

**CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY, ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE, AND
CORPORATE PURPOSE: A TRIPLE CONCEPT FOR ACHIEVING LONG-TERM
PROSPERITY**

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Cite this article:

Florez-Jimenez MP, Lleo A, Danvila-del-Valle I, Sánchez-Marín G (2024), "Corporate sustainability, organizational resilience and corporate purpose: a triple concept for achieving long-term prosperity". *Management Decision*, Vol. 62 No. 7 pp. 2189–2213, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-06-2023-0938>

Corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and corporate purpose: a triple concept for achieving long-term prosperity

Abstract

Purpose – In this paper, we aim to narrow the gap caused by the lack of literature relating the three concepts of corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and corporate purpose in the context of corporations. We want to present a framework that explains how these three concepts are related and effectively merged for long-term corporate survival.

Design/methodology/approach – We present a systematic review. We first proposed initial search strategies to identify those documents that define each concept and to identify concepts with which each concept is associated. Subsequently, we designed a search strategy combining all three concepts and their associated concepts to gather and analyze all the possible studies that have tried to connect these concepts. We finally identify some gaps in the understanding of how these three concepts are related.

Findings – We contend that corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and corporate purpose merge to achieve long-term corporate survival. We explain that there exists a two-way relationship between these three variables. We also present gaps and future directions that should be addressed to foster an increase in knowledge about the relationships between corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and corporate purpose.

Originality – Nowadays, some authors do endeavor to explain how aspects such as corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and corporate purpose are crucial in the dynamic environment facing corporations every day. Nevertheless, there needs to be more understanding of how these three concepts are related and effectively merged for long-term corporate survival. This paper contributes to the literature by closing this gap.

Keywords Sustainability, Resilience, Purpose, Organization, Framework.

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The increased complexity of economic, environmental, and social systems leads to crises, uncertainty, and risk becoming common issues worldwide (Gorzeń-Mitka, 2016). Multiple economic sectors have been affected, and the survival of companies has been threatened (Marconatto *et al.*, 2022). One example is COVID-19, which has produced a disruptive and risky environment, menacing the sustainability of organizations (Al-Omouh *et al.*, 2022). For this reason, it is crucial for companies that want to have long-term prosperity—"the state of flourishing, thriving, good fortune and/or successful social status" (Szabo *et al.*, 2013, p. 2)—to be prepared to address the challenges of a dynamic world (Ivanov and Dolgui, 2020; Oliveira-Dias *et al.*, 2022).

Sustainability, resilience, and purpose are concepts that nowadays explain (individually) how organizations can achieve long-term prosperity. Some authors, such as Hahn and Figge (2011), Hahn and Kühnen (2013), and Oliveira-Dias *et al.* (2022) believe that organizations must pursue sustainable development to achieve long-term prosperity. Sustainable development permits opportunities to be embraced and risk to be managed from three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social (Hahn and Figge, 2011). Commitment to sustainable development helps manage and build a reputation with external stakeholders, helping to attract the best people to join the company (Azapagic, 2003). This is because the world understands the role of business in meeting societal challenges and acknowledges that the sustainable development agenda, including the sustainable development goals, cannot be achieved without business (Sasaki *et al.*, 2023). Sustainable development methods also lead to cost savings such as, for example, when organizations introduce new efficient processes and products (e.g., recycling) (MMSD, 2016). Additionally, ensuring sustainability implies

ensuring a healthy environment and well-being for workers and, thus, productivity (MMSD, 2016).

Former studies explain that long-term prosperity can be achieved through organizational resilience. Kotsios (2023) refers to resilience as a factor for achieving a business's long-term viability since it is an organization's ability to preserve functioning despite the presence of adversities and recover from unfortunate events to maintain its identity. Kantabutra and Ketprapakorn (2021) sustain that a resilient organization endures crises and persists over time by assisting members in using individual learning to increase corporate capacity for dealing with challenges of internally and externally changing environments. Adjusting to uncertainty and building a risk-aware culture could help organizations to become better positioned and better prepared to deal with the demands of high-impact events and to seek opportunities and gains through uncertainty (Gorzeń-Mitka, 2016). Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal (2016) sustain that resilience prepares organizations for the unexpected, to cope positively with it, and to sense and correct maladaptive tendencies.

Further, previous research presents corporate purpose as an essential foundation for long-term prosperity. A study from the EY Beacon Institute (2017) states that "73% of executives agree that having a well-integrated *purpose* helps their company navigate today's turbulent environment." (p. 13). Corporate purpose affects strategy (Aguilera, 2023; Gartenberg *et al.*, 2019) and performance, has a nonfinancial focus, and looks for the long-term success of the firm, helping every part of the corporation to change towards the same aim (Yemişçigil, 2019). Purpose helps managers overcome their "myopia" in response to crises and uncertainty by helping them expose new insights, see issues holistically, and sustain focus and direction (Ocasio *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, having a corporate purpose elicits among stakeholders both trust in the organization and a sense of belonging, strong relationships, and collaboration, with which any unexpected, complex issue can be successfully addressed

(Collins and Saliba, 2020; Polman and Winston, 2021).

Although concepts of sustainability, resilience, and purpose explain (individually) how organizations can achieve long-term prosperity, it is unclear how interconnected they are in scholarly research. For example, a few works, such as Collins and Saliba's (2020) and Liu *et al.*'s (2020), connect these three concepts (corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and corporate purpose). Collins and Saliba's (2020) work, through a qualitative study case, argues that shared purpose brings stakeholders together, strengthening the firm's resilience. They also show how stakeholders perceive purpose-driven companies to have sustainability as a core value. Liu *et al.*'s (2020) work, through a theoretical framework, argues that an authentic purpose favors resilience amid the complex and fast-changing environment. They also sustain that firms are obliged, now more than ever, to adopt sustainable practices.

Other scholars connect just two of the three concepts (corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and corporate purpose). For example, academics that connect corporate purpose and sustainability usually argue that sustainability should be part of the organization's purpose to serve humankind (Anninos and Chytiris, 2012; Balmer, 2017; Cheng *et al.*, 2010), i.e., organizations should pursue sustainability as part of their main goal. Other researchers propose sustainability, specifically economic sustainability, as a fundamental resource with which to continue developing organizational purpose (Geok, 2018). Academic publications that connect resilience and sustainability usually sustain that resilience is necessary for sustainability (Missimer, Robèrt and Broman, 2017; Sacchetti and Tortia, 2014; Tajuddin *et al.*, 2017). Resilience can create a risk-aware culture that could help organizations become better positioned and better equipped to deal with the demands of high-impact events and seek opportunities and gains through uncertainty (Gorzeń-Mitka, 2016).

