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Developing a Grounded Theory-Based Model for Building Resilience Against Organizational Stroke

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ABSTRACT

Government organizations play an important role in national planning and development. The concept of organizational stroke among employees of these organizations is of considerable importance because, if left unaddressed, it can lead to reduced employee commitment and efficiency, stagnation in physical and social networks, and the erosion of the organization's competitive advantage. Accordingly, the present study aimed to design a model for building resilience against organizational stroke in government organizations in Ilam Province. The statistical population consisted of experts, including experienced university faculty members as well as practitioners and managers of government organizations in Ilam Province. Using the snowball sampling technique and continuing until theoretical saturation was reached, 15 participants were selected. In terms of purpose, this study was applied, and with respect to the manner of data collection, it was qualitative and survey-based. Data were collected through interviews. The study adopted a qualitative approach and employed grounded theory through three stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In designing and developing the initial model, qualitative analysis was conducted in accordance with grounded theory principles, and interviews were carried out accordingly. The findings showed that the concept of organizational stroke in government organizations comprised two broad categories: internal stroke and external stroke. Each of these categories encompassed several concepts that constituted the components of the model. Human factors, managerial factors, structural factors, cultural factors, and environmental factors were identified as the principal components of the model.

Keywords: Organizational stroke, grounded theory, government organizations in Ilam Province

Introduction

Government organizations constitute one of the principal institutional mechanisms through which public policies are formulated, implemented, monitored, and translated into services for citizens. Their effectiveness therefore depends not only on formal structures and administrative procedures but also on the quality of communication, managerial competence, employee engagement, organizational culture, coordination mechanisms, and the capacity to respond to environmental disturbances. Contemporary public organizations operate in increasingly complex environments characterized by technological change, economic uncertainty, institutional pressures, changing stakeholder expectations, and recurrent crises. Under such conditions, organizational continuity cannot be understood simply as the absence of failure; rather, it requires an active capacity to recognize emerging dysfunctions, prevent the deterioration of organizational processes, and restore effective functioning when disruption occurs. The concept of **organizational stroke** provides a useful perspective for examining severe forms of organizational dysfunction in which the flow of information, communication, coordination, and interaction becomes impaired to such an extent that normal organizational functioning is threatened. The concept has been

developed to describe circumstances in which critical organizational processes become obstructed or dysfunctional, producing consequences for both organizational performance and employee functioning. Shajari et al. conceptualized organizational stroke by identifying its antecedents, indicators, and consequences, thereby emphasizing that it should be understood as a multidimensional organizational phenomenon rather than as a single behavioral or structural defect [1]. More recently, research in Iranian governmental organizations has demonstrated that intra-organizational stroke may emerge through a combination of individual, managerial, structural, communicative, and contextual weaknesses, highlighting the relevance of the construct for public-sector management [2].

Organizational stroke is particularly consequential in governmental organizations because such organizations are typically characterized by formalized procedures, hierarchical authority relationships, multiple layers of decision-making, and extensive dependence on internal and external communication networks. When communication channels become ineffective, when employees perceive that information does not circulate accurately or in a timely manner, or when managers fail to create conditions for meaningful interaction, the organization can progressively lose its capacity for coordinated action. In this respect, organizational stroke may be manifested through communication breakdown, reduced responsiveness, distorted information flows, organizational isolation, weak feedback mechanisms, declining employee commitment, and a widening distance between formal objectives and actual organizational practices. Shajari et al. showed that the phenomenon can be understood through interconnected antecedents and manifestations that eventually generate damaging individual and organizational outcomes [1]. Similarly, the identification of factors associated with intra-organizational stroke in governmental organizations suggests that dysfunctional communication is rarely attributable to employees alone; rather, it develops through the interaction of human, managerial, organizational, and environmental conditions [2]. Consequently, an adequate response to organizational stroke requires more than correcting isolated communication problems. It requires a systematic resilience-oriented framework capable of addressing the interconnected organizational conditions that produce vulnerability and of strengthening the organization’s capacity to prevent, absorb, and recover from disruption.

