

## STRATEGIC HRM IN THE AGE OF POLYCRISIS: BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE THROUGH DYNAMIC CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

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Received: 01/04/2026 | Revised: 05/04/2026 | Accepted: 25/04/2026 | Published: 01/05/2026

### Abstract

This study examines the role of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in building organizational resilience in the context of polycrisis, characterized by interconnected economic, geopolitical, environmental, and technological disruptions. Drawing on a narrative literature review, the research integrates SHRM with dynamic capability theory to develop a conceptual framework linking human resource practices, sensing, seizing, and transforming capabilities, and resilience outcomes. The findings suggest that SHRM plays a pivotal role in fostering adaptability by enhancing employee engagement, skills, and organizational flexibility. HR practices such as continuous learning, leadership development, and flexible work systems contribute to the development of dynamic capabilities, enabling organizations to respond effectively to uncertainty and disruption. The study highlights that resilience is achieved through the alignment of human capital strategies with changing environmental demands. It also emphasizes the importance of integrating HR systems with broader organizational processes to support continuous renewal. The research contributes to theory by connecting SHRM and dynamic capabilities within a polycrisis context and offers practical insights for building sustainable and resilient organizations.

**Keywords:** *Strategic Human Resource Management, Polycrisis, Organizational Resilience, Dynamic Capabilities, Workforce Adaptability*

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of polycrisis has gained prominence in recent years to describe a condition in which multiple global disruptions—economic instability, geopolitical tensions, environmental crises, and rapid technological change—occur simultaneously and interact with one another. Unlike isolated crises, a polycrisis is characterized by interconnected risks that amplify uncertainty and create cascading effects across systems (Mujtaba & Mahapatra, 2024). For organizations, this means that disruptions are no longer predictable or contained but are continuous, overlapping, and mutually reinforcing. Events such as supply chain breakdowns, climate-related disruptions, political conflicts, and digital transformation pressures collectively shape an increasingly volatile environment. As a result, organizations must navigate not just individual shocks but complex systems of disruption that evolve in real time. This context fundamentally alters how organizations perceive risk, strategy, and long-term sustainability (Mujtaba & Mahapatra, 2019).

The rise of polycrisis has significantly increased uncertainty and complexity in organizational environments, challenging traditional approaches to planning and decision-making. Organizations now operate in conditions where change is constant, and future scenarios are difficult to anticipate with precision. This heightened uncertainty requires a shift from linear, predictive models of management to more adaptive and flexible approaches (Silva & Costa, 2025). Complexity is further intensified by the interdependence of global systems, where disruptions in one domain can quickly spread to others. For example, geopolitical conflicts can affect economic stability, which in turn influences labor markets and organizational performance. In such an environment, organizations must develop the capacity to respond rapidly while maintaining coherence and direction. This has elevated the importance of resilience

as a core organizational capability (Zamani et al., 2025). However, traditional Human Resource Management (HRM) approaches are often ill-equipped to respond effectively to continuous and overlapping crises. Historically, HRM has focused on administrative efficiency, compliance, and stable workforce planning, assuming relatively predictable operating conditions. These approaches tend to emphasize standardization, long-term planning, and incremental change, which may not be suitable in highly dynamic environments (Oman et al., 2024). During periods of disruption, rigid HR systems can limit organizational agility and slow down decision-making processes. Additionally, traditional HR practices may not adequately support the rapid reskilling, flexible work arrangements, and adaptive leadership required in crisis situations. This highlights the need for a more strategic and proactive role for HR in managing uncertainty (Ponmalar et al., 2025). Consequently, organizations are increasingly turning to Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) as a means of aligning human capital with evolving business needs.

HR practices play a central role in developing these capabilities by fostering learning, flexibility, and leadership development. This study aims to examine how SHRM contributes to building organizational resilience in the context of polycrisis and to explore how dynamic capabilities can be cultivated through targeted HR interventions. By integrating these perspectives, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing adaptability and long-term sustainability. Ultimately, the study highlights the importance of rethinking HRM as a strategic function that enables organizations to thrive in an era of continuous disruption.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Understanding Polycrisis and Organizational Challenges**

The concept of polycrisis refers to a situation in which multiple crises occur simultaneously and interact in ways that amplify their overall impact. Unlike isolated disruptions, polycrisis is characterized by interconnected events across economic, geopolitical, environmental, and technological domains. These crises do not operate independently; instead, they reinforce one another, creating cascading effects that are difficult to predict and manage (Ponmalar et al., 2025). For example, a geopolitical conflict may disrupt global supply chains, which in turn triggers economic instability and labor market fluctuations. This interconnectedness increases systemic risk, as failures in one area can rapidly spread across multiple systems. As a result, organizations must contend with a level of complexity that goes beyond traditional risk management approaches (Bhatnagar et al., 2025).

