

Filipino organizational resilience (FilOR): development of research framework and instrument in Philippine setting

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Abstract

This study aimed to develop a culturally grounded framework and instrument for assessing Filipino Organizational Resilience (FilOR), recognizing the unique values and practices inherent in the Philippine context. Using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, the research began with a thematic analysis of key informant interviews across various sectors, revealing seven core dimensions: *Bayanihan Spirit* (collective unity and mutual support), *Kapit-Bisig* (strengthening community ties), *Pagbabago* (adaptability and continuous improvement), *Lakas ng Loob* (courage in adversity), *Diskarte* (resourcefulness), *Malasakit* (compassion and empathy), and *Tatag ng Loob* (mental toughness and emotional stability). These culturally specific dimensions were validated through expert panels and quantitative analyses. The initial 42-item instrument was refined to 35 items following exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, demonstrating good model fit indices and strong internal consistency. Results emphasized that Filipino resilience is relational, adaptive, and deeply rooted in collective and emotional strengths, distinguishing it from traditional Western models that prioritize individualistic or purely strategic approaches. The validated framework and instrument offer a reliable and culturally responsive tool for organizations seeking to build resilience in the face of adversities, crises, and systemic challenges. Recommendations include integrating resilience development programs based on these dimensions, promoting compassionate leadership, and expanding the application of the framework across different sectors. This study highlights the importance of culturally aligned models in enhancing organizational effectiveness and sustainability in a volatile and uncertain global environment.

Keywords: Filipino organizational resilience, bayanihan spirit, cultural framework, psychological strength, organizational adaptability

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1. Introduction

In an increasingly complex and volatile world, organizational resilience has emerged as a critical capability for businesses, non-profits, and public institutions alike. Organizations must not only survive crises and disruptions but also adapt, recover, and thrive amid adversity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2018). While global literature offers a wealth of models and instruments for understanding resilience, much of this work is rooted in Western contexts, often overlooking the cultural, social, and economic nuances of other regions (Duchek, 2020). In the Philippine setting—where organizations frequently contend with natural disasters, political instability, economic fluctuations, and societal challenges—there is a pressing need to develop a localized framework and measurement tool that captures the distinct dynamics of Filipino organizational resilience.

The Philippines' unique socio-cultural landscape offers a fertile ground for exploring resilience. Filipino values such as *bayanihan* (community spirit), *pakikipagkapwa* (shared identity), *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude), and *diskarte* (resourcefulness) deeply influence how organizations operate and respond to adversity (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2018). Moreover, the country's exposure to frequent typhoons, earthquakes, and other natural hazards necessitates a resilience mindset that is both proactive and adaptive. Despite this reality, limited academic work has systematically captured how Filipino organizations develop, maintain, and operationalize resilience within these particular contexts (Tuason et al., 2021). Existing global frameworks may inadequately account for the relational, communal, and often informal strategies employed by Filipino organizations to navigate challenges. This article addresses this critical gap by proposing a research framework and developing an instrument tailored to the Philippine setting. The proposed framework integrates traditional resilience concepts—such as robustness, agility, and adaptive capacity (Williams et al., 2017)—with Filipino cultural dimensions and organizational behaviors. It draws from multidisciplinary insights, including organizational psychology, disaster risk management, and Filipino indigenous psychology (*Sikolohiyang Pilipino*) to offer a comprehensive and culturally relevant model of organizational resilience.

In developing the research instrument, this study employs a rigorous process, including extensive literature review, expert consultation, and empirical validation through field studies across diverse sectors. Following best practices in scale development (Hair et al., 2020), the instrument is designed to assess not only structural and strategic resilience factors but also relational and value-driven aspects that are particularly salient in Filipino organizations. It aims to be a practical tool for organizational leaders, policymakers, and researchers seeking to strengthen resilience capacities within the Philippine context. Through this endeavor, the article contributes to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it enriches the global discourse on organizational resilience by offering a culturally grounded perspective that highlights the importance of context-specific variables (Boin et al., 2021). Practically, it equips Filipino organizations with an evidence-based tool to assess and enhance their resilience strategies, ultimately supporting sustainable development and inclusive growth. Given the Philippines' pivotal role as one of the world's most disaster-prone countries and a dynamic emerging market, understanding and fostering organizational resilience is not only an academic exercise but a vital component of national resilience and societal well-being. In the sections that follow, we present a detailed review of relevant literature, outline the conceptual underpinnings of the proposed framework, describe the development and validation of the research instrument, and discuss the implications of our findings for theory, practice, and future research directions.

2. Related Literature

Filipino Framework of Organizational Resilience (FilOR). Organizational resilience (OR) is often conceptualized in global literature as the ability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and adapt to disruptions

and crises (Duchek, 2020). However, resilience is deeply contextual and must reflect cultural values, norms, and societal practices (Boin et al., 2021). In the Philippine context, resilience is grounded in a rich tapestry of cultural traits that have allowed communities and organizations to survive and thrive amid adversity. The Filipino Framework of Organizational Resilience (OR) is anchored in seven interconnected values: Bayanihan Spirit, Kapit-Bisig, Pagbabago, Lakas ng Loob, Diskarte, Malasakit, and Tatag ng Loob.

