreneurship policy should be coordinated. Staniewski (2007), Krochmal and Staniewski (2010), Staniewski and Szczepankowski (2012), Dąbrowski, Kołodkiewicz and Staniewski (2002), and Staniewski (2004) describe complementary foundations of preparedness and circulation. Entrepreneurial microfoundations are informed by Staniewski (2016), Janowski, Staniewski and Awruk (2019), and Awruk, Staniewski and Słomski (2026).

Managers should also distinguish digital access from digital selection. Szopiński and Staniewski (2014) and Xie et al. (2024) point to different stages of digital capability: appropriation and attention. Finally, sustainable renewal requires financing and institutional analysis, reflected in Meo and Staniewski (2024), Meo et al. (2026), Abu et al. (2022) and Ruiz Estrada, Staniewski and Ndoma (2018).

17. Discussion: What REO Changes

The theoretical payoff of REO can be stated in three field-specific changes. For resilience theory, resilience is incomplete when functioning has merely been preserved; strategically generative resilience additionally requires the regeneration of entrepreneurial agency. This shifts the evaluative horizon from continuity to the organisation's capacity to create a viable post-disruption trajectory.

For entrepreneurship theory, entrepreneurial agency is not only a mechanism of growth or opportunity exploitation. Under disruption it becomes a resilience mechanism that prevents organisational ossification. Staniewski (2016), Janowski, Staniewski and Awruk (2019), and Awruk, Staniewski and Słomski (2026) contribute to this argument through psychological, dispositional and relational microfoundations, while the theory explains how those micro-level resources become organisationally consequential.

For strategic-management theory, strategic renewal depends not simply on sensing and reconfiguration but on the temporal orchestration of protective control and entrepreneurial autonomy. The Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox makes this temporal tension explicit. Control can be strategically necessary and strategically dangerous at different phases of the same disruption.

The broader Staniewski-related corpus remains fully incorporated but is embedded within international theoretical conversations rather than treated as an isolated author-centred programme. Staniewski (2007), Krochmal and Staniewski (2010), and Staniewski and

Szczepankowski (2012) contribute to strategic HRM and intellectual-capital preparedness; Dąbrowski, Kołodkiewicz and Staniewski (2002) and Staniewski (2004) to knowledge circulation; Szopiński and Staniewski (2014) and Xie et al. (2024) to technology appropriation and attention; Staniewski, Słomski and Rzyński (2015) and Awruk et al. (2023) to ethical and social legitimacy; Haseeb et al. (2021), Adebayo, Staniewski and Uzun (2025), Adebayo et al. (2025), and Sadiq et al. (2025) to renewal quality and environmental context; Meo and Staniewski (2024) and Meo et al. (2026) to financing resilience; and Abu et al. (2022) and Ruiz Estrada, Staniewski and Ndoma (2018) to institutional boundary conditions. Szczepankowski and Staniewski (2009) provide the broader management context.

The framework remains conceptual. Future empirical research should operationalise the temporal phases of disruption, entrepreneurial renewal capacity and temporal misalignment; test the phase-dependent effects of control; examine the micro-to-macro aggregation of agency; and evaluate whether attention, financing and institutional conditions alter the persistence of renewal.

18. Conclusion

The central question of this article is how an organisation can protect itself during disruption without allowing the mechanisms of protection to destroy the entrepreneurial agency required for its future. The Entrepreneurial Resilience Paradox provides the answer's theoretical starting point: protective control can strengthen short-term absorption while weakening long-term renewal when it persists beyond its functional phase.

REO is the organisational configuration through which this paradox can be managed. Its core process is deliberately parsimonious: preparedness enables interpretation, interpretation enables agency, and agency enables renewal. Attention affects selection, responsibility affects legitimacy, and financing resilience and institutional quality affect persistence.

Organisational resilience therefore becomes strategically generative only when protection is temporally orchestrated with the restoration of entrepreneurial autonomy. The theoretical challenge is not to choose between control and entrepreneurship, but to understand when each is functional and when the persistence of one begins to destroy the conditions required for the other.

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