



ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome

ISSN: 2351-0617 (print), ISSN: 2408-2058 (electronic)

Developing A Strategic Plan for Strengthening Organizational Resilience Through Employee Empowerment and Engagement in KMSS-Mandalay

Ning Khui Shing, Somchai Tantasanee

ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome Vol 11(1) pp. 128-148

www. <http://www.assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/odijournal>

Published by the
Organization Development Institute
Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management
Assumption University Thailand

ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome
is indexed by the Thai Citation Index and ASEAN Citation Index

Developing A Strategic Plan for Strengthening Organizational Resilience Through Employee Empowerment and Engagement in Kmss-Mandalay

Ning Khui Shing¹, Somchai Tantasanee²

¹ Master of Management in Organization and Development (MMOD)
Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management (GS-BATM),
Assumption University, Thailand. Email: khuishing91@gmail.com

² Lecturer, MMOD, GS-BATM, Assumption University, Thailand.
Email: tantasa2003@yahoo.com

Received: 05 July 2023. Revised: 10 August 2023. Accepted: 18 August 2023.

Abstract

Since the Military Coup, in 2021, several organizations in Myanmar have been dealing with a political crisis that has led to financial limits and donor agency withdrawal. This situation has also significantly influenced the loss of work opportunities, physical insecurity and facing challenges for organizational survival. This research has four main objectives: 1) To explore how employees define "Organizational resilience and Employee empowerment and Engagement" during the political crisis in Myanmar, 2) To discover the strengths of Employee empowerment, engagement, and organizational resilience in KMSS-Mandalay, 3) To determine the shared aspirations given results and opportunities of employee's empowerment and engagement towards organizational resilience, and 4) To develop a strategic plan for strengthening organizational resilience through employee empowerment and engagement in KMSS-Mandalay based on the findings. The research questions for this study, which focuses on resilience during times of crisis in Myanmar, were mostly constructed by applying the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Model. Regardless of gender or marital status, ten workers from various level positions were horizontally chosen to participate in the research following the objectives of the study. Phenomenology was used to gain insight into team members' lived experiences through structured interviews. The researchers asked two coders from fellowships who were well-versed in the topic selection by content analysis. The results demonstrate that strengths and dreams are essential components of resilient organizations. Resilience, employee empowerment, and engagement powered by AI are all elements of strengths. The goals include sustaining the preferred aspirations both now and beyond the crisis, employee contributions to the organization's future, and organizational success and sustainability opportunities. Finally, a strategic plan is developed based on employee strengths and dreams for the future to improve organizational resilience.

Keywords: Organizational Resiliency, Employee Empowerment, Employee Engagement

Introduction

This study conducted in the non-profit organization namely, Karuna Mission Social

Solidarity (KMSS) in Mandalay, Myanmar, focuses on organization's resiliency of through employee empowerment and engagement in the present situation. Key information commitments include resilience, employee empowerment, and engagement of representatives within the work environment.

Background of the Organization

Since 2002, Karuna Myanmar Social Services, guided by the Social Teaching of the Church and ordered by the Catholic Bishop Conference of Myanmar (CBCM), embraced social development activities in 16 Dioceses. It works in participation with faith-based leaders, nearby specialists, ethnic groups, and community leaders at all levels. The most of Karuna Myanmar is to arrange with benefactors and Diocesan Karuna workplaces through the local Church and to assist Diocesan Karuna's in upgrading the capacity of the neighborhood individuals with commonsense information and abilities, in elevating the by and large living standard of the destitute and the marginalized in any case of ideology and ethnicity through encouraging mindfulness preparing workshops, fortifying formal and casual instruction, bracing well-being, and moving forward agrarian and vocation opportunities. Karuna Myanmar has been putting each exertion to maximize the quality and the nobility of life of the destitute and the needy.

KMSS has five central mediation zones in instruction, well-being, jobs, social security, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Crisis. Each diocese will be focused on concurring to each center zone or segment. There will be progressing advancement and bolster in each division of Sub-Committees whose individuals are from the National Office (NO) and Diocese (DO) and who center on the administration, usage, and checking of the proposed exercises. Each of the Sub-Committees was set up between 2011-2012 for the sector development of the KMSS Country Strategic Plan 2012.

Currently, KMSS-Mandalay works in education, crisis response, social security, DRR and livelihood program. KMSS-Mandalay is associated with other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Mandalay, Magway Listing Districts. The focus of KMSS- Mandalay is the advancement of a Coordinated Community Advancement Program that advances individual's solid interest in their claim improvement by making openings that bring individuals of all beliefs and ethnicity to work together to distinguish, execute and oversee their claim improvement activities. Besides, KMSS-Mandalay is working in Taungdwingyin, Magway and Mandalay townships.

The researchers analyzed SOAR Framework by Focus Group Discussion focusing on Senior Management Team Members during conducting OD Innovation Process by Design Thinking in terms of discovery, define, develop, and implement stages along with using SOAR Framework. This organizational diagnosis process has resulted in the factors in each stage of SOAR Framework in Table 1.

The core competencies of KMSS-Mandalay are relentless coping with current hardships, clear strategic vision and mission, organizational core values, proper leadership and management and to-some-extent-well-functioning of Adim/Human Resource Policy, procurement procedures and policy, finance policy and internal control system among Local Non-Profit Organizations.

Table 1

SOAR Analysis of KMSS-Mandalay

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relentless coping with current hardships • Clear Strategic vision and mission • Live up to Organizational Core values given organizational resilience • Proper leadership and management are found in organizational management setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of training and career development planning for employees • Enhancement of human resource management systems • Employee and workplace well-being • Developing relationship and partnership with Civil Society Organizations and other partners
Aspirations	Results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster organizational resilience • Set a good example among partners in terms of learning organizational cultures • Hold existing commitment to serving the vulnerable, needy and poor following the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade Human Resource Management policies and procedures • Formulate employee capacity programs guidelines in line with KMSS-National Office • Keep implementing the existing projects along with implementing partners

Statement of Problem

Since 2004, KMSS-Mandalay has implemented various programs including Education, Emergency Response, Social Protection, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Livelihood, with Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and partner organizations. They provide capacity building programs and translate Catholic social teaching values into their vision, mission, and values, ensuring convenient project implementation. KMSS-Mandalay's commitment to supporting the needy and poorest people has earned its reputation and gained donor trust.

