

## Exploring the Role of Organizational Resilience in Stakeholder Engagement in Multi-Organizational Projects: A qualitative Study in the Palestinian journalism

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**Abstract: Objective:** This qualitative study offers an original contribution by developing a theoretical model that explains how organizational resilience influences internal stakeholder engagement within Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs). **Methodology:** The model was examined through qualitative empirical data collected from the Palestinian journalism sector, marked by political instability and resource constraints. Data were collected through focus groups, in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving two prominent local journalism organizations in Palestine. **Findings:** The results indicate that resilience practices, such as adaptive leadership, effective resource sharing, risk-sharing mechanisms, and collaborative procedures, significantly enhance internal stakeholder engagement during MOP implementation. **Conclusions and Recommendations:** These results underscore the value of a sector-specific framework for resilience strategies in journalism and offer broader implications for similarly high-risk, resource-constrained settings. Future research should consider longitudinal studies of resilience dynamics and examine how project management structures can sustain stakeholder engagement in complex, multi-organizational environments.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Stakeholder Engagement, Palestine, Journalism Projects, Multi-Organizational Projects.

### استكشاف دور المرونة التنظيمية في إشراك أصحاب المصلحة في المشاريع متعددة المنظمات: دراسة نوعية في الصحافة الفلسطينية

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**المخلص: الهدف:** تقدم هذه الدراسة النوعية إسهامًا أصليًا من خلال تطوير نموذج نظري يوضح كيف تؤثر المرونة التنظيمية على مشاركة أصحاب المصلحة الداخليين ضمن المشاريع متعددة المنظمات (MOPs)، وقد تم اختبار هذا النموذج باستخدام بيانات تجريبية نوعية جُمعت من قطاع الصحافة الفلسطيني، الذي يتميز بعدم الاستقرار السياسي وندرة الموارد، ويهدف سد فجوة في الأدبيات الحالية، وتكشف الدراسة التفاعل بين المرونة التنظيمية ومشاركة أصحاب المصلحة في البيئات المتقلبة. المنهجية: تم جمع البيانات من خلال مجموعات تركيز ومقابلات معمقة وتحليل وثائق، وشملت مؤسستين صحفيتين محليتين بارزتين في فلسطين. النتائج: تشير النتائج إلى أن ممارسات المرونة التنظيمية، مثل القيادة التكيفية، وتشارك الموارد بشكل فعال، وآليات تقاسم المخاطر، وإجراءات التعاون، تُعزز بشكل كبير من مشاركة أصحاب المصلحة الداخليين أثناء تنفيذ المشاريع متعددة المنظمات. **الاستنتاجات والتوصيات:** تؤكد هذه النتائج على أهمية وجود إطار خاص بالقطاع لوضع استراتيجيات للمرونة التنظيمية في مجال الصحافة، كما تقدم دلالات أوسع يمكن الاستفادة منها في البيئات المعرضة للمخاطر والمقيدة من حيث الموارد، وتوصي الدراسة بأن تتناول الأبحاث المستقبلية دراسات طولية لديناميكيات المرونة، وتكشف كيف يمكن لهياكل إدارة المشاريع أن تدعم استمرارية مشاركة أصحاب المصلحة في البيئات المعقدة ومتعددة الأطراف. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** المرونة، إشراك أصحاب المصلحة، فلسطين، مشاريع الصحافة، المشاريع متعددة المنظمات.

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## Introduction

Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) bring together independent organizations that align resources, expertise, and strategies to achieve shared goals (Abuzaid, 2024; Mubarak *et al.*, 2022; Huang *et al.*, 2020). They are increasingly important in sectors facing complex challenges that require cross-organizational collaboration (Yang *et al.*, 2022). MOPs enable knowledge sharing, resource optimization, and joint problem-solving, but their success depends on coordination and stakeholder engagement (Pavez *et al.*, 2021; Hamidavi Nasab *et al.*, 2023). Practices vary across sectors and regions.

Stakeholders are central to MOPs, shaping outcomes through expectations and decisions. Internal stakeholders (e.g., coordinators, journalists, technical staff, managers) are especially critical in journalism, where they directly influence workflow and strategy (Internews, 2023; Smets *et al.*, 2022; Wut *et al.*, 2022). Their engagement ensures alignment, reduces conflict, and supports collaboration (Freeman *et al.*, 2018; Rosado, 2023). In unstable environments, adaptability and commitment are vital for project continuity and resilience (Kamalahmadi & Parast, 2016; Wut *et al.*, 2022).

Resilience, though widely studied in manufacturing and supply chains (Pettit *et al.*, 2019; Hosseini *et al.*, 2019), has received limited attention in sustaining stakeholder engagement within MOPs. It supports adaptability, resource sharing, and collaborative risk management, ensuring stability during disruption (Freeman *et al.*, 2018; Yang *et al.*, 2022).

This study addresses the gap by proposing a model linking multi-organizational resilience to stakeholder engagement under volatile, resource-constrained conditions. It emphasizes

leadership adaptability (Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Hollands *et al.*, 2023), strategic resource sharing (Hamidavi Nasab *et al.*, 2023; Dong, 2023), and collaborative risk management (Yang *et al.*, 2022; Piperca & Floricel, 2023).

Applied to Palestinian journalism as an example, the model illustrates challenges of chronic instability, restricted mobility, and financial pressure (IFJ, 2024; Internews, 2023; Samir Kassir Foundation, 2021). The paper outlines the framework, methodology, findings, and implications, concluding with recommendations and future research directions. The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 outlines the theoretical framework and literature on resilience, stakeholder engagement, and MOPs. Section 3 details the methodology, including data collection and analysis. Section 4 presents findings and discusses how multi-organizational resilience influences stakeholder engagement in journalism, using Palestine as a case. Section 5 concludes with key insights and recommendations. Section 6 highlights study limitations and proposes directions for future research.

## Research Problem

Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) often operate in volatile environments marked by political instability, economic constraints, and security risks—conditions that challenge internal stakeholder engagement, vital for alignment and sustainability. Effective collaboration across organizational and geopolitical boundaries is essential, yet frequent disruptions undermine trust, coordination, and accountability. Although organizational resilience is well-documented in sectors like manufacturing and supply chains (Pettit *et al.*, 2019) and increasingly in inter-organizational contexts (Yang *et al.*, 2022), its role in sustaining internal stakeholder engagement in complex MOPs remains

underexplored. In particular, practices such as leadership adaptability, resource- and responsibility-sharing, and collaborative risk management require deeper investigation in fragile sectors. This study addresses this gap by proposing a model linking multi-organizational resilience to internal stakeholder engagement, applying it empirically to journalism in Palestine—a sector facing acute political, financial, and logistical disruption. The Palestinian journalism context offers a compelling testbed for examining resilience as a mechanism for sustaining internal cohesion in MOP execution.