Considering the above, there seems to be a lack of research that tackles and explains holistically the relationship between corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, and

corporate purpose (SRP). Most existing investigations have proposed a linear relationship between two of these concepts. Further, no studies have brought together the different presented relationships to gain a systemic understanding of how these three concepts connect and contribute together to achieve long-term prosperity for an organization. A systemic perspective is missing on the achievement of organization long-term prosperity in this order of ideas. To help to close this gap, in this work, we aim to bring together, within a framework, the different trends regarding the relationship between these concepts and their associated words (as one concept is often associated with other concepts and/or replaced by them).

In order to identify all the documents that have connected SRP or their associated concepts, we conducted a systematic literature review (SLR). A systematic literature review is a methodology that finds existing studies, evaluates contributions, synthesizes information, and proposes conclusions about what is and is not known, minimizing bias (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). We initially proposed search strategies to identify those documents that define each concept and to identify concepts to which each concept is connected. Then, we designed a search strategy that connects all three concepts or their associated concepts to gather all the possible literature that have connected these concepts (SRP).

In this order of ideas, through an SLR, this paper aims to present some theoretical contributions. First, it presents a framework with the relationships between the three concepts (SRP). Second, this paper presents gaps and future directions regarding the relationships between SRP that future research could address to gain a better understanding of the above relationships. This contribution will help professionals, researchers, consultants, and business leaders better understand how these three concepts are related, prioritize initiatives, and design operative methodologies to help organizations achieve long-term prosperity.

To achieve the above, the next section presents a theoretical background with the conceptualization of the three concepts involved in SRP. Then, we describe the research

methodology used to carry out the systematic literature review to identify those documents that have been previously related to SRP. The following section presents, as a result, a framework that connects SRP. The fifth section outlines gaps and future directions. Finally, in the section on conclusions, we provide concluding remarks, the main theoretical contributions and the study's practical implications, and limitations.

2. Theoretical Framework

The literature describes SRP using various associated concepts; each construct has no univocal conception. For this reason, we consider it necessary to conceptualize each of these concepts.

2.1. Corporate sustainability. According to Smith and Lewis (2011), corporate sustainability refers to an organization's peak present performance that fuels a firm's long-term success through sustainable development (Boons and Lüdeke-Freund, 2013). Sustainable development is the process of utilizing resources to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of stakeholders or future generations to meet their own needs (Ahi and Searcy, 2013; Dyllick and Hockerts, 2017). Kajtazi *et al.* (2023, p. 3) sustain that "Businesses that aim to create sustainable development must create value that meets the requirements of all stakeholders and the natural environment."

One central concept helping to operationalize sustainable development is the triple bottom line approach, which implies a minimum environmental, economic, and social performance (Seuring and Müller, 2008). Taking this into account, we agree with previous scholars (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2017; Pagell and Wu, 2009; Seuring and Müller, 2008) that corporate sustainability is formed by the three dimensions of the triple bottom line (Figure 1): social development, economic development, and environmental development.

[HERE FIGURE 1]

Social development: refers to managing a corporation to strengthen the human capital of stakeholders and furthering the quality of life of its communities (Chow and Chen, 2012; Dyllick and Hockerts, 2017).

Economic development: means managing a company with cash flow sufficient to ensure return and liquidity for developing operations (Chow and Chen, 2012; Dyllick and Hockerts, 2017).

Environmental development: means managing a company so that its products and its activity do not degrade eco-system services (Chow and Chen, 2012; Dyllick and Hockerts, 2017).

2.2. *Organizational resilience.* According to Pettit *et al.* (2010), resilience embraces risk management and crisis management programs to enable an organization to survive unforeseen disruptions and create competitive advantage; it helps the organization address risk (Pettit *et al.*, 2010) and future crises (Sigala, 2020). He *et al.* (2023, p. 148) state that resilience refers to an organization's "capacity to resist major business disruptions due to unforeseeable, unexpected, or catastrophic events, leading organizational systems beyond the planned service limits without serious losses."

We regard that resilience implies planning (before), responding (throughout), and recovering (after) from unexpected events by maintaining continuity of operations (Jüttner and Maklan, 2011). Being prepared can be related to a proactive or planning capacity, and responding and recovering can be associated with a reactive or adaptative capacity through overcoming challenges (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Based on the above, we propose that

organizational resilience can have two dimensions (Figure 2): planning and adaptability. Risk management and crisis management initiatives, respectively, can support these dimensions.

[HERE FIGURE 2]

Planning: Resilience enables corporations to prepare for unexpected events (Jüttner and Maklan, 2011). Proactive resilience enables setbacks to become opportunities for growth. Thus, resilience places a unique positive value on risk factors that may otherwise be viewed as threats that increase the probability of negative outcomes or decrease the probability of positive ones (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Planned resilience is supported by risk management initiatives, which require the examination of all possible outcomes of a project or process, then weighing the potential returns against the potential risks of the investment (Pettit *et al.*, 2010).

Adaptability: Resilience recognizes the need for adaptation (with regard to operations and resources (Ivanov *et al.*, 2018)) and even improvisation in situations characterized by change and uncertainty to react to stressful events (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2011). The resilience capacity uniquely searches for and finds significance despite circumstances that do not lend themselves to planning and preparation (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). Adaptation embraces response and recovery (Jüttner and Maklan, 2011). Response means reaction to a specific stimulus, and recovery means returning to ‘normal’ stable or steady-state conditions (Spiegler *et al.*, 2012). A quick response implies minimizing the time to react to disruptions and beginning the recovery stage (Spiegler *et al.*, 2012). Adaptive resilience is supported by crisis management initiatives, which implies “the individual and organizational readjustment of basic assumptions, as well as behavioral

and emotional responses aimed at recovery and readjustment”(Williams *et al.*, 2017, p. 735).

2.3. *Corporate purpose.* According to Harrison *et al.* (2020), the purpose is not a marketing campaign; it is the “company’s reason for being, the “why” behind an organization’s existence.” (Gartenberg, 2023, p. 2). In this way, it is the force for achieving profits; it is not the sole pursuit of profits (Harrison *et al.*, 2020). We agree that purpose embraces identity (Muñoz *et al.*, 2018) and shapes it over time (Diochon and Anderson, 2011). Further, corporations with strong corporate purpose are those in which employees hold strong beliefs about the meaning and impact of their work (Eden and Huxham, 2001). Additionally, purpose refers to “the broad mission of the business and the problem it solves.” (Muñoz *et al.*, 2018). According to the above, we propose that corporate purpose is formed by three dimensions (Figure 3): identity, meaning, and mission.

[HERE FIGURE 3]

Identity: organizational identity explains what the organization is (Yemişçigil, 2019). It answers the question of “who we are” and explains the organization’s uniqueness (Diochon and Anderson, 2011). Identity is the 'personality' and 'soul' of the corporation, the whole presentation of an organization, the sum of all the elements that make it distinctive, its personality, and how the company views itself (Abratt, 1989). The organization’s identity emerges from the interaction among various stakeholders within and outside the organization (Diochon and Anderson, 2011).