Despite success from development actors like KMSS-Mandalay, there are still gaps in education, livelihood, social protection, and disaster risk reduction in remote areas of Myanmar. Despite collaboration with UN agencies, INGOs, and LNGOs, there are still wide-ranging gaps to be filled for development. KMSS-Mandalay and international donors will offer employee and client-based capacity building and development programs, benefiting from the organization's reputation, commitment, and strong relationships with partners and clients. KMSS-Mandalay's strengths and opportunities enable sustainable growth, empowerment, and modifications in policies, client, and partnership after diagnosis.

KMSS-Mandalay implements programs, collaborates with partners, and focuses on Human Resource Management Policies and staff training to support local communities despite unstable political situations in Myanmar.

Since 2021, several organizations in Myanmar have been dealing with a political crisis that has led to financial limits and donor agency withdrawal. This situation has also significantly influenced the loss of work opportunities, physical insecurity and facing challenges for organization survival. Resilience refers to an organization's ability to respond to challenging situations in a way that allows it to swing back to stability.

To improve organizational resilience, this research aims to understand better the ideas and concepts covering resilience, engagement, empowerment, strengths, and ambitions. In

light of the situation, the research uses a phenomenology approach with KMSS-Mandalay Staff in Myanmar.

Research Objectives

1. To explore how employees, define organizational resilience and employee empowerment and engagement during political crisis in Myanmar
2. To discover the strengths of employee empowerment, engagement and organizational resilience in KMSS-Mandalay
3. To determine the shared aspirations in view of results and opportunities of employee's empowerment and engagement toward organizational resilience
4. To develop a strategic plan for strengthening organizational resilience through employee empowerment and engagement in KMSS-Mandalay based on the findings

Research Questions

1. What are the employees' common understanding of organizational resilience, employee empowerment, and engagement?
2. What are the strengths of employees and organizations in terms of empowerment and engagement toward enhancing organizational resiliency?
3. What are the shared aspirations in view of results and opportunities of employees' empowerment and engagement towards organizational resiliency?
4. What strategic plans should be designed based on the results of the study?

Significance of the study

The non-profit KMSS-Mandalay in Myanmar is chosen for this study and asked to take part in the research. The study is being conducted at the ideal time given Myanmar's current upheaval. The ability to bounce back from challenging situations requires resilience on the part of the organization. As a result, both the researchers and the organization's staff may benefit from one another's knowledge and recognize the organization's resilience in this circumstance. The findings would help the company create a strategic plan for boosting organizational resilience in the following years.

Scope and the limitation of the study

The ongoing crisis in Myanmar limited the study's focus to a few criteria. The study's focus was on organizational resilience, employee empowerment, and engagement as a result of which the organization will be more resilient. With a limited staff and the appropriate roles, only qualitative research using SOAR was conducted for the study. Study time was likewise constrained due to the challenging circumstances. All interviews were conducted by video conference because the researcher was unable to directly meet the interview subjects in person. Due to the ongoing political crisis, the organization has decided not to update any organizational information. That is why the organization's website is not accessible to obtain updated facts and data.

Literature Review

Resilience

According to Parsons (2010), resilience is used to characterize organizations, systems, or individuals that can adapt to and recover from stress that threatens their existence with the least amount of harm to their stability and functioning.

This term was expanded by Luthans (2002) to consider people's capacity to "bounce back" from hardship. When faced with a challenging situation or event, such as failure, disagreement, or personal misfortune, resilient individuals go on with their lives. In order to successfully resolve and/or handle challenging situations, an individual must have strength and coping mechanisms (Baumgardner & Crothers, 2010).

Organizational Resilience

Duchek (2020) defines "organizational resilience" as the ability of an organization to foresee potential risks, successfully deal with unexpected occurrences, and learn from and adapt to changing conditions intended to promote organizational change.

Duchek (2020) mentioned that there are three sequential resilience stages (anticipation, coping, and adaptation) and give each of these stages' significant organizational capacities. In the anticipation stage, studies by Bhamra et al. (2011) and Kendra and Wachtendorf (2003) and Somers (2009) mentioned that the organization must possess three key competencies: the capacity to monitor both internal and external changes, the capacity to spot important trends and potential dangers, and to the greatest extent possible—the capacity to foresee unforeseen occurrences. Unanticipated danger or events can be seen during coping stage and adaptation refers to modifications made in the wake of catastrophes and is focused on organizational progress (Limnios et al., 2014) and mainly focus on learning and reflection. In view of the above definition of each stage, if an organization can anticipate, cope and adapt to the adversity that organization is facing, the organization can be regarded to be resilient.

Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment refers to the transfer of authority and responsibility from upper to lower levels of the organizational structure, particularly the transfer of decision-making authority (Arneson & Ekberg, 2006; Dainty et al., 2002; Langbein, 2000).

Yildirim and Naktiyok (2017) mentioned that there was positive link between employee empowerment and transformational leadership in such a way that transformational leaders delegate some authority to their followers and include them in organizational choices so that they participate actively in the activities, do their duties well, and help the company reach its objectives.