The increasing attention to **organizational resilience** provides an important theoretical foundation for such a framework. Organizational resilience refers broadly to the ability of an organization to anticipate threats, withstand disruptions, adapt to changing conditions, maintain essential functions, and recover or develop following adverse events. Contemporary resilience scholarship increasingly treats resilience not as a fixed organizational attribute but as a dynamic capability generated through interactions among leadership, human resources, organizational learning, social relationships, technology, culture, and adaptive processes. Studies conducted in crisis settings have demonstrated that resilience develops across multiple levels and that leadership behaviors and employees’ psychological resources can jointly shape an organization’s capacity to withstand and overcome disruption. Njaramba and Olukuru, for example, proposed a multilevel perspective in which leadership styles and employees’ psychological capital contribute to organizational resilience during crises, emphasizing that organizational recovery depends on the interaction between managerial action and individual-level adaptive resources [3]. Research on health systems similarly underscores the role of leadership in supporting psychological health and organizational resilience under conditions of prolonged crisis, suggesting that resilience requires organizational practices that protect employees while sustaining collective functioning [4]. These findings are particularly relevant to governmental organizations, where disruptions in employee well-being, leadership effectiveness, and institutional coordination can directly compromise organizational capacity and public service delivery.

Human resources are therefore central to any effort aimed at building resistance to organizational stroke. Employees are not merely recipients of organizational policies; they are active participants in communication networks, knowledge exchange, service delivery, organizational learning, and adaptive problem-solving. When employees possess adequate psychological resources, perceive organizational support, and operate within a constructive relational environment, organizations are better positioned to withstand pressures and maintain functioning. Conversely, employees exposed to chronic communication problems, perceived injustice, excessive workload, lack of recognition, or declining job satisfaction may progressively withdraw from organizational interaction, contributing to the very conditions through which organizational stroke develops. Evidence indicates that organizational resilience can have important implications for employees' work attitudes, including job satisfaction, particularly in public and organizational settings where employees encounter significant institutional and environmental demands [5]. Likewise, perceived organizational virtuousness has been associated with employee subjective well-being through mechanisms involving resilience and agility, indicating that positive organizational characteristics can strengthen employees' capacity to function effectively under challenging conditions [6]. From this perspective, building resilience against organizational stroke requires attention to employee communication skills, motivation, perceived fairness, psychological resources, and willingness to participate in organizational relationships rather than focusing exclusively on formal structures.

Organizational justice is especially important because employees' perceptions of fairness influence their willingness to engage with organizational processes and relationships. When organizational procedures, resource allocations, managerial interactions, and decision-making processes are perceived as unjust, employees may become less willing to communicate, cooperate, share information, or invest psychological energy in organizational objectives. Such patterns can intensify communication fragmentation and undermine the relational foundations required for collective resilience. Recent research has demonstrated a significant relationship between organizational justice and job engagement, reinforcing the proposition that perceptions of fairness shape the degree to which employees psychologically and behaviorally invest in their work roles [7]. In the context of organizational stroke, perceived injustice may therefore function as more than an employee-attitude issue; it may contribute to the gradual weakening of organizational communication and coordination. When employees do not trust decision-making systems or perceive organizational relationships as inequitable, formal communication channels may lose legitimacy and informal, fragmented, or defensive patterns of interaction may become more prominent. A resilience-building model must consequently recognize organizational justice as part of the broader human and relational conditions through which effective communication and organizational functioning can be preserved.