Meaning: meaning states what is significant for the corporation (Allan *et al.*, 2019). Meaning gives a reason for being (Yemişçigil, 2019) and is one of the intrinsic

motivation drivers of higher-quality and more creative work (Henderson, 2020). Understanding why we do what we do and why this is meaningful and valuable is core to understanding who we are (i.e., identity) (van Knippenberg, 2020).

Mission: mission is a succinct expression of *corporate purpose* (Abratt, 1989; Rey *et al.*, 2019). The mission is how the *corporate purpose* has been operationalized, reflecting the corporation's desired impact on its main stakeholders (Rey *et al.*, 2019).

3. Methodology: Review scope and coding information.

In this research, we aim to analyze what the relationships are between sustainability, resilience, and purpose proposed so far in the literature to present a framework that explains how these three concepts together can lead the organization to long-term prosperity. In doing so we also aim to identify gaps in the research field under study. To these ends, we conducted an initial search in Web of Science and Scopus, but we realized that the Web of Science documents selected were all contained in the Scopus search. In light of this, we only present in this paper the search used in Scopus, which is a large-scale database collector (Liu, 2013) with many premier journals and which covers most indexed journals in every field of research (Mongeon and Paul-Hus, 2016). Figure 4 presents the adopted methodology.

[HERE FIGURE 4]

We selected and read seminal articles for each main concept (corporate sustainability, organizational resilience, or corporate purpose) in order to find concepts associated with each main concept and to create a complete search strategy. To identify the seminal articles we i) searched in the title, abstract, or keywords search fields (by replacing ‘purpose’ with ‘corporate purpose’ or ‘organization purpose’ since sometimes ‘purpose’ appears in the abstract to make

reference to the purpose of the document), ii) used the Business, Management and Accounting (BMA) filter to narrow the search to corporate context, iii) included articles in English, iv) included the most influential articles (articles published in the top 10 percent journals) (Meuer *et al.*, 2020), and v) included the 10 most cited articles that describe the core concept (Lazaretti *et al.*, 2020). For the above, we crossed in Excel the resulting articles with the list of journals in the top 10 percent citesscore obtained in the CiteScore Quartiles metric of Scopus (Elsevier, 2017). Next, we organized the articles from the most to the least cited and skimmed them until the 10 most cited articles that describe the core concept were identified (Lazaretti *et al.*, 2020). Table 1 presents the search strategy used and the seminal documents selected for each of the core concepts involved in the SRP term.

[HERE TABLE 1]

As a second step, we conducted a comprehensive search strategy that included core concepts and their associated concepts. The search strategy followed two criteria: i) searching in the title, abstract, or keywords search fields and ii) using the Business, Management, and Accounting (BMA) filter (Table 2). The completed search strategy resulted in 108 documents, meaning that 108 documents dealt with the main concepts or at least one of their associated concepts.

[HERE TABLE 2]

To carry out the selection of documents, we reviewed the abstracts of the identified documents to determine their relevance. We considered two criteria: i) each concept had to be used consistently with the research, guided by the description of the seminal documents, and

ii) the documents had to relate these concepts to a corporate setting. We subsequently read the full text of each selected document to ensure that it was indeed relevant for inclusion, considering the criteria of the previous step.

Out of all the 108 documents originally selected, 54 were discarded because they were not consistent with the research objective, (e.g., those that had used the term *meaning* when referring to the meaning of a concept, not as the meaning of the organization). In addition, after we had revised the remaining 54 documents, 25 further documents were discarded as they did not situate the concepts within a corporate setting (e.g., those that referred to urban fields). In the end, only 29 potential documents were read in-depth for our systematic literature review study.

Considering the papers resulting from the comprehensive search strategy that included core concepts and their associated concepts, we identified relationships between the core concepts. Finally, we performed a general analysis of the gaps and future directions based on the information collected during the previous phases.

4. Results

Table 3 shows the 29 selected documents, their document type (empirical or theoretical), and the most relevant trends regarding their relationship to SRP.

[HERE TABLE 3]

To identify the trends, we analyze in each of the 29 documents which purpose-associated keywords were related to which resilience-associated keywords and the nature of their relation, which and how purpose-associated keywords were related to sustainability-associated keywords, and which and how resilience-associated keywords were related to sustainability-associated keywords. Putting together the results, we created a framework (Figure 5) and we

found out that there is a two-way relationship between *corporate purpose* and *organizational resilience*, between *organizational resilience* and *corporate sustainability*, and between *corporate purpose* and *corporate sustainability*. Following, we describe each of these two-way relationships.

[HERE FIGURE 5]

4.1. Corporate purpose and Organizational resilience. On the one hand, it is possible to describe how corporate purpose can affect organizational resilience (Figure 5, Arrow a). Empirically, Collins and Saliba (2020) demonstrate that when the corporate purpose is shared, it helps build and strengthen organizational resilience. Collaborating around a common purpose creates a sense of belonging among stakeholders and a stable relationship between them, making corporations more resilient to change and any daunting challenges they may face (Collins and Saliba, 2020).

Additionally, Tajuddin *et al.* (2017) validate through a study case that corporations can cultivate *organizational resilience* when they have an identity. Corporate identity permits integration between senior management, employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders (Tajuddin *et al.*, 2017). At the same time, corporate identity aligns employees' behavior to ensure that their actions reinforce the brand messages and establish a strong corporate brand thereby establishing a corporate culture (Tajuddin *et al.*, 2017).

The above is also proposed theoretically by Liu *et al.* (2020), who sustain that an authentic purpose and identity favor resilience within a complex and fast-changing environment. Roberts and Dutton (2009), for their part believe that "individuals can develop resilience as they progressively learn through experiences of confronting adverse circumstances, including identity threats" (Roberts and Dutton, 2009, p. 31).

Roorda (2018) empirically supports that updating the mission and identity relating to the triple bottom line aspects contributes to *organizational resilience*. This he affirms is true to the extent that identifying with sustainable orientation allows continuous attention to be paid to both the short and the long term results, improving work fundamentally and in an innovative fashion at the same time as solving problems and eradicating their causes (Roorda, 2018).

Other literature does not refer directly to *organizational resilience* but to adaptation. Mannen et al. (2012) present that aligning an organization as closely as possible to its respective core purpose and mission in all of its actions contributes to a strong organizational culture when the need arises for adaptability in response to threats. Zapata *et al.* (2016) argue that commitment to the organization's mission favors knowledge management between stakeholders, which ensures rapid adaptation to dynamic environments.

As mission and identity are dimensions of *corporate purpose* (Section 2.3), and adaptation is a dimension of *organizational resilience* (Section 2.2), we propose that corporations with a shared purpose may be more resilient.

