



When East Meets West in Building Organisational Resilience: An Exploratory Study Among Bangladeshi Exporters

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Abstract

This longitudinal qualitative study examines how globally operating readymade garment exporters from Bangladesh build organisational resilience in order to cope in the turbulent business environment. We found that at the time of crisis, such as the one caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, the studied exporters lacked robustness, and were not prepared for unexpected external shocks. However, the companies built resilience by adaptation to the situation as well as possible. Their ability to build resilience was found to be partly rooted in the local culture. At the time of crisis, the companies combined *jugaad*—a regional cultural practice—with a Western mindset and management tools. In this study, this unique combination of regional and Western practices is labelled as *jugalbandi*. Interestingly, organisational resilience which is achieved in this way seems to be temporary: the exporters discarded the locally-embedded practices when the situation stabilised. Our study challenges the mainstream views on organisational resilience espoused in earlier research, and develops a context-sensitive, culture-embedded framework of resilience building.

Keywords Organisational resilience · Resilience building · VUCA · Exports · Jugaad · Jugalbandi · Bangladesh

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1 Introduction

If anything, today's business environment can be described as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, VUCA in short.¹ In addition to the recent pandemic, companies have faced and continue to face many other unexpected events, some having a large-scale impact and others with minor influence. In general, they are prepared to cope with regular market- or environment-related uncertainties, as challenges due to unexpected, high-impact events or episodic irregularities emerge from time to time (Adobor et al., 2021; Bahri Korbi et al., 2021). To cope with the changes and uncertainties caused by such crises, they need *organisational resilience* (Sabatino, 2016). In line with Linnenluecke (2017), we define organisational resilience as those characteristics that allow some organisations to respond faster or recover quicker than others.² Previous research has examined these characteristics from two different angles: preparedness to face potential crises/disruptions (ex-ante), and the ability to bounce back after disruption (ex-post) (Korber & McNaughton, 2018). During crises, resilient companies withstand stress and cope with challenges without losing control, but they also identify and create new opportunities that arise from the chaos (Buliga et al., 2016). In accordance with previous research (e.g., Parker & Ameen, 2018), we consider resilience building as a process in which companies adapt their business and reconfigure their resources to meet future harsh market conditions. Thus, resilience is "something that can be learned, built on, and improved" (Stoltz, 2004: 18).

The need for resilience in the turbulent environment is particularly strong in companies from emerging economies with weak institutions and a heavy dependence on global supply chains. Their resource and capability constraints and reliance on a few key customers and/or suppliers as well as limited support structures make them very vulnerable (Baral et al., 2023; Hossain et al., 2022; Khan & Ali, 2023; Martinez et al., 2021; Munir et al., 2022). An external shock is a test of their ability to maintain and build resilience. Unfortunately, in-depth knowledge on the impact of such events on the operations of companies from emerging markets is limited (Aman & Seuring, 2023; Kogut & Mejri, 2022; Munir et al., 2022; Tekletsion et al., 2024). Additionally, the existing research often focuses on how to avoid uncertainty instead of offering solutions for dealing with it (Adobor et al., 2021; Portuguese Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020). Our research builds on the few studies on the topic (e.g., Mostafiz et al., 2022; Paul et al., 2021) and gives voice to actors who have been marginalised in earlier research.

In our study we ask *how globally operating exporters from an emerging economy have built organisational resilience to respond to the challenges of VUCA*

¹ The concept was adopted to business literature from military discussion already two decades ago, and related challenges have been on the agenda of scholars and managers since (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Schoemaker et al., 2018).

² We differentiate between organisational agility and organisational resilience. Whereas the former focuses on how organisations could exploit environmental changes and use them as market opportunities (Walter, 2021), we are interested in how companies can respond to external turbulence and recover from it.

environment, and use the recent COVID-19 pandemic as an example of such challenges. We chose the Bangladeshi garment industry as our empirical context, and we studied the phenomenon over time (before, during and after the pandemic). With the help of the collection of secondary data and four rounds of interviews in the case companies, we learned that the studied exporters lacked robustness: they were not prepared to face extreme external shocks. However, during the pandemic all the companies demonstrated organisational resilience in the form of adaptability: they were able to bounce back after the disruption by introducing novel solutions as well as strengthening customer and supplier relationships. Interestingly, their ability to build resilience was also rooted in the local culture. At the time of crisis, the companies combined *jugaad*—a regional cultural practice—with a Western mindset and management tools. This kind of creative combination of local practices with more systematic operations has been labelled as *jugalbandi* (Jain, 2022), and it refers here to the practices companies use to sustain their competitiveness under crisis. However, when the pandemic was over, the efforts to support resilience with local solutions decreased, and the companies returned to their prior routines and practices.

Our findings provide novel insights into the discussion on building resilience and the strategies used to cope with changing environments. Contrary to the existing literature's stress on preparedness for external shocks and streamlined processes, companies in emerging markets may take the initiative and become (temporarily) resilient by adopting culturally-embedded solutions. This study offers a context-sensitive, culture-based examination of resilience building. The studied companies' innovative solutions made it possible for them to sustain competitiveness under crisis.

2 Literature Review

The concept of organisational resilience was introduced quite some time ago. Two decades have passed since Hamel and Välikangas (2003) pointed out that turbulence is increasing at a faster pace than organisational resilience and Stoltz (2004) called for a quick change in leadership to be better prepared for the turbulence. This inspired an increasing number of scholars to begin investigating what organisational resilience actually is. According to a systematic literature review by Linnenlücke (2017), organisational resilience research can be classified into five lines of inquiry: (1) organisational responses to external threats, (2) organisational reliability, (3) employee strengths, (4) the adaptability of business models and (5) design principles that reduce supply chain vulnerabilities and disruptions. Other reviews (e.g., Bhamra et al., 2011; Hillmann, 2021; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021; Ma et al., 2018; Raetzke et al., 2021; Saad et al., 2022; Su & Junge, 2023; Tekletsion et al., 2024) emphasised various viewpoints related to the concept. Given the variance in perspectives and disciplinary backgrounds, it is not surprising that scholars have not reached a consensus on how to define the concept.