### **Study Objectives**

This study proposes a framework to examine how multi-organizational resilience supports internal stakeholder engagement in MOPs operating under volatile, resource-constrained conditions. It highlights key resilience mechanisms, leadership adaptability, resource management, innovation, and organizational culture, and structural elements like responsibility-sharing and collaboration. Applied to the Palestinian journalism sector, the model offers practical strategies and academic insights for enhancing engagement and sustaining MOPs in fragile environments.

### **Importance of the Study**

This study enhances understanding of how internal stakeholder engagement in MOPs can be sustained through multi-organizational resilience, especially in chronically volatile environments. By identifying resilience-driven engagement mechanisms, it supports internal collaboration in high-risk settings and advances academic discourse on multi-organizational resilience across sectors. The Palestinian journalism sector provides an empirical case to test the model, offering practical recommendations for journalism organizations and guiding stakeholders, such as donors and

policymakers, toward sustaining journalism-related MOPs in fragile contexts.

### **Research Questions**

This study aims to explore how multi-organizational resilience can be assured in order to engage MOPs stakeholders, especially the internal stakeholders. In this study, the multi-organizational resilience is represented as a composite construct that integrates two constituents: (1) the resilience of individual organizations that are parts of the multi-organization and (2) structural characteristics of multi-organization (responsibility sharing, risk sharing, and communication) that assure synergic effects regarding resilience of the multi-organization. Research focuses on the internal actors from participating organizations that are engaged in MOPs execution. Their engagement is expressed through their preparedness for project execution, resource allocation, adaptability to changes, and competence in executing their roles. Internal stakeholders play a critical role in overcoming challenges and driving the success of MOPs in resource-constrained environments like the Palestinian journalism sector.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

#### ***The Main Research Question (RQ)***

How does multi-organizational resilience influence internal stakeholder engagement in Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) within the volatile journalism sector, based on case of Palestine where political instability and resource constraints are prominent?

#### ***Sub-Questions (SQs)***

**SQ1:** How does the resilience of organizations implementing MOPs enhance the internal stakeholders' engagement during the execution/implementation of MOPs?

**SQ2:** How do the characteristics of multi-organization structure (responsibility-sharing, risk-sharing, collaboration procedures)

enhances the internal stakeholders' engagement during the execution/implementation of MOPs?

### **Literature Review**

Considering the topic focused and chosen research problem a comprehensive literature review was done around and on the topic.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Stakeholder engagement is the active inclusion of individuals, groups, or entities in decision-making, planning, and execution of projects (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997). In Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs), it aligns interests, fosters collaboration, improves outcomes, and builds trust (Dwikat *et al.*, 2022; Fassin *et al.*, 2017; Freeman *et al.*, 2018; Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2017).

**Organizational Resilience:** Organizational resilience is the capacity to adapt to challenges. Leadership offers strategic direction and emotional support, sustaining goals and trust (Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Denyer, 2017; Yikilmaz *et al.*, 2024). Volatile contexts require adaptive cultures (Denyer, 2017; Thomé *et al.*, 2016; Yang *et al.*, 2022).

**Journalism Project:** A journalism project creates content beyond the newsroom through cross-departmental collaboration, including investigative series or multimedia storytelling (Granger, 2023).

**Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs):** MOPs are collaborations pooling resources to achieve shared goals (Manning, 2017; Peters *et al.*, 2024; Yang *et al.*, 2022). They address complex, high-risk challenges requiring inter-organizational synergy (Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Rosado, 2023).

## **Resilience in Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) and Stakeholder Engagement in Palestinian Journalism**

Organizational resilience is vital for MOPs in journalism, especially in volatile socio-political contexts (Smets *et al.*, 2022; Wut *et al.*, 2022). While resilience is well-studied in commercial and environmental sectors (Denyer, 2017), its role in high-risk journalism adds complexity, requiring adaptive capacity and strategic resource allocation. Existing research focuses on manufacturing, healthcare, and general project management (Dong, 2023; Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020), overlooking journalism's unique challenges. This study addresses that gap, offering resilience strategies for journalism in fragile environments.

### **Organizational Factors Influencing Resilience**

Organizational resilience arises from factors enabling adaptation under pressure. Collaboration and communication improve teamwork in complex contexts (Nassar, 2024; Pavez *et al.*, 2021). Flexibility supports reorganization during disruptions (Piperca & Floricel, 2023; Liu & Yin, 2020), while innovation drives creative responses (Fey & Kock, 2022). Leadership offers guidance in crises (Mubarak *et al.*, 2022), and culture fosters proactive values (Osobajo *et al.*, 2023). Preparedness, resource management (Yang *et al.*, 2022), staff competence (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020), systems thinking (Jørgensen, 2023), and CSR (Huang *et al.*, 2020) further sustain resilience.

**Leadership as a Catalyst for Resilience:** Carmeli *et al.* (2021) identify leadership as central to resilience in volatile settings like Palestine. It drives resource mobilization, cohesion, and adaptation, fostering culture, crisis decision-making, and stakeholder collaboration (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020; Müller

& Martinsuo, 2015; Osobajo *et al.*, 2023; Pavez *et al.*, 2021).

**Team Adaptability and Resource Management:** Flexibility in resources, adaptable training, and strategic planning are vital for resilience in journalism MOPs. While resilience is widely studied in risk management, it is underexplored in journalism. This study examines how Palestinian journalism MOPs apply flexibility and adaptability to navigate their unique political and economic challenges (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020).

### **Palestinian Context and the Imperative for Resilience in Stakeholder Engagement**

The Palestinian journalism sector faces unique challenges, such as journalism censorship, safety risks, and limited resources, which are intensified by the region's socio-political landscape (Reporters Without Borders, 2024). Unlike other sectors, journalism in Palestine is continually impacted by external pressures, shaping resilience and stakeholder engagement practices in ways distinct to this context.

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder Theory by (Freeman, 1984) balances stakeholders' interests and organizational goals and underpins multi-organizational project management (Fassin *et al.*, 2017; Freeman *et al.*, 2018; Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2017). It advances ethical engagement, viewing stakeholders as integral to success, including high-risk journalism (Wagner *et al.*, 2021). Effective engagement requires alignment, not communication alone; in Palestinian journalism MOPs, trust is vital. Resilience strengthens relationships amid shocks (Yang *et al.*, 2022). Transparency, respect, responsiveness, and navigating power dynamics enable resilient partnerships; strong ethical frameworks sustain collaboration among stakeholders (Smets *et al.*, 2022; Ika &

Munro, 2022; Fassin *et al.*, 2017; Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2017).

