

The predictive effect of relational transparency on organizational resilience in the construction sector in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent to which relational transparency as a dimension of authentic leadership served as a predictor of organizational resilience within Zimbabwe's construction sector. Motivated by the evident instability and high attrition rate among the construction firms in Zimbabwe, this study sought to examine whether the presence of relational transparency contributed to organizational adaptability and survival amid diversity. The research evidence, both international and local revealed a notable paucity of studies directly examining the intersection between relational transparency a key strand of authentic leadership and organizational resilience, particularly within the African context. The relational transparency variable has been fully conceptualized over time and over a number of fields but its measurement has remained relatively subjective. Drawing from the theory of authentic leadership and Organisational Resilience theory the study sought to determine how the dimension of relational transparency relatively advocated by Walumbwa et al., (2009.) enhances the adoptive capacity of the organisations in the construction sector. A cross-sectional research design was employed. The population was approximately 3000 companies in the construction sector. Using the [Taro Yamne](#) sample size formula, a study sample of 353 was used. Statistical analysis using a structural equation modelling (SEM) determined a significant positive relationship between relational transparency and organisational resilience ($\beta = 0.276, p < 0.05$). This paper positioned relational transparency, a key constituent of authentic leadership as a potentially critical and vital determinant of organizational resilience in settings inundated and experiencing volatility. The findings substantiated the hypothesis that relational transparency is a significant predictor of organizational resilience in the Zimbabwe construction industry, particularly during periods of

crises and disruption. These results provided empirical support for integrating relational transparency as a constituency of authentic leadership into leadership development and crisis preparedness strategies within the sector.

Keywords: authentic leadership, construction industry, organizational resilience, relational transparency, Zimbabwe

Introduction

The contemporary business environment is increasingly becoming very complex, chaotic, volatile and unpredictable; making the operations of business very difficult and fluid. Organisations have been impacted by a plethora of unexpected turbulences and crises, and these have appeared with increasing frequency (Christopher and Holweg, 2011). The survival of organisations amidst these numerous business shocks, like technological, geopolitical and economic turbulences, changing policymaker mediations and regulations, shifts in industry structures and consumer behaviours have become even more unpredictable and frequent (Hamel, 2013). These turbulences have impacted organisations significantly and differently which has necessitated leadership to astutely and continually reconfigure organisational resources, reorient, redesign processes and realign strategies in the process rebuild and set up a resilient organisation. Organizational resilience is the ability to anticipate potential threats, to respond effectively to unexpected events, to learn from these events (Duchek, 2020) and facilitate adaptability to the dynamic environment (Ungerer, 2019).

In Zimbabwe these perturbations in the global arena confluence with the domestic weaknesses including high interest rates, informalised economy, policy inconsistencies and stringent regulatory policies create fertile grounds for fragility in the operating environment. In recent years, the notion of resilience has shifted from being conceptualised merely as a post-crisis recovery mechanism to an adaptive capability embedded within organisational systems (Linnenluecke, 2017; Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2021). The construction sector's operational environment, marked by fragmented supply chains, volatile pricing, and contractual uncertainties, demands that leaders continuously recalibrate strategy and decision-making in response to changing conditions (Ruiz-Martin et al., 2022). Leaders who demonstrate relational transparency are better positioned to detect weak signals of disruption, interpret their implications, and align organisational responses accordingly (Liu et al., 2024). Moreover, resilience within the construction sector is increasingly

conceptualised as a multi-level phenomenon that integrates individual, team, and organisational dimensions (Hillmann et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2023). Individual leader resilience, anchored in emotional regulation and self-reflection, translates into collective confidence and trust within teams, which, in turn, strengthens systemic resilience. Consequently, resilience is as much a behavioural and psychological construct as it is a structural or operational one. The Zimbabwean construction industry provides a unique empirical landscape for analysing these dynamics. Structural fragility, evident in currency volatility, infrastructural deterioration, and delayed government funding, has made many firms susceptible to operational disruptions (CZI, 2023; ZIMSTATS, 2024). Nevertheless, amidst these challenges, some firms have shown adaptive resilience by innovating in procurement, adopting flexible project delivery methods, and utilising local partnerships to maintain operations.