Although the definitions of organisational resilience vary, two fundamental characteristics stand out: *adaptability* and *robustness*. The former refers to capturing new opportunities, innovation and continuous learning, while the latter refers to stress

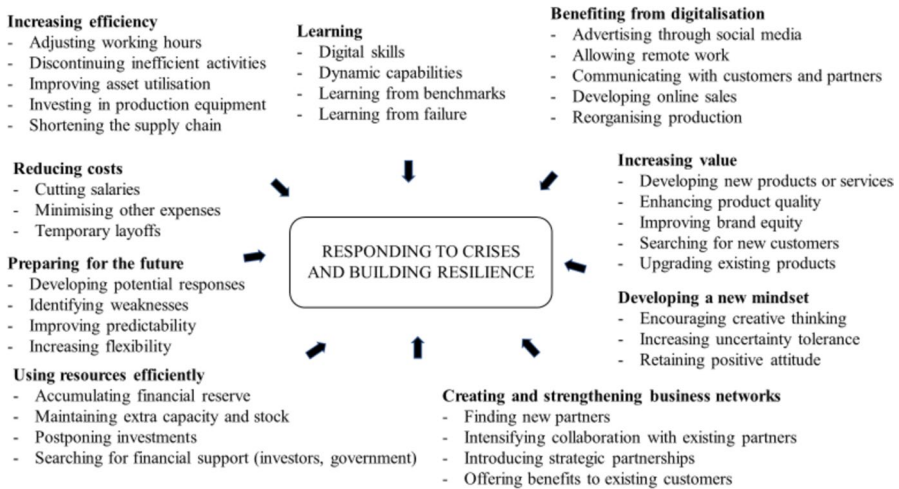


Fig. 1 A synthesis of prior research on ways to respond to crises and build resilience

endurance, preparedness and recovery (Buliga et al., 2016). Resilient organisations employ a variety of strategies when coping with changing environments, with some emphasising robustness and others focusing more on adaptability. These are also the building blocks of our definition of organisational resilience: *a firm's ability to take timely action in unfavourable environment to restore its previous activities and to prepare for future challenges*.

The existing literature also offers some insights into how firms attempt to improve their resilience and/or respond to crises. Figure 1 (based on Appendix 1) summarises the diversity of ways firms have dealt with crises and uncertainty in prior research as in the long run 'rare events' tend to occur in repeating intervals (Oehmen et al., 2020). Thus, we will witness the emergence of future critical events that will again strain firms' organisational resilience.

Unfortunately, the empirical findings are scattered and inconsistent and do not allow us to form a complete, convincing picture of how organisational resilience is created and which longer-term consequences resilience-building has on firms (Raetze et al., 2021; Su & Junge, 2023; Tekletsion et al., 2024). There is definitely a need for further research. Moreover, studies that focus on building organisational resilience among firms from emerging economies are rare (Pradana & Ekowati, 2024; Saad et al., 2022), and the findings are rather dispersed. For example, authors have suggested that managers of emerging market firms should become more flexible (Baral et al., 2023), improvise (Munir et al., 2022), digitalise, innovate (Kogut & Mejri, 2022), develop new services, products and processes (Martinez et al., 2021) or leadership and collaboration capabilities (Gani et al., 2023), learn risk management (Baral et al., 2023), build social capital (Aman & Seuring, 2023) and additional inventories, accumulate slack resources (Khan & Ali, 2023) and become open to business opportunities that emerge during crises (Hossain et al., 2022). However, these suggestions are relatively universal, and the underlying context-sensitive

explanation is missing. We searched for such an explanation through an exploratory empirical study.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Setting

To understand how globally operating exporters from an emerging economy have built organisational resilience to respond to the VUCA environment, we conducted a qualitative study among garment exporters from Bangladesh. A qualitative approach to a research question is appropriate when the phenomenon under investigation is novel and complex (Fletcher et al., 2018; Welch et al., 2013). Although there is literature on how organisations respond to crises and build resilience (see Appendix 1), the findings are tentative and scattered, and we assume that both the spatial (emerging economy) and temporal context (the time before, during and after the global pandemic) call for an exploratory research approach (Hepfer & Lawrence, 2022; Shela et al., 2023).

A qualitative study also allows us to examine the phenomenon in its real-life context and consider the fact that the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are often blurred (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising that qualitative methods have been commonly used to study company behaviour during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Acciarini et al., 2021; Conz et al., 2023; Fath et al., 2020; González & Pérez-Urbe, 2021; Nurunnabi, 2020; Purnomo et al., 2021; Sarkar & Clegg, 2021; Thelisson & Meier, 2024; Vissak, 2022a). In-depth qualitative studies have also been recommended when examining companies which are embedded in global value chains (Kano et al., 2020).

A longitudinal qualitative case study design is most appropriate for theoretical generalisation (Tsang, 2014). In such a study, theory is generated from empirical evidence with the help of context-sensitive data, theoretical sampling and data-driven analysis (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). It provides the opportunity to search for similarities and differences across the studied firms but also to identify emerging patterns or linkages, thus supporting inductive theory building (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Furthermore, this research strategy allows rich conceptualisation which is needed to extend theory (López-Duarte et al., 2018).

We chose the readymade garment industry in Bangladesh as the research context of our study for a number of reasons. To start with, the garment industry is a major global export industry, and the Bangladeshi garment industry is the second largest garment export industry in the world, after China (World Trade Organisation, 2023). It is also the core of Bangladeshi economy as it contributes 84% of the country's exports and it is the largest employer with a workforce of five million people (Biswas et al., 2023; Tehseen et al., 2024). Within the garment industry, we focused on knit and woven goods, which are relatively equal in Bangladeshi exports. In the 2022–23 fiscal year, woven goods' exports were 21.25 billion USD, and knitwear's exports were 25.74 billion USD, while the ready-made garments sector in total accounted for 84.58 per cent of the country's

total exports (BGMEA, 2024). The sector survived the previous financial crisis relatively well, mainly due to the focus on the low-price segment and resulting stable demand (Ali & Islam, 2010; Ali et al., 2011). In contrast, the impact of COVID-19 was significant, and there was a dramatic decrease of over 80% of export orders in spring 2020. In the 2021/22 financial year, the situation began to improve. In 2023, the total export figure increased, although the growth rate from the previous year diminished, and the total woven exports decreased in absolute value. In the first four months of 2024, the export performance continued to fall short of the export target percentage (Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh, 2024).