More specifically, transformational leadership inspires and encourages employees by giving cutting-edge skills and information about their jobs (Maqsood et al., 2019). Yukl and Becker (2006) mentioned that conveying business information with workers about the organization's vision, strategy, objectives, and action plans is essential for an empowerment project. As a result, the organization's work would be improved by significant employee contributions. Van Der Vegt et al., (2015) said that enabling workers to engage in decision-making makes the organization more resilient since it allows for a rapid reaction to changes in the environment.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement was defined as the condition in which workers are emotionally and intellectually devoted to the organization or group, as assessed by three basic behaviors which are say, stay, and strive by Hewitt Associates LLC in 2004 (p.2).

Employee engagement and the work environment, training and career development and organizational policies are significantly correlated (Anitha, 2014). Deci and Ryan (1987) states that management that promotes a healthy workplace culture frequently demonstrates care for employees' needs and feelings, offers encouraging comments, and empowers people to express their worries, learn new skills, and resolve workplace issues. The working environment is where employees demonstrate their eagerness, interest, and willingness to work, according to Boles et al., (2004). Harter et al. (2003) mentioned that different features of the workplace might lead to different degrees of employee engagement.

Training is a methodical approach to learning and growth that enhances the development of the person, the group, and the organization (Goldstein & Ford, 2002) and the employee gains confidence in the training field because of participating in training and learning development programs, which encourages them to be more engaged in their work (Anitha, 2014).

Woodruffe (2005) and Rama Devi (2009) have highlighted the significance of organizational policies and processes that best enable flexible work arrangements that assist workers balance their work and home settings: Organizations with such arrangements are more likely to have engaged employees.

Research linking resilience and empowerment shares a number of essential elements, are important ideas in community psychology, and play important roles in each of our daily lives. Both strategies are strengths-based, goal-oriented techniques that may be used in reaction to risk. Both of them have been linked to beneficial outcomes over many years of study (Cattaneo & Chapman, 2010; Masten, 2001, 2018).

Simons and Buitendach (2013) discovered a practical and statistically significant relationship between overall employment engagement ratings and resilience among contact center employees in the setting of South Africa.

This study also uses Appreciative Inquiry to conduct interview questions using the Appreciative inquiry 5D process, namely:

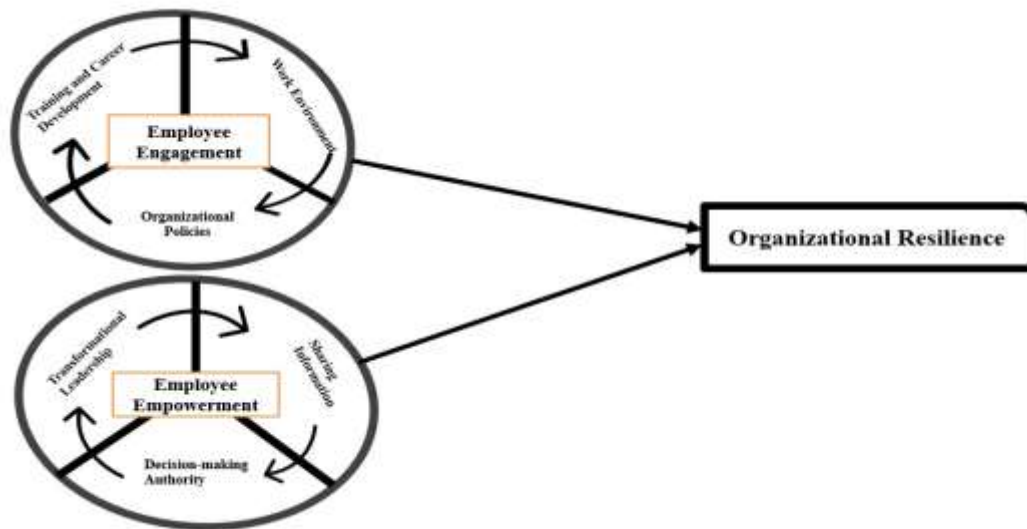
Define: To find out knowledge on organizational resiliency, employee engagement, and empowerment

Discovery: Identifying each person's and organizational strengths through their professional accomplishments and standout moments

Dream: Identifying each person's and organizational dreams through their contributions to the realization of their objectives and expectations in their working lives.

Design: To identify what systems, tools, and procedures must be in place in order to make these three opportunities from the past become reality?

Destiny: To identify how can we sustain the preferred empowerment, engagement, and organizational resilience?

Figure 1*Conceptual Framework*

This figure was created by examining theoretical frameworks and the KMSS-Mandalay SOAR Analysis. Enhancing organizational resilience based on the organization's strengths and objectives through employee empowerment and engagement is the key goal of this study.

One of the most important characteristics of every organization regarding organizational survival and sustainability is the ability to be resilient during difficult times. The organization must be robust in the face of an unexpected crisis. The elements influencing employee empowerment and engagement to improve organizational resilience are depicted in Figure 1.

The elements may be divided into two categories: engagement in organizational resilience and employee empowerment. The first part's components are transformational leadership, decision-making authority, and information sharing under employee empowerment and at the same time, the second part's components are the workplace, organizational policies, training and development, and employee engagement because those factors promote organizational resilience.

Based on a SOAR analysis of the organization, the researcher aims to determine how workers perceive resilience and the elements that influence organizational resiliency. Through the development of a strategic plan based on the capabilities and goals of staff members and organizations, the suggested conceptual framework will be validated with KMSS-Mandalay.

Research Methodology

This research falls under qualitative research by gathering data and information through structured interviews. Due to the organization's status as a small organization, purposeful sampling was used in this study. Patton (2002) wrote that people's experiences, views, ideas, feelings, and knowledge are thoroughly explored in detail using open-ended inquiries and probing statements. Verifiable quotations in a context that allows for interpretation make up the data (P. 4).

Phenomenology research methodology was applied in this study. Given that KMSS-Mandalay is a small-scale and young humanitarian organization in the nation, phenomenology was necessary to produce in-depth descriptions of organizational resilience and seek reality from interviewees' narratives of their experiences and feelings. Additionally, phenomenology allowed the researcher and interviewees to exchange knowledge about the study. Using a phenomenological method, the major goal is to explain each team member's lived experience thoroughly. In-depth insights on the other team members and interactions within a team were obtained through document analysis and interview data compiled from the substance of the participants' perceptions. According to Creswell (2009), phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology that focuses on the shared aspects of a group's lived experiences.