This variation indicates that resilience outcomes are not solely determined by external factors but are significantly shaped by leadership cognition and behaviour. Specifically, leaders who exhibit relational transparency, recognise personal and organisational limitations, and make ethically grounded decisions are more likely to foster cultures of adaptability and shared purpose (Obuobi et al., 2022; Mutizwa & Marufu, 2023). From a strategic perspective, the convergence of authentic leadership and resilience highlights a shift from mechanistic, control-based management to relational, value-driven leadership. Contemporary research maintains that in volatile environments, leadership legitimacy comes not only from positional authority but also from authenticity, empathy, and reflective practice (Luthans & Avolio, 2023; Hoch et al., 2023). These qualities improve psychological safety and collective efficacy, which are crucial for resilience (Carmeli & Dutton, 2021). In Zimbabwe's construction firms, where leadership hierarchies tend to be rigid and communication pathways bureaucratic, fostering relational transparency can help overcome inertia, enabling decentralised decision-making and organisational agility. Resilience in the 21st-century construction landscape, therefore, requires leaders who can integrate emotional intelligence, moral awareness, and strategic foresight. As the literature demonstrates, leaders who embrace relational transparency are better equipped to navigate paradoxes, balance short-term survival with long-term sustainability, and transform crises into opportunities for renewal (Linnenluecke, 2017; Rahi, 2024). This aligns with Duchek's (2020) capability-based model, which frames resilience as a cycle of anticipation, coping, and adaptation. Within Zimbabwe's

volatile economy, such capabilities are indispensable not only for firm survival but also for restoring trust and stability across the broader construction ecosystem.

In recent years, the construct of resilience has greatly migrated from being viewed as merely crisis recovery to an adaptive capability embedded within organisational systems (Linnenluecke, 2017). Datta (2015) found relational transparency a key component of authentic leadership to be significantly associated with improvements in leaders, followers, and organisational outcomes. Wong *et al.* (2016) emphasised the importance of this construct; nonetheless, this assertion has not been empirically interrogated in relation to its predictive influence on organisational resilience. While there is considerable hype surrounding the variable's impact on organisational performance, there is limited conclusive evidence supporting these claims. Organisations in the construction sector in Zimbabwe have been exposed to some very harsh realities with some ultimately closing down while others managed to weather the realities and did very well.

Context of the Study

The construction industry's intricate ecosystem, consisting of manufacturers, contractors, engineers, architects, and material suppliers, makes it especially vulnerable to shocks (Alsharif et al., 2024). Currency instability, funding limitations, and environmental demands, such as adherence to green building standards (Green Building Council of Zimbabwe, 2021), further increase operational pressures. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which predominate the sector, often lack the financial and managerial capacity to adapt, emphasising the need for leadership that can foster resilience through ethical stewardship, transparency, and a culture of continuous learning. Therefore, this study positions authentic leadership at the intersection of resilience and performance, arguing that leadership authenticity is a crucial yet underexplored mechanism through which construction firms in Zimbabwe can navigate uncertainty, maintain competitiveness, and turn adversity into opportunity.

Table 1: Economy Condition survey 2024

Indicator	2015	2020	2023	2024
Contribution to GDP %	.8	1	2.68	3.31
GDP % at constant prices	4.1	3.2	6.8	3.2
Capacity utilisation %	12	38	53.2	54.7
Company closures	98	5	Data not available	

Source: ZIMSTATS, 2024; Construction industry federation of Zimbabwe; (2020); Zimbabwe Building and Contractors Association; (2018).