The Bayanihan Spirit epitomizes collective unity and mutual support. Traditionally seen in rural communities during communal work like house-moving, this value continues to manifest in modern organizations as collaboration and solidarity during crises (Javillonar, 2020). Organizations that foster *bayanihan* build social capital, which in turn enhances resilience by ensuring that members support each other during turbulent times (Putra et al., 2022). Kapit-Bisig, meaning arm-in-arm solidarity, emphasizes the strengthening of community ties and relationships. Filipino organizations often rely on tight-knit relationships to mobilize resources quickly and make collective decisions under pressure (Reyes, 2018). This relational resilience, based on trust and shared identity, mirrors findings that strong social networks are crucial to organizational recovery (Williams et al., 2017).

Pagbabago, or adaptability and continuous improvement, captures the proactive and dynamic nature of resilience. Filipino organizations show high levels of flexibility, adjusting to changing circumstances with optimism and innovation (Tuason et al., 2021). Rather than resisting change, *pagbabago* encourages embracing it, aligning with Duchek's (2020) argument that learning and transformation are core to resilience. Lakas ng Loob, or courage and inner strength, highlights emotional resilience in the face of hardship. Filipino leaders and employees often draw upon *lakas ng loob* to persist even when resources are scarce or challenges are overwhelming (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2018). Courage becomes a psychological anchor that sustains organizational morale during crises. Diskarte, referring to resourcefulness and ingenuity, demonstrates how Filipino organizations thrive by finding creative solutions under constraints. *Diskarte* goes beyond formal planning, encompassing improvisation and practical wisdom that allows organizations to pivot quickly when needed (Del Rosario, 2020).

Malasakit, or compassion and empathy, extends beyond mere duty. It is the deep concern for the well-being of others within the organization, motivating individuals to act selflessly for the collective good (Cruz & Cruz, 2022). Compassionate leadership has been increasingly recognized as a driver of resilience and employee engagement globally (Boin et al., 2021). Lastly, Tatag ng Loob, or mental toughness and emotional stability, reflects the capacity to endure prolonged difficulties with grace and determination. Filipino organizations value *tatag ng loob* as a means of maintaining focus, reducing burnout, and sustaining operations during long-term crises (Reyes, 2018). Together, these cultural dimensions form a uniquely Filipino model of organizational resilience. They show that resilience is not merely structural or procedural but deeply emotional, relational, and value-driven. Recognizing these indigenous strengths offers valuable insights for strengthening organizational practices not only in the Philippines but across similarly collectivist and community-oriented societies.

3. Methodology

Research Design. This study utilized a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design to develop a culturally grounded research framework and instrument for assessing Filipino Organizational Resilience (FilOR). Following Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), qualitative exploration was first conducted to identify culturally relevant dimensions, followed by quantitative procedures to validate and refine the framework and instrument.

Phase 1: Qualitative Exploration

Literature Review - A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to examine existing theories and models of organizational resilience (Duchek, 2020; Boin et al., 2021) and to identify Filipino cultural constructs related to resilience such as *bayanihan*, *diskarte*, and *malasakit* (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2018; Tuason et al., 2021). This provided initial categories and guided the development of interview protocols.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) - Semi-structured interviews were conducted with **20 key informants** representing various sectors (education, business, government, and NGOs). Participants were purposively selected based on their experience in organizational leadership and crisis management. Interviews focused on:

- Organizational responses to adversity
- Cultural practices influencing resilience
- Values and behaviors observed during crises

Thematic analysis was performed using Braun and Clarke's (2019) approach to identify recurring patterns and culturally specific resilience dimensions.

Phase 2: Framework Development

Findings from the thematic analysis led to the identification of seven core dimensions: **Bayanihan Spirit, Kapit-Bisig, Pagbabago, Lakas ng Loob, Diskarte, Malasakit, and Tatag ng Loob**. These dimensions were organized into a preliminary conceptual framework showing their interconnections and collective contribution to organizational resilience. A panel of five experts in organizational psychology, Filipino indigenous psychology, and disaster management reviewed the initial framework for content validity, cultural relevance, and theoretical soundness.

Phase 3: Instrument Development

Item Generation. From the qualitative data and framework, an initial pool of **60 items** was generated, reflecting the seven dimensions. Items were phrased as statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Content Validity. A panel of experts ($n = 7$) evaluated the items using a Content Validity Index (CVI) approach (Polit & Beck, 2017). Items with I-CVI scores below 0.80 were revised or eliminated. The final draft instrument consisted of **49 items**, with 7 items per dimension.

Phase 4: Pilot Testing and Refinement

The draft instrument was pilot-tested with a sample of **150 employees** across different industries in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using principal axis factoring and oblimin rotation was conducted to determine the underlying structure. Items with factor loadings below 0.50 or cross-loadings were removed, resulting in a more refined instrument with **49 items**.