Research Population and Sampling procedures

Before the coup, KMSS-Mandalay employed 50 people. This organization now employs 30 people due to project funding restrictions and funding withdrawals from donor agencies, which have caused the organization to reduce its workforce. Regardless of gender or marital status, ten workers from various level positions were horizontally chosen to participate in the research following the objectives of the study. According to Ellis (2018), different textbooks suggest different sized samples for phenomenological research, but in reality, a sample of between 6 and 20 individuals is sufficient and the sample size of this research is 10 respondents (Four senior management members, three senior operations members, and three senior field staff members) as purposive sampling.

Table 2

Participants in the research study (Informants) from KMSS-Mandalay

No.	Job level of respondents	Number of respondents
1	Senior Management level	4
2	Senior Operations Staff	3
3	Senior Field Staff	3
	Total	10

Research Instruments

Developing Questionnaire

Based on earlier studies from the literature review on employee empowerment, engagement, and resilience, the researchers constructed a questionnaire for this study. Appreciative Inquiry Framework was applied in this study. The SOAR Analysis, which is the operational system of Appreciative Inquiry, is used for developing the questions of each stage of Appreciative Inquiry Framework.

Item Objective Congruence

Prior to conducting interviews, experts from Assumption University evaluated the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) to determine the reliability of the questions. Three Assumption University specialists were kindly requested to assess the developed questions to see if they

align with the conceptual framework and research objectives. The assessment criteria for the IOC are listed as follows.

+1= Congruent

0 = Questionable

-1 = In congruent

Researchers have examined the IOC index average values as determined by experts. Jusoh et al., (2018) state that a question should not be included in the study if the average rating is less than 0.5. The minimal score, nevertheless, was set at 0.66 by the researcher. Experts and researchers exchanged questions and ideas, and ultimately, all experts agreed on the suggested questions after making certain changes. Out of the 12 questions, 11 were accepted for use in the interviews.

As part of the researchers' coding analysis approach, three coders were chosen to read, examine, and discover common themes in the interview findings.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Summary of Common Themes from the interviews

Question		Question	Most Common Themes
Part	No.		
I	1	What is the meaning of organizational resilience for you?	-Team’s endurance to hardships -Adaptability to the crisis through team support -Adherence to Organizational policies and having financial resources -Manage the current risk to the best possible way to resume the existing projects or works -To live or abide by organizational vision, mission and values
	2	What is the meaning of employee engagement from your experience under work- environment, training and development and organizational policies?	-Communicative -Autonomy -Rewards and capacity building -Positive and supportive workplace
	3	What is the meaning of employee empowerment? for you under transformational leadership, Decision-making authority and sharing information?	-Power sharing or delegation (autonomy) -Collective decision making -Capacity building -Sharing information -Positive workplace -Redesign Job Description
II	1	Would you kindly share with me a story of how you and your organization overcome the difficulties during the crisis including adversity in your day-to-day life? Which of your strengths did you use in that story?	-Spiritual Exercise & self-care -Communication, management, adaptation, collaborations, coordination skills -Build relationship,

Question		Question	Most Common Themes
Part	No.		
	2	What are your best experiences with employee empowerment from Superior level to Subordinate level in your workplace?	-Autonomy, -Power sharing, -Decision making -Information sharing -Capacity building -Trust (Macro-Managing) @ Inspiration
	3	What are your best experiences with employee engagement in your workplace?	-Positive work environment -Staff training and development -Professionalism and Benefits -Strong policies should be in place -Form Self-managed teams
III	1	What do you want to see implemented that bolster empowerment, engagement, and Organizational Resilience at this KMSS-Mandalay after crisis?	-Organizational policies (HR policies and Management, Information Systems, Internal Policies) -Career Development, Leadership Development, -Job Opportunities, Positive work environment -Incentive programs & Financial independency -Professional, expert and accountable staff Resulted in meaningful life
	2	How your contribution to KMSS-Mandalay creates more opportunity to improve organizational resilience?	-Accountability and personal commitments -Sharing information -Contributing ideas/ knowledges to the organization
	3	What are the opportunities for improving team's success?	-Interest of Donors and International Organizations -Organizational policies formulation -Decision making authority -Good leadership and capacity building programs strengthening from INGOs
IV	1	What systems, tools, and procedures must be in place to make these three opportunities from the past become reality?	-Strong organizational culture and policies -Update and amendment of good systems/ data storage systems software for Admin-HR/ Finance/ M&E and Project Management -Collective leadership
V	1	How can we sustain the preferred empowerment, engagement, and organizational resilience?	-Employee Commitment -Capacity Building programs -Good relationship with donors and authorities -Effective leadership & Teamwork -Positive workplace -Strong organizational culture/ structure

Presentation of Research Objectives

In this study, the researchers employed the Appreciative Inquiry Framework (Sutthinont & Dowpiset, 2015) to obtain participant feedback on their perceptions of their strengths, opportunities, and accomplishments to gain insight into their understanding of the leadership's capabilities in the given situation. This section discusses and describes the findings as they pertain to the study's goals.

Research Objective I. Definitions of organizational resilience, empowerment, and engagement as stated by respondents in light of their experience in the Burmese military coup

The researchers have prepared questions relating to organizational resiliency, empowerment, and engagement to assess the employees' perspectives on the notions of organizational resiliency, empowerment, and engagement. KMSS-Mandalay employees from Myanmar defined and discussed their insights on organizational resiliency, empowerment, and engagement during the individual interviews based on their experience they had during the military coup in Myanmar. Table 2 provides a summary of the common topics that the respondents mentioned.