It is important to understand that the period since the emergence of COVID-19 has not been characterised by a continuous downturn but by volatility. The beginning, when the first country-wide lockdown was imposed in March/April 2020, was a time of unpreparedness and insecurity. During the following year, society learned to cope with the situation. However, due to the generally weakened state of health, insecurity increased again in autumn 2020, but it was followed by booming exports of garments in January 2021–June 2022. After summer 2022, the uncertainty increased again but for reasons other than the pandemic, including new geopolitical tensions and increasing inflation. In 2023, garment exports particularly to the US and European Union declined (Garment export to EU falls, 2024). High inflation and rising costs have led garment workers in Bangladesh to demand higher wages, posing a potential threat to the industry. As Bangladesh aims to progress from a least developed country to a developing nation by 2026, this will result in a change in its trade policy as it will lose duty-free access to the EU. Meanwhile, reduced duties for Vietnam based on an EU deal have increased Vietnam's garment exports, reducing Bangladesh's market share. Additionally, the higher dollar rate has increased raw material and shipping costs. As a result, year 2023 was challenging, and 2024 is even more uncertain for RMG exports. On the other hand, the development of Bangladeshi exports is also affected by a positive change in the business environment: the strained China–USA relationship and political instability in Myanmar and Pakistan have increased the attractiveness of Bangladesh as a potential source for garments.

3.2 Case Selection

This study focuses on the change in building organisational resilience and in the case selection, we applied purposeful, intensity sampling, thus stressing appropriateness and access to relevant knowledge in order to include information-rich cases, which produced deep understanding of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). This study investigates how globally operating exporters from an emerging economy have built organisational resilience to respond to the challenges of VUCA environment. The selected companies operate in the Bangladeshi garment industry, and both knit and woven goods exporters are represented. A summary of the selected firms is compiled in Table 1.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

In line with common practice in qualitative studies (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2018), we used multiple sources of evidence to create a holistic view of resilience building after the emergence of COVID-19. Our main data collection method was a series of online, semi-structured interviews with top management (for interview guides, see Appendix 2). The first round of semi-structured interviews was conducted in May–June 2021, the second in February–April 2022, the third in January–February 2023 and the final fourth round in May 2024. The focus of the interviews narrowed during the research process: in the first interview, it was on the impacts of COVID-19 (see the first interview guide in Appendix 2); in the subsequent interviews, particular interest was paid to resilience building. The interviews were conducted in Bengali, which is the mother tongue of the interviewees and the interviewer (the lead author of this study). The interviews were translated afterwards into English and thereafter back-translated to Bengali to check for and resolve potential discrepancies. The study also benefited from data triangulation (Denzin, 1978), as secondary data were used to check the validity. For example, information on garment exports and on the research context was obtained from the Bangladeshi Export Promotion Bureau, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association. Additionally, company-specific information was acquired from their websites and social media accounts.

The first steps of the data analysis were taken already during the data collection process. Following the recommendations of inductive theory building in case studies (e.g. Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), our data analysis began with the creation of descriptions of resilience building in each company based on evidence from multiple sources. This narrative analysis brings forward the subjective perceptions of the informants and also reflects their social norms and values, combined with lived experience (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016), and thus fits well our aim at context-sensitive explanation of resilience building.

In the following cross-case analysis we combined categorising and connecting strategies (Maxwell & Miller, 2008). After examination of the interview transcripts and secondary data, we had a broad understanding of the phenomenon and started to search for patterns in the case companies' resilience building during and after the COVID-19 crisis. We were particularly interested in decisions and actions supporting the resilience building process, and after categorising them we moved to connecting, i.e., started to form a chronology of events to track whether actions related to resilience building had changed over time. This allowed us to compare the studied companies' behaviour before, during and after the pandemic.

Our coding of data started with the search of the elements of organisational resilience mentioned in prior research: robustness and adaptability. However, during the coding new insights emerged from the data, which did not fit this classification. Instead, the informants described improvised, innovative and effective practices, which did not require much resources. A member of our research team with roots in the area pointed out that in fact in the Indian subcontinent this kind of behaviour is commonly called '*jugaad*'. This notion encouraged us to (a) re-read our data with '*jugaad* lenses' on and (b) search for literature on the concept. After re-analysing

Table 1 The case companies in brief

	Firm 1	Firm 2	Firm 3	Firm 4	Firm 5
Establishment year	2011	2016	2001	1987	1999
Owner(s)	a Japanese multinational (founded in 1926)	a local private owner	a local family (a Canadian partner markets the firm's products in Canada)	a local family	an Indian private owner based in Hong Kong as well as a local partner
Main products	knit garments but also plastic, carbon fibre, water purifiers	sweaters and other knit products	woven and knit products	knit products (with woven details, if necessary)	woven garments
Number of employees	4000	200	60	1600	12,000
Foreign operation modes	direct exports, production and sales subsidiaries, JVs	initially indirect exports (subcontracting), now direct exports	this is a trading house that acts as an intermediary	direct exports (very minor indirect exports in the past)	direct exports, foreign production subsidiaries
First foreign market(s)	Japan	China	Canada and USA	Germany	USA
Main foreign market(s)	Japan	China	USA and Canada	Germany	USA
Other entered countries	globally active (in 30–55 countries)	mainly active in Asia and Europe	mainly active in America and Europe	other European countries (e.g. UK, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Italy), Japan	Europe (EU)

our data, we realised that the companies did not only ‘jugaad’ but when building organisational resilience, they combined it with some practices we knew from literature. In order to highlight both aspects, we searched for a context-sensitive concept, which would describe this behaviour. We found a term, *jugalbandi*, which had been used in international management research to describe the way how Indian organisations creatively combine local practices and mindsets to more systematic modes of operations which are commonplace in advanced economies (Jain, 2022). It seemed to describe very well the organisational practices and thus we decided to apply that to our analysis.

Triangulation of the data sources strengthened the conclusions we drew based on the empirical study. In order to further assure the trustworthiness of our findings, we aimed at ‘rigour-within-context’, which is recommended when conducting research in emerging economies (Halme et al., 2024). The lead author of this study has deep contextual knowledge of the research setting, and he was able to communicate with the informants in their mother tongue. Furthermore, he was able to follow various local media sources. Due to his roots in the area, he was familiar with the culture and aware of aspects of cultural embeddedness. On the other hand, the other members of the author team were ‘outsiders’ who observed the phenomenon from a distance. The combination of emic and etic perspectives in the analysis allowed us to obtain findings that were both more adequate and more meaningful (cf. Buckley et al., 2014). Additionally, rigour in the analysis was supported by using computer-aided software (Nvivo) in the coding of the data (cf. Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012).