The implications of polycrisis for organizations are profound, particularly in terms of volatility, uncertainty, and disruption. Organizations are now required to operate in environments where change is constant and often unpredictable, making long-term planning increasingly challenging. This heightened uncertainty demands greater flexibility and responsiveness, as organizations must adapt quickly to evolving conditions. Disruptions can affect not only operational processes but also workforce stability, employee well-being, and organizational culture (Adhikya, 2025). Furthermore, the continuous nature of crises means that organizations cannot simply recover and return to a stable state but must develop the capacity to function effectively amid ongoing turbulence. In this context, resilience becomes a critical capability, enabling organizations to absorb shocks, adapt to change, and sustain performance over time (Köchling & Wehner, 2020).

### **Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)**

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has evolved significantly from its origins as an administrative function focused on personnel management and compliance. Traditionally, HR was primarily concerned with tasks such as payroll, recruitment, and policy enforcement, operating as a support function within organizations (Gupta & Mishra, 2022). However, as the importance of human capital has become more widely recognized, HR has transitioned into a strategic partner that contributes to organizational decision-making and performance. This evolution reflects a broader shift toward viewing employees as valuable assets rather than costs to be managed. SHRM emphasizes the alignment of HR practices with organizational goals, ensuring that workforce capabilities support long-term strategic objectives (Chen, 2023). This transformation has positioned HR as a key player in navigating complex and dynamic business environments.

In the context of polycrisis, SHRM plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational agility, adaptability, and competitive advantage. By aligning human capital strategies with changing environmental demands, SHRM enables organizations to respond more effectively to uncertainty and disruption. HR practices such as continuous learning, leadership development, and flexible work arrangements contribute to building a resilient and adaptable workforce (Agbasiere & Nze-Igwe, 2025). Additionally, SHRM supports the development of organizational cultures that encourage innovation, collaboration, and responsiveness. This strategic approach allows organizations to leverage their human resources as a source of competitive advantage, particularly in times of crisis. As a result, SHRM is not

only a mechanism for managing people but also a driver of organizational transformation and resilience (Vaivav Kumar Singh & Kunal Sinha, 2025).

### **Dynamic Capability Theory**

Dynamic Capability Theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding how organizations adapt to rapidly changing environments. It focuses on an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external resources to address evolving challenges (Lawrence et al., 2024). The theory is commonly conceptualized through three core components: sensing, seizing, and transforming. Sensing involves identifying emerging opportunities and threats in the external environment, requiring organizations to remain vigilant and informed. Seizing refers to the ability to mobilize resources and make strategic decisions in response to these insights. Transforming, the final component, involves continuously renewing organizational structures, processes, and capabilities to maintain alignment with changing conditions (Habersang et al., 2025). Together, these components enable organizations to remain competitive in dynamic and uncertain environments.

The application of dynamic capabilities is particularly relevant in the context of HR and organizational management. HR functions play a critical role in developing and sustaining these capabilities by fostering skills, knowledge, and behaviors that support adaptability. For instance, training and development programs enhance the organization's ability to sense and respond to change, while flexible HR policies enable rapid resource reallocation (Riemer et al., 2025). Leadership development initiatives also contribute to the transformation process by equipping managers with the skills needed to guide organizational change. In practice, dynamic capabilities are embedded in organizational routines and supported by HR systems that promote learning and innovation. By integrating dynamic capability theory with SHRM, organizations can create a robust framework for navigating polycrisis conditions. This integration highlights the central role of human capital in driving continuous adaptation and long-term resilience (Freitas, 2025).

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts a **narrative literature review** approach to explore the role of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in building organizational resilience within the context of polycrisis. A narrative review is particularly appropriate for this research because it allows for a comprehensive and interpretive synthesis of diverse theoretical perspectives, rather than focusing solely on quantitative aggregation. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the topic—spanning HRM, organizational resilience, and dynamic capability theory—a narrative approach enables the integration of concepts from multiple domains. The review draws on existing academic literature to identify key themes, frameworks, and relationships relevant to SHRM and dynamic capabilities. Unlike systematic reviews that follow strict inclusion criteria, this approach emphasizes conceptual depth and theoretical development. The aim is to construct a coherent understanding of how HR practices contribute to adaptability and resilience in complex environments. This method also supports the development of an integrative framework linking SHRM, dynamic capabilities, and organizational resilience.