As illustrated in Table 1.1, Zimbabwe's construction sector experienced severe structural and operational headwinds between 2020 and 2024, culminating in widespread company closures, reduced capacity utilisation, and constrained productivity. During this period, the sector's contribution to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remained disproportionately low, barely 1% in 2020, despite its strategic role in infrastructure development and economic recovery. Although a marginal improvement was recorded by 2024, the figures revealed an entrenched fragility that curtailed the sector's capacity to function as a growth catalyst. Persistent under utilisation of installed capacity further underscored the extent of operational distress faced by firms during the review period (CZI, 2024). The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI, 2023) reported that a significant proportion of firms entered insolvency or voluntary liquidation, primarily owing to chronic liquidity shortages and the inability to access credit for both project implementation and statutory compliance under key legislative frameworks such as the *Labour Act* [Chapter 15:08], *NSSA Act* [Chapter 17:04], and *Environmental Management Act* [Chapter 20:27]. Compliance enforcement remained punitive and uneven, further straining the survival prospects of smaller contractors. Access to finance was repeatedly cited as the sector's most binding constraint, compounded by volatile interest-rate regimes and erratic monetary policy. In 2022, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe raised policy rates to an unprecedented 200 per cent, effectively excluding most construction enterprises from debt financing and working-capital facilities (CZI, 2022).

Supply-chain fragilities and constrained market access further exacerbated the crisis. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2021) identified limited access to formal financial services as a key barrier to competitiveness and project delivery, while foreign currency scarcity and import restrictions impeded the procurement of critical inputs such as cement, steel, and machinery. Public-sector investment, traditionally the sector's anchor through state-funded infrastructure projects, also declined sharply due to targeted sanctions and fiscal austerity, diminishing the pipeline of major works (ILO, 2021). Parallel assessments by the National Social Security Authority (NSSA, 2024) confirmed that construction had become the hardest-hit industry, recording the highest number of business liquidations and voluntary closures in the economy.

Within this volatile ecosystem, organisational resilience emerged as both a strategic necessity and a differentiating capability. Firms capable of reconfiguring resources, innovating financing models, and developing adaptive partnerships demonstrated relative endurance despite macroeconomic adversity. Conversely, those constrained by rigid hierarchies, weak leadership, and limited adaptive capacity succumbed to collapse. The divergent outcomes across firms, therefore, underscore the critical role of resilient organisational systems and adaptive leadership in navigating structural shocks.

These developments accentuate the urgency of empirical inquiry into the predictive influence of authentic leadership on organisational resilience. While financial prudence and operational agility are essential, recent scholarship posits that leadership authenticity, grounded in transparency, moral integrity, and self-awareness, may be the missing behavioural lever that enables firms to withstand systemic turbulence and sustain competitiveness (Gupta & Singh, 2023; Liu et al., 2024). In a context marked by monetary instability, institutional fragility, and fragmented value chains, understanding how authentic leadership fosters adaptive resilience within Zimbabwe's construction sector is therefore both theoretically compelling and practically imperative.

The coexistence of organisational collapse and survival within the same macroeconomic conditions highlights the main question guiding this research: why do some construction companies survive systemic shocks while others fail? Previous evidence suggests that the key difference may lie in the behavioural and cognitive traits of leadership rather than in structural or financial resources (Hillmann et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024). Specifically, leaders with strong

relational transparency demonstrate the ability to reflectively adjust strategies, mobilise collective effort, and maintain performance in uncertain situations. Deeper appreciation of these behavioural dynamics within Zimbabwe's construction industry is, therefore, essential for developing evidence-based strategies for organisational resilience and sustainable growth.

Objective of the study

The study sought to ascertain the effect of relational transparency on organisational resilience in the construction sector in Zimbabwe

Research Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between relational transparency and organisational resilience in the construction sector in Zimbabwe.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

Organisational resilience refers to an organisation's ability to anticipate potential threats, absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions, and recover while maintaining critical functions (Duchek, 2020). It embodies not only survival but also the capacity for renewal and transformation following adversity. Ungerer (2019) frames resilience as a dynamic process involving anticipation, coping, and adaptation, a continuum rather than a static outcome. In high-risk sectors such as construction, resilience is fundamental for maintaining productivity amid fluctuating project cycles and resource dependencies. Current literature situates organisational resilience at the intersection of systems thinking, dynamic capabilities, and behavioural adaptation (Hillmann & Raetze, 2022; Ruiz-Martin et al., 2022). Rather than merely being reactive, resilience represents an ongoing process of learning, reconfiguration, and innovation that enables organisations to sustain performance under turbulence. Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2021) argue that resilient organisations possess adaptive capacity, an ability to integrate experiences of disruption into strategic renewal. This conceptualisation resonates with Duchek's (2020) three-stage model, where anticipation, coping, and adaptation co-evolve to reinforce organisational learning. Consequently, resilience must be viewed not as a one-time response to crisis but as an enduring capability embedded in