4 Findings

4.1 Robustness

Earlier research has already identified the significant impact of COVID-19 on business activities (Acciarini et al., 2021; Bahri Korbi et al., 2021) and the Bangladeshi garment exporters were no exception (Asikullah et al., 2024). Many of their important customers, such as the major fashion brands C&A, H&M, Inditex (Zara), Tesco and Primark, cancelled orders or delayed payments in early 2020. As a result, around 500 garment factories in Bangladesh were closed and thousands of people lost their employment (Chaity et al., 2021). In 2020, the sales of Bangladeshi garment exporters declined with about 17%, on average (Boudreau & Naeem, 2021), and the workers in the industry lost nearly 30% or their wages (Saxena et al., 2021). A report of the Asian Development Bank (2020: 1) described the seriousness of the situation as “The [Bangladeshi] RMG sector is on the verge of an unprecedented humanitarian and business catastrophe.”

In line with Mostafiz et al. (2022), we found that the exporters in the Bangladeshi garment industry were not prepared for the external shock created by the emergence of the pandemic. The immediate consequence was a huge increase in costs, particularly those related to materials and logistics, and the exporters were not able to raise their prices to cover that increase. In addition to financial challenges, the case firms found it difficult to control for the continuity of their business. The orders

were infrequent and continued to fluctuate for months. For example, one interviewee described the ‘back-and-forth’ situation as follows:

“COVID started here in March [2020], everything was closed here from March to April, we closed our factory for a month. At that time, our production was under pressure, and all orders were cancelled. Then we opened but the customers closed. Then the customers said that we cannot take the order, my situation here is terrible. ... Again, a time came when customers said I need to order right now. Then the customers said, no matter how you will send to us but send the product immediately. ... Suddenly, in June–July [2020], there was a huge pressure from Europe. They need the goods. My factory was closed. How would I deliver?” (Firm #1)

A number of issues related to employees emerged, partly due to various restrictions and bans and partly because of fear and uncertainty related to their health and safety. The companies had to follow the safety protocol which the national association of garment exporters BGMEA had prepared in consultation with the International Labour Organisation and the Bangladeshi government (Huq, 2020). The interviewees were also afraid that some of the consequences of COVID-19 would have long-term effects.

“A crisis will only get worse if it becomes too long or prevails for a long time. This long-time crisis creates a long-term effect in people’s minds. This is not a sudden shake; instead, it creates a pain that continues.” (Firm #1)

Another issue which was relevant for some firms was low wage competitiveness and workers’ absenteeism (see also Asikullah et al., 2024; Mostafiz et al., 2022). Some employees preferred to move back to their villages because they would be able to earn more there. Thus, when firms started receiving new orders, some did not have enough workers to fulfil them.

“This is a manpower crisis. ... The worker’s family says, ‘Come home [to the village], you don’t have to stay there [in the factory in Dhaka city] anymore. If we have to die, we will die together’. ... After the first corona [April/May 2020], some of them did not want to come to the factory, some of them left the job, or some went home forever with their families.” (Firm #4)

Based on the interviews, it is evident that the case companies were not prepared for such a crisis. They had plans for unexpected natural disasters, such as floods or storms, but very limited readiness to react to a disruption of global trade. Past crisis plans were prepared internally and on a micro level, focusing on factory safety, quality issues or the unexpected financial troubles of a major customer.

4.2 Adaptability

Due to the lack of robustness, the only option for the case companies was to adapt to the situation as well as possible. They employed multiple strategies to build resilience during the pandemic. A typical first reaction was an attempt to increase

the efficiency and productivity of the firm (Pettit et al., 2010). Based on the literature, laying off some of the workforce (cf. Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022) would have been expected, as salaries were the biggest expense for these companies. However, this did not happen in all the case companies.

“No, we haven’t cut the workforce yet. It’s our company policy. It’s not what we want to do. Maybe, in the coming days, we will have to cut some of the workforce, but even in that case, we will replace them.” (Firm #1)

“Due to COVID, there has been no change in our employee numbers. There has been no change in their salary structure yet.” (Firm #2)

“Not a single person in my company has been reduced until now.” (Firm #5)

The companies searched for alternative solutions to improve their resilience, such as strengthening their customer relationships—especially retaining strong long-term network relationships via active collaboration and communication, offering discounts and sharing relevant information with customers (see also Calabrò et al., 2021; Fath et al., 2020; González & Pérez-Uribe, 2021). Their attempts were also supported by customers, who understood that their suppliers were in a difficult position.

“We always gave feedback to our customers that this [is] the situation, this or that could happen now. Don’t worry; whenever a good situation comes, we will [come] back to you, we will support you.” (Firm #3)

“One special thing we did was not to let the buyers get stressed (or afraid). I never told the buyers I could not deliver the order I had just received. I didn’t let them get stressed.” (Firm #4)

“German Fashion, an industry group representing the country’s fashion labels, told DW that “We’re currently holding several talks between manufacturers and buyers because we are convinced the problems can only be resolved by a willingness for compromise on both sides,” a German Fashion spokeswoman said.” (Becker, 2020)

In these difficult times, some of the firms improved their adaptability by increasing value for customers (see also Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Duarte Alonso et al., 2020). They accomplished this by, for example, developing their brand, improving the product quality or adapting the products to better meet their customers’ needs. Firm #3 even began to develop their own designs, but overall, in the beginning of the pandemic, the case companies were not very concerned about their output. They had long-lasting customer relationships and past stable demand for their products. In fact, due to the pandemic, the demand for some products—e.g., clothes which people normally wear at home—even increased. The entrepreneurs seemed to trust that when the pandemic was over, the situation would return to ‘normal’, and during the second round of interviews, some interviewees had already experienced positive developments. Thus, the pandemic provided growth opportunities for some firms (see also Davidsson et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2021; Vissak, 2022b).

“The positive side of COVID is that the demand for products that you usually use at home has increased. This is normal; you usually will wear a T-shirt at home. Of course, you will not wear a formal shirt at home. And even so, when you wear trousers at home, you will prefer loose or knit trousers if you wear knit. You must not wear a pair of jeans. In that sense, when everyone works from home, the demand for knit has actually increased.” (Firm #4)

However, the attitudes of some firms changed over time, and they realised that there would be no return to the past. They had to adapt to the new situation, which was in some ways more competitive than before. Our data show that the pandemic was an important trigger for learning. In line with findings from other COVID-19-related studies (Ma et al., 2018; Portuguese Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020; Zarghami, 2021), all the case firms admitted in 2023 that they have learned from their mistakes and are better prepared for future crises. They are now equipped with more flexibility and are open to changes within the scope of their business. The ‘change mindset’ has been contagious; it has spread through the firms.