### **Organizational Theory for Resilient Organization**

As Mitchell *et al.* (1997) explain, "Organizational Theory delves into the internal forces that influence an organization's behavior, efficiency, and adaptability." It links culture, structure, and decision-making to resilience in MOPs (Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Yang *et al.*, 2022). Resilient cultures stress flexibility and purpose, building trust and crisis response, while structures allocate roles/resources; alignment and communication enable continuity (Osobajo *et al.*, 2023; Zhang & Li, 2017; Boussaid & Shafi, 2018). In uncertain project environments, flatter structures enable fast, decentralized decisions, crucial for sustaining project integrity and stakeholder trust in MOPs (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Yang *et al.*, 2022).

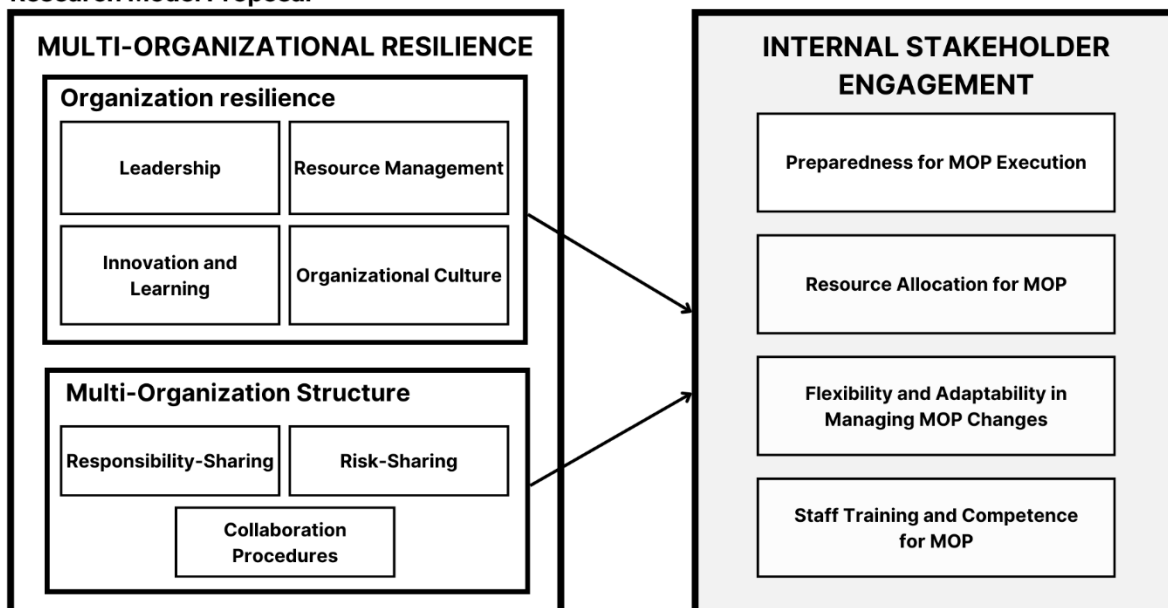
### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the dynamics of multi-organizational resilience in Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs), focusing on the Palestinian journalism sector. The proposed model, shown in Figure 1, illustrates how resilience mechanisms embedded in MOPs may influence internal stakeholder engagement across organizational settings. The model is directly aligned with the primary research question (RQ), which examines how multi-organizational resilience, operationalized through internal practices and inter-organizational structures, shapes internal stakeholder engagement during MOP execution. The first core relationship assumes that organizational resilience, expressed through adaptive leadership, effective resource use, innovation, and a supportive culture, enhances internal stakeholder engagement. Empirical studies support this link: Carmeli *et*

*al.* (2021) show how resilient leadership and cultural adaptability strengthen cohesion and commitment under uncertainty. Similarly, Hamidavi Nasab *et al.* (2023) emphasize learning and innovation as drivers of preparedness and responsiveness among internal stakeholders. The second core relationship focuses on structural mechanisms like responsibility-sharing, risk-sharing, and formal collaboration procedures. These mechanisms facilitate joint coordination and problem-solving, which are vital in unstable contexts. Yang *et al.* (2022) highlight how governance frameworks clarify roles and improve collaboration. Hollands *et al.* (2023) further show that structured coordination supports continuity and reinforces engagement in inter-organizational settings. These relationships are integrated under a theoretical lens combining systems theory and the dynamic capabilities perspective. Systems theory views MOPs as interdependent networks, with resilience mechanisms maintaining systemic integrity (Lehtinen &

Aaltonen, 2020). The dynamic capabilities view explains how organizations adapt to uncertainty by reconfiguring resources and routines, enabling sustained engagement (Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Hamidavi Nasab *et al.*, 2023). By anchoring both relationships in empirical literature and situating them within Stakeholder and Organizational Theory, the model offers more than a variable framework—it provides a coherent interpretive lens. Stakeholder Theory asserts that engagement depends on ethical and resilient practices that build trust and shared commitment (Fassin *et al.*, 2017; Freeman *et al.*, 2018). Organizational Theory complements this by explaining how internal resilience—adaptive cultures, clear structures, and responsive decisions—helps organizations align stakeholders during disruption (Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Yang *et al.*, 2022). Thus, MOPs serve a dual role: as platforms for deploying resilience and as drivers of stakeholder dynamics under uncertainty.