Data collection involves a targeted search of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reputable reports from major academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords used in the search include “polycrisis,” “strategic human resource management,” “dynamic capabilities,” and “organizational resilience.” Selected sources are critically analyzed to identify recurring patterns, theoretical linkages, and gaps in the literature. The analysis focuses on how HR practices enable sensing, seizing, and transforming capabilities, as well as their role in managing uncertainty and disruption. The narrative synthesis process involves comparing and contrasting different perspectives to highlight areas of convergence and divergence. This approach allows for the development of a conceptual model that explains the mechanisms through which SHRM contributes to resilience. By emphasizing interpretation and integration, the methodology provides a rich and nuanced understanding of the research topic. Ultimately, the narrative review serves as a foundation for advancing theory and informing future empirical research.

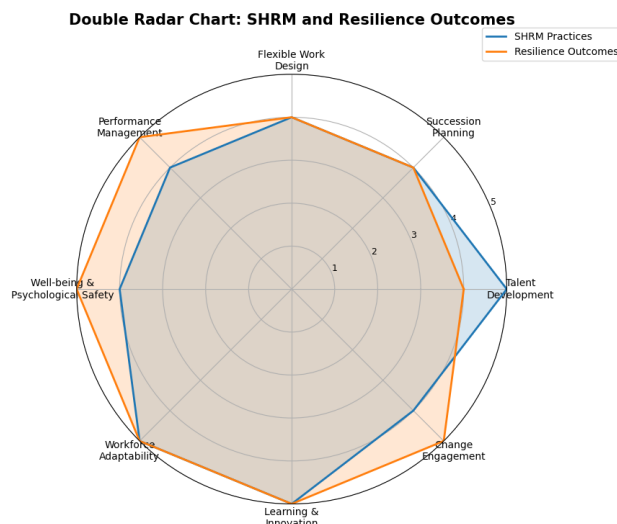
### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **SHRM and Resilience Outcomes**

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational resilience by aligning workforce capabilities with the demands of uncertain and disruptive environments. Strategic HR practices such as talent development, succession planning, flexible work design, and performance management systems contribute directly to an organization's ability to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to shocks (Tamim, 2025). By

embedding resilience-oriented principles into HR policies, organizations can create systems that are not only efficient but also responsive to change. For example, workforce planning that incorporates scenario analysis allows organizations to prepare for multiple future possibilities rather than relying on static forecasts. Similarly, HR practices that emphasize well-being and psychological safety enable employees to cope more effectively with stress and disruption (Picanço Rodrigues et al., 2025). These elements collectively strengthen the organization’s capacity to maintain stability while adapting to external pressures. As a result, SHRM becomes a central mechanism through which resilience is operationalized at both individual and organizational levels (Gössling & Scott, 2024).

Employee engagement, skills, and adaptability are critical mediators in the relationship between SHRM and resilience outcomes. Engaged employees are more likely to demonstrate commitment, discretionary effort, and a willingness to support organizational change initiatives. At the same time, continuous skill development ensures that employees remain capable of responding to evolving job requirements and technological advancements (Winn et al., 2011). Adaptability, in particular, is essential in polycrisis environments, where roles and responsibilities may shift rapidly. HR practices such as training programs, job rotation, and leadership development initiatives help cultivate these attributes across the workforce. Furthermore, fostering a culture of learning and innovation encourages employees to experiment, collaborate, and contribute to problem-solving. These human capital factors enhance the organization’s ability to recover from disruptions and capitalize on emerging opportunities (Scheffran, 2025). Ultimately, SHRM influences resilience not only through structural systems but also through the development of a capable and engaged workforce.