On the other hand, it is possible to describe how *organizational resilience* can affect *corporate purpose* (Figure 5, Arrow b). Missimer *et al.* (2017) consider that *organizational resilience* helps retain corporate identity during disturbances since it focuses on absorbing and shaping change. In a complementary way, Paniccia and Baiocco (2020) consider adaptation a prerequisite to combining or aligning identities from different systems (organizations, people, regions). Additionally, Saha and Saha (2020) propose that a process of continuous adaptation helps to overcome societal challenges and develops the social mission. Additionally, Mateescu *et al.* (2017) and Al Mashaqbeh *et al.* (2018) present that risk management indicators are used to measure the organization's mission achievement and thus help to achieve said mission.

As we consider *adaptation* and *risk management* as part of *organizational resilience* (Section 2.2) and *identity* and *mission* as part of *corporate purpose* (Section 2.3), we propose that *organizational resilience* fosters maturity in the *corporate purpose*.

4.2 Organizational resilience and Corporate sustainability. On the one hand, it is possible to describe how organizational resilience can affect corporate sustainability (Figure 5, Arrow c). Sacchetti and Tortia (2014) demonstrate through a study case that when corporations are resilient, they can achieve long-term prosperity. They say that innovation strategies such as strengthening network ties generate organizational resilience and, thus, feedback mechanisms that permit more effective and sustainable solutions to problems (Sacchetti and Tortia, 2014). Qualitative study cases such as Tajuddin *et al.*'s (2017, p. 140) support that organizational resilience contributes to long-term prosperity, saying that corporations “should look for strategic tools to assist them to be resilient for their business sustainability.”

Additionally, Pendergast (2009), Geok (2018), and Zapata *et al.* (2016) demonstrate that a corporation that wants long-term prosperity requires adaptation to changing local circumstances. Fatoki (2019) shows that adaptability may help an organization react positively to sustainability initiatives in order to be competitive and achieve long term success.

Sidali *et al.* (2015) propose that environmental adaptation is necessary to maintain sustainable development. Missimer *et al.* (2017) identify adaptive capacity as being essential to sustain a social system. One of these aspects is diversity (with regard to characteristics such as gender, age, personality, and skills), which ensures flexibility and helps cope with change, facilitating redevelopment and innovation following disturbance and crises to achieve long-term prosperity. Metcalf and Benn (2012) sustain that adaptability is how the organization changes internally to enable its continued existence within the wider CIDEESS—the complex interconnected and dynamic environmental, economic and social systems within which

business is embedded as an agent in the world—and to keep contributing to the triple bottom line. The above, interaction with the CIDEESS may increase efficiency, and pursuing efficiency could be interpreted as the triple bottom line approach given that environmental and social issues that are internal to organizations need to be managed efficiently to ensure they do not engage in social, environmental or financial waste (Metcalf and Benn, 2012).

Further, Bonfanti *et al.* (2016) and Sam Liu and Huang (2020) show that organizations which focus on risk management can integrate more easily with their territory of reference and pursue sustainability more effectively. Anninos and Chytiris (2012), say that “crisis management vision includes the refinement of management practice through the integration of specific factors in business strategy, which allows sustainable corporate growth.” (p. 61). This is complemented by Cortas (2020) who, using a case study, validates that when corporations recover from a crisis, they can achieve long-term prosperity. As explained in Section 2.2, given that recovery, crisis management, risk management, and adaptation are part of *organizational resilience*, we propose that organizations achieve sustainability when they are resilient. This is true to the extent that resilience affords the organizational ability to continue to deliver sustainable competitive performance.

On the other hand, it is possible to describe how *corporate sustainability* can affect *organizational resilience* (Figure 5, Arrow d). Zietlow *et al.* (2018) suggest that financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves supports organizations' risk management programs. Glushchenko *et al.* (2018) propose that in terms of global crisis management, it is necessary to elaborate a sustainable development strategy to provide a financial-economic state that will mitigate crisis factors. Additionally, Purcell (2019) sustains that social sustainability is achieved by shortening distances between those making the decisions and those impacted by the decisions. This drives the flow of successful ideas and helps the organization be far more robust and resilient when facing disruption (Purcell, 2019). Complementarily, Roorda (2018)

presents how *organizational resilience* increases when it pays explicit attention to aspects of sustainable development (local community, global human society, nature). In this way, it can anticipate challenges and gain a positive reputation (Roorda, 2018).

As we consider economic, social, and environmental development as dimensions of sustainable development (Section 2.1); and crisis management and risk management as part of *organizational resilience* (Section 2.2), we propose that contributing to sustainable development enables the development of *organizational resilience*.

4.3 Corporate purpose and Corporate sustainability. First of all, we consider it necessary to mention that sustainable development must feature within corporate purpose (Figure 5, Arrow e). Collins and Saliba (2020) and Cheng *et al.* (2010) demonstrate through a case study that purpose-driven corporations seek to improve the community or the environment beyond their economic goals. Pendergast (2009) demonstrates how delivering value to customers and satisfying stakeholders' needs becomes part of a mission. Theoretically, Anninos and Chytiris (2012), Balmer (2017), and Liu *et al.* (2020) propose that sustainable development should serve humankind and make an essential step toward welfare. Al Mashaqbeh *et al.* (2018) and Glushchenko *et al.* (2018) present sustainable development as part of the mission. Additionally, Roorda (2018) and Roberts and Dutton (2009) sustain that the triple bottom line is part of the corporate identity and mission, and Sidali *et al.* (2015) propose that sustainability should be part of identity.

Additionally, we propose that *corporate purpose* contributes directly to achieving *corporate sustainability* (Figure 5, Arrow f). Andrews (2017) shows how an identity focused on the environment helps employees effectively influence pro-environmental change. Theoretically, Roberts and Dutton (2009) argue that sustainability-focused identities provide employees with tools to understand why sustainability initiatives make sense for the firm and,

thus, bring beneficial outcomes, e.g., contributing to social, economic, and natural environment sustainability. Further, Balmer (2017) proposes that these sustainable identities ensure stakeholder identification with a corporate identity which translates into positive behaviors that support the organization's sustainability. In a similar vein, Saha and Sáha (2020) and Sam Liu and Huang (2020) propose that social mission-driven organizations generate creative new solutions to fulfill societal needs and meet sustainable development goals. The above is complemented by Fatoki (2019), who validates that there is a significant positive relationship between mission and environmental performance.

Finally, we propose that *corporate sustainability* contributes directly to achieving *corporate purpose* (Figure 5, Arrow g). Empirically, Sacchetti and Tortia (2014), Bonfanti *et al.* (2016), Zietlow *et al.* (2018), Geok (2018), and Cortas (2020) demonstrate through case studies that when corporations are economically sustainable, they will have resources to continue with their mission or purpose. More generally, Mannen *et al.* (2012) state that development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations of stakeholders (sustainable development as we understand it) yields an abundance of resources necessary for mission continuity. As we proposed in Section 2.3, for a purposeful organization, the mission could express the corporate purpose, we sustain that sustainable development fosters the continuation of *corporate purpose*.