**Research Model Proposal**



**Figure (1):** Research model.

**Research Variables**

This study explores the relationship between Multi-Organizational Resilience (independent

variable) and Internal Stakeholder Engagement (dependent variable) within Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) in the

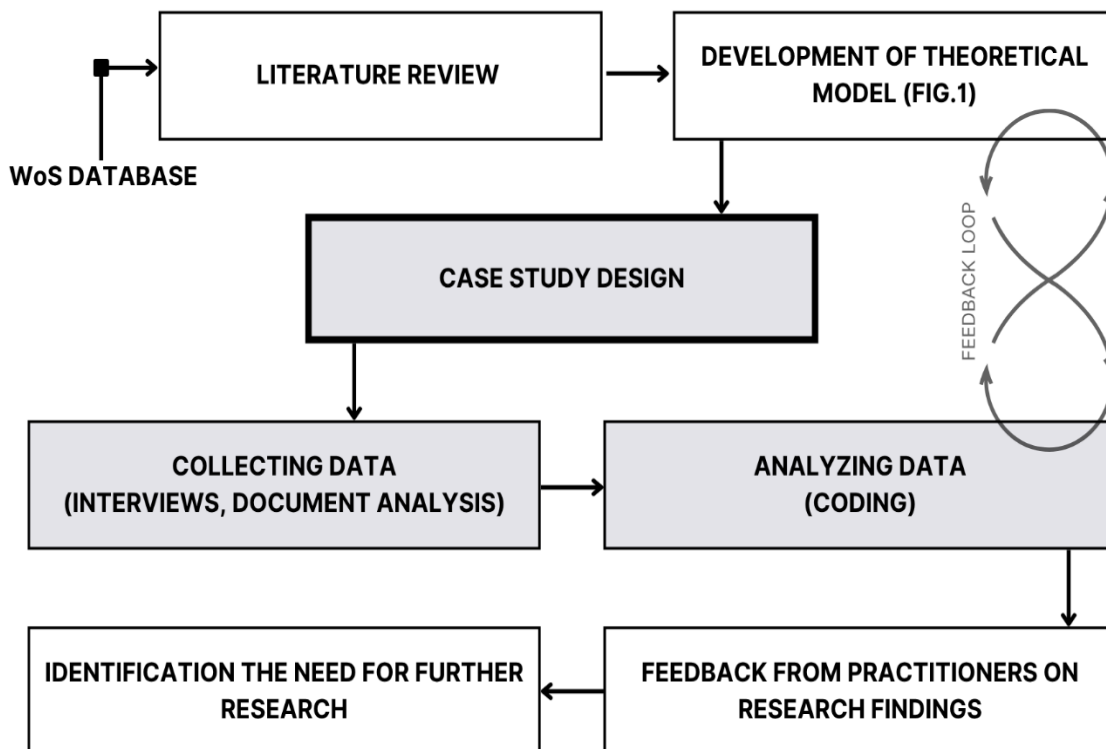
Palestinian journalism sector as an example (Figure 1). MOPs may shape engagement through governance structures, inter-organizational coordination, and collaborative decision-making, influencing stakeholder commitment (Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2022).

Multi-Organizational Resilience comprises two components: Organizational Resilience and Multi-Organization Structure. Organizational Resilience reflects capacity to adapt, recover, and sustain operations amid disruptions, supported by leadership adaptability, resource management, innovation, learning, and culture (Carmeli *et al.*, 2021; Hamidavi Nasab *et al.*, 2023). Multi-Organization Structure highlights governance mechanisms—contractual and relational—that maintain continuity (Yang *et al.*, 2022). Contractual governance clarifies roles, responsibilities, and risk-sharing, while relational governance fosters collaboration. Together, these mechanisms enhance continuity, flexibility, and risk mitigation in

journalism MOPs (Huang *et al.*, 2020; Hollands *et al.*, 2023).

Internal Stakeholder Engagement, the dependent variable, indicates collaboration between organizations and stakeholders, including journalists, managers, coordinators, and editorial teams. Engagement may depend not only on individual commitment but also on resilience and governance within MOPs (Freeman *et al.*, 2018; Wut *et al.*, 2022). Its dimensions include preparedness for execution, resource allocation, flexibility, adaptability, and competence (Huang *et al.*, 2020; Hamidavi Nasab *et al.*, 2023; Liu & Yin, 2020; Müller & Martinsuo, 2015).

The methodology (Figure 2) advances from literature review through focus groups, case study design, data collection, coding, practitioner feedback, and future research. This paper emphasizes case study design, data collection, and analysis to show how resilience mechanisms support internal stakeholders' engagement amid challenges and unstable environment of projects.



**Figure (2):** Research flow.

## Target Population and Sampling Criteria

The target population comprises journalists from Ajyal Radio Network and 4K Media Production, selected for their active roles in journalism MOPs in Palestine's volatile context. Since 2018, the two organizations have jointly led 12 projects, with Ajyal focusing on journalism and 4K on video production. Participants were chosen for their experience, ensuring diverse insights from internal stakeholders working under ongoing uncertainty.

## Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through five qualitative methods (focus groups, case study, document analysis, coding, and debriefings) capturing various aspects of resilience and engagement in journalism MOPs. Interviews and documents were transcribed in Arabic, translated via Google Translate, and manually verified. NVivo was used for analysis.

## Data Volume

- 28 documents, totaling 166 pages, were reviewed, including project plans, communication logs, financial reports, and post-project evaluations.
- Documentation also included photographic evidence of team meetings and workshops (14 related photos).
- Some projects communications.

## Data Collection Periods

- Interviews: Conducted between March 2024 and August 2024 in multiple phases:
  - a. March 14-15, 2024: Focus Groups.
  - b. July 1 – August 2, 2024: Case Study Interviews.
  - c. August 16-20, 2024: Debriefing Sessions.

### a. Focus Groups

Six participants from each organization were chosen to cover essential roles in resilience and

stakeholder engagement. This number provides a balanced representation while allowing for meaningful discussion within time constraints. The chosen participants represent various functional roles crucial to multi-organizational projects, as detailed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

## Research Instruments

Two focus groups were held to explore journalism MOPs before case study design, aiming to understand how practitioners perceive resilience and its role in internal stakeholder engagement. Participants from Ajyal and 4K discussed inter-organizational collaboration and resilience-building in high-risk settings.

- **Focus Group 1** (March 14, 2024 – 90 min): Explored internal organizational resilience (leadership adaptability, resource management, innovation, and culture) as drivers of engagement.
- **Focus Group 2** (March 15, 2024 – 90 min): Examined inter-organizational mechanisms (responsibility-sharing, risk-sharing, and collaboration) for sustaining engagement.

Findings helped define key themes, challenges, and adaptive responses, forming the foundation for the case study.

### b. Case Study

Following Yin's (2014) case study methodology, this research explores resilience in each organization's real-life context. Yin highlights case studies as valuable for examining complex, context-specific phenomena like resilience in volatile settings. The analysis focused on organizational practices contributing to resilience. Key data sources included functional and executive managers, as well as project managers involved in current MOPs (See Table 1). This approach offered detailed insights into resilience strategies and stakeholder engagement.