**Figure 1.** Alignment Between Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Practices and Organizational Resilience Outcomes

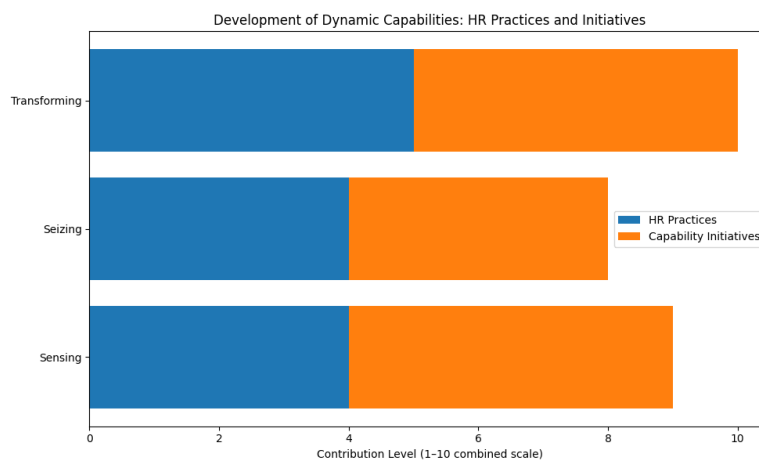
This figure 1 illustrates a double radar chart comparing key dimensions of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices with corresponding resilience outcomes. The chart shows a strong alignment between SHRM elements—such as talent development, workforce adaptability, and learning and innovation—and enhanced resilience capacities, including adaptability, engagement, and well-being. Notably, areas like workforce adaptability and learning and innovation score highly in both SHRM and resilience, indicating that investments in these practices directly strengthen an organization’s ability to respond to disruptions. Meanwhile, slight gaps in dimensions like talent development and performance management suggest opportunities where strengthening HR strategies could further improve resilience outcomes. Overall, the visualization reinforces the idea that SHRM is not only a structural function but also a critical driver of organizational resilience through its influence on employee capabilities, engagement, and adaptability.

### Development of Dynamic Capabilities

HR practices are instrumental in enabling the development of dynamic capabilities, particularly the processes of sensing, seizing, and transforming. Through talent management and knowledge-sharing systems, organizations can enhance their ability to sense changes in the external environment, such as emerging market trends or potential threats (Borissov, 2024). For instance, training programs that emphasize environmental scanning and strategic awareness equip employees with the skills needed to identify opportunities and risks. Seizing capabilities are

supported by HR practices that facilitate rapid decision-making and resource allocation, such as agile team structures and decentralized authority. Additionally, performance management systems aligned with strategic objectives encourage employees to act on identified opportunities (Leslie et al., 2025). Transforming capabilities, which involve continuous renewal and adaptation, are reinforced through organizational learning initiatives and change management practices. Together, these HR-driven processes enable organizations to remain flexible and responsive in the face of ongoing disruption.

Examples of capability-building initiatives further illustrate how HR contributes to dynamic capability development. Organizations may implement cross-functional training programs to enhance collaboration and knowledge integration across departments. Leadership development initiatives can focus on building strategic thinking, adaptability, and crisis management skills among managers. Digital learning platforms and reskilling programs also play a crucial role in preparing employees for technological change and evolving job demands (Leslie & Simmons, 2024). In addition, HR can support innovation by fostering a culture that encourages experimentation and tolerates calculated risk-taking. Flexible work arrangements and project-based assignments allow employees to gain diverse experiences and develop a broader skill set. These initiatives collectively strengthen the organization's ability to sense, seize, and transform in response to environmental changes. As a result, HR becomes a key enabler of dynamic capabilities that underpin long-term organizational success (Rakowski et al., 2025).



**Figure 2.** HR-Driven Development of Dynamic Capabilities: Sensing, Seizing, and Transforming

This figure 2 presents a double stacked horizontal bar chart illustrating how HR practices and capability-building initiatives jointly contribute to the development of dynamic capabilities—namely sensing, seizing, and transforming. The chart shows that all three capabilities are supported by a combination of formal HR systems (e.g., talent management, performance systems) and targeted initiatives (e.g., training, leadership development, reskilling). Sensing capabilities are strongly influenced by initiatives such as environmental scanning training and knowledge-sharing, while seizing capabilities reflect a balanced contribution from both HR structures and agile, decision-oriented practices. Transforming capabilities exhibit the highest combined contribution, highlighting the critical role of continuous learning, change management, and innovation-focused HR strategies in enabling organizational renewal. Overall, the figure emphasizes that dynamic capabilities are not developed through isolated practices but through the integration of structured HR systems and proactive development initiatives, reinforcing HR's central role in sustaining long-term adaptability and competitive advantage.