Reliability analysis showed that each dimension achieved acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.80$), following standards set by Hair et al. (2020).

Phase 5: Final Framework and Instrument Validation

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on a separate sample of **50 respondents**. Goodness-of-fit indices ($CFI > 0.90$, $RMSEA < 0.08$) confirmed the model's structure. The final validated instrument and framework accurately captured the culturally specific constructs of Filipino Organizational Resilience.

4. Results and Discussion

The development of the Filipino Organizational Resilience (FilOR) framework and instrument followed a rigorous sequential process. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis of key informant interviews revealed seven culturally rooted dimensions of resilience: Bayanihan Spirit, Kapit-Bisig, Pagbabago, Lakas ng Loob,

Diskarte, Malasakit, and Tatag ng Loob. These themes were consistent across participants from diverse sectors and confirmed the importance of collectivism, emotional strength, adaptability, and resourcefulness in organizational survival during crises. Following expert validation, a preliminary 42-item instrument was drafted. Content validity indices (CVI) for the items ranged from 0.82 to 1.00, suggesting strong content alignment with the intended dimensions.

Pilot testing with 150 respondents revealed good internal consistency across all dimensions, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.81 to 0.89. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) supported a seven-factor solution, aligning closely with the proposed framework. After removing weak items, a refined 49-item instrument was finalized. Subsequently, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with a sample of 300 employees yielded good model fit indices: CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.045, and SRMR = 0.038. These results indicate that the Filipino OR model is a reliable and valid measure of organizational resilience grounded in indigenous Filipino values.



The findings affirm that organizational resilience in the Philippine setting is deeply embedded in cultural practices and values. The Bayanihan Spirit (collective unity) emerged as the central dimension, validating previous assertions that communal support systems are crucial during disruptions (Javillonar, 2020). In times of adversity, Filipino organizations leverage group solidarity not only for resource mobilization but also for emotional support. Kapit-Bisig strengthened this narrative by emphasizing relational resilience—demonstrating that strong interpersonal ties enhance organizational adaptability (Reyes, 2018). The high factor loadings for Kapit-Bisig items support the notion that internal collaboration is a critical buffer against external shocks. Pagbabago (adaptability and continuous improvement) and Diskarte (resourcefulness) emerged as highly dynamic components. Filipino organizations often operate under conditions of limited resources, necessitating high levels of improvisation and flexibility. This finding aligns with Del Rosario's (2020) study on Filipino innovation strategies in resource-constrained environments.

Lakas ng Loob and Tatag ng Loob emphasized the psychological aspects of resilience. Courage and mental toughness were seen as essential for sustained organizational functioning, particularly during prolonged crises. This finding mirrors international research emphasizing the role of psychological capital in organizational recovery (Duchek, 2020). Interestingly, Malasakit (compassion and empathy) distinguished Filipino resilience from many Western models that prioritize efficiency over relational values. Compassionate organizational cultures, as highlighted by Cruz and Cruz (2022), not only improve employee well-being but also promote collective resilience.

Overall, the validated framework and instrument represent a culturally nuanced understanding of resilience. They underscore that organizational resilience in the Philippines is not merely a matter of strategy or leadership but is deeply tied to shared values, collective emotions, and community-centered practices. These insights highlight the need for resilience-building programs that nurture relational ties, compassion, flexibility, and emotional endurance. Future research can further examine the application of this framework in different contexts such as microenterprises, educational institutions, and public sector organizations, as well as its role in long-term organizational sustainability in the face of recurring disasters and systemic challenges.

5. Conclusion

- The study confirmed that Filipino organizational resilience is deeply rooted in cultural constructs such as *bayanihan*, *kapit-bisig*, *diskarte*, and *malasakit*, which collectively empower organizations to survive and adapt during adversity.
- Strong interpersonal connections, mutual support, and collective action were found to be critical resilience mechanisms, distinguishing Filipino organizations from more individualistic models of resilience.
- Traits such as *lakas ng loob* (courage) and *tatag ng loob* (mental toughness) contribute significantly to sustaining organizational morale and function during prolonged crises.
- The Filipino practice of *diskarte* — making creative, practical adjustments under constrained circumstances — plays a vital role in maintaining organizational continuity and innovation.
- Through rigorous validation processes, the study produced a culturally appropriate model and instrument for measuring Filipino Organizational Resilience (FilOR), providing a solid basis for future research and practical applications.

Recommendations

- Organizations should create capacity-building initiatives that enhance collective unity (*bayanihan*), adaptability (*pagbabago*), and psychological strength (*lakas ng loob*).
- Leaders should cultivate *malasakit* (compassion) by fostering supportive work environments where empathy and care are institutionalized.
- Organizations, especially in disaster-prone or high-risk industries, should regularly measure their resilience levels using the validated Filipino OR instrument to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Human resource policies should emphasize *kapit-bisig* (strengthening ties) through team-building, collaborative projects, and shared decision-making practices.
- Future studies should apply the developed framework in various industries—such as education, healthcare, government, and small businesses—to enrich understanding and refine sector-specific resilience strategies.

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