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## 8. Strategic Leadership and Organizational Resilience in a Disrupted World: An LCP Nexus™ Perspective

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### Abstract

Organizations today face a convergence of disruptive forces, including artificial intelligence, rapid digitalization, sustainability imperatives, and global crises. These forces expose the limitations of traditional leadership models and highlight the need for strategic leadership and organizational resilience. This paper applies the Leadership–Culture–Performance (LCP) Nexus™ framework to examine how resilience emerges not as an individual trait but as an organizational capacity rooted in the alignment between leadership, culture, and performance systems. Drawing on insights from complexity theory, adaptive leadership, and crisis management, the paper explores how leaders can cultivate agility, foresight, and cultural alignment to navigate uncertainty. Case illustrations from healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic, AI integration in financial services, and sustainability leadership in multinational corporations demonstrate how resilient performance arises when leadership signals are coherently interpreted through cultural systems. The paper argues that resilience in a disrupted world requires leaders to foster cultural adaptability, distributed decision-making, and systemic trust, enabling organizations to transform crises into opportunities for strategic renewal. By situating resilience within the LCP Nexus™, this study contributes to advancing theoretical and practical understanding of strategic leadership in uncertain markets and organizational resilience as an emergent property of complex systems.

**Keywords:** *strategic leadership, organizational resilience, disruption, LCP Nexus™, culture, AI, sustainability.*

## 8.1 Introduction

The global business and governance environment is increasingly shaped by disruption. Forces such as the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI), climate-related risks, and geopolitical instability continue to destabilize established organizational systems. Leaders are challenged not simply to maintain continuity but to adapt, innovate, and build resilience in conditions of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA) (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014).

Traditional leadership models, often based on hierarchy, stability, and control, struggle to respond to this landscape. Instead, leaders require new conceptual tools and practical strategies to develop strategic resilience, the ability to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to shocks while sustaining performance and legitimacy (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011).

This paper applies the Leadership–Culture–Performance (LCP) Nexus framework (Inkpen, 2025), which posits that organizational performance is an emergent property of interactions among leadership, cultural interpretation, and systemic response. By applying this framework, resilience can be understood not as an individual trait but as a collective capacity embedded within leadership and culture. The paper proceeds through four sub-themes of Track I: leadership agility and foresight in uncertain markets; organizational resilience and business continuity planning; change management and digital leadership; and strategic transformation through crises.

In addition to these forces, the emergence of hybrid working arrangements and the growing interdependence of global supply chains have compounded the scale of uncertainty. The shifting nature of labor markets, evolving employee expectations, and stakeholder demands for transparency create conditions where leaders must not only manage operations but also steward organizational legitimacy. These interconnected pressures mean that strategic leadership today requires a system-level view, recognizing that resilience cannot be achieved in isolation but must be embedded across organizational layers. The LCP Nexus therefore offers a timely framework that integrates leadership practice, cultural sensemaking, and systemic response into a coherent approach to performance in turbulent times.

## 8.2 Leadership Agility and Foresight in Uncertain Markets

Leadership agility is increasingly recognized as an essential capability for navigating VUCA conditions (Horney, Pasmore, & O’Shea, 2010). Agility refers not only to rapid decision-making but also to the capacity to pivot strategies, build adaptive coalitions, and mobilize cultural resources. Strategic foresight complements agility by equipping leaders to anticipate possible futures and prepare for multiple scenarios (Rohrbeck & Kum, 2018).

The LCP Nexus™ demonstrates that agility and foresight are not merely cognitive skills of individual leaders, but properties of organizational systems shaped by culture. Leadership behaviors are filtered through cultural interpretation: if the culture values adaptability and learning, agility is amplified. If the culture prizes risk aversion and conformity, agility is suppressed, even when leaders signal a change.

For example, firms in the technology sector that had embedded foresight processes (such

as scenario planning) into their cultural routines were better prepared to pivot their supply chains during the pandemic. In contrast, organizations with rigid, compliance-driven cultures lacked the interpretive flexibility to act on leadership foresight.