“People understand that things might change anytime; now, I am in a better position, but it may change shortly. It may become necessary for people to have Plan B or Plan C.” (Firm #1)

“I learned that this is not the end; more pandemics will come, and we have to be ready.” (Firm #2)

“In the last five or six months, I would say that a revolutionary period has been going on for the garments of Bangladesh. It is still growing. If the last six months’ business volume is checked, it will be more than any time in the previous ten years.” (Firm #5)

In general, all major investments and/or development plans were postponed during the pandemic. However, there was one exception to the rule: digitalisation. Due to the pandemic, the firms were forced to work remotely and communicate with partners and customers via digital solutions (cf. Al Naimi et al., 2022; Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Oehmen et al., 2020). The progress in digitalisation was considerable. Nevertheless, the use of digital solutions was mainly restricted to communication; other ways to benefit from them were not yet been implemented. Another important lesson was the importance of personal health and the role of health measures (see also Acciarini et al., 2021; Păunescu & Mátyus, 2020). On the other hand, these have been abandoned by now.

“People have forgotten about COVID-19. Now, there is nothing called COVID-19. The disinfection tunnels bought at that time now sit like museum pieces in the factories. Nowadays, during tea breaks, people joke about which vaccine they took.” (Firm 3)

4.3 *Jugaad: A Local Way of Solving Problems*

When conducting the interviews, we realised that the garment exporters had been able to sustain their competitiveness surprisingly well but their organisational

resilience did not seem to be based on the elements (robustness, adaptability) we expected. Instead of preparedness and streamlined processes, their resilience seemed to be built on more locally-derived solutions. Discussions with our informants stressed the importance of creative problem-solving and inclusiveness in resilience building, something which can be described with a local term *jugaad*. The term refers to actions taken to overcome severe conditions by improvising an effective solution with limited resources (Prabhu & Jain, 2015).³

In the Indian subcontinent, organisations and individuals often rely on indigenous, flexible and innovative solutions to solve problems (Balasundaram et al., 2023; Chatterjee et al., 2024). This practice allows them to improvise and use resources effectively (Khadria & Mishra, 2023; Prabhu & Jain, 2015) but it is not only about ‘a temporary quick-fix’; it also includes experiential learning and emphasises inclusiveness (Agarwal et al., 2020; Shepherd et al., 2020). When interviewed for the leading newspaper in Bangladesh, a Cambridge professor, Jaideep Prabhu, specialising in *jugaad* innovations, stated:

“I believe *Jugaad* already has and will keep on having a profound impact on Bangladesh. /.../ We look at *Jugaad* as an ingenuity that solves a lot of problems.” (Rahman, 2016)

The *jugaad* mindset was visible in the resilience building of our case companies. The creative solutions of the garment exporters ranged from introducing new practices and routines at the grassroots level to global sourcing. For example, prior to COVID-19, the case companies used raw material suppliers from overseas (typically China), whereas due to lockdowns, they had to turn to local producers or source fabrics from neighbouring countries, such as India and Pakistan. Examples of operational quick solutions were typically related to securing the health and safety of employees through concrete actions.

“Suppose 2000 workers will come, we started early, 6 in the morning – 400 will arrive at 6, next 400 at 6:30, 400 at 7, 400 at 7:30, the rest at 8. In this way, there was confidence among the workers that they would be able to maintain safety.” (Firm #5)

“The factory owners have already started allowing extensions of holidays in consultation with the workers as the labour ministry in a meeting Sunday agreed to allow it if deemed necessary.” (Mirdha, 2021)

Within the local context, it is important to note the inclusiveness that was mentioned in the interviews. The media has sometimes accused Bangladeshi garment manufacturers of poor working conditions and ignorance of their employees’ wellbeing. Yet, when it comes to resilience building at the time of the crisis, the

³ Still, it has to be acknowledged that some authors have used different terms for a relatively similar phenomenon. An example is bricolage: Tehseen et al., (2024: 15) also studied Bangladeshi RMG sector and point out that “entrepreneurial bricolage, facilitated by combination of existing and other inexpensive (e.g. no or low cost) resources and creative reconfiguration, leads to develop innovative workable solutions which are valuable to encounter a broad range of new challenges.”.

respondents stressed the importance of supporting the community, as the following quotes demonstrate.

“The rest of us, who were here, had our communications, then we tried to motivate each other. We frequently met, including the top management, and tried to give courage to each other.” (Firm #3)

“We helped them to grow awareness regarding their health and safety issues. We also assured them that they will not lose the job if they become sick or a close family member gets sick.” (Firm #4)

“Recognizing the impact on workers, various support programs were introduced. This included providing food and financial aid, ensuring job security, and setting up communication channels for workers to voice their concerns.” (Boudreau & Naem, 2021)

Jugaad is sometimes also understood as an interim solution and examples of such could be found from the secondary data we collected for the study. For example, during the pandemic as the foreign market became more challenging, some factories quickly shifted towards producing personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, gowns, and face shields. This move not only met the soaring global demand for protective gear but also helped keep factories running and workers employed. Many manufacturers rapidly retooled their production lines to produce these essential items, and also started to export them to other countries (Uz-Zaman, 2020). Additionally, several factories implemented various cost-cutting measures to manage the financial strain. These included reducing overtime hours, cutting regular hours, delaying payments, and in some cases, reducing wages. About 60% of factories reported reducing overtime, and 29% cut wages during the second quarter of 2020 (Boudreau & Naem, 2021).

4.4 *Jugalbandi: Integrating Best Practices from East and West*

The combination of local practices with the expectations of global business is in many ways unique and bound to the region. Therefore, we also wanted to describe the phenomenon with a term which is derived from the same culture, *jugalbandi*. The term has been used in international management research to describe the way how Indian organisations creatively combine local practices and mindsets to more systematic modes of operations which are commonplace in advanced economies (Jain, 2022).

References to *jugalbandi* are rare in business and management research. The concept is embedded in Indian culture, meaning a duet performance in Indian classical music in which two musicians play together, either with the same or different instruments (Ghosh, 2018). Linguistically it originates from Sanskrit and combines the words "jugal" (paired) and "bandi" (tied together). It highlights the conversational dialogue between the performing artists as well as their improvisational interaction which leads to harmonious experience (Clayton et al., 2019).