5. Gaps and lines of future research

The framework presented in this research supports theories of previous documents about the impact of the corporate purpose on organizational resilience capabilities. Nevertheless, more knowledge is needed about how the relationship between organizational purpose and organizational resilience is developed, i.e., more explanation is required about how mediator and moderator variables interact between purpose and resilience. For example, a *sense of*

belonging is proposed by Collins and Saliba (2020) as a mediator between collaborating around a common purpose and organizational resilience, nevertheless it is necessary to study more thoroughly, on the one hand, the relationship between a shared purpose and a sense of belonging, and on the other hand, the relationship between a sense of belonging and organizational resilience. A feeling of belongingness could be evaluated and measured with the sense of community variable (Colenberg *et al.*, 2020) since, according to Davidson and Cotter (1991), people who have an elevated sense of community towards a particular referent group have a feeling of belongingness; they will feel a strong emotional cohesion within the group (Davidson and Cotter, 1991). A sense of community could result from a feeling of importance, mutual benefit, and shared emotions with others at work (Colenberg *et al.*, 2020).

Knowledge management is also proposed by Zapata *et al.* (2016) as a mediator between collaborating around a common purpose and organizational resilience. Nevertheless, it is necessary to study in depth, on the one hand, the relationship between a shared purpose and knowledge management and, on the other hand, the relationship between knowledge management and organizational resilience. Knowledge management could be evaluated and measured using, for example, scales such as Bennett and Gabriel's (1999). Knowledge management is the management of the information available to an organization; its creation and utilization in organizational activities build on what is already known and extend it further (Bennett and Gabriel, 1999).

Additionally, more knowledge is needed about when organizational resilience has a greater impact on sustainability. It has been proposed that resilient organizations have an adaptive capacity which helps them cope with change. Diversity is proposed as an essential aspect of sustaining a social system, ensuring flexibility, and helping cope with change. Nevertheless, more knowledge is needed about how diversity impacts the relationship between organizational resilience and sustainability. Some studies suggest that evaluating each diversity

attribute as a distinct theoretical construct leads to more precise results (Badal and Harter, 2014), so it would be necessary to analyze theoretically and empirically how attributes such as gender, age, or personality, moderate the impact of organizational resilience on sustainable behaviors. Additionally, an analysis of other moderation effects is recommended to help the organization make decisions that positively impact sustainable behaviors.

Moreover, this research proposes other relationships between SRP. It suggests a two-way relationship between the three elements of SRP. First, this research indicates that resilience also impacts purpose. Resilience capacities help organizations retain their identity during disturbances. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research that validates the above impact. It would be interesting to validate through longitudinal analysis the feedback impact that organizational resilience has on the corporate purpose. This would also allow us to determine if there were positive feedback between purpose and resilience. To this end, the scale proposed by Lleo *et al.* (2021) for measuring purpose implementation and the scale proposed by Prayag *et al.* (2018) for measuring organizational resilience could be used. It would be necessary to select a study case and measure shared purpose in $t=1$, organizational resilience in $t=2$, and shared purpose again in $t=3$.

Second, this research suggests that it is not just organizational resilience that impacts organizational sustainability, but the latter impacts the former since it permits organizations to anticipate challenges and reduces risks by considering stakeholders' interests and investing in risk management. Additionally, sustainability provides a financial-economic state that will reduce the crisis factors. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research that validates the above impact. It will be interesting to validate the feedback impact between organizational resilience and corporate sustainability through longitudinal analysis. For the above, scales proposed by Prayag *et al.* (2018) for measuring organizational resilience and scales proposed by Chow and Chen (2012) for measuring organizational sustainability could be used. It would be necessary

to select study cases and measure organizational resilience in $t=1$, corporate sustainability in $t=2$, and organizational resilience again in $t=3$.

Third, this research proposes a direct and two-way relationship between corporate purpose and organizational sustainability, and even further, suggests that sustainability should be part of the organizational purpose. In this way, when sustainability is part of organizational purpose, it provides employees with tools to understand why sustainability initiatives make sense for the firm, it permits stakeholder identification with the corporate identity, and it translates into positive behaviours that support the organization's sustainability. This sustainability yields an abundance of resources needed for purpose continuity. Nevertheless, more knowledge about how to measure the level of sustainability in an organization is necessary. Future studies should clarify which sustainability dimensions, i.e., economic, social, and environmental, should be present for a corporate purpose to be sustainable, e.g., economic and social, economic and environmental, or all three together.

Additionally, more research is necessary to explain theoretically and empirically how employees' sustainable behaviors are reflected in sustainable objective indicators in organizations. According to Ruiz-Perez *et al.* (2021), sustainable behaviors can measure organizational citizenship behaviors- organizational citizenship behaviors for other individuals (OCBI), organizational citizenship behaviors for the environment (OCBE), and extra-role behaviors (OCB). OCBI measures how much employees care about the well-being of their co-workers (Ruiz-Perez *et al.*, 2021) and other community concerns (Ciarniene *et al.*, 2020). OCBE measures how employees contribute to environmental improvement (Ruiz-Perez *et al.*, 2021), environmental integrity, and the protection and saving of natural resources (Ciarniene *et al.*, 2020). OCBO measures how employees use their initiative to engage in behavior that encourages sustainability in the work context beyond their formal job tasks (Ruiz-Perez *et al.*, 2021).

6. Conclusions

6.1 Concluding remarks

Nowadays, it is crucial for companies that want to have long-term prosperity to be prepared to face the challenges of a dynamic world. Some authors explain how aspects such as *corporate Sustainability*, *organizational Resilience*, and *corporate Purpose* can help organizations survive in the environment that corporations must face every day. Nevertheless, there is little understanding of how these three concepts are related and how they can be effectively merged for long-term corporate survival. Few academics relate the three concepts or propose sustainability as being part of corporate purpose and say that the last one impacts organizational resilience. Most academic publications relate two of these concepts and posit that sustainability should be part of the organization's purpose to serve. Others propose economic sustainability as a fundamental resource to continue developing organizational purpose. Others sustain that resilience is necessary for sustainability.

Through a systematic literature review that considers SRP and their associated concepts, we obtained a two-way relationship between SRP in this research. Corporate purpose impacts organizational resilience, but the latter also impacts the former since it focuses on the ability to shape change and permits an organization to integrate with the systems within which it is embedded and keep its purpose alive. Additionally, organizational resilience impacts organizational sustainability, but the impact also exists in the opposite way since sustainability permits organizations to anticipate challenges and reduces risks and crisis factors. Further, we saw that sustainability should be part of the corporate purpose, corporate purpose directly affects organizational sustainability, and sustainability impacts corporate purpose. When sustainability is part of the organizational purpose, it permits stakeholder identification with the corporate purpose and translates into positive behaviours that support the organization's

sustainability. This sustainability yields an abundance of resources needed for purpose continuity. Nevertheless, most connections between SRP have only been explained briefly, so more explanation about how each of the relationships is developed is needed.