organisational culture, processes, and leadership practice. The scholarly consensus increasingly recognises leadership behaviour as a key determinant of resilience. Leadership influences how firms interpret crises, mobilise resources, and coordinate collective responses (Carmeli & Dutton, 2021; Newman et al., 2023). This behavioural environment becomes a catalyst for resilience by encouraging learning from failure and collective adaptability. The literature thus reframes resilience not only as a structural or operational outcome but as a behavioural and relational phenomenon rooted in the authenticity and reflective competence of leadership. In developing economies like Zimbabwe, resilience research remains heavily focused on macro-economic and infrastructural factors, often ignoring the micro-behavioural elements that explain why organisations with similar resources face different outcomes (Mutizwa & Marufu, 2023; Obuobi et al., 2022). In the Zimbabwean construction industry, where volatility is constant and institutional trust is fragile, understanding the psychological foundations of resilience becomes essential. Leaders' relational transparency, including their ability to recognise emotions, biases, and limitations, plays a critical role in guiding decision-making and adaptive capacity (Liu et al., 2024). Moreover, contemporary scholarship conceptualises organisational resilience as multi-level and cross-temporal (Hillmann et al., 2021; Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2020). At the individual level, resilience is reflected in emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility; at the team level, it manifests through collaboration, trust, and shared mental models; and at the organisational level, it is institutionalised through governance systems and adaptive routines. This integrative function foregrounds the proposition that relational transparent leadership is not merely an antecedent but a sustaining mechanism of organisational resilience, particularly in complex, project-based environments such as construction. Thus, organisational resilience in the Zimbabwean construction sector must be reconceptualised as a strategic behavioural capability rather than an incidental outcome. It arises from the interplay between structural robustness and leadership authenticity, in which relationally transparent leaders cultivate cultures of reflection, innovation, and adaptability. This conceptual framing provides the theoretical basis for empirically examining the predictive relationship between relational transparency and organisational resilience in the subsequent sections of this study.

Relational Transparency (RT) and Authentic Leadership (AL)

Within the Authentic Leadership Theory (ALT) framework, relational transparency constitutes the

foundational dimension upon which it is built together with self-awareness, balanced processing, and internalised moral perspective (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Relational transparency involves honest, open communication and balanced disclosure. It mitigates information asymmetry and builds trust networks that accelerate coordination under pressure (Qiu et al., 2020). In construction alliances, transparent communication correlates with fewer disputes and quicker consensus-building (Gupta & Singh, 2023).

Balanced processing refers to objective evaluation of diverse perspectives before decision-making. It counteracts cognitive bias and “escalation of commitment,” which are endemic in time-sensitive industries. Studies link balanced processing to improved contingency planning and error correction (Yukl & Gardner III, 2020). In Zimbabwe’s construction industry, where unpredictability and systemic shocks are widespread, leaders that are grounded in relational transparency demonstrate adaptive cognition and emotional intelligence that enhance organisational recovery, learning, and resilience. Their capacity to blend authenticity, reflective insight, and moral clarity elevates them from a personal virtue to a transformative organisational skill essential for sustainable resilience (Newman et al., 2023; Rahi, 2024).

Empirical Review

Relational transparency refers to the extent and degree to which leaders are truthful, open, extent of disclosure and finally trusting (Rego et al. 2022). The ability and extent to which leaders are able to openly articulate their value processes and intentions is the pivot of what constitutes relational transparency (Elhamed and Hessuin, 2022). While the main thrust was the contextualisation of relational transparency as an independent variable and also a key component of authentic leadership and organisational resilience as a dependent variable its measurement according to Elhamed and Hessuin (2022) is what has not been adequately interrogated. Relational transparency as a key component of authentic leadership is positively associated with improved outcomes (Obuba, 2022) nonetheless, there is a growing line of thought that the extent of a leaders’ openness, trust of employees and vice versa, truthfulness and mutual disclosure can lead to increased and enhanced employee productivity and hence organisational improvement. Interestingly Headley (2021) posits that the more open and transparent a leader is the more likely a culture of trust is fostered. While much of the literature concentrated on definitions (Chan, 2018)