Managerial and human resource management practices constitute another critical dimension of organizational resilience. Managers determine communication priorities, create or constrain opportunities for participation, interpret environmental information, encourage or discourage feedback, and shape the organizational climate in which employees operate. Effective human resource management can also create adaptive capacity by developing competencies, supporting flexibility, promoting learning, and aligning employee capabilities with organizational demands. Research has shown that human resource management strategies can enhance organizational resilience, particularly when organizations simultaneously possess strategic agility that enables them to interpret and respond rapidly to change [8]. Furthermore, the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance may be strengthened through workplace resilience, indicating that resilient capacities can serve as an important mechanism connecting organizational values with actual employee

outcomes [9]. These findings suggest that resilience against organizational stroke requires managerial systems that do not merely regulate employee behavior but actively strengthen communication competence, facilitate timely information exchange, encourage participation, support learning, and cultivate adaptive responses. In governmental organizations, where procedural rigidity and centralized decision-making can create delays, management's ability to establish clear communication channels and respond constructively to information from employees and citizens becomes especially important.

The organizational structure itself can either facilitate or inhibit resilience. Formal structures define authority relationships, communication pathways, levels of decentralization, decision-making responsibilities, and the distribution of organizational resources. When structures are excessively rigid, ambiguous, fragmented, or poorly aligned with organizational objectives, they may delay the transmission of information, distort communication, and prevent timely responses to emerging problems. Such conditions increase the likelihood that localized dysfunctions will spread across organizational units. By contrast, structures that support coordination, information transparency, flexible decision-making, and cross-unit collaboration can provide a foundation for organizational adaptation. The importance of organizational agility becomes particularly visible in rapidly changing environments, where organizations must adjust structures and processes rather than relying on historically established routines. Research examining organizational resilience in conjunction with strategic agility suggests that resilient organizations require the ability to reconfigure resources and practices in response to changing conditions [8]. The relationship between organizational structure and resilience is therefore central to understanding how governmental organizations can be protected against organizational stroke: resilience is unlikely to develop when formal systems systematically obstruct communication, slow decision-making, or separate employee objectives from organizational priorities.

Organizational culture provides an equally important contextual foundation for resilience because it influences how organizational members interpret problems, communicate with one another, respond to change, and understand acceptable patterns of behavior. Shared values and beliefs can support cooperation and learning, but cultural inconsistency between managers and employees may intensify conflict and weaken organizational cohesion. Research has demonstrated that organizational culture can influence employee performance through workplace resilience, suggesting that culture shapes not only attitudes but also the organization's capacity to sustain functioning under pressure [9]. The importance of cultural and collective dimensions is also apparent in research on organizational virtuousness, resilience, agility, and collectivism, which indicates that shared relational orientations can affect employee well-being and adaptive functioning [6]. In the context of organizational stroke, a culture that undervalues communication, discourages upward feedback, normalizes information withholding, or creates distance between management and employees can accelerate organizational deterioration. Conversely, a culture that supports trust, collaboration, learning, participation, and reciprocal communication can function as a protective mechanism, strengthening the organization's capacity to identify and correct dysfunction before it develops into a more severe organizational condition.

Resilience must also be understood in relation to an organization's external environment. Governmental organizations are embedded in networks of ministries, regulatory bodies, citizens, political institutions, funding systems, and other public-sector organizations. Their performance therefore depends not only on internal processes but also on the quality of external communication and the stability of their institutional environment. Policy changes, budget limitations, crises, technological disruptions, and unexpected environmental developments can place substantial pressure on organizational systems.

Research examining resilience during the COVID-19 crisis has shown how prolonged disruption can transform organizational practices and generate long-term consequences for coordination, work systems, and organizational adaptation [10]. Similarly, research on organizational resilience in relation to social capital demonstrates that relational resources and social connections can influence how organizations respond to crises, emphasizing the importance of networks, trust, and interconnectedness in adaptive capacity [11]. These findings suggest that the prevention of organizational stroke requires organizations to establish reliable channels for environmental feedback and communication with higher-level institutions, citizens, and other stakeholders. An organization that becomes isolated from its environment or fails to interpret external signals effectively may be unable to anticipate disruption or modify its practices before organizational functioning deteriorates.