6.2 Theoretical contributions

This paper has two principal theoretical contributions. First, it presents a framework highlighting the relationships between SRP presented in the literature. It is the first research that proposes a two-way relationship between these concepts. This enriches the theory on how organizations can achieve long-term prosperity in a changing world and when said organizations are agents in a highly complex array of interconnected dynamic systems. Second, this paper presents gaps and future directions that should be addressed to help increase knowledge about the relationships between SRP and help organizations take decisions based on knowledge that conduct them to long-term prosperity.

6.3 Practical implications

The above contributions also have practical implications that will help professionals, consultants, and business leaders to prioritize initiatives and design operative methodologies to help organizations develop their *corporate purpose, organizational resilience, and corporate sustainability*. For example, organizations need to be aware that for long-term prosperity, everything starts with a purpose, and sustainability has to be part of that purpose. To this end, organizations should go back to the initial question, "what are we here for" and "what goals beyond that of profit maximization does the organization want to achieve" (the social or environmental contribution of the organization). Additionally, for purpose to have a genuine impact, organizations need to live a purpose; it is not enough to have a purpose statement. The above implies that the three dimensions of purpose (identity, meaning, and

mission) have to be shared with employees. Leaders should prioritize strategies that favor a shared purpose (Rey *et al.*, 2019). This shared purpose will contribute to organizational resilience and sustainability, and as a result, the organizational purpose will be kept alive.

6.4 Limitations

This research has some limitations. It does not classify documents into academic traditions or identify theories to which SRP has been related. It will be interesting to classify which academic traditions and theories have been related to the three concepts of SRP so more specific gaps can be identified and more specific contributions can be addressed to better understand how organizations can achieve long-term prosperity. For the above, bibliometric research methods and bibliographic coupling analysis can be used to identify which research aspects are aligned, how they contribute to the different theories that tackle them, and how it might be interesting to overcome specific gaps in each tradition. Another limitation of this study is that the search strategy sought to identify papers that related the three concepts of SRP, not any two of them. To complement this framework, future research could analyze the papers resulting from the interception of pairs of these concepts.

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Tables

Core concept	Search strategy	Seminal documents
Corporate Sustainability	TITLE-ABS-KEY (sustainability) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j"))	Ahi and Searcy (2013); Boons and Lüdeke-Freund (2013); Dyllick and Hockerts (2017); Linton et al. (2007); Murray et al. (2017); Pagell and Wu (2009); Saberi et al. (2018); Seuring and Müller (2008); Smith and Lewis (2011); Tukker (2004)
Organizational Resilience	TITLE-ABS-KEY (resilien*) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j"))	Ahi and Searcy (2013); Avey et al. (2009); Avey et al. (2011); Ivanov et al. (2018); Jüttner and Maklan (2011); Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011); Luthans (2002); Pettit et al. (2010); Sigala (2020); Youssef and Luthans (2007)
Corporate Purpose	TITLE (purpose) OR KEY (purpose) OR ABS ("corporate purpose" OR "organizational purpose") AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j"))	Abela (2001); Becker et al. (2017); Diochon and Anderson (2011); Duska (1997); Eden and Huxham (2001); Harrison et al. (2020); Moore (2012); Muñoz et al. (2018); Sheth (2020); Wilson and Post (2013)

Table 1. Search strategies to select seminal documents

Main concepts	Search strategy per concept	Complete search strategy
Sustainability	TITLE-ABS-KEY (sustainability OR "sustainable development" OR "Triple bottom line") AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI"))	(TITLE (purpose OR mission OR identity OR meaning) OR KEY (purpose OR mission OR identity OR meaning) OR ABS ("corporate purpose" OR "organizational purpose" OR mission OR identity OR meaning)) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (resilien*OR adaptation OR "adaptive management" OR "adaptive capacity" OR adaptability OR "risk management" OR "crisis management" OR recovery) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (sustainability OR "sustainable development" OR "Triple bottom line") AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI"))
Purpose	(TITLE (purpose OR mission OR identity OR meaning) OR KEY (purpose OR mission OR identity OR meaning) OR ABS ("corporate purpose" OR "organizational purpose" OR mission OR identity OR meaning)) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI"))	
Resilience	TITLE-ABS-KEY (resilien* OR adaptation OR "adaptive management" OR "adaptive capacity" OR adaptability OR "risk management" OR "crisis management" OR recovery AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "BUSI"))	

Table 2. Search strategies

Document	Document Type	Trends
Al Mashaqbeh et al. (2018)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Sustainability as part of a mission. Risk management helps to achieve the organization's mission.
Andrews (2017)	Empirical/ Qualitative data	Environmental identity helps employees to be effective in influencing pro-environmental change.
Anninos and Chytiris (2012)	Theoretical	Sustainable development should be a purpose. Crisis management encourages sustainability.
Balmer (2017)	Theoretical	Sustainability as part of the corporate identity and purpose. Stakeholder identification with a corporate identity translates into positive behaviours that support the organization's sustainability.
Bonfanti et al. (2016)	Empirical/ Qualitative data	Economic sustainability as a means of achieving social mission objectives. Risk management can help develop the organization's sustainability.
Cheng et al. (2010)	Empirical/ Qualitative data	Sustainable development as part of the organization's purpose.
Collins and Saliba (2020)	Empirical / Qualitative data	Purpose strengthens the firm's resilience. Purpose-driven corporations seek sustainable development.
Cortas (2020)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Recovery plans bring economic sustainability. Economic sustainability allows the mission to continue.
Fatoki (2019)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Adaptability helps an organization react positively to sustainability. A mission aligned with sustainable initiatives favors sustainability.
Geok (2018)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Economic sustainability is necessary for achieving the organization's purpose. Adaptation as a prerequisite to achieve sustainability.
Glushchenko et al. (2018)	Theoretical	Crisis management should consider sustainable development. Sustainable development as part of the mission.
Liu et al. (2020)	Theoretical	Sustainable development as part of the purpose. Purpose and identity favor resilience.
Mannen et al. (2012)	Empirical/ Qualitative data	Purpose/mission allows adaptability. Sustainable development yields an abundance of resources necessary for the mission continuity.