they still, limitedly demonstrated the role played by relational transparency in organisational resilience, particularly in organisations facing crises; with Oginde (2020) arguing strongly that the ability of a leader to show character both in public and privately ultimately has a bearing on how they are viewed by followers as authentic and in the process helping to improve productivity. While there is paucity on the studies on the relationship of relational transparency and organisational resilience an interesting observation was made by Kurian and Nafukho (2022) who posited that to be seen as authentic, leaders needed to treat followers with humility and openness which is the key driver of relational transparency. These assertions while very conceptual have remained underexplored empirically, hence that oversight was a critical gap that this research sought to address.

The Research Gap

Although ALT has been extensively explored across corporate and public- sector domains, its micro-behavioural dimension, specifically, relational transparency, remains conceptually acknowledged but empirically under-investigated as a determinant of organisational resilience. Existing studies on leadership in Zimbabwe's construction industry primarily emphasise technical competence, project management efficiency, or financial control, while neglecting the reflective, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of leadership behaviour that sustain adaptability in volatile environments (Liu et al., 2024; Mutizwa & Marufu, 2023). In Zimbabwe's construction sector, the lack of empirical evidence linking relational transparency to resilience is a critical research gap and addressing it is imperative to understanding how introspective, authentic leadership behaviour influences organisational learning, resource mobilisation, and sustainability amid systemic turbulence (Hillmann & Raetze, 2022; Obuobi et al., 2022).

Little has been shown or is known, about the contribution of relational transparency as a component of authentic leadership strategy and theory to organisational resilience during cataclysmic events, adversities and crises (Chan, 2018). Chan (2018) argued that adversities, crises, perturbations, and cataclysmic episodes posed both adverse and severe threats to organisations generally. However, no evidence existed suggesting the presence of any empirical interrogation of this position having been carried out. From the scholarly work on organisational resilience, it appeared different organisations tended to react differently to adversities (Hamel &

Valikangas, 2017). Studies that had examined organisational resilience had typically focused on specific aspects of the concept, resulting in limited consensus on the general conceptualisation, contextualisation, and measurement structure of the construct.

Research Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional research design as it sought to gather data at a particular point in time. This approach was then coupled with hypothesis testing. Hypothesis testing was mainly employed in a bid to examine and establish the predictive relationship between relational transparency and organizational resilience. The organisations registered with the various bodies in the construction sector in Zimbabwe all constituted the population from where the sample was drawn from. Nonetheless there still were other organisations not fully registered that were identified that still were roped into the population for the sake of this study. The organisations that are registered with the statutory and official regulatory bodies such as ZimTrade, Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and CIFOZ among many formed the pool and basis for the population of the study. In addition, some indigenous regulatory bodies such as the Zimbabwe Indigenous Contractors Association were also made reference to, in a bid to ensure the widest possible coverage in terms of population. It was estimated that the players registered with the various regulatory bodies in the sector were approximately 3000 (ZIMSTATS, 2012). The sample size was determined by the application of the Fowler's formula for finite populations. (2014). The population was very large and this formula greatly improved the likelihood of getting a balanced sample that also improved the ability to then generalise the results to the entire population. Critically it was noted that 65% of the population were organisations based and domiciled in Harare with the remainder then dotted around the country. The selection was purely random. The estimated population gave a sample of approximately 353 players. The primary data was collected through the use of a structured 5-point Lickert scale questionnaire. Simple random sampling was used to ensure balanced representation across all organisations, thereby reducing sampling bias and enhancing generalisability (Saunders et al., 2019). Data was collected between April and July 2024 using a structured self-administered questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic information, relational transparency measures, and organisational resilience indicators. Relational Transparency was measured using the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Walumbwa et al., 2008), adapted to the