### **Integrated Framework: SHRM → Dynamic Capabilities → Resilience**

The integrated framework linking SHRM, dynamic capabilities, and organizational resilience provides a comprehensive explanation of how human resource practices contribute to adaptive capacity. In this framework, SHRM serves as the foundational driver that shapes organizational processes and workforce capabilities (Collste et al., 2025). Through targeted HR practices, organizations develop dynamic capabilities that enable them to respond effectively to environmental changes (Rakowski et al., 2025). These capabilities, in turn, facilitate resilience by allowing organizations to anticipate disruptions, adapt to new conditions, and recover from shocks. The relationship between these constructs is both sequential and interdependent, as SHRM influences the development of dynamic capabilities, which then mediate the impact on resilience outcomes. This framework highlights the importance of

aligning HR strategies with broader organizational objectives. It also emphasizes the role of human capital as a critical resource in building resilience (Duan, 2025). Evidence supporting this framework can be found in both theoretical and empirical studies across organizational and management literature. Research on SHRM demonstrates that organizations with strategically aligned HR practices are better equipped to navigate uncertainty and achieve sustainable performance. Similarly, studies on dynamic capabilities show that organizations capable of sensing, seizing, and transforming are more resilient in the face of disruption (Collste et al., 2025). Empirical findings also suggest that HR-driven initiatives, such as continuous learning and leadership development, contribute to both capability building and resilience outcomes. The integration of these perspectives provides a more holistic understanding of organizational adaptability. By linking HR practices to dynamic capabilities and resilience, the framework offers a structured approach for analyzing how organizations can thrive in complex environments. This conceptual model serves as a foundation for future research and practical application (Mark et al., 2025).

### **Managing Polycrisis through HR Strategies**

In the context of polycrisis, HR strategies play a crucial role in helping organizations navigate uncertainty and disruption. Organizations must adopt flexible and adaptive HR practices that can respond to rapidly changing conditions. This includes implementing flexible work arrangements, such as remote and hybrid models, to maintain operational continuity during disruptions. HR also plays a key role in workforce planning, ensuring that organizations have the right skills and capabilities to address emerging challenges (Mark et al., 2025). Additionally, crisis management and communication strategies are essential for maintaining employee trust and engagement during periods of uncertainty. By proactively addressing workforce needs, HR can help organizations remain stable and responsive in dynamic environments. These strategies enable organizations to manage both immediate disruptions and long-term challenges effectively (Liu & Renn, 2025).

The importance of flexibility, continuous learning, and leadership is particularly evident in managing polycrisis conditions. Flexible HR systems allow organizations to quickly reallocate resources and adapt to changing demands. Continuous learning initiatives ensure that employees remain equipped with the skills needed to new challenges and technological advancements (Liu & Renn, 2025). Leadership plays a critical role in guiding organizations through uncertainty, providing direction, and fostering a sense of purpose. Effective leaders promote resilience by encouraging collaboration, innovation, and adaptability among employees. HR practices that support leadership development and knowledge sharing are therefore essential for managing complex environments. Together, these elements create a resilient organizational culture that can withstand and adapt to ongoing disruptions (Richardson, 2025). Ultimately, managing polycrisis requires a holistic approach that integrates HR strategies with broader organizational goals.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study underscores the critical role of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in enabling organizations to navigate the complexities of a polycrisis environment. As interconnected disruptions become the norm, traditional HR approaches are no longer sufficient to sustain performance and stability. Instead, organizations must adopt a strategic and forward-looking perspective that aligns human capital with evolving environmental demands. The findings highlight that SHRM contributes to resilience by fostering employee engagement, enhancing skills, and promoting adaptability across the workforce. Moreover, the integration of dynamic capabilities—sensing, seizing, and transforming—provides a structured mechanism through which organizations can continuously respond to change. By embedding these capabilities within HR practices, organizations can build a workforce that is not only reactive but also proactive in addressing uncertainty. Ultimately, SHRM emerges as a key driver of resilience, enabling organizations to maintain competitiveness and sustainability in turbulent conditions.

At the same time, the study emphasizes that building resilience in the age of polycrisis requires a holistic and integrated approach. Organizations must move beyond isolated HR initiatives and develop systems that support continuous learning, flexibility, and leadership development. The proposed framework linking SHRM, dynamic capabilities, and resilience offers a valuable lens for understanding how organizations can thrive amid ongoing disruption. However, implementing such strategies requires overcoming challenges such as resistance to change, resource constraints, and the need for new competencies. Future research should explore empirical validation of this framework across different industries and cultural contexts, as well as the role of digital transformation in shaping HR capabilities. For practitioners, the key implication is clear: investing in people, capabilities, and adaptive systems is essential for long-term success. In an era defined by uncertainty, resilience is no longer optional but a strategic imperative.

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