Rapid technological transformation adds another dimension to this challenge. Digitalization can strengthen organizational resilience by improving information accessibility, increasing the speed of communication, enabling data-driven decision-making, and supporting organizational learning; however, poorly managed technological transformation can also generate resistance, fragmentation, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, and new forms of organizational dependence. Research on digital transformation and organizational resilience indicates that effective change management is essential when organizations seek to use digital technologies as instruments of adaptation [12]. In higher education, crisis-driven digital transformation has similarly demonstrated that the transition from resistance to resilience depends substantially on organizational learning and the ability to institutionalize adaptive knowledge rather than simply introduce new technologies [13]. At the same time, the increasingly digital character of organizational processes has broadened the concept of resilience to include cyber resilience. An integrative framework for organizational cyber resilience emphasizes the need to connect technological capacities with organizational structures, human behavior, governance, and adaptive processes rather than treating cybersecurity as an isolated technical concern [14]. For governmental organizations, these developments indicate that communication resilience must encompass both traditional administrative communication and the technological infrastructures through which information is created, transmitted, stored, and interpreted.

Technological and analytical capabilities can also strengthen organizational resilience by enabling organizations to detect patterns, anticipate threats, and evaluate performance more systematically. Emerging research on artificial intelligence-integrated modeling suggests that advanced analytical approaches may support organizational performance and economic resilience by improving measurement and decision-making capabilities [15]. Nevertheless, technological capacity alone cannot protect organizations against dysfunction if managers fail to use available information, employees lack trust in organizational systems, or organizational structures prevent knowledge from reaching relevant decision-makers. The effective use of technology therefore depends on the interaction of technical, managerial, structural, and cultural conditions. This multidimensional perspective closely corresponds with the logic of organizational stroke, which cannot be attributed to one isolated cause. A communication breakdown may originate in employee-level deficiencies, managerial disregard for feedback, structural ambiguity, cultural incompatibility, insufficient resources, environmental pressure, or the interaction of several such factors. Accordingly, organizational resilience must also be designed as a multidimensional system of prevention, adaptation, and recovery.

Leadership composition and the broader organizational environment further shape resilience by influencing strategic perspectives, decision-making diversity, and organizational responses to uncertainty. Recent evidence concerning top

management team gender diversity suggests that organizational environment can interact with leadership characteristics in shaping corporate resilience, underscoring the importance of contextual and governance conditions in determining whether diversity in managerial perspectives is translated into adaptive capacity [16]. Such findings reinforce the argument that resilience is produced through configurations of organizational characteristics rather than through any single managerial practice. This is particularly relevant for governmental organizations, where institutional rules, environmental pressures, administrative traditions, leadership practices, and employee characteristics intersect in complex ways. Therefore, understanding organizational stroke requires a framework capable of capturing not only direct causal conditions but also contextual and intervening factors that influence organizational responses. Grounded theory is particularly suitable for this purpose because it allows theoretical categories and their interrelationships to emerge systematically from participants' experiences rather than imposing a predetermined model on a complex and insufficiently explored phenomenon.

Despite the expanding literature on organizational resilience, crisis management, strategic agility, organizational culture, leadership, technological adaptation, and employee well-being, there remains a conceptual gap regarding how these streams of research can be integrated specifically to explain and counteract organizational stroke in governmental settings. Existing resilience research demonstrates that organizations can develop adaptive capacities through leadership and psychological capital [3], social capital [11], effective human resource management and strategic agility [8], supportive organizational cultures [9], employee well-being and collective resources [6], crisis-responsive leadership [4], technological learning [13], digital change management [12], and integrated cyber-resilience capabilities [14]. At the same time, the organizational-stroke literature indicates that severe organizational dysfunction may arise through combinations of communication problems, managerial deficiencies, structural barriers, and environmental pressures [1, 2]. What remains insufficiently understood is how these factors are organized into a coherent explanatory model in a specific public-sector context and how such a model can inform resilience-building interventions. This gap is especially significant in governmental organizations because their administrative continuity, responsiveness, and internal coordination directly affect the quality of public governance and service delivery. A locally grounded model can therefore provide both theoretical value by refining the emerging construct of organizational stroke and practical value by identifying leverage points through which public organizations can reduce vulnerability, strengthen adaptive capacity, and prevent communication and coordination failures from escalating into broader organizational decline.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to develop a grounded theory-based model for building resilience against organizational stroke in governmental organizations in Ilam Province.