Table 2 Summary of practices to build organisational resilience in the firms

	Firm 1	Firm 2	Firm 3	Firm 4	Firm 5
Robustness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adaptability	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Jugaad	✓	n.a.	✓	✓	n.a.
Return to old routines	✓	n.a.	✓	n.a.	✓

✓ = demonstrated some practices, = ✓✓ demonstrated strong practices

In our opinion, this metaphor aptly describes the resilience building of the Bangladeshi garment exporters during the COVID-19 pandemic. We witnessed how the companies synchronised their actions to be resilient and consequently overcame the sudden external shocks. For example, they adopted health and safety practices common in globally operating companies, and combined them with creative solutions which were appropriate in the local context. These solutions were supported by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) offering, for example, advice on health measures and low-interest loans to overcome the challenges. Additionally, the companies were innovative in adjusting their product offering to meet their customers' changing needs over time. Flexible and resourceful use of workforce allowed them to not only follow their company policies but also guarantee work for their employees during this challenging period. However, when the restrictions related to the pandemic were lifted, the companies returned to their old routines and practices as the following quote from a fourth-round interview indicates.

“Now, there is nothing such a COVID-19. We returned to as we did our business for years. Unlike Europeans or Americans, we don't typically prepare beforehand. We only react when faced with immediate threats or serious problems. This same lack of preparedness is evident in our response to COVID-19 or other crisis issues right now” (Firm #1)

Following our research question, we were not searching for similarities and differences across the cases but wanted to explore whether there is a common pattern which these companies used to build organisational resilience during this exceptional period. Table 2 below summarises the elements of resilience building we identified.

All the firms combined robustness and adaptation for building organisational resilience. However, three of the firms also introduced new practices which could be labelled as ‘jugaad’. The last interview round indicated that the companies have more or less returned to their old routines after the crisis. Given that jugaad as a term refers to a temporary solution, this may have been intentional.

As we can see from Table 2, there is no single clear pattern among the firms in building organisational resilience but the firms differ. In general, larger firms or those with extensive multinational experience demonstrated greater robustness and adaptability. However, none of the companies were well prepared to the situation. All firms were able to adapt to the situation, although Firm 3 which

is a trading house was less adaptable than the others due to the nature of its business.

5 Discussion

Our repeated interviews with the informants allowed us to follow their resilience building over time and observe potential changes. Our data allowed us to benefit from temporal bracketing (Langley, 1999), i.e. decomposing the data into successive adjacent periods. The first period—*Bolt from the Blue*—in spring 2020, was characterised by increasing awareness of the spreading global pandemic and its consequences. When COVID-19 hit Bangladesh in March 2020, the garment industry experienced a huge shock accompanied with fear and uncertainty. As major customers cancelled orders and/or delayed payments, factories closed for March and April. Although factories reopened, customers were still unable to take orders. Consequences were severe for the garment industry: due to market volatility, planning was almost impossible, logistical and material costs increased, employee health and safety concerns emerged and employees faced health-related fears, resulting in significant loss of manpower. In order to cope with the situation, the *jugalbandi* behaviour (Jain, 2022) started; efforts to increase efficiency and productivity, customer loyalty and product offering were combined with creative solutions, such as local sourcing of raw materials and improvised health and safety precautions.

During the second period—*Survival Mode*—in summer and autumn of 2020, orders from particularly European customers peaked and the garment exporters who had just been able to scale down their operations, had to quickly scale them up. Understandably, the companies struggled to meet the suddenly increased demand. In order to manage the volatility, all major investments and development plans were put on hold—with the exception of efforts to digitalise the business. All slack resources were put in improving health and safety measures on the grassroots level. *Jugalbandi* continued as efficiency measures, such as salary cuts of employees' wages were combined with local creative solutions.

While the global pandemic continued, processes and routines had been developed and therefore the third period during 2021–2022 could be labelled as *Towards Stability*. Despite COVID-19, the Bangladeshi garment exporters benefited from positive market development as the demand for both knit and woven products was quite stable. Need for *jugaad* decreased over time and by early 2023, the companies continued their businesses as if there would have never been a global pandemic. All extra efforts to build organisational resilience disappeared and the developments made during the pandemic remained more or less obsolete. Due to this, the studied companies will be unprepared for potential future VUCA situations. On the other hand, then, they might use *jugalbandi* again.

6 Conclusion

This study responds to the calls for additional research on resilience-building of companies from emerging markets (Pradana & Ekowati, 2024; Saad et al., 2022) and to the studies emphasizing the need to study longer-term outcomes resilience-building has on firms (Raetze et al., 2021; Su & Junge, 2023; Tekletsion et al., 2024). Prior research has demonstrated a clear impact of organisational resilience on firm performance (Iftikhar et al., 2021), which highlights a need for a better understanding of how that resilience is created. A recent systematic literature review on the phenomenon emphasises the dynamic nature of the concept and stresses the diverse capabilities which are needed to anticipate, withstand, cope with and adjust to crises (Conz & Magnani, 2020). Unfortunately, the meta-analyses and literature reviews are biased, as the great majority of empirical research has been conducted in Western developed economies (Pradana & Ekowati, 2024; Saad et al., 2022).

Based on our empirical study, we would like to challenge the mainstream view and, instead of adopting a universal, context-free perspective, to argue that the process of building organisational resilience is context-dependent. In order to understand the resilience building of exporters from emerging economies, we need to be sensitive to the cultural context in which they operate, as it may be an important source of resilience-building elements. The context-specific features of resilience building may also explain the inconsistent findings in prior research.

Exporters from the Indian subcontinent are deeply embedded in their societies' cultural and societal values and norms, which influence their resilience building. At the same time, their business is tightly intertwined in the global value chains in which their partners and customers operate. Due to the embeddedness in global value chains, they have adopted Western practices which support robustness and adaptability. However, due to cultural embeddedness, at the time of crises, local practises such as *jugaad* are adopted to support creative problem solving and inclusiveness. Thus, their ability to sustain competitiveness under crisis relies on *jugalbandi*, a combination of improvisation and rigour, a fusion of the local with the global but these locally-embedded practices were discarded when the situation stabilised.

These context-sensitive solutions are not transferable across contexts as such. However, the conclusions should be amalgamated into resilience building theory. For example, our findings highlight that resilience-building efforts are not stand-alone solutions. They require coordination, connection, and support from various actors, represented by the metaphor *jugalbandi* used in this study. Specifically, in developing countries where the national economy relies heavily on one or two main industries, resilience depends on combining local context-specific strategies with global (Western) strategies, as well as the co-operation between various actors.