Zimbabwean context, while organisational resilience was assessed using a composite scale derived from Duchek's (2020) capability-based framework and Hillmann and Raetzke's (2022) three-phase model of anticipation, coping, and renewal. Prior to deployment, the instrument underwent expert validation by three leadership scholars and two industry practitioners to ensure contextual relevance, followed by a pilot test with 30 respondents that confirmed clarity and cultural validity, yielding Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 2019). Reliability and validity were assessed using both classical and modern psychometric tests, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) exceeding 0.80 and average variance extracted (AVE) exceeding 0.50, demonstrating strong internal consistency and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021). Discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, while Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted in AMOS 27 produced robust fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.31$, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.05), confirming factorial stability. Multicollinearity diagnostics yielded variance inflation factors (VIF < 3.0), indicating independence among predictors (Kline, 2023). The data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) in AMOS 27, chosen for its ability to test simultaneous direct and indirect effects among latent constructs. Descriptive statistics summarised firm demographics, while inferential tests estimated path coefficients (β) to determine the strength and direction of the hypothesised relationship. The model's explanatory power was evaluated using R² values and fit indices (CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR), with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. Sensitivity analysis confirmed the model's robustness and stability, ensuring methodological rigour and reinforcing the validity of findings supporting the hypothesis that relational transparency significantly predicts organisational resilience in Zimbabwe's construction sector.

Findings and Discussions

The presentation and analysis of the results obtained for the study are detailed herein, which sought to ascertain relational transparency as a predictive variable of organisational resilience during periods of turbulence in Zimbabwe's construction sector. Grounded in a quantitative research paradigm, this study builds upon data collected through a structured, close-ended questionnaire. The findings were presented through both descriptive and inferential statistics to address the hypothesis outlined. The central focus of this study was to determine whether relational

transparency predicted organisational resilience as an outcome variable during turbulent times, reflecting the key deliverable of the research. The study drew extensively on theories of authentic leadership and organisational resilience, integrating insights from the literature to interrogate and interpret the empirical findings.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic configuration of respondents provides a critical lens through which to interpret the human and intellectual architecture of Zimbabwe's construction sector. The sample comprised 61% male and 39% female participants, a ratio consistent with global patterns in construction yet indicative of gradual gender diversification in leadership roles (ILO, 2021; CIFOZ, 2024). This gender distribution, though still asymmetrical, suggests incremental progress towards inclusive leadership, a trend associated with improved innovation and collective decision-making under volatile conditions (Hillmann & Raetze, 2022). Respondents reported an average managerial tenure of 11.6 years, signalling a leadership cadre with deep experiential capital and tacit sectoral knowledge. Such experience is empirically linked to heightened cognitive adaptability and reflective competence, attributes essential to organisational learning and crisis navigation (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2021). Educationally, the sample demonstrated strong academic grounding: 58% held tertiary qualifications, and 32% held postgraduate degrees. This high level of formal education underpins analytical reasoning, ethical judgement, and meta-cognitive awareness, all of which reinforce authentic leadership and resilience capacities (Luthans & Avolio, 2023; Gardner et al., 2021). The combination of advanced education and extensive managerial experience thus enhances the internal validity of the dataset and the interpretive reliability of subsequent analyses. The composition of the participating organisations further strengthens representativeness and analytical breadth. Firms were drawn from a wide array of small (41 per cent), medium (37 per cent), and large-scale enterprises (22%), closely mirroring the structural heterogeneity of Zimbabwe's construction industry (ZIMSTATS, 2024). This diversity allowed for comparative assessment across organisational scales, capturing variations in leadership behaviour and resilience strategies between agile, resource-constrained SMEs and bureaucratically structured large firms. Collectively, these demographic patterns reveal a leadership landscape that is both heterogeneous and professionally sophisticated, offering a credible empirical platform for

analysing how relational transparency functions as a behavioural lever of organisational resilience in Zimbabwe’s complex, turbulence-prone construction environment.