Mateescu et al. (2017)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Risk management helps to achieve the organization's mission.
Metcalf and Benn (2012)	Theoretical	Adaptation allows keeping contributing to the triple bottom line.
Missimer et al. (2017)	Theoretical	Adaptive capacity is part of resilience. Resilience is an essential aspect of achieving sustainability. Resilience permits the organization to retain the same identity.
Paniccia and Baiocco (2020)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Adaptation as a prerequisite to align identities.
Pendergast (2009)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Adaptation favors sustainability. Social sustainability becomes part of a mission.
Purcell (2019)	Empirical/ Qualitative data	Social sustainability enhances resilience.
Roberts and Dutton (2009)	Theoretical	Identity cultivates resilience. Triple bottom as part of mission and identity. Sustainability-focused identities ensure sustainability.
Roorda (2018)	Empirical/ Qualitative data	Sustainable development increases resilience. Mission and identity contribute to resilience. Triple bottom as part of mission and identity.
Sacchetti and Tortia (2014)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Resilience is necessary for sustainability. Economic sustainability is a means of achieving social mission objectives.
Saha and Saha (2020)	Theoretical	Social mission-driven organizations favor sustainable development goals. Adaptation facilitates running across societal challenges and developing the social mission.
Sam Liu and Huang (2020)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Social mission-driven organizations favor sustainable development goals. Risk management can help develop the organization's sustainability.
Santos et al. (2014)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Adaptation favors sustainability.
Sidali et al. (2015)	Theoretical	Sustainability requires adaptation. Sustainability should be part of the identity.
Tajuddin et al. (2017)	Empirical/ Qualitative data	Resilience contributes to sustainability. Identity can cultivate resilience.
Zapata Cantu and Mondragon (2016)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Commitment to the organization's mission favors rapid adaptation Adaptation as a prerequisite to achieve sustainability

Zietlow et al. (2018)	Empirical/ Quantitative data	Economic sustainability supports risk management. Economic sustainability as a means of achieving the objectives of the social mission.
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Table 3. Selected documents and relevant trends

Figures

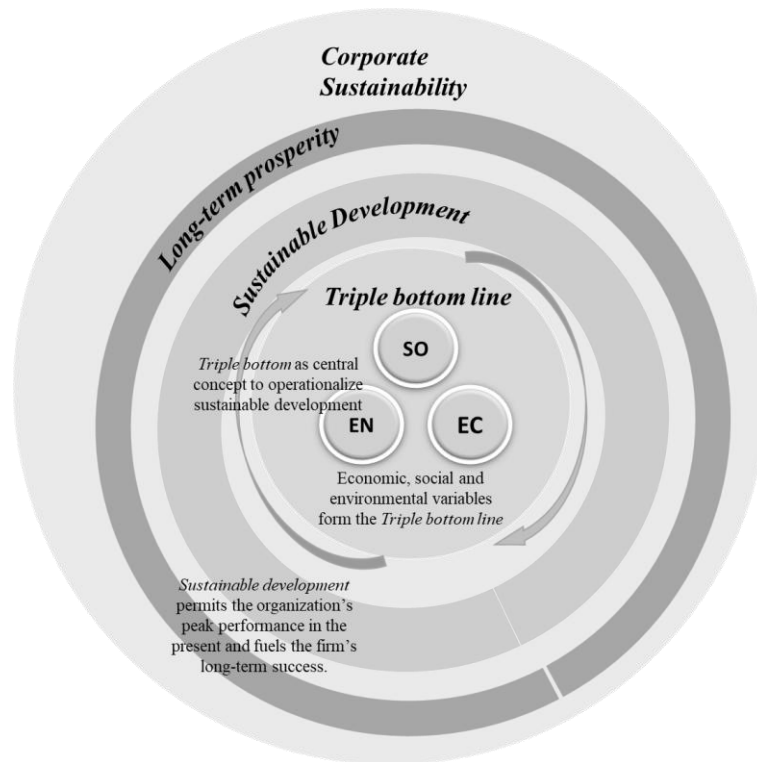


Figure 1. Conceptualization for corporate sustainability. Social development (**SO**), Economic development (**EC**), Environmental development (**EN**).

Source: Own elaboration

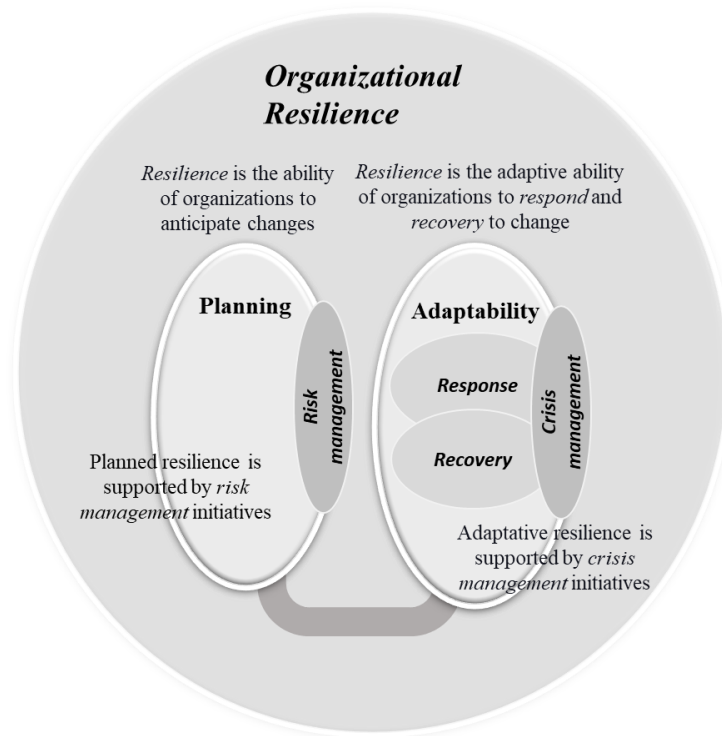


Figure 2. Conceptualization for Organizational Resilience
Source: Own elaboration