From a managerial point of view, this study stresses the importance of local, context-specific solutions in building organisational resilience under a global crisis. It is essential that government and semi-public organisations (such as the

BGMEA) maintain a close-coordinated relationship with manufacturers and provide supportive advice, guidelines, and directions, as they did during the pandemic. The situation requires intensive collaboration throughout the global value chain, from manufacturers to exporters and their customers. We would also hope that each crisis would boost some learning, in our study the case companies developed their skills in digitalisation. Additionally, best practices of resilience-building solutions should be sustained for future challenges.

As with any study, this one has some limitations. As it is based on five cases from one emerging economy—Bangladesh—and one industry, in the future we hope to see studies based on more cases from other emerging economies and industries. Longitudinal data should be collected from these or other firms to find out how various crises have affected them, what they have done to become more resilient and what else they plan to do in the future and why. Also, it would be interesting to study firms that have not managed to survive during crises and find out if they tried to do anything differently in their resilience-building efforts than more successful firms.

Appendix 1. Ways for increasing a firm's resilience and/or responding to crises

Main themes	Sub-themes and sources
Reducing costs	Laying off employees temporarily (Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Rodrigues et al., 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022; Vissak, 2022a), reducing salaries (Fath et al., 2020; González & Pérez-Urbe, 2021; Păunescu & Mátyus, 2020; Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermefio, 2020; Sharma & Rautela, 2022), reducing other costs (Calabrò et al., 2021): e.g., rental costs via reducing physical office space (Sharma & Rautela, 2022; Vissak, 2013)
Increasing efficiency and productivity	Shortening the supply chain (Acciarini et al., 2021), improving asset utilisation (Pettit et al., 2010), improving labor productivity (Pettit et al., 2010), buying new production equipment (Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Stoltz, 2004), adjusting working hours (Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Purnomo et al., 2021), discontinuing less efficient activities (Vissak, 2022a)

Main themes	Sub-themes and sources
Increasing value	Improving brand equity (Pettit et al., 2010), improving product quality (Duarte Alonso et al., 2020; Stoltz, 2004), developing new products (Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Davidsson et al., 2021; González & Pérez-Uribe, 2021; Oehmen et al., 2020; Pettit et al., 2010; Purnomo et al., 2021; Sarkar & Clegg, 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022) or services (Duarte Alonso et al., 2020; Oehmen et al., 2020; Vissak 2022ab), adjusting existing products (Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2021), entering new, more profitable customer segments (Sarkar & Clegg, 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022; Vissak 2022ab)
Creating and strengthening network relationships	Creating strategic partnerships (Acciarini et al., 2021), finding additional (or backup) partners (Acciarini et al., 2021; Adobor et al., 2021; Al Naimi et al., 2022), e.g., local or foreign (Duarte Alonso et al., 2020) suppliers or customers (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Eppinger et al., 2018; Fath et al., 2020; Hald & Coslugeanu, 2022; Pettit et al., 2010; Sarkar & Clegg, 2021; Vissak, 2022a; Zarghami, 2021) or collaborating more actively with the current ones (Fath et al., 2020), sharing orders (Purnomo et al., 2021) or revenues with partners (Al Naimi et al., 2022), establishing partnerships with the public sector (Acciarini et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2021; Zarghami, 2021), universities and other (educational) institutions (Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020), retaining strong long-term network relationships (Calabrò et al., 2021; Purnomo et al., 2021) via actively communicating with customers (González & Pérez-Uribe, 2021; Pettit et al., 2010) and other partners and sharing relevant information with them (Al Naimi et al., 2022); offering discounts to important customers (Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020)
Accumulating slack resources and getting financial backup	Creating reserve production capacity (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Pettit et al., 2010), accumulating financial reserves (Al Naimi et al., 2022; Pettit et al., 2010; Sharma & Rautela, 2022), maintaining excess/"safety" resources (Calabrò et al., 2021) like stock materials (Rapaccini et al., 2020) or products (Conz & Magnani, 2020), postponing investments and development plans (Vissak, 2022b), applying for governmental support (Acciarini et al., 2021; Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Fath et al., 2020; Nurunnabi, 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022; Vissak 2022ab; Zarghami, 2021), getting a loan (González & Pérez-Uribe, 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022), getting investments from venture capitalists (Gunasekaran et al., 2011) or, in case of individual entrepreneurs, from family members (Muhammad et al., 2022)

Main themes	Sub-themes and sources
Using digital solutions more actively	Using digital solutions for working remotely (Acciarini et al., 2021; Fath et al., 2020; Păunescu & Mátyus, 2020; Vissak, 2022a), analysing the firm's activities (Rapaccini et al., 2020), reorganizing production (Hald & Coslugeanu, 2022) and for communicating with business partners (Al Naimi et al., 2022) and customers (Anakpo & Mishi, 2021; Oehmen et al., 2020); e.g., selling online via the firm's new website, social media platforms or apps (Chowdhury et al., 2021; Fath et al., 2020; Sarkar & Clegg, 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022; Vissak, 2022a) and advertising the firm more actively via online channels (Vissak, 2022b)
Learning	developing employees' digital (Acciarini et al., 2021) and other—for instance, language and social media (Duarte Alonso et al., 2020)—skills (Pettit et al., 2010), fostering organisational learning e.g. in terms of developing new dynamic capabilities (Adobor et al., 2021), learning from past mistakes (Ma et al., 2018; Portuguese Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020; Zarghami, 2021) and from more successful firms (Vissak, 2022a)
Preparing for future crises	Discussing potential responses to future crisis situations (Acciarini et al., 2021), trying to predict future crises (Acciarini et al., 2021; Adobor et al., 2021; Al Naimi et al., 2022; Ma et al., 2018; Pettit et al., 2010), trying to recognise future business opportunities (Pettit et al., 2010), identifying the firm's potential weaknesses (Ma et al., 2018), becoming more flexible (Al Naimi et al., 2022; Bahri Korbi et al., 2021; Stoltz, 2004) in terms of manufacturing, sourcing (Hald & Coslugeanu, 2022), transport (Chowdhury et al., 2021) or export market selection (Eppinger et al., 2018), developing operating procedures (Ma et al., 2018) and building reserve stocks before the next crisis (Kuckertz & Brändle, 2022), allocating some resources for developing future products instead of over-investing into past products and technologies (Hamel & Välikangas, 2003), changing the business focus: e.g. from manufacturing to design (González & Pérez-Urbe, 2021) or other services (Rapaccini et al., 2020) or from business customers to end consumers (Sarkar & Clegg, 2021)