Table 2

Definitions of organizational resiliency, employee empowerment and employee engagement

Question	Most Common Themes
Organizational Resilience	-Team’s endurance to hardships -Adaptability to the crisis through team support -Manage the current risk to the best possible way to resume the existing projects or works, -To live or abide by organizational vision, mission and values
Employee Engagement	-Communicative and employee commitment -Decision Making authority, -Strong Internal policies -Rewards and capacity building -Positive and supportive workplace
Employee Empowerment	-Power sharing or delegation -Collective decision making -Capacity building -Sharing information -Positive workplace -Redesign Job Description

The definitions of the respondents' knowledge of the components associated to organizational resilience are shown in Table 2.

Organizational Resilience: The respondents state that organizational resilience describes the team’s endurance to hardships, adaptability to the crisis through team support by managing the current risk to the best possible way to resume the existing projects or works and lastly to live or abide by the organizational vision, mission and values during the crisis. As a result, the company may be classified as a resilient organization, with organizational processes, practices, and procedures to achieve organizational goals by managing to overcome adversity (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011).

These findings support the researcher’s definition of this study. All employees must have positive adjustments to deal with challenges and achieve success for the organization to be resilient.

Employee Engagement: According to the answers, a resilient and successful organization runs its business through communication and employee commitment among its staff members by showing them respect, acceptance, and appreciation. Employee engagement entails having a bottom-up communication flow, implementing inclusive decision making at

all levels and strong internal policies formulation and implementation, offering capacity building for employee development, and having strong incentive systems in place so that employees perceive their working environment as positive and helpful. Compared to the definition that the research has utilized in this research; it aligns with the outcomes of respondents.

Employee Empowerment: According to the respondents, the common themes for employee empowerment are power sharing or delegation, collective decision making, capacity building, sharing information, a positive workplace and redesigning job description. More specifically, they mentioned that they had practiced collective leadership because beforehand, they had no Executive Management Team (EMT) Team but now, they have formed it to get all involved in planning, decision making and not only EMT teams but also all employees based on issue deepening. And then, Executive Management Team has come to practice bottom-up communication flow so that all information is reached at the right time in the right manner. In addition, the superior levels usually provided capacity building programs and sometimes, Executive Management Team invested their time in redesigning job descriptions for everyone. Lastly all these good practices have helped us move forward and at the same time, all staff feel empowered. Compared to the definitions developed by the researchers, there is also alignment and even the researcher obtained some repeated emerging themes in this study.

Research Objective II. Strength in the experience of the resilience of employee and organization, and employee empowerment and engagement

This study focused on strength and aspiration, was conducted using the Appreciative Inquiry methodology. In Part II, three questions were presented to learn more about the organizational and employee strengths in the areas of resilience, employee empowerment and engagement, all of which the respondents thought were essential to their capacity to remain resilient in the face of the crisis.

Table 3 describes the common themes from respondents' answers relating to problems experienced during the crisis and stories of resilience used in daily life, while Table 8 reveals the best experiences with employee empowerment and engagement.

Table 3

Challenges encountered during the crisis and stories of resilience in everyday life

Question	Most Common Themes
Would you kindly share with me a story of how you and your organization overcome the difficulties during the crisis including adversity in your day-to-day life? Which of your strengths did you use in that story?	<p>Challenges after the military coup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Insecurity of lives -Unexpected Investigation from Military Junta -Funding Restrictions -Funding Withdrawal from Donor Agencies -Banking crises -Job Insecurity <p>Major challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -As Utilization of Low Profile at the Field level, it is major challenge for staff to perform duties, - Staff downsizing due to some projects being withdrawn.

Question	Most Common Themes
	<p>Stories of Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -One of the Board Members said that we have had to take care of releasing statements and choice of words because the Military Government is constantly watching the organization, staff, and the Church, -One day, the military coup during their surprise check at the hiring house of two staff and found some medicines, organizational computers, and their phones while two staff had lunch outside, so they had to relocate in the safe houses, -One staff member said that his house was burned down during the political crisis, and he even became displaced person, but the organization allocated convenient place for him. -Staff members cannot meet with clients or volunteers due to the current circumstances, and fieldwork is ongoing. <p>The strengths used by the respondents in the given situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Spiritual Exercise & self-care -Communication, management, adaptation, collaborations, and coordination skills -Build relationship, -Adhere to the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church (Core values) to the best possible like Sacrifice Orientation

Challenges since the military coup: The biggest obstacle for the KMSS-Mandalay workforce is the security issue, and some of the employees have to migrate to other regions. Additionally, some family members of employees had their homes burned down, forcing them to move, and as a result, they are now internally displaced. The respondents agreed that the coup has uncertain their livelihoods and that the turmoil has damaged them physically and psychologically.

Significant obstacles for KMSS-program Mandalay's activities include the withdrawal of several projects and some personnel reductions due to the crisis. Moreover, KMSS-Mandalay employed a low-profile strategy at the field level, preventing workers from ensuring their safety.

Nevertheless, the organization's staff and overall strength are exceptional, enabling them to handle emergencies and overcome difficulties. The KMSS-Mandalay team demonstrated the following strengths in light of the given conditions.

- Spiritual Exercise & self-care
- Communication, management, adaptation, collaborations, and coordination skills
- Build relationship and adhere to the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church (Core values), like Sacrifice Orientation.