**Table (1):** Interviewed stakeholders' groups.

Groups	Stakeholder	Code	Gender/Age/Education /Experience
1. Group 1 (from O1 - ajyal radio network)	Senior News Journalist	CS 1	F/20-29/BA/5-10
2. Group 1 (from O1 - ajyal radio network)	Administrative Journalist	CS 2	F/30-39/BA/15-20
3. Group 1 (from O1 - ajyal radio network)	Audio Editor/Journalist	CS 3	M/20-29/BA/5-10
4. Group 1 (from O1 - ajyal radio network)	Podcast Host	CS 4	F/30-39/MA/10-15
5. Group 1 (from O1 - ajyal radio network)	Script Writer/Journalist	CS 5	F/30-39/BA/5-10
6. Group 1 (from O1 - ajyal radio network)	Investigative Journalist	CS 6	M/40-49/MA/15-20
7. Group 2 (from O2 - 4k media production)	CEO/Journalist	CS 7	F/30-39/MA/10-15
8. Group 2 (from O2 - 4k media production)	Media Coordinator	CS 8	F/20-29/BA/5-10
9. Group 3 (collaborative project team)	Financial Manager	CS 9	F/30-39/BA/10-15
10. Group 3 (collaborative project team)	Photographer/Journalist	CS 10	M/20-29/BA/5-10
11. Group 3 (collaborative project team)	Video Editor/Journalist	CS 11	M/20-29/BA/1-5
12. Group 3 (collaborative project team)	Social Media Manager	CS 12	M/30-39/BA/5-10

### Research Instruments

In-depth Interviews **Appendix 3:** Targeting leadership qualities, resource management, adaptability, and innovation and other aspects as listed below, these questions aim to capture individual experiences and perspectives within MOPs.

#### c. Documentation

This study analyzed 28 documents (166 pages) detailing how Ajyal Radio Network (O1) and 4K Media Production (O2) implemented journalism-related MOPs. Projects covered child protection, women's empowerment, employment equity, and e-education in Palestine, often funded by unnamed international or local NGOs under confidentiality agreements. The documents highlight public tenders where one organization acted as lead contractor, later subcontracting the other based on expertise. Ajyal led journalistic/editorial tasks and voice-overs, while 4K managed technical and visual production. Task distribution was clarified through annexes to Terms of Reference, usually included within main agreements. Coordination occurred via meetings, email, and WhatsApp to ensure flexibility. Upon completion, projects were documented through financial and administrative reports. Document analysis focused on resilience practices, resource distribution, risk mitigation, and stakeholder engagement. When combined with

interviews and focus groups, these materials provided a holistic understanding of collaboration in high-risk journalism environments.

#### Sources of Documents

The 28 analyzed documents (166 pages) were sourced from two journalism organizations: Ajyal Radio Network (O1) contributed 16 documents (100 pages), and 4K Media Production (O2) provided 12 (66 pages). Together, they offer complementary perspectives on resilience and engagement in MOPs. The documents include public tender contracts, collaborative agreements, and operational frameworks defining editorial, reporting, and production roles. Implementation records detail investigative planning, risk management, and team coordination. Financial documents cover funding, resource distribution, and staffing. Post-project evaluations and crisis protocols assess content impact, production continuity, and strategic adaptation in volatile contexts, as outlined in **Appendix 4**.

#### Document Characteristics

The 28 collected documents (2018–2024) span periods of political and operational instability impacting MOPs in the Palestinian journalism sector. Ajyal contributed 16 documents (100 pages), and 4K provided 12 (66 pages). Materials varied in format (strategic and financial reports, spreadsheets on budgets

and risks, stakeholder communications (emails, minutes, correspondence), and photographs documenting meetings and fieldwork. Each document was assessed for its relevance to resilience practices, stakeholder engagement, and project execution. Together, they provided empirical evidence on preparedness, decision-making, and adaptive strategies in volatile settings.

### ***Collection Procedures***

Document selection followed predefined criteria targeting multi-organizational resilience, resource distribution, risk management, and internal stakeholder engagement in journalism-related MOPs. Focus was placed on multi-year projects (2018–2024) that demonstrated adaptive strategies amid political and financial instability in Palestine. Contracts and agreements were included for their role in defining editorial and production responsibilities. Financial records highlighted funding and resource allocation, while evaluation and crisis protocols captured lessons learned and resilience improvements. Priority was given to documents detailing coordination between Ajyal (O1) and 4K (O2) in investigative journalism, content production, and stakeholder communication. All documents were securely stored—digitally encrypted or physically archived—and analyzed using thematic coding and qualitative software to identify patterns in preparedness, decision-making, and adaptability. This ensured empirical validation of resilience practices and stakeholder engagement in journalism-based MOPs.

### **The debriefing session from both organizations**

For further validation, additional in-person, one-on-one interviews as presented as in Appendix 5.

## **Research Instruments**

These sessions were held on August 16 and August 17, 2024, at Ajyal Radio Network, and on August 20, 2024, at 4K Media Production. These interviews lasted 30 minutes each and involved seven journalists in administrative roles. The session protocol includes the questions presented in Appendix 6.

### **Data Analysis**

The coding followed a three-phase approach (Yin, 2014; Saldana, 2009):

1. **Open Coding:** Broad themes were identified without preset categories, capturing core ideas like leadership and resource adaptability.
2. **Axial Coding:** Relationships among codes were refined into sub-themes, linking leadership, resource management, and workforce adaptability.
3. **Selective Coding:** Core themes (flexibility, innovation, and collaboration) were synthesized to show how resilience practices shape stakeholder engagement in MOPs.

Focus groups and interviews in Palestinian journalism MOPs revealed resilience themes such as leadership adaptability, resource strategies, collaboration, and crisis response. Flexibility, risk-sharing, and innovation were key to sustaining engagement. These insights informed the case study, which showed how resilience is enacted through adaptive processes and dynamic stakeholder interactions. Findings were triangulated with documents for consistency.

### **Document Analysis**

Documents such as project plans, communication logs, and reports validated participant findings and added context to resilience practices.

### ***Method of Analysis***

Thematic content analysis was applied, aligning document data with themes from

interviews and focus groups to deepen understanding. Key elements of the analysis included:

1. **Theme Identification:** The document analysis primarily contributed to identifying key structural aspects of multi-organizational resilience in MOPs, including responsibility-sharing mechanisms, risk mitigation strategies, contractual agreements, and communication procedures between partners.
2. **Organization of Data:** NVivo software was used to systematically categorize document segments under key resilience themes such as risk-sharing, collaboration procedures, and inter-organizational coordination (collaboration procedures). Each document was coded based on its contribution to understanding formalized MOP structures.