Thus, agility and foresight achieve resilience only when they are culturally reinforced, a core belief of the LCP Nexus. Global examples illustrate this dynamic clearly. For instance, during the 2008 financial crisis, firms that had engaged in regular foresight exercises were quicker to pivot strategies than competitors. In Asia, conglomerates adopt adaptive leadership practices that enable them to maintain growth during market volatility by drawing on cultural traditions of collective decision-making. By contrast, many Western firms, with rigid shareholder-driven priorities, were unable to adjust quickly enough. These contrasts highlight that foresight is not merely a technical process but deeply connected to cultural interpretation. Moreover, foresight increasingly intersects with AI-driven analytics, enabling leaders to combine predictive models with cultural narratives to enhance agility. This integration underscores the LCP Nexus™ view that resilience arises when technology and human culture co-evolve.

### 8.3 Organizational Resilience and Business Continuity Planning

Resilience has often been equated with business continuity planning, focusing on risk assessment and contingency measures. While essential, this perspective reduces resilience to structural preparedness. Contemporary research emphasizes resilience as an ongoing adaptive capacity that integrates both planning and cultural flexibility (Van Der Vegt, Essens, Wahlström, & George, 2015).

The LCP Nexus™ conceptualizes resilience as an emergent alignment between three dimensions: Leadership Expression (vision, adaptability, and ethical commitment); Cultural Interpretation (how leadership signals are translated into norms and narratives); and System Response (the collective behaviors that sustain or undermine performance). A clear example is the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the NHS, hospitals that encouraged distributed leadership, nurtured trust, and embedded cultural narratives of solidarity were better able to adapt under pressure (Inkpen, 2024). By contrast, hospitals with continuity plans but weaker cultural cohesion struggled with issues such as low morale, staff turnover, and inadequate staff safety. Resilience, therefore, emerges when planning structures are underpinned by cultural alignment and trust, enabling continuity that is both technical and relational. Further evidence comes from global supply chain research. Companies such as Toyota and Unilever have demonstrated resilience by embedding redundancy, supplier diversification, and cultural commitment to long-term partnerships.

Their continuity planning extended beyond technical logistics to include social contracts with suppliers and communities, creating deeper resilience. Conversely, organizations with overly lean and efficiency-driven models, such as some fast fashion retailers, experienced severe disruption when single-source supply lines collapsed. These cases reaffirm that resilience is not only a matter of continuity manuals but also of cultural alignment and trust, confirming the LCP Nexus™ model. Resilient organizations weave planning into the cultural fabric, making adaptability a lived value rather than an emergency response.

## 8.4 Change Management and Digital Leadership

Digital disruption, particularly using AI, reshapes decision-making, workforce design, and ethics (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017). Leaders face dual challenges: implementing technological transformation while managing the cultural responses that accompany it.

Research on change management indicates that transformation often fails when imposed as a top-down, technical initiative without cultural alignment (Kotter, 2012). The LCP Nexus™ explains this failure as an artistic interpretation gap: leadership signals for change clash with entrenched cultural scripts.

A notable example is the adoption of AI-driven fraud detection by financial services organizations. Success depended less on technical capability than on leaders framing AI as aligned with cultural values of security and customer care. Where AI was framed primarily as cost-cutting automation, employees resisted, undermining resilience.

Digital leadership, therefore, requires bridging the technical-social divide: leaders must communicate digital transformation in ways that align with cultural meaning systems, ensuring technology adoption strengthens resilience rather than generating resistance. A further example can be seen in the healthcare sector where digital health records and AI-assisted diagnostics have transformed workflows. Organizations that introduced these technologies with cultural sensitivity, engaging clinicians in co-design, achieved greater adoption and patient benefits. Where leaders imposed digital tools without cultural adaptation, staff burnout and disengagement were common outcomes. Another illustration is in higher education, where universities that aligned digital transformation with traditions of academic freedom experienced smoother transitions to online learning during the pandemic.

These examples reinforce that digital leadership requires cultural literacy alongside technological expertise. Leaders who succeed in digital transformation recognize that culture is the medium through which technology either strengthens or undermines resilience.