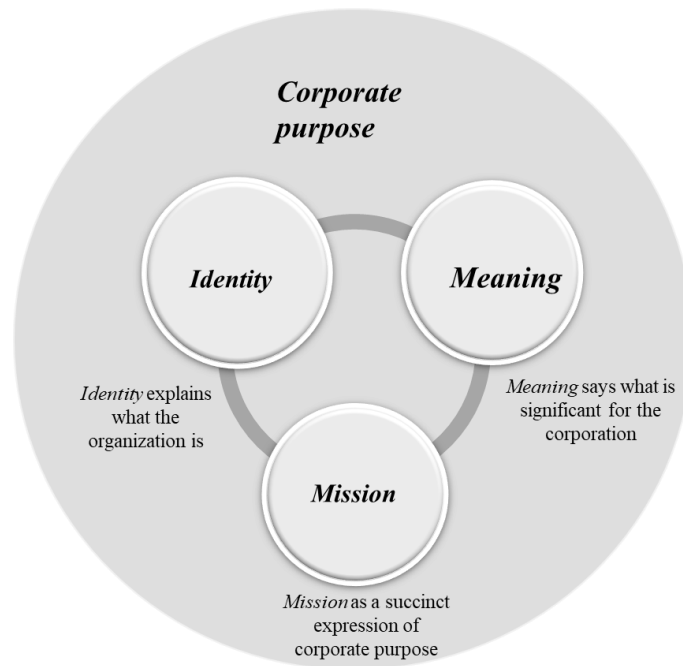


Figure 3. Conceptualization for corporate purpose
Source: Own elaboration

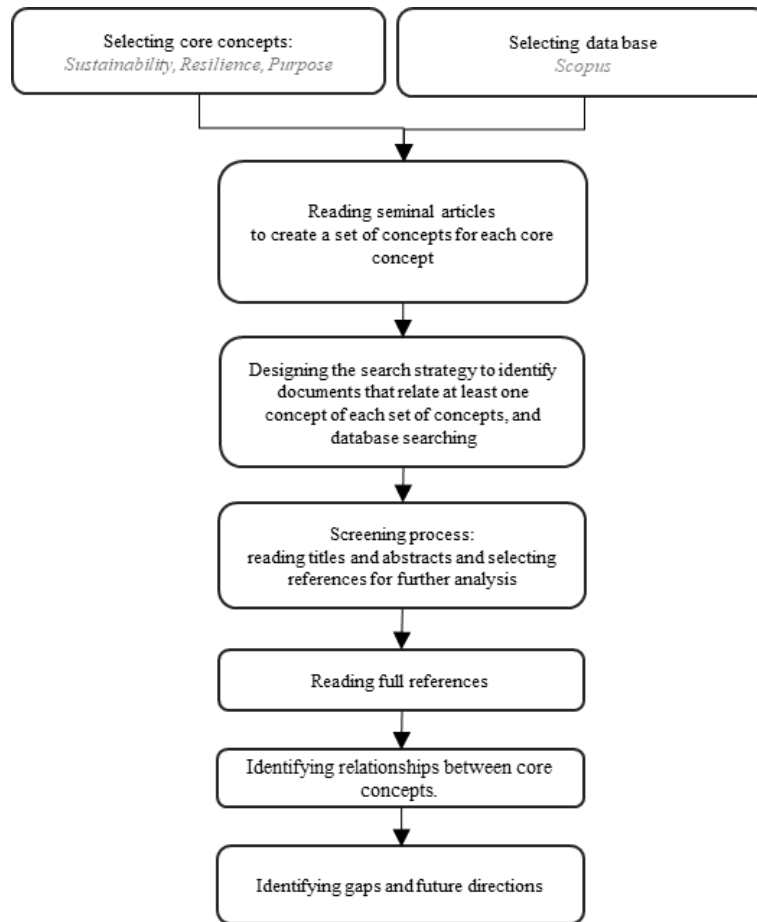


Figure 4. Flowchart describing the methodology adopted

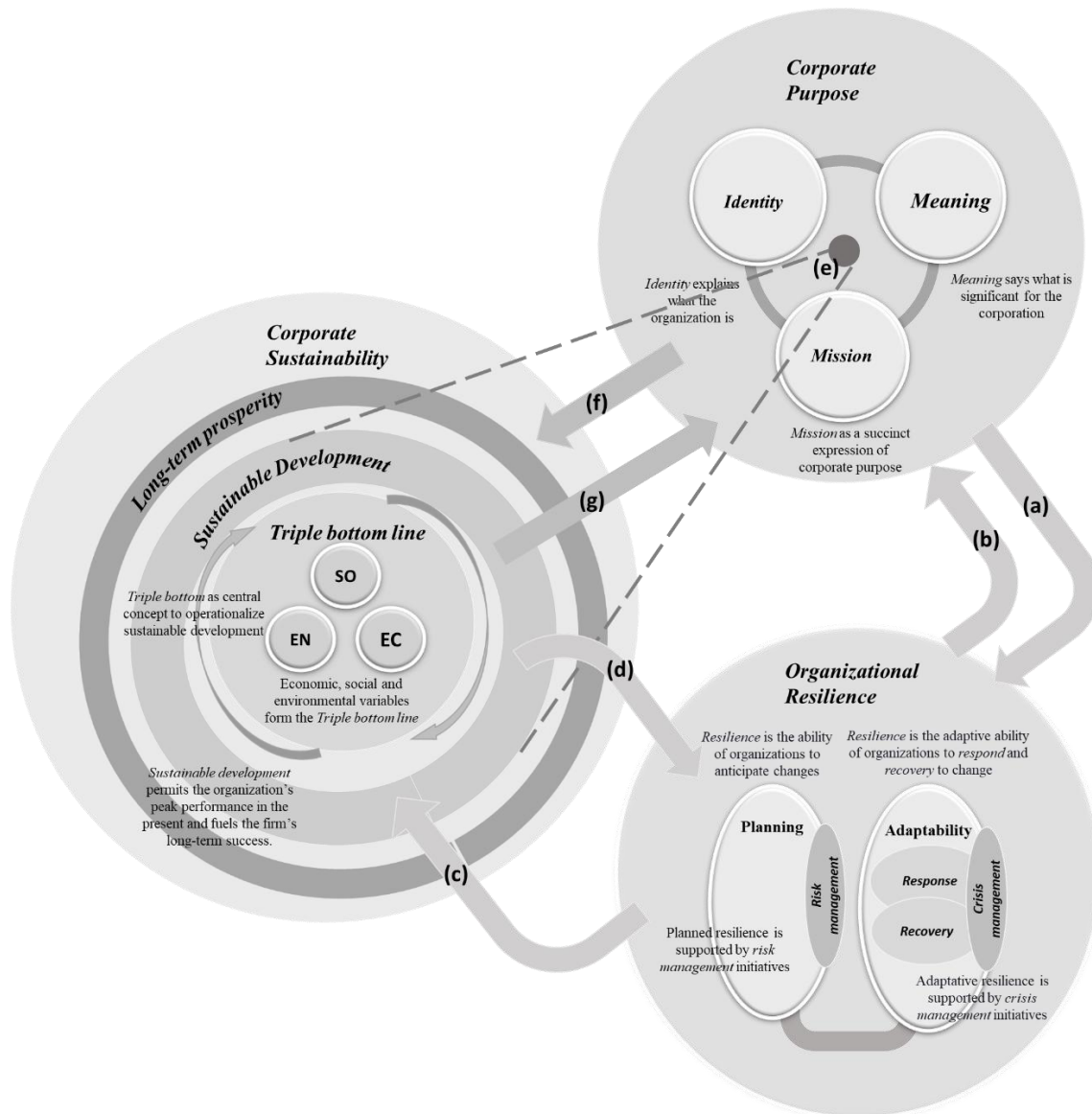


Figure 5. Component structured framework for SRP. Social development (**SO**), Economic development (**EC**), Environmental development (**EN**). **a.** Corporate Purpose impacts Organizational Resilience, **b.** Organizational Resilience impacts Corporate Purpose, **c.** Organizational Resilience impacts Sustainable Development, **d.** Sustainable Development impacts Organizational Resilience, **e.** Sustainable Development is part of Corporate Purpose, **f.** Corporate Purpose impacts Corporate Sustainability, **g.** Sustainable Development impacts Corporate Purpose.

Source: Own elaboration