Table 4

Dealing with strengths of employee empowerment and engagement

Question	Most Common Themes
<p>What are your best experiences with employee empowerment from Superior level to Subordinate level in your workplace?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Autonomy, -Power sharing, -Decision making -Information sharing -Capacity building -Trust (Macro-Managing) and inspiration

Question	Most Common Themes
What are your best experiences with employee engagement in your workplace?	-Positive work environment -Staff training and development -Professionalism and benefits -Strong policies should be in place -Form Self-managed teams

When answering the question on employee empowerment, the respondents described themselves as motivated workers who put out strong effort and are effective team players as they cooperate with coworkers to meet the organization's objectives. They said that KMSS-Mandalay has come to practice delegation authority and decision making from Superior level to subordinate level based on their performance variability. In addition, capacity building is provided in line with job description requirement and staff's request. They have always insisted that they share updated information at the right time with the right person and put absolute trust (macro-managing) when their subordinates perform their duties and responsibilities. And moreover, the senior managers or leaders usually encourage the subordinates to maintain the good productivity and the subordinators said that they are inspired by the leadership of their senior managers or officer. As a result, these have paved the way for sustainable development for the team and organization.

In the context of employee engagement, most of the respondents feel engaged because in the Office, they tried to act as professional, but family type is adhered and providing employees with a safe and comfortable work environment makes all employees engaged. They appreciate, support, love and recognize each other and they communicate and engage each other through brotherly spirit. And then, senior managers provided training and development programs depending on Job Descriptions and requirements. They all agreed that organizational policies must be adopted and implemented, such as staff outsourcing, succession planning, and internal control. Lastly, they formed a team, set monthly meeting dates, and shared success stories and challenges for sharing lessons learned and providing feedback. Consequently, they think they are motivated workers that deliver quality work, have high expectations, and are strong team players when collaborating with coworkers to meet the organization's objectives.

Research Objective III. Shared aspirations, preferred future in terms of results and opportunities of employees towards organizational resiliency.

Dream, a part of the Appreciative Inquiry Framework, is one of the topics covered by the questions connected to research aim III. Considering the situation, the team has encountered difficulties and has responded by constructively coping and adapting with the leadership and management. The team has discovered that they are motivated and empowered workers. The researcher also learns about their common goals, ideal future in terms of outcomes, and chances for employees to contribute to organizational resilience. Based on the dream, the third part's questions were formed. The prevalent themes for the answers relating to dreams are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Shared aspirations of employees towards organizational resiliency

Question	Most Common Themes
What do you want to see implemented that bolster empowerment, engagement, and Organizational Resilience at this KMSS-Mandalay after crisis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Concrete Organizational policies (HR policies and Management, Information Systems, Internal Policies) -Career Development, Leadership Development, -Job Opportunities, Positive work environment -Incentive programs & Financial independency -Professional, expert and accountable staff -Resulted in meaningful life
How your contribution to KMSS-Mandalay creates more opportunity to improve organizational resilience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accountability and commitments -Sharing information -Contributing ideas/ knowledges to the organization
What are the opportunities for improving team’s success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interest of Donors and International Organizations -Organizational policies -Good leadership and capacity building programs strengthening from INGOs -Collaboration and Coordination from Parish Priests and Bishops and relevant stakeholders,
What systems, tools, and procedures must be in place in order to make these three opportunities from the past become reality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strong organizational culture and policies -Update and amendment of good systems/ data storage systems software for Admin-HR/ Finance/ M&E and Project Management -Collective leadership
How can we sustain the preferred empowerment, engagement, and organizational resilience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Employee Commitment -Capacity Building programs -Good relationship with donors and authorities -Effective leadership & Teamwork -Positive workplace -Strong organizational culture/ structure

In the post-crisis era, respondents wish to see KMSS-Mandalay as an agile, dependable, and well-equipped organization with more professionals, experts, and accountable employees, solid financial systems, and financial independence via specific organizational policies. Moreover, the organization will create more job opportunities for the youths and provide more capacity development programs for the staff and clients.

The respondents want to offer the organization their ideas and knowledge, and they will support the organization and external stakeholders through their commitments, responsibilities, and information sharing. They will also build relationships and develop networking skills through training and knowledge sessions.

For KMSS-Mandalay, team’s success demands interests from Donor Agencies and other INGOs, robust organizational policies, good leadership and capacity building programs strengthening from Self & INGOs and constant collaboration and coordination from Parish Priests and Bishops and relevant stakeholders. If so, KMSS-Mandalay takes the lead gradually and gains trust from stakeholders in humanitarian sectors in Mandalay region. Moreover, due to public recognition of KMSS-humanitarian Mandalay's support to clients and increased donor

funding, the organization can extend its operations throughout Mandalay District and the rest of Myanmar.

Research Objective IV. Based on the findings, develop a strategic plan for enhancing organizational resilience through employee empowerment and engagement in KMSS-Mandalay based on the findings.

A strategic plan for improving organizational resilience has been designed based on study findings, considering the strengths, shared ambitions, and outcomes. It was also corroborated by common themes from the content analysis that employees have obstacles and difficulties because of the situation. The team handles the challenges with characteristics like resilience, and employee empowerment and engagement. Organizational resilience is influenced by decision-making authority, power sharing, capacity building, and information sharing from employee empowerment, organizational policies, training and development, self-managed teams, and a positive work environment. Given these factors, Table 5 presents the strategic plan for organizational resilience.

Figure 2

Strategic Plan Framework



The researchers created the strategic plan framework for organizational resilience, shown in Figure 2, considering the findings.

Following the 4-step strategic management process, as the first step, the organization will continuously revisit its vision, mission and values based on internal and external analyses along with the research findings. After that, plans or resources will be formulated and added to existing and well-functioning plans and resources. And then strategic implementations start as of providing capacity buildings or trainings and allocating resources towards organizational resilience. Continuously, the performance measures based on frameworks will be evaluated,

controlled and corrected to revisit the first three steps of strategic management processes, also in the stages of preferred sustainability for the organization.

Looking closer at the strategic process, all above factors are interwoven to reach organization strategies. And then, based on organizational diagnosis, SOAR Analysis and research findings, the finding variables: employee engagement, employee empowerment, systems and procedures in places, opportunities for team success and proposed implementation after crisis are continuously formulated as the strategies that will help the organization achieve organizational resilience and keep looking out for developments that might influence the likelihood of attaining the strategic goals in the internal and external environments. Additionally, resources employee motivation and the provision of the instruments necessary for plan implementation are critical for this stage's success. Based on the above, all internal and external performance measures are being continuously evaluated.

As researched, it has been seen that the organization and its staff have been dealing with obstacles and problems due to the situation. The ultimate objective of every organization, including KMSS-Mandalay, is to fulfill its mission and vision statements. The organization has to have the capacity to respond to obstacles and difficulties and be resilient to overcome them to accomplish this aim. And then, the organization must remain strong and aspirational even in the most trying and hopeless moments if it is considered resilient. Factors based on findings from Employee empowerment and engagement play a significant role in organizational resilience, but factors like proposed implementation after crisis, employee's contribution and systems and procedures in place from Aspiration must not be ignored. Therefore, both strengths and aspirations are equally significant in resilient companies. Strengths without aspirations will not lead to organizational resilience, and vice versa.

Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the findings, organizational resilience is largely influenced by staff individuals' strengths and aspirations and the organization itself and Ten respondents who serve as staff members at KMSS-Mandalay provided the survey's results.

According to the interview data, the respondents understood resilience, empowerment, and engagement to accomplish the first research objective. Looking at the respondents' answers, organizational resilience is the ability of a team to withstand challenges, adapt to a crisis with team support by managing the current risk to find the best way to resume ongoing projects or work, and ultimately to live up to or uphold an organization's vision, mission, and values while facing challenges.

Regarding employee engagement, the interviews revealed that a strong and effective company runs its operations through employee commitment and communication among its staff members by treating each other with respect, acceptance, and gratitude. For employees to feel that their workplace is supportive and positive, it is important to have bottom-up communication, implement inclusive decision making at all levels, develop and implement strong internal policies, provide capacity building for employee development, and have strong incentive systems in place.

Concerning Employee Empowerment, the recurring themes are delegation of power, collective decision making, capacity building, information sharing, a happy work environment,

and job description redesign. The respondents especially noted that they have engaged in collective leadership since, up until recently, there was no Executive Management Team (EMT) team, but now that once it has been established, all employees, including EMT teams, are participating in planning and decision-making as issues get more complex. They have since learned to conduct bottom-up communication flow to ensure that all information is sent at the appropriate moment. In addition, the superior levels usually provided capacity building programs and sometimes, the Executive Management Team invested their time in redesigning Job Descriptions for everyone. Lastly all these good practices have helped us move forward and at the same time, all staff feel empowered.

The research questions were created to enquire about the problems encountered during crises and the strengths of people and organizations to respond to crises to reach the second research objective. The biggest obstacle for the KMSS-Mandalay workforce is the security issue, and some of the employees have to migrate to other regions. Additionally, some family members of employees had their homes burned down, forcing them to move, and as a result, they are now internally displaced. The respondents agreed that the coup has uncertain their livelihoods and that the turmoil has damaged them physically and psychologically.

Significant obstacles for KMSS-program Mandalay's activities include the withdrawal of several projects and some personnel reductions due to the crisis. Moreover, KMSS-Mandalay employed a low-profile strategy at the field level, preventing workers from ensuring their safety. Nevertheless, the organization's staff and overall strength are exceptional, enabling them to handle emergencies and overcome difficulties. The KMSS-Mandalay team demonstrated the following strengths considering the given conditions.

- Spiritual Exercise & self-care
- Communication, management, adaptation, collaborations, and coordination skills
- Build relationship and adhere to the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church (Core values), like Sacrifice Orientation.

To accomplish study objective 3, the researchers considered the questions for big dreams, primarily focused on the post-crisis period. The findings demonstrated that employees' dreams are significantly influenced by the organization's future, their contributions to its success, and the contrast between the present and the period following a crisis. The respondents stated that KMSS-Mandalay is hoped to be an agile, dependable, and well-equipped organization with more professionals, experts, and accountable employees, solid financial systems, and financial independence. And then, respondents will support the organization and external stakeholders through commitments, responsibilities, and information sharing. For KMSS-Mandalay, the team's success demands interests from Donor Agencies and other INGOs, robust organizational policies, good leadership and capacity building programs strengthening from Self & INGOs and constant collaboration and coordination from Parish Priests and Bishops and relevant stakeholders.

The researcher has prepared a strategy plan for enhancing organizational resilience based on the findings and discussion, strengths, shared and desired ambitions, and results. The results demonstrated that despite experiencing hardships and problems during crises, an organization may persevere and overcome challenges thanks to the capabilities and aspirations of its employees. The organization will become more robust because of this.

Recommendations

Based on the results, it is evident that the strategic plan for organizational resiliency strongly emphasizes strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. KMSS-Mandalay has to concentrate on the element of aspirations (Dream) even if it has a definite and clear organizational development strategy for the organization's future.

Organizational Resilience

Concerning organizational resilience, the management and leadership team have experienced these challenges and overcome them throughout this political crisis. Even though the organization has a contingency plan to respond to the crisis and when this faced this unexpected political coup, the organization is not ready to respond to the situation. That is why, in the contingency plan of KMSS-Mandalay, specific names and plans like a coup- response plan should be formulated as organizational policies soon.

Employee Engagement

Regarding employee engagement in the definition, the following themes are common based on the employees' understanding; engagement is defined into five themes communicative and employee commitment, decision-making authority, strong Internal policies, rewards and capacity building, and positive and supportive workplace but in reality at workplace, employee are experiencing positive work environment, staff training and development, professionalism and benefits, strong policies should be in place and forming Self-managed teams. Thus, there is a need for KMSS-Mandalay to practice decision making authority with every employee in every department to have more engagement among them. Compared to the Conceptual Framework of Engagement Sub-Variables, which are Work Environment with Organizational Policies and Training and Development Policies, the results defined that employees at KMSS-Mandalay are engaged in their work to have more resilience during this political crisis.

Employee Empowerment

According to the employee empowerment in the definition, the following themes are common based on the employees' understanding; empowerment is defined as six themes power-sharing or delegation, collective decision making, capacity building, sharing information, positive workplace, and redesigning job description but in the reality at workplace, the employee is experiencing power-sharing (delegation & macro-managing), collective decision making, information sharing and capacity building. Thus, for employees to be more empowered, KMSS-Mandalay must provide a supportive work atmosphere and encourage collaboration among all of its employees to redesign the job descriptions. Compared to the conceptual framework of empowerment sub-variables, which are transformational leadership and decision-making authority including sharing information, employees at KMSS-Mandalay are engaged in their work to have more resilience during this political crisis.

Moreover, the researchers advise the organization to implement a strategy plan to increase organizational resilience via empowerment and engagement along with factors from Aspiration stages. This suggestion for a strategic plan will be presented with KMSS-Mandalay from the organizational development perspective.

References

- Anitha, J. (2014). Determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. *International journal of productivity and performance management*, 63(3), 308-323.
- Arneson, H., & Ekberg, K. (2006). Measuring empowerment in working life: a review. *Work*, 26(1), 37-46. <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8031-7651>
- Baumgardner, S. R., & Crothers, M. K. (2010). *Positive Psychology*. Pearson Education.
- Bhamra, R., Dani, S., & Burnard, K. (2011). Resilience: the concept, a literature review and future directions. *International journal of production research*, 49(18), 5375-5393. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7>
- Boles, M., Pelletier, B., & Lynch, W. (2004). The relationship between health risks and work productivity. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 46(7), 737-745.
- Cattaneo, L. B., & Chapman, A. R. (2010). The process of empowerment: a model for use in research and practice. *American Psychologist*, 65(7), 646-659. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018854>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research designs: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Sage.
- Dainty, A. R., Bryman, A., & Price, A. D. (2002). Empowerment within the UK construction sector. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23(6), 333-342.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1987). The support of autonomy and the control of behavior. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 53(6), 1024-1037.
- Duchek, S. (2020). Organizational resilience: a capability-based conceptualization. *Business Research*, 13(1), 215-246. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7>
- Ellis, P. (2018). Understanding research for nursing students. *Understanding Research for Nursing Students*, 1-208.
- Goldstein, I. L., & Ford, J. K. (2002). *Training in organizations: Needs assessment, Development, and Evaluation* (4th ed.). Wadsworth, Belmont.
- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F. L., & Keyes, C. L. M. (2003). Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies. In C. L. M. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 205-224). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10594-009>
- Hewitt, A. (2004). *Employee engagement higher at double digit growth companies*. ICNL. <https://www.icnl.org/post/report/civic-space-in-myanmar>
- Jusoh, Z., Zubairi, A. M., & Badrasawi, K. J. I. (2018). Validity Evidence Using Expert Judgment: A Study of Using Item Congruence Involving Expert Judgements for Evidence for Validity of a Reading Test. *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)*, 307-320.
- Kendra, J. M., & Wachtendorf, T. (2003). Elements of resilience after the world trade center disaster: reconstituting New York City's Emergency Operations Centre. *Disasters*, 27(1), 37-53.

- Langbein, L. I. (2000). Ownership, empowerment, and productivity: Some empirical evidence on the causes and consequences of employee discretion. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 19(3), 427-449.
- Lengnick-Hall, C. A., Beck, T. E., & Lengnick-Hall, M. L. (2011). Developing a capacity for organizational resilience through strategic human resource management. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21(3), 243-255.
- Limnios, E. A. M., Mazzarol, T., Ghadouani, A., & Schilizzi, S. G. (2014). The resilience architecture framework: Four organizational archetypes. *European Management Journal*, 32(1), 104-116. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0085-7>
- Luthans, F. (2002). The need for and meaning of positive organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, 23(6), 695-706.
- Maqsood, R., Tufail, M. S., Sardar, A., & Gill, S. (2019). Transformational Leadership, Job Embeddedness and Employee Empowerment: An Empirical Analysis of Manufacturing sector in Pakistan. *Dialogue (Pakistan)*, 14(3).
- Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American psychologist*, 56(3), 227-238. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.227>
- Masten, A. S. (2018). Resilience theory and research on children and families: Past, present, and promise. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10(1), 12-31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12255>
- Parsons, D. (2010). Organizational resilience. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, The*, 25(2), 18-20.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. sage.
- Rama Devi, V. (2009). Employee engagement is a two-way street. *Human resource management international digest*, 17(2), 3-4.
- Simons, J. C., & Buitendach, J. H. (2013). Psychological capital, work engagement and organisational commitment amongst call centre employees in South Africa. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 39(2), 1-12.
- Somers, S. (2009). Measuring resilience potential: An adaptive strategy for organizational crisis planning. *Journal of contingencies and crisis management*, 17(1), 12-23.
- Sutthinont, P., & Dowpiset, K. (2015). Strength-Based Operations as Organization Development Intervention (SBO-ODI) on Enhancing Teacher Commitment, Engagement, and Performance: A Case Study of Assumption College Ubon Ratchathani (ACU). *ABAC ODI Journal Vision. Action. Outcome*, 2(1), 157-172.
- Van Der Vegt, G. S., Essens, P., Wahlström, M., & George, G. (2015). Managing risk and resilience. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(4), 971-980.
- Woodruffe, C. (2005). Employee engagement: the real secret of winning a crucial edge over your rivals. *Manager: British Journal of Administrative Management*, 50(1), 28-29.
- Yildirim, F., & Naktiyok, S. (2017). The mediating role of organizational support in the effect of transformational leadership on employee empowerment. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 16(1), 292-303.
- Yukl, G. A., & Becker, W. S. (2006). Effective empowerment in organizations. *Organization Management Journal*, 3(3), 210-231. <https://doi.org/10.17015/ejbe.2018.021.03>