### **Results from Document Analysis**

The document analysis identified patterns, strategies, and challenges in resilience and stakeholder engagement within MOPs. Findings were triangulated with interviews and focus groups to enhance contextual understanding. Ajyal Radio Network (O1) faced funding delays and stakeholder misalignment. Resilience strategies included regular alignment meetings and contingency planning for political instability. 4K Media

Production (O2) encountered logistical delays and limited resources. In response, it used cloud-based coordination and mobile production units to sustain delivery timelines. Collaborative mechanisms, such as formal agreements, clarified roles and responsibilities. Periodic evaluations allowed early challenge detection and adaptive planning. Crisis communication protocols helped maintain stakeholder trust during disruptions. These findings underscore the importance of proactive resilience strategies and effective collaboration in overcoming challenges and fostering stakeholder engagement in MOPs.

### **Thematic Coding Structure for Journalism MOPs**

To better understand how resilience and internal stakeholder engagement are practiced in journalism-related Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs), the study employed a three-level coding process: First-order Concepts (raw codes), Second-order Concepts (categories), and Third-order Concepts (themes). Drawing on interviews, documents, and focus groups, the final coding structure (Table 2) identifies two analytical domains (Multi-Organizational Resilience and Internal Stakeholder Engagement) each comprising three themes. This framework forms the basis for the results interpretation in the next section.

**Table (2):** Themes, Categories, and Codes for Multi-Organizational Resilience and Internal Stakeholder Engagement in Journalism MOPs.

First-order Concepts (Codes)	Second-order Concepts (Categories)	Third-order Concepts (Themes)
Crisis Response Leadership	Decision-Making in High-Risk Journalism	Leadership & Governance ( <i>Multi-Organizational Resilience</i> )
Ethical Decision-Making and Accountability		
Leadership Adaptability		
Transparent Editorial Governance	Stakeholder Communication & Trust	
Stakeholder Communication & Trust		
Team Cooperation & Role Adaptation	Human Resource Management	Resource Optimization & Adaptive Management ( <i>Multi-Organizational Resilience</i> )
Multi-Skilling & Task Flexibility		
Budgeting & Financial Planning		
Digital Infrastructure & Workflow Optimization	Financial & Technological Efficiency	
Contingency Planning for Unstable Resources		
Handling Journalism Topics	Knowledge & Skills Development	Adaptive & Learning Journalism Organizations ( <i>Multi-Organizational Resilience</i> )
Real-Time Content Adjustments		
Investigative Techniques & Problem-Solving		

First-order Concepts (Codes)	Second-order Concepts (Categories)	Third-order Concepts (Themes)
Continuous Learning & Mentorship	Resilience & Innovation	
Adaptive Reporting & Crisis Journalism		
Digital & New Media Trends		
Task Distribution & Editorial Role Clarity	Collaboration & Workflow Strategies	Inter-Organizational Coordination & Stakeholder Alignment ( <i>internal stakeholder engagement</i> )
Editorial & Production Coordination		
Cross-Organizational Workflow Synchronization		
Joint Crisis Management Strategies	Crisis & Risk Coordination	
Emergency Communication & Risk Response		
Responsibility-Sharing Frameworks	Formal Agreements & Compliance	Multi-Organizational Governance ( <i>internal stakeholder engagement</i> )
Contractual Governance & Legal Clarity		
Ethical & Risk Mitigation Protocols		
Inter-Organizational Agreements	Long-Term Organizational Stability	
Strategic Alliances & Funding Sustainability	Preparedness & Crisis Response	
Stakeholder Readiness & Coordination		
Risk & Security Considerations in Journalism	Resource & Adaptability Management	Stakeholder Engagement & Project Execution ( <i>internal stakeholder engagement</i> )
Dynamic Resource Allocation		
Budget & Staff Flexibility	Training & Competency Development	
Investigative Journalism Training		
Multi-Stakeholder Communication & Transparency		

Table 2 summarizes six core themes aligned with the two pillars of the model: multi-organizational resilience and internal stakeholder engagement in journalism MOPs. Themes on leadership, resource adaptation, and learning reflect resilience, while coordination, governance, and execution reflect engagement. Each theme is grounded in second- and first-order concepts derived from interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. The coding confirms the model's alignment with Stakeholder and Organizational Theory, emphasizing trust, adaptability, ethical governance, and collaboration. While interviews and focus groups revealed adaptability and inter-organizational cooperation, documents highlighted formal structures such as governance protocols and risk-sharing frameworks, often implicit in discussions. Two emergent factors—communication fluidity across organizations and trust gaps—were identified. While they do not alter the model's structure, they refine its categories, particularly those on collaboration and responsibility-sharing. These refinements enhance the model's explanatory power in

unstable MOP environments and support its consistency across methods. This foundation invites further testing against the theoretical framework in Chapter 2.

### Findings And Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the core dimensions of multi organizational resilience and internal stakeholder engagement in Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) within the Palestinian journalism sector as in **Appendix 7. Effective Leadership & Governance in Journalism MOPs**

Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping resilience in journalism MOPs, particularly in contexts characterized by political instability, resource constraints, and operational uncertainties. The findings reveal that adaptive leadership fosters resilience by ensuring strategic decision-making, operational continuity, and stakeholder alignment. Interviewees emphasized the need for leaders to balance editorial independence with multi-organizational collaboration, ensuring that project goals align with journalistic values and external stakeholder expectations. A Social

Media Manager from Ajyal Radio Network described leadership's role in maintaining operational continuity: *"Resilience is about staying operational no matter what happens. For us, that means keeping our social media active and relevant, even during unexpected challenges. One important strategy is having a versatile team that can handle different tasks, especially with digital tools."* Similarly, a Senior News Journalist highlighted the critical balance between editorial decision-making and resource allocation: *"We need leadership that understands the frontlines of journalism, not just the numbers. We also need flexibility in our resources, but without sacrificing the quality of our reporting. That's the line we can't cross, no matter what the pressure is."* This aligns with Denyer (2017) and Carmeli *et al.* (2021), who emphasized leadership's role in building resilience through clear decision-making, structured governance, and trust-building. Furthermore, Paais & Pattiruhu (2020) noted that strategic leadership in high-risk journalism environments strengthens team cohesion and resource mobilization, ensuring projects sustain momentum despite disruptions. The importance of leadership adaptability was also reinforced by Ajyal's contractual agreements, which stated: *"Clause 5.2 specifies leadership roles during crisis situations, mandating immediate communication with stakeholders to ensure continuity."* (Ajyal - Contractual Doc CD1). These insights address iQ1, demonstrating that effective leadership in journalistic MOPs ensures resilience by fostering a culture of adaptability, stakeholder engagement, and rapid decision-making.