Methodology

The present study, which aimed to design strategies for building resilience against organizational stroke in government organizations in Ilam Province, was an applied descriptive-analytical study, as it sought to enable government organizations in Ilam Province to benefit from its findings. In terms of research type, it was considered a descriptive-analytical study conducted using a qualitative approach. The statistical population consisted of experts, including experienced university faculty members as well as practitioners and managers of government organizations in Ilam Province. Because experts and specialists with sufficient expertise in the research topic could not be clearly identified in advance, purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed. The qualitative sample size was determined according to the level of theoretical

saturation. Through this process, 15 experts were considered sufficient for the interviews. Data were collected through interviews. In the present study, semi-structured interviews were used to identify strategies for building resilience against organizational stroke in government organizations in Ilam Province. The study sought to collect, analyze, and explain the research phenomenon through the grounded theory method.

Findings and Results

The qualitative phase of this study was conducted based on the views of 15 experts in the field under investigation. The demographic characteristics of the interview participants, categorized according to gender, work experience, educational attainment, and field of activity, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Expert Study Population

No.	Education	Work Experience (Years)	Gender	Field of Activity
1	PhD	27	Male	Management
2	PhD	27	Male	Management
3	PhD	18	Female	Management
4	PhD	20	Male	Strategic Management
5	PhD	16	Male	Management
6	PhD	22	Male	Physical Education
7	PhD	25	Male	Management
8	PhD	21	Female	Management
9	PhD Candidate	20	Female	Management
10	PhD Candidate	18	Male	Management
11	PhD Candidate	19	Male	Management
12	PhD Candidate	19	Female	Management
13	PhD Candidate	26	Female	Management
14	PhD Candidate	24	Male	Management
15	PhD Candidate	21	Male	Management

Following the interviews and their transcription, the interview texts were systematically reviewed through a structured process to identify the principal factors. In the first step, statements representing dimensions and characteristics were extracted from the interview transcripts. In the next stage, the data were analyzed at the sentence and phrase levels, and subcategories were identified. In other words, after the statements had been extracted, factors were formulated through the categorization process. As noted previously, during the detailed analysis of the data, concepts were generated according to similarities in their applications. Coding was performed either directly from the participants' interview statements or based on the meanings conveyed by them. Finally, the interview transcripts were subjected to further examination, and the data analysis process was repeated more than ten times with greater precision in order to achieve logical saturation. The dimensions and characteristics of the main categories were repeatedly examined. The boundaries of each category and its dimensions were not definitively established at the beginning of the analysis; rather, the categories were continuously revised throughout the analytical process. Open coding was terminated when:

a) repeated examination of the interview transcripts continued to produce the same meaningful classifications.

b) the subcategories and their characteristics became repetitive.

c) no new relevant information could be identified in the interview transcripts; even when new information emerged, it could be accommodated within the existing classification system.

Table 2

Secondary Coding and Formation of Categories

Open Coding	Secondary Codes
Employees' weakness in establishing communication; organizational communication perceived as difficult; organizational communication requiring specialized skills; employees being unable to establish communication; narrow-mindedness regarding the acquisition of communication skills by employees	Lack of employees' communication skills
Neglect of organizational communication; disregard for the importance of organizational communication; reluctance to establish organizational communication; underestimating the importance of organizational communication	Lack of understanding of the importance of communication
Unnecessary communication causing employee dissatisfaction; excessive communication causing job burnout; fatigue resulting from unnecessary communication	Employee dissatisfaction resulting from unnecessary communication
Absence of organizational justice leading to reluctance to communicate; failure to perceