

Leveraging the intellectual capital of a resilient organization in crisis threat situations (case studies)

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Introduction

The development of an organization (including the economic entity) can be disrupted by a crisis situation. The reaction of an economic entity to an emerging threat may depend on its intellectual capital. In the literature on the subject, much attention is paid to the place of intellectual capital in organizational management. Intellectual capital was included in the proposal for the company development management process (Chodyński, 2005). The possibilities of using different models of intellectual capital for knowledge management in an organization are considered (Chodyński, 2004, 2007). Intellectual capital influences business security architecture (Chodyński, 2024). It is indicated that the elements of intellectual capital (human, relational and organizational capital) support the company's capacity to be resilient and maintain its

results in situations of threats (disasters) (Ahmed i in., 2020; Agostini i Nosella 2023). The impact of intellectual capital on, among others, the functioning of banks (Elenwo i Tolofari, 2024) and its use in the IT sector are considered (Tunio, 2024). The role of intellectual capital in supporting supply chain resilience is discussed (Pettit i in., 2019; Mubarik i in., 2022). For logistics companies, the impact of individual elements of intellectual capital (human, structural, relational) on their resilience capabilities was determined. These capabilities were related to the relationship between intellectual capital, human resource management (HR) practices, and the use of artificial intelligence. The relationship between the quality of logistics services, logistics companies' resilience, and their performance was addressed (Abdalati i Yamin, 2025).

In this article, the division of intellectual capital into: human capital and structural capital (Walecka, 2016) as well as the division into: human capital, structural (organizational) capital and relational capital related to contacts with the environment was adopted for consideration (Sokołowski, 2018) (Sokołowski treats structural and organizational capital as identical, assuming that it refers to management structures, processes, organizational knowledge, innovation and internal relations in the organization).

The aim of this study is to determine the impact of an organization's intellectual capital on its resilient behaviors. A resilient organization is capable of anticipating threats and, when they do occur, adopting behaviors that enable survival in crisis conditions and further organizational development. Particular attention is paid to the potential of intellectual capital in relation to A. Stephenson's model of organizational resilience. Stephenson's model contains 13 elements: minimizing tunnel thinking ("Minimisation of Silo Mentality"), internal resources ("Capability & Capacity of Internal Resources"), employee engagement ("Staff Engagement & Involvement"), knowledge utilization ("Information & Knowledge"), leadership ("Leadership, Management & Governance Structures"), innovation and creativity ("Innovation & Creativity"), efficient decision-making ("Devolved & Responsive Decision Making"), situation awareness ("Internal & External Situation Monitoring & Reporting"), strategy planning ("Planning Strategies"), emergency plans and exercises ("Participation in Exercises"), proactive attitude ("Proactive Posture"), effective partnership ("Capability & Capacity of External Resources") and awareness of goals and priorities ("Recovery Priorities") (Stephenson, 2010; Chodyński, 2025; Rzegocki, 2021, p. 73). The importance of innovative behavior was emphasized.

The research question is: to what extent does Stephenson's organizational resilience model incorporate elements of intellectual capital, particularly in terms of innovative behavior? To what extent are these behaviors influenced by organizational stakeholders?

Research methods: a critical literature review and analysis of case studies of companies affected by threats. In the literature, a case study is presented as a detailed

description, usually of a real economic phenomenon, e.g., an organization, a management process, its components, or its environment, in order to draw conclusions about its causes and outcomes. In the literature, we can distinguish three purposes of case studies: theory-generating, theory-testing, and practical (Grzegorzczuk, 2015). A case study can be considered from a narrow or broad perspective. The narrow approach focuses on why specific decisions or groups of decisions were made, how they were implemented, and what their consequences are. The broad approach encompasses the logic of designing and selecting strategies as a response to a specific research problem when the number of variables exceeds the capacity to collect specific data. It is used to develop new theories. The term “case study” refers to both the research process and the research outcome. Types of case studies include autotelic, instrumental, and collective case studies. An autotelic study examines a specific case that is not treated as representative of a broader phenomenon. An instrumental case study serves to deepen understanding of a broader phenomenon or allows for the drawing of more general conclusions. A collective case study is an instrumental study that encompasses several similar or diverse cases (Chodyński, 2016, pp. 247–259).

This article presents three case studies stemming from threats of different nature: a pandemic, war, and a natural disaster.

Intellectual capital and organizational resilience in the A. Stephenson model

The literature on the subject points to the link between intellectual capital and organizational resilience. The special role of human capital in building organizational resilience is emphasized (Kwiecień, 2023; Shela i in., 2021). In A. Walecka's (2016) considerations regarding the elements of intellectual capital, human capital includes knowledge, experience of employees, their education, refers to the sources of creativity and innovation, as well as the improvement and acquisition of new skills. In this approach, it is considered in Stephenson's model primarily in the areas of employee engagement, innovation, and creativity. Internal structural capital (organizational capital), relating to processes, procedures, databases, and communication and information infrastructure, is primarily related to the area of efficient decision-making in Stephenson's model. In turn, external structural capital (relational capital), relating to relationships with the environment, can refer to building networks with external partners and is primarily associated with the area of effective partnership in Stephenson's model, emphasizing the key role of stakeholders.

The analysis of intellectual capital and the components of the presented model of organizational resilience led to the conclusion that the analyzed model of resilience by Stephenson includes elements that are directly related to individual areas of intellectual capital.

The role of innovation

The literature on the subject highlights the importance of relational capital (both internal and external) as an element of intellectual capital in crisis management. It is emphasized that a company's relational capital determines its resilience to crisis. Walecka (2019) treats a crisis situation as a set of circumstances that led to a crisis as a turning point in the course of events, although she emphasizes that there are also views that a crisis precedes a crisis situation. In turn, the Crisis Management Act defines a crisis as a situation that negatively impacts the safety of people, property, or the environment, which is associated with a significant limitation in the actions of the relevant authorities due to the inadequacy of available resources. The concept of a crisis is not defined in the Act (Crisis Management Act, 2007). With relational capital in mind, it's worth emphasizing the potential for leveraging scientific research to expand the existing description of network dimensions (flexibility or dynamics, cohesion, coordination, scale of operations) to include the exchange of knowledge as a resource (including collaboration between inter-organizational teams in times of threats). This also applies to considering the time factor, considering changes in partners' intellectual capital over time, as well as the construction of *ad hoc* networks (Chodyński, 2021, p. 216, Table 9). Referring to Stephenson's model, the extended approach to network dimensioning can be linked primarily to the areas of "effective partnership" and "proactive attitude".

The components of intellectual capital are the source of innovation, and knowledge is the foundation for creating intellectual capital. In terms of structural capital, knowledge is formalized, relating to management structures and methods (organizational documentation), descriptions of processes and technologies, and organizational culture (records regarding, among other things, the company's vision and mission) (Sokołowski, 2018). In A. Stephenson's model, two independent areas were distinguished: "innovation and creativity" and the area of "use of knowledge".

The literature on the subject draws attention to the role of intellectual capital in an enterprise in the context of its innovation and innovation absorption, as well as entrepreneurship (Różycka, 2021). The role of innovation management mechanisms in companies and organizational networks, using intellectual capital, is emphasized (Chodyński, 2021, pp. 175–176, Table 5). The impact of individual components of intellectual capital on the innovative capacity of enterprises is presented (Danielak, 2024). At the same time, the impact of intellectual capital and organizational resilience on innovation potential and the creation of competitive advantage is emphasized (Iqbal i in., 2025). The impact of intellectual capital and organizational resilience on individual sectors is presented, including in relation to the issue of innovation, including for business activities in tourism (Alnasser i in., 2024).

Leveraging intellectual capital in situations where organizational security is threatened, including through entrepreneurial and innovative activities, is particularly important, as described in A. Chodyński's monograph (2021). These proposals were presented within the framework of partial models of the model of responsible innovative behavior in the face of environmental turbulence. Among other things, the importance of entrepreneurial bricolage within *ad hoc* innovation is emphasized (Chodyński, 2021, pp. 208–215, esp. Figure 1, Table 8), which on the one hand can be associated with human capital within the framework of intellectual capital, and on the other hand – can be related to the area of “efficient decision-making” within the framework of A. Stephenson's model.

The presented analysis indicates that innovative behaviors are related, on the one hand, to the intellectual capital possessed, and, on the other hand, they significantly influence organizational resilience, in particular in the face of extreme environmental turbulence.

Case studies of the behavior of resilient companies

Case studies were presented relating to the response of economic entities to COVID-19, disruption of supply chains due to the war in Ukraine and natural disasters.

The case studies were selected based on well-described examples in the literature relating to these three threat groups. Therefore, the previously discussed approach of an autotelic, case-specific study was utilized.

Case study I. The COVID-19 pandemic and technological company CISCO

From the very beginning of the pandemic, CISCO was recognized as a key provider of critical infrastructure services. Priority was given to orders from emergency services and essential services, and the rapidly evolving needs of healthcare facilities were supported. The COVID-19 lockdown resulted in a threefold increase in the number of people using the market-leading Webex videoconferencing platform within a month.

Rules applied:

1) Employees are the company: With the right technology, a distributed workforce can be more resilient, effective, and diverse. Even before the pandemic, CISCO already had significant experience implementing this so-called hybrid work model. Employees spent an average of about two days a week at home.

2) Resilience through leadership, empathy, and emotional intelligence.

Flexibility and trust are key factors in resilience. Empathetic management of remote workers is gaining importance. Online remote management tools allow employees to maintain close contact with their managers. Videoconferencing technology is important for maintaining organizational culture in a distributed workforce.

Company management has increased the frequency of video calls with employees, ensuring each employee feels recognized and cared for.

3) Resilience through smarter security

Employee education plays a crucial role in threat prevention. CISCO offered its employees cybersecurity training and periodically sent them fraudulent (phishing) emails (CISCO, 2021).

Stakeholder support included:

1) Customers

A series of free offers and trials for Webex and security technologies, along with \$2.5 billion in funding, were launched to help businesses maintain operations. The Business Resiliency Program, offered by Cisco Capital, included a 90-day payment freeze and allowed customers to defer 95% of the cost of a new product or solution until 2021. Healthcare customers were provided with essential technology for remote connectivity and telemedicine; customized solutions were developed to support the rapid deployment of intensive care units, temporary clinics, and COVID-19 testing sites. Medical device integration and remote access to medical data were enabled. Customers managing factories, distribution warehouses, and other facilities requiring on-site personnel were provided with solutions that helped ensure employee safety and privacy while maintaining productivity.

2) Suppliers

In collaboration with suppliers, a new order prioritization process was developed, enabling the fulfilment of over 2,500 critical customer requests for emergency infrastructure.

3) Employees

Although many CISCO employees were already prepared to work remotely, capacity was expanded sevenfold to support 140,000 remote workers and contractors in just 10 days. This required increasing VPN capacity, providing employees with essential equipment, and expanding global IT support. During regular virtual meetings, the leadership team, along with medical and mental health experts and special guests, shared the latest business news, medical advice, perspectives, and inspiration. Employees also received several additional paid days off to spend time with family or to rest and recharge.

4) Communities, Governments, Businesses, International Organizations

Non-profit organizations serving vulnerable populations have seen a decline in volunteers and financial support, and have also experienced challenges in adhering to social distancing guidelines. CISCO has stepped up to help organizations around the world, donating \$53 million in cash and personal protective equipment to various organizations.

As part of CISCO's contribution to COVID-19 relief efforts, \$7 million went to the United Nations Foundation's COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, supporting the World Health Organization's (WHO) global efforts to prevent, detect, and manage the spread of the virus. The Country Digital Acceleration (CDA) program provided funding to countries, government agencies, and businesses to rapidly implement COVID-19 technology solutions. Webex collaboration technology also enabled institutions like the G20 and the U.S. Congress to transition to secure virtual meetings. Teleconferencing equipment at CISCO offices was donated to local hospitals. Stanford Children's Health, one of the hospitals that received the system as a donation, was able to increase the number of virtual visits per day from 30 to 700. CISCO donated 5.3 million KN95 masks and over 750,000 surgical masks and face shields, some of which were 3D printed by CISCO volunteers around the world (Boynton, 2021).