## 8.5 Strategic Transformation Through Crises

Crises present both existential threats and opportunities for transformation. Strategic leaders can leverage crises to reset cultural narratives, reinforce shared purpose, and align performance with long-term sustainability goals (Boin, Kuipers, & Overdijk, 2013).

The LCP Nexus™ highlights how crises catalyze narrative reframing: leadership actions during crises are interpreted culturally, shaping whether systems fragment or adapt. Resilient leaders use symbolic acts to shift narratives from fragility to adaptability and from compliance to purpose. Multinational corporations that embed sustainability values into their cultures before global disruptions have demonstrated stronger resilience. For instance, companies that aligned their supply chains with environmental and social responsibility were able to adapt more quickly during pandemic-related disruptions, as employees identified with a long-term resilience narrative rather than a short-term crisis management approach.

In “Leading from the Nexus: A Practical Guide to Aligning Leadership, Culture, and Performance,” Inkpen (2025) argues that small, symbolic leadership actions, such as reinforcing trust

cycles or aligning ESG values with cultural identity, can drive profound systemic transformation. Crises thus become opportunities for cultural renewal and strategic repositioning. History offers numerous examples of crisis-driven transformation.

Following the 2011 Fukushima disaster, Japanese energy firms accelerated investments in renewables, reframing their cultural identity around resilience and sustainability. Similarly, airlines hit by the pandemic redefined business models, with some pivoting toward cargo services and digital platforms. These cases demonstrate how leaders use crises as opportunities to re-script organizational narratives, aligning short-term survival with long-term strategic renewal. Importantly, transformation is not uniform: organizations with leadership disconnected from cultural systems often double down on control, exacerbating fragility. By contrast, those embracing cultural renewal thrive. As Inkpen (2025) stresses in his book, *Leading from the Nexus*, strategic renewal depends less on formal strategy documents and more on leaders' ability to symbolically and practically realign culture.

## 8.6 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This paper offers two main contributions. **Theoretical Contributions:** It extends resilience literature by framing resilience as an emergent property of the leadership–culture–performance alignment, rather than solely as an individual capability or structural function. This integrates adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), organizational culture (Weick, 1995), and complexity-informed resilience (Folke, 2016).

**Practical Contributions:** It provides actionable insights for leaders seeking resilience in disruption:

- Embed resilience narratives into culture.
- Use foresight to prepare for multiple possible futures.
- Bridge digital transformation with cultural meaning-making.
- Foster distributed leadership and trust cycles.
- Treat crises as opportunities for cultural renewal and strategic transformation.

Beyond these contributions, the LCP Nexus™ framework also complements emerging debates on Industry 5.0 and the human-centric workplace. As organizations integrate advanced technologies, resilience depends on striking a balance between efficiency and human values, emotional intelligence, and cultural cohesion. This paper highlights that leaders must not only design resilient systems but also cultivate resilience narratives that inspire trust across diverse stakeholders. For practitioners, this underscores the need for leadership development programs that integrate cultural systems thinking with foresight and adaptive practices.

## 8.7 Conclusion

Disruption is now continuous rather than episodic. Leaders cannot rely on stability-based models; instead, they must cultivate resilience as a strategic capacity. The LCP Nexus™ framework provides a powerful lens for understanding how leadership actions are culturally interpreted

and translated into system-level performance. By embedding foresight, agility, cultural adaptability, and symbolic leadership into practice, organizations can transform crises into opportunities for renewal. Resilience, in this context, is not static but dynamic—a property of aligned leadership, culture, and performance. As disruption intensifies, leaders who integrate the LCP Nexus™ perspective will be better positioned to sustain performance, legitimacy, and adaptability in a disrupted world.

Future research could build on this study by applying the LCP Nexus to comparative cases across various sectors, such as energy, education, and finance, to test how resilience emerges in different cultural contexts. Empirical studies might also explore how symbolic acts of leadership during crises translate into measurable performance outcomes over time. Practically, leaders who adopt this framework will be better placed to address disruptions such as climate migration, cyber threats, and shifts in geopolitical power. The broader implication is that resilience must be viewed not as a defensive posture but as a proactive capability, the foundation of strategic renewal in a disrupted world.

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