### **Efficient Resource Management & Utilization**

Effective resource management is central to ensuring that journalistic MOPs can operate

under financial constraints while maintaining high editorial and production standards. Findings indicate that successful MOPs employ adaptive resource allocation, leveraging the strengths of internal teams and technological infrastructure to sustain resilience. A Script Writer from Ajyal emphasized team-based resource allocation: *"By understanding the diverse skills within our team, we can assign tasks that play to each person's strengths, which will improve both efficiency and the overall quality of our scripts."* Similarly, a Video Editor from 4K Media Production highlighted technology's role in optimizing workflows: *"Success in any project depends on continuous communication, keeping all team members updated on developments, and working collaboratively. Tools like WhatsApp groups can enhance coordination and ensure everyone stays aligned."* These findings align with Kamalahmadi & Parast (2016) and Chen *et al.* (2023), who highlighted resource flexibility as a fundamental pillar of resilience. Additionally, Yang *et al.* (2022) and Osobajo *et al.* (2023) emphasize that adaptive resource management strengthens internal stakeholder engagement, preventing delays and optimizing efficiency. Formal documentation also reflects these principles, as noted in 4K's contractual framework: *"Clause 4.3 promotes cross-department collaboration to meet tight deadlines efficiently."* (4K - Contractual Doc CD2). These findings directly address iQ2, demonstrating how strategic human and technological resource utilization contributes to resilience in journalism-focused MOPs.

### **Adaptive & Learning Organization in Journalism MOPs**

Resilience in journalism-focused MOPs depends on an adaptive workforce that can respond to disruptions while maintaining editorial consistency. Interviewees described

real-time adaptability as crucial to sustaining reporting standards and stakeholder engagement. A Photographer from 4K Media emphasized flexibility in production workflows: *"Adaptability involves delivering impactful visuals despite external pressures. It's about having workflows that can accommodate sudden changes while maintaining quality."* An Administrative Journalist from Ajyal echoed this sentiment, noting: *"We need to adapt quickly to changes without losing the thread of our story. This means having systems in place that allow us to re-prioritize stories, link new developments with ongoing coverage, and keep our audience engaged."* Findings from Ajyal's Final Report FR5 reinforce the value of adaptability in crisis scenarios: *"Safety training modules implemented during the Gaza crisis allowed reporters to quickly adjust to covering war-related topics."* This aligns with Carmeli *et al.* (2021) and Liu & Yin (2020), who emphasize that adaptive organizational cultures enhance resilience. Addressing iQ4 and iQ8, these findings illustrate how an adaptive workforce sustains engagement in high-risk journalism environments.

### **Enhanced Team Collaboration & Engagement Strategies**

Multi-organizational collaboration is essential for ensuring editorial consistency and optimizing team performance in journalism MOPs. Findings reveal that structured task distribution and inter-organizational coordination prevent redundancies and enhance project efficiency. A Financial Manager stressed the importance of clear communication and feedback loops: *"For this collaboration to be truly effective, we need clear, open lines of communication and well-defined objectives. Regular updates and a feedback loop will be essential to keep everyone aligned and moving*

*forward."* A CEO from 4K emphasized role clarity in high-pressure environments: *"Defined responsibilities and accountability frameworks reduce ambiguities, especially during high-pressure situations."* Ajyal's structured framework reinforces these insights: *"Clause 5.1 requires the implementation of a structured collaboration framework, including sharing draft scripts for stakeholder feedback and organizing review sessions."* (Ajyal - Contractual Doc CD7). These findings align with Denyer (2017), Osobajo *et al.* (2023), and Yang *et al.* (2022), who highlight the role of structured collaboration in enhancing resilience and engagement in complex journalism projects. Addressing iQ3 and iQ5, these results demonstrate how team collaboration fosters resilience in MOPs.

### **Resilient Multi-Organizational Structure in Journalism MOPs**

Findings from document analysis highlight that resilience is reinforced through structured responsibility-sharing, risk-sharing, and formal collaboration procedures. Ajyal's contractual framework mandates: *"Clause 7.3 mandates that liability policies extend to subcontractors and shared operational teams to ensure collective coverage for risks."* Additionally, 4K's risk-sharing agreements emphasize operational continuity: *"Clause 7.5 mandates that the Contractor maintain adequate insurance coverage, including worker's compensation, liability for injuries, and general risks."* These findings align with Mubarak *et al.* (2022) and Rosado (2023), who argue that multi-organizational structures enhance resilience by fostering shared responsibility mechanisms. Addressing iQ7 and iQ9, these results demonstrate how structured resilience frameworks sustain journalism MOPs.

## Internal Stakeholder Engagement & MOP Execution

Internal stakeholders play a pivotal role in journalism MOPs, requiring structured training, resource allocation, and stakeholder coordination. A Social Media Manager emphasized: *"Motivation and structured training significantly impact project outcomes. Support from management transforms team dynamics."* Findings from Wut *et al.* (2022) highlight that structured internal stakeholder engagement strategies are crucial for sustaining multi-organizational resilience. Addressing iQ6 and iQ10, these findings reinforce the role of internal engagement in sustaining journalism MOPs.

### Linking Findings to Research Questions

This section synthesizes the findings from the research themes and aligns them with the sub-questions (SQs) and the primary research question (RQ). The analysis highlights how organizational resilience factors contribute to stakeholder engagement within Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) in the volatile context of the Palestinian journalism sector.

#### *Sub-Questions (SQs)*

**SQ1:** How does the resilience of organizations implementing MOPs enhance the internal stakeholders' engagement during the execution/implementation of MOPs?

Based on the study findings, resilience in journalism-based Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) enhances internal stakeholder engagement through strategic organizational practices and structural mechanisms tailored to Palestine's volatile context. Leadership serves as a cornerstone, fostering trust, clarifying roles, and ensuring alignment among internal actors, including journalists, editors, and technical staff, even under crisis. Resource management reinforces resilience by providing

stakeholders with the necessary tools and training to maintain output quality. Adaptive allocation strategies optimize limited resources, strengthening stakeholder commitment. Workforce adaptability is equally critical, enabling internal stakeholders to adjust workflows and sustain reporting consistency during disruptions. Collaboration frameworks, including editorial planning and cross-departmental coordination, support communication and shared accountability, maintaining efficiency across organizational boundaries. Finally, a culture of innovation and learning embeds resilience by encouraging creativity and proactive responses. As mentioned, journalism organizations that foster such a culture empower stakeholders to adopt new storytelling methods and leverage technology, key to sustain engagement and project success in high-risk environments.

**SQ2:** How do the characteristics of multi-organization structure (responsibility-sharing, risk-sharing, collaboration procedures) enhance the internal stakeholders' engagement during the execution/implementation of MOPs?

According to the findings, multi-organizational structures strengthen internal stakeholder engagement by fostering a collaborative framework suited to the complexities of journalism MOPs in Palestine. Responsibility-sharing enhances ownership and clarity among journalists and project team members. Clear task distribution reduces ambiguity, allowing stakeholders to act with confidence and accountability aligned with project goals. Risk-sharing serves as a critical engagement driver in unstable contexts. Transparent mechanisms distribute risks equitably, promoting a collective sense of trust and shared responsibility. This encourages proactive collaboration and reinforces internal

alignment despite external pressures. Collaboration procedures (including regular editorial meetings, coordinated planning sessions, joint problem-solving, and structured feedback loops) improve cohesion and efficiency across journalism teams and organizational boundaries. These practices support collective resilience and sustained engagement throughout the MOP lifecycle.

### **Primary Research Question (RQ)**

**RQ:** How does multi-organizational resilience influence internal stakeholder engagement in Multi-Organizational Projects (MOPs) within the volatile journalism sector, based on the case of Palestine where political instability and resource constraints are prominent?

The findings underscore that multi-organizational resilience, combining organizational resilience and structural frameworks, is essential to sustaining internal stakeholder engagement in journalism MOPs in Palestine. These elements ensure preparedness, adaptive capacity, strategic resource allocation, and staff competence throughout MOP implementation. At the core lies organizational resilience. Effective leadership fosters trust, aligns operational needs with strategic goals, and navigates uncertainty by clarifying roles and guiding journalists, editors, and technical teams. Resource management supports resilience by ensuring access to essential tools, training, and logistical support, enabling continuity under constrained conditions. A culture of innovation and learning empowers journalists to adopt new storytelling methods and adapt during disruptions without compromising quality. A resilient organizational culture, based on transparency and shared values, reinforces motivation and cohesion across internal teams. Complementing this, structural frameworks)

including responsibility-sharing, risk-sharing, and collaboration procedures) enhance stakeholder alignment. Clear role definitions and equitable risk distribution strengthen ownership and confidence, while regular editorial meetings and structured decision-making foster a cohesive and responsive project environment. Together, these elements provide the foundation for resilient and engaged MOP teams in high-risk settings.

In answering the question, this study employs multi-item scales adapted from Sujjan *et al.* (1994) and Van Yperen and Janssen (2002), ensuring methodological rigor. While Organizational Resilience and Multi-Organization Structure were conceptualized through literature, their operationalization was validated through interviews and documents. The interaction with Internal Stakeholder Engagement underscores their interdependence. This interplay ensures that preparedness, adaptability, resource allocation, and training are consistently maintained in Palestinian journalism MOPs, making engagement a dynamic and sustainable process. As long as multi-organizational resilience mechanisms are upheld, stakeholder engagement remains strong, enabling teams to meet goals and stay committed under pressure. Thus, internal engagement is not an isolated result but reflects the strength of resilience structures. This interlinked relationship offers a novel lens to understand sustainable collaboration in journalism-based MOPs.

### **Summary of Findings**

Chapter 5 applies the model (Figure 1), linking organizational resilience and multi-organization structure as drivers of internal stakeholder engagement. Resilience factors (leadership, resource management, innovation, and culture) combined with structural mechanisms like responsibility- and risk-

sharing, enhance preparedness, resource use, adaptability, and staff competence. Validated through interviews and document analysis in a Palestinian journalism MOP, the model shows relevance for fragile contexts. Multi-item constructs (Sujan *et al.*, 1994; Van Yperen & Janssen, 2002) ensured validity. Findings confirm the model's coherence and value in sustaining engagement in resource-limited settings.

### **Conclusion and Future Work**

This study presents a model for sustaining internal stakeholder engagement in non-traditional MOPs under volatile, resource-limited conditions. Integrating organizational resilience and multi-organization structure, highlights leadership, adaptive resource use, innovation, and coordination as key enablers. Applied to a journalism MOP in Palestine, it addresses challenges in fragile contexts and offers relevance to sectors like humanitarian aid, crisis education, and emergency health. Future research should test the model across sectors, track its evolution, and assess technology's role in strengthening engagement, while developing tools and training to support resilient collaboration in high-risk projects.

### **Study Limitations**

This study has five key limitations. First, its focus on Palestinian journalism limits broader applicability. Second, the small qualitative sample reduces generalizability. Third, cross-sectional data prevented analysis of engagement over time. Fourth, access to external stakeholders (such as funders or policy-level coordinators) was restricted. Lastly, future studies should examine the quality and dynamics of internal relationships to better understand their role in sustaining engagement.

### **Recommendations and Proposals**

Based on the findings, organizations in volatile, resource-limited contexts should enhance adaptive leadership through targeted programs to sustain cohesion and trust. Flexible resource management with contingency planning supports engagement during disruptions. Promoting innovation, learning, and clear engagement protocols, communication (feedback, and role clarity) maintains alignment and stakeholder commitment.

### **Future Research Directions**

Applying this framework in healthcare, education, and humanitarian aid could test its transferability. Longitudinal research may reveal resilience–engagement evolution, while examining PMOs' roles could uncover alignment strategies. Studying stakeholder relationships may further deepen understanding of engagement in complex environments.

### **Declaration of AI-Assisted Technology Usage**

This work used AI-assisted tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot AI (Paraphrasing Tool), to support drafting, improve language clarity, and enhance text organization. These tools were used solely to assist the authors in presenting their original ideas more clearly and professionally. All ideas, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions are entirely the authors' own, reflecting original research and critical thought. Ethical guidelines, including those by Elsevier, were followed to ensure responsible and transparent AI use in academic writing.

### **Disclosure Statement**

– **Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:** The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

- **Availability of Data and Materials:** Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.
- **Authors Contribution:** First Author – Walid S. S. Nassar, PhD student: Responsible for all aspects of the study, including conception and design, data collection, analysis, and manuscript preparation. Second Author – Prof. Dr. Majda Bastič: Provided critical oversight of the research methodology, verified its validity, reviewed the references, and evaluated all figures and illustrations related to the methodological framework. Third Author – Prof. Dr. Mladen Radujković: Ensured the coherence and scientific accuracy of the manuscript, reviewed the integration of citations, and supervised the consistency of the paper. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.
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