The company has developed processes to coordinate responses to pandemics like COVID-19, including Global Business Resilience (GBR) and Supply Chain Incident Management (SCIM) (Garrett, 2020).

Case Study II. The war in Ukraine and car manufacturers VW and BMW

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has significantly increased risk and uncertainty in the global economy, particularly in Eastern Europe. Consequences for automakers include sourcing from Russia and Ukraine and the ability to produce or sell vehicles in these countries. Sanctions imposed by the EU, the United States, and/or other countries on Russia, as well as sanctions on Russian banks, companies, and individuals, have impacted the operations of automotive companies (BMW Group, 2023).

Two German car manufacturers, BMW and Volkswagen, have stated that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused shortages of key components, forcing them to curtail vehicle production in Europe. The war is negatively impacting supply chains in the automotive industry. In BMW's case, the problems stem, among other things, from the fact that its main suppliers of electrical wiring harnesses are located in western Ukraine. Volkswagen has supported its Ukrainian suppliers of wiring harnesses. The company sources them from as many as 11 plants in Ukraine, nine of which are operating at reduced capacity. To address the problem, the carmakers are seeking suppliers outside Ukraine. Furthermore, some European car production is being relocated to other regions, including China and South America. BMW and Volkswagen halted car production in Russia and exports to the country following the outbreak of the war ("BMW, VW warn", 2022). Russia is the eighth largest automotive market in the world.

Volkswagen Group donates €1m (£833,690) to the UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe charity in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine ("Car industry reacts", 2022).

Case Study III. Natural disaster and theme park Walt Disney World Resort in Florida

A comprehensive business continuity strategy for an organization includes, among other things, developing a business continuity plan following a natural disaster (e.g., floods, storms, or fires).

It describes in detail procedures ranging from securing facilities and creating data backups to activating alternative work locations and managing communications in the event of infrastructure failure.

Preparing for hurricanes at Walt Disney World Resort focuses on ensuring operational readiness. Developed protocols allow for the closure of the entire resort, securing resources, and communicating with thousands of employees and guests in less than 12 hours. The plan includes pre-established supply chains, the creation of local *ad hoc* teams, and detailed action lists. The importance of extensive training is emphasized.

Disney World has faced several hurricanes over the past few years, including Hurricane Milton in 2024. During these storms, Disney closed its theme parks and other attractions, requiring guests to stay put. During Hurricane Milton, Disney provided guests with discounts on rooms, meals, and hurricane kits, as well as children’s entertainment. While Disney ensures all guests on property are cared for during the storm, there are hotels that are better suited for staying put.

Disney’s official policy is as follows: “If the National Hurricane Center issues a hurricane warning for the Orlando area – or your area of residence – you may change or cancel Walt Disney Travel Company Disney Resort hotel packages and most room-only reservations (made directly with Disney) within 7 days of your planned arrival date at no additional charge. Most room-only packages and vacation packages can be modified or canceled online, including changes to travel dates” (Delpozo, 2025).

Possibilities of practical use of intellectual capital elements in reference to A. Stephenson’s model

The table 1 below presents the relationship between the elements of intellectual capital and the individual elements of Stephenson’s model, resulting from a critical review of the literature, in the light of the analysis of three different case studies, facing various threats.

The first stage identified the characteristics of individual elements of intellectual capital in relation to specific areas of Stephenson’s organizational resilience model. The second stage, using specific company examples, identified anti-crisis solutions that utilized these characteristics, depending on the threats faced.

Table 1. Linking the elements of intellectual capital with the individual elements of A. Stephenson's model based on case studies

Elements of intellectual capital/areas of the A. Stephenson model	Characteristics	Companies	Anti-crisis solutions
Human capital/ the area of employee engagement, innovation and creativity, and the area of "knowledge utilization"	Innovation, creativity, knowledge, employee engagement, organizational culture	CISCO	Leveraging previous hybrid work model experiences to build human capital. A new type of leadership. Educating employees on cybersecurity.
		BMW, VW	Efforts to maintain continuity of supplies from Ukrainian companies, taking into account the commitment and creativity of employees.
		Walt Disney World Resort	The role of training in emergency situations.
Structural internal (organizational) capital/ referring mainly to the area of efficient decision-making	Procedures and processes within the organization, organizational communication, decision-making	CISCO	New forms of collaboration with employees. Coordination of activities supported by innovative technical solutions.
		BMW, VW	Decisions to suspend production in Russia.
		Walt Disney World Resort	Business continuity plan and procedures.
Structural external (relational) capital / is primarily associated with the area of effective partnership, emphasizing the key role of stakeholders. Aspects of network dimensioning can be linked primarily to the areas of "effective partnership" and "proactive attitude"	Relations with the environment, external partners, stakeholders, network building, including ad hoc	CISCO	New forms of cooperation and support for external stakeholders.
		BMW, VW	Relocating production to other countries. Support for non-profit organizations.
		Walt Disney World Resort	Ensuring guest safety in the event of an emergency. Flexible hotel cancellation policy.

Source: authors' own work

Conclusions

Case studies confirm the use of general principles related to ensuring organizational resilience:

- 1) Creating remote work opportunities using innovative solutions, both technical and work organization (based on the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic).

- 2) Ensuring diversification of operations and supplies in the case of manufacturing companies (example: the war in Ukraine).
- 3) In the event of natural disaster threats, it is important to develop a business continuity plan that includes:
 - establishing detailed evacuation protocols: create and regularly practice clear, site-specific evacuation plans.
 - implementing off-site data replication: critical business data should not only be backed up but also actively replicated to a secure, dedicated location. This requires moving beyond cloud storage and includes disaster recovery solutions.
 - preparing emergency kits; these include first aid kits, water, long-life food, flashlights, and communication devices such as satellite phones or two-way radios that are not dependent on local cellular networks. A flexible approach to pricing and payment for customers is emphasized in the event of a natural disaster that threatens not only business operations but also human life and health.

In summary, the following can be stated:

For three different cases, the use of individual elements of intellectual capital by economic entities in resilient behavior was analyzed in situations of completely different threats;

In the area of human capital, the effectiveness of actions was based on employee experience, commitment, and training. Structural organizational capital leveraged coordination of activities, decision-making, and ensuring business continuity. Structural relational capital was leveraged through collaboration with stakeholders, international decision-making, and ongoing security actions.

Given diverse threats, depending on the type of economic entity and its situation, the use of intellectual capital elements in support of resilient behavior encompasses various anti-crisis solutions.

The article demonstrates that both the theoretical foundations of resilient companies with specific intellectual capital, as well as practical experience and the general principles of ensuring organizational resilience, can be applied to specific areas of Stephenson's model. The research questions were answered, and the work's objective was achieved.

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Abstract

The impact of an organization's intellectual capital on resilient behavior was determined. The links between intellectual capital elements and specific areas of A. Stephenson's organizational resilience model were discussed. It was emphasized that a resilient organization is not only capable of anticipating potential threats but, should they occur, of implementing behaviors that enable survival in crisis conditions. It should also enable the organization's further development. Based on the analysis of case studies of three companies from different sectors, exposed to various types of threats (COVID-19, war, hurricanes), practical possibilities for utilizing individual elements of intellectual capital were identified: human, organizational, and relational. The importance of innovative activities was emphasized. The particular importance of the Stephenson model's areas was demonstrated, such as employee engagement, innovation and creativity, knowledge utilization, efficient decision-making, proactive attitude, and effective partnership, with the key role of stakeholders emphasized.

Key words: organizational resilience, intellectual capital, innovative behavior, crisis management, A. Stephenson's resilience model, case studies

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Conflict of Interest

Andrzej Chodyński serves as Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka* / Security: Theory and Practice. In accordance with the journal's editorial policy and COPE guidelines regarding potential conflicts of interest, Andrzej Chodyński did not participate in subsequent stages of the work after submitting the submission. The manuscript was accepted for publication based on the anonymous opinions of two independent reviewers from outside the author's institution (double-blind review process). The review process was overseen, and all correspondence with the reviewers was conducted, by an independent member of the Editorial Office.

Vladyslava Kornilova declares no conflict of interest.