Main themes	Sub-themes and sources
Developing new mindsets	Supporting managerial team members (Adobor et al., 2021) and other employees (Calabrò et al., 2021), encouraging creative thinking (Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011) and trying something new even if it is risky (Stoltz, 2004), recognizing that uncertainty is the “new normal” (Adobor et al., 2021; Kuckertz & Brändle, 2022) and that firms should become ready to face future crises (Stoltz, 2004); retaining a positive attitude (Fath et al., 2020; Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020) and openness to make changes (Hamel & Välikangas, 2003), understanding that it is also possible to grow during crises (Kuckertz & Brändle, 2022)
Increasing health measures	Developing a health protocol (Garcia-Villagrán et al., 2020), introducing strict hygiene measures (Păunescu & Mátyus, 2020), using face masks (Acciarini et al., 2021), reducing physical contacts (Acciarini et al., 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022) via e.g. working partially or fully from home (Rapaccini et al., 2020; Rodrigues et al., 2021; Zarghami, 2021), implementing other safety measures (Chowdhury et al., 2021): e.g. closing common areas, controlling temperatures (Rapaccini et al., 2020), providing disinfectants and protection equipment (Rodrigues et al., 2021; Sharma & Rautela, 2022)

Appendix 2. Interview guides

Interview 1

I. General information

When was the firm established and what are its main business areas and products? Has anything changed regarding business areas and products? If yes, then what, when and why?

To whom does your firm belong (a local business owner, a foreign business owner, the state, local government etc.) and has anything changed regarding ownership (e.g. did someone acquire a part of the firm later)? If yes, then what, when and why?

If your firm belongs to a family, then how many generations (e.g. grandparents, parents, children) are involved in the management of the firm? What are their roles?

Can you give information about your number of employees in 2019, 2020 and expected number of employees in the end of in 2021?

Can you give information about your turnover in 2019, 2020 and expected turnover in 2021?

II. Foreign activities

What was your first foreign market and in which year and way (e.g. exports, investment...) did you enter it?

Why did you select this market as your first foreign market?

-
- How much knowledge of your firm's first foreign market did you have before you entered it?
- Can you give information about your export share in 2019, 2020 and expected export share in 2021?
- In which year did your firm reach at least a 25% export share per turnover (if you have reached it)?
- Can you give information about your main export markets in 2019, 2020 and (expected) export markets in 2021?
- Does your firm have any foreign subsidiaries? If yes, then where, when and why did you establish them and what kind of subsidiaries (e.g., sales, production...) do you have? Has anything changed regarding foreign subsidiaries since foundation (e.g. have you established any new ones or closed down some; if yes, then when, where and why)?
- Does your firm have any other foreign activities (e.g. does it use licensing, franchising...)? If yes, then can you describe such activities (what, when, why...)?
- In which year did your firm enter the first continent outside Asia (Africa, North America, South America, Europe or Australia) through exporting? Which country did you enter and why?
- In which year did your firm enter the first continent outside Asia through investments, licensing, franchising etc.? Which country did you enter, through which activity and why?
- In which year did your firm enter the second continent outside Asia through exporting? Which country did you enter and why?
- In which year did your firm enter the second continent outside Asia through investments, licensing, franchising etc.? Which country did you enter, through which activity and why?
- In which year did your firm enter the third continent outside Asia through exports or other activities? Which country did you enter, through which activity and why?
- How do you evaluate your firm's success in internationalization (100%- very successful... 0%- not at all successful)? Why?
- What have you learned from your firm's foreign activities?

III. Changes in foreign activities

- Have you ever had to exit any foreign markets completely (stop all export, investment or other activities)? If yes, then please explain which markets, what happened on each market, when and why
- Have you ever had to reduce your activities in any foreign countries to a large extent, but not completely (e.g. reduce some export, investment or other activities in 1 year by 20% or more)? If yes, then please explain which markets, what happened on each market, when and why
- Have you ever re-entered any markets completely (revived all previous export, investment and other activities in your previous markets and started serving the same customers after having no activities there for a year or more)? If yes, then please explain which markets, what happened on each market, when and why
- If you ever stopped your activities in any foreign countries or reduced them to a large extent, then did you enter different foreign markets or find other customers instead of them or prefer other activities (e.g. invested to country 1, but sold your subsidiary there and started to export to country 2)? If yes, then please explain which markets, what happened on each market, when and why

IV. The effects of the COVID-19 crisis

- How prepared were you for the crisis (100%- very prepared... 0%- not at all prepared)? Why?
- How did you try to prepare for the crisis?
- How did the crisis affect you? Please describe both negative and positive effects of the crisis on your firm (e.g. turnover, number of employees, customer base etc.)
- What did you do during the crisis to be more successful (e.g. try to reduce costs, increase revenues, adjust products...) and why? Which of these activities were the most useful for your firm and why? If any activities did not bring expected results, then which and why?
- Was the experience acquired during previous crises in any way helpful or harmful for your firm? If yes, then please explain how and why
- What did you learn from the COVID-19 crisis?

V. Strengths and future of your firm

What are currently your main strengths compared to your foreign competitors (e.g. lower price, better quality...)?

What were your main strengths compared to your foreign competitors before the COVID-19 crisis?

How do you evaluate your firm's overall success (100%- very successful... 0%-not at all successful)? Why?

What are your plans for 2021–2022 and for the more distant future (e.g. will you try to export more, develop new products etc.)?

How do you plan to prepare for future crises? Why?

Interview 2

- How did the pandemic affect your firm since the last interview? did anything else affect your firm strongly? if yes then what and how?
- How could the pandemic affect you in the following months? what else could affect your firm strongly in the following months? why?
- What do you plan to do to respond to the pandemic in 2022 or later? why?
- What else do you plan to do in 2022 or later to become more resilient? why?
- Overall, how happy are you with your firm's resilience? why?
- If you could give suggestions to other firms how to become more resilient then what would you suggest (e.g. what they could do and which mistakes they should avoid) and why?
- Do you need to change something in your product/offering/operations/organization to become more resilient in the future? Give an example what it could be. How would that improve your resilience?
- In order to be better prepared to future critical events, what do you do? How do you support (from our framework in the paper)?—identification and exploitation of new opportunities, learning, innovativeness
- In order to better recover from future crises, what do you do? How do you support (from our framework)—stress endurance, preparedness, recovery
- How would you describe your role in the international/global supply chain? Does that affect your resilience in the future? Do you anticipate any changes in your position in the supply chain? Why/why not? If yes, how will that affect your resilience?
- What is the role of intermediaries in your resilience building? Please give examples.
- What is the role of other members of your network/stakeholders in your resilience building?
- Which factors make resilience building difficult/hinder it?

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