Descriptive statistics on relational transparency in the construction sector

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarise central tendencies, dispersion, and overall data distribution for the two key constructs, Relational Transparency and Organisational Resilience, measured on a five-point Likert scale. As shown in Table 2, relational transparency recorded a mean of 3.24 (SD = 0.948), signifying that most respondents rated themselves positively on openness, truthfulness, disclosure and trust. The presence of a non-zero standard deviation and the range from 2 to 5 further confirmed the divergence in views, with some respondents perceiving relational transparency while others did not. These findings indicate that Zimbabwe’s construction-sector leaders generally perceive themselves as relationally transparent and adaptive, qualities that, as subsequent inferential analyses demonstrate, significantly enhance organisational resilience.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean response	Std. Deviation
RTA	249	2	5	3.24	Neutral	.948

The dimensions of relational transparency (RTA) received a mean score of 3.24 rounding to 3 on a Lickert scale, which corresponded with ‘neutral’ which was neither agree nor disagree. This neutrality suggested uncertainty or inconsistency in the presence of behaviours such as openness, truthfulness, disclosure and trust.

Descriptive statistics on organisational resilience of construction companies

The research sought to examine the effect of relational transparency on organisational resilience within the construction industry. To achieve this, it was necessary to first describe the current state of resilience among construction companies in Zimbabwe. Six key items were used to broadly

capture and summarise organisational resilience: the organisation's ability to anticipate and respond to crises, the presence of a learning-oriented culture, the promotion of inclusivity and diversity, the existence of well-established contingency plans and procedures, the adoption of sound financial management practices, and the maintenance of diversified and flexible supply chain networks. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics detailing the resilience characteristics of construction companies operating in Zimbabwe.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on state of organisational resilience

	N	Min imu m	Maxi mum	Mean	Mean response	Std. Deviation
The organisation is able to anticipate and respond to crisis	249	2	4	2.66	Neutral	.730
The organisation exhibits a learning culture and mindset	249	2	4	2.67	Neutral	.840
The organisation promotes inclusivity and diversity	249	2	4	2.59	Neutral	.862
There are established plans and procedures to respond to disruptions	249	2	4	2.82	Neutral	.895
There is prudent financial management (cash reserves and contingent funding)	249	2	4	2.78	Neutral	.928
The organisation has diversified and flexible supply chains	249	2	4	2.67	Neutral	.850
Overall	249			2.66	Neutral	.812
Valid N (listwise)	249					

An analysis of the six measurement items of organisational resilience revealed varied mean scores across constructs: ability to anticipate and respond to crisis (2.66), learning culture (2.67), promotion of inclusivity and diversity (2.59), established plans and procedures to respond to disruption (2.82), prudent financial management practices (2.78), and diversified and flexible supply chains (2.67). All these mean scores approximate a neutral response, indicating that, overall, respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the items used to assess resilience. While some respondents agreed, as indicated by a maximum score of 4, others disagreed, with a minimum score of 2 recorded for all items. The first indicator, the organisation's ability to anticipate and respond to crises, reflected this variation, with some respondents affirming resilience in times of turbulence (mean = 4), while others expressed strong disagreement (mean = 2), suggesting that some companies adapted swiftly, whereas others struggled with disruptions, leading in some cases

to operational cessation. A high standard deviation (above 0.5) confirmed this wide dispersion of responses, reinforcing the presence of divergent views around the neutral mean.

The second resilience factor, the organisation’s capacity to maintain a learning culture and mindset, produced a similar pattern. With a maximum mean score of 4, some participants agreed their organisations foster continuous learning, while others disagreed (minimum = 2). The standard deviation of 0.840, notably above the threshold of 0.5, further emphasised the variability of opinion, again clustering around neutrality. Likewise, for the dimension of promoting inclusivity and diversity, the mean range between 2 and 4 reflected mixed sentiments. While some agreed their organisation embraced inclusivity, others did not, and the standard deviation of 0.862 supported the conclusion that views remained centred around neutrality. A similar trend persisted across the remaining three resilience dimensions: the existence of established response procedures, financial prudence, and diversified, flexible supply chains. All scored a maximum mean of 4 (indicating agreement among some participants) and a minimum of 2 (indicating disagreement). Their respective standard deviations, 0.895, 0.928, and 0.850, were all above 0.5, signifying considerable variability and reinforcing the neutral stance across organisations.

Table 4: Hypothesis testing (H₁)

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Decision
H2	RTA → ORS	.012	.045	1.173	***	Supported

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

An analysis of Relational Transparency (RTA), which assessed the openness of leaders to disclose information and admit mistakes, revealed a regression estimate of 0.01 with a p- value below 0.05. Although the effect size is relatively small, the positive and statistically significant relationship implied that increased relational transparency contributed, albeit modestly, to enhance organisational resilience in the construction sector. This result supported the hypothesised relationship, suggesting that enhanced relational transparency contributed significantly to improvements in organisational resilience. A unit increase in this dimension is expected to produce a 0.12 unit increase in resilience, assuming other factors remain constant. These findings affirmed

the positive role of relational transparency in strengthening resilience within the construction industry. The study managed to illustrate how relational transparency predicts organizational resilience in turbulent times in the construction sector in Zimbabwe.

Implication of the study

Critically integrating theory with the empirical data collected was central to this study, particularly in testing the hypothesis aimed at examining how relational transparency influenced and is a predictor of organisational resilience during turbulent times in Zimbabwe's construction sector. In a meaningful way, the study arguably contributed to the longstanding academic demand for empirical evidence supporting this relationship. Notably, the study contributed towards validating relational transparency as a predictive variable of organisational resilience, an area previously underexplored in both theoretical and empirical literature, especially within the context of Zimbabwe's construction sector. Prior to this study, the relational transparency framework had not been fully tested or proven in terms of its role in enhancing organisational resilience, especially within high-risk sectors such as the construction sector. The current findings offered new insights and provided a degree of theoretical validation, demonstrating how leadership grounded in relational transparency could bolster an organisation's ability to withstand and adapt to disruptions. Where the relationship between these two constructs was largely conceptual and speculative, this study offered concrete evidence of their practical interconnection. Thus, this study filled in a critical gap by offering a theoretically and empirically grounded linkage between the two constructs, laying the groundwork for future research and practical application in resilience-building within vulnerable sectors.

Practical implications

The study lent strong support to the view that organisational leaders significantly influenced their followers and that their impact during periods of disruption cannot be underestimated. While the construct of relational transparency continues to evolve in the literature, it is increasingly recognised as having meaningful implications for organisations in crisis. The findings of this study are likely to benefit the corporate sector, particularly the construction industry, by informing the design of leadership development programmes aimed at helping leaders understand the importance of relational transparency in shaping resilience outcomes. The study holds relevance not only for

organisational leaders, but also for policymakers, government institutions, and investors within the sector. This study critically presented the empirical results of the study, specifically examining how relational transparency was a predictive variable, and organisational resilience as an outcome variable, in the context of turbulent conditions within Zimbabwe's construction sector. The presentation, analysis, and discussion were guided throughout by the research objective.

Practical recommendations

A critical recommendation is the need to expand the contextual scope of the study. While this study focused specifically on the construction sector in Zimbabwe, it is vital to consider how relational transparency impacted organisational resilience across the wider Southern African region. Given the socio-economic and environmental challenges faced by countries in this region, including armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique, and persistent climate-related disruptions, the relationship between leadership and resilience warrants a broader regional examination. According to the World Bank (2020), these perturbations have significantly affected infrastructure development and economic performance, especially within the construction sector. As such, there is an urgent need to develop a deeper regional understanding of how relational transparency can support resilience in the face of such adversities. The conceptual model proposed, which outlined the influence of relational transparency on organisational resilience, should be adopted and further tested to guide strategic leadership development and policy formulation across the sector.

Recommendation for future research

The study outcomes demonstrated and confirmed the existence and significance of relational transparency as a predictive variable of organisational resilience, supported by empirical examples drawn from the construction sector during times of crisis. However, several areas emerged that warranted further investigations, forming the basis for recommendations for future research. These issues highlighted the need for more comprehensive research that expanded beyond the initial parameters. Future studies could benefit from broadening the scope to cover the entire construction industry, thereby enhancing the robustness and generalisability of the findings. While this research focused deliberately on the construction sector, it not only validated the predictive role of relational transparency in organisational resilience but also opened avenues for exploring its applicability across other industries. The findings suggested a valuable opportunity to assess whether similar

patterns existed in non-construction sectors, and to examine the extent to which relational transparency as a key dimension of authentic leadership influenced resilience in different organisational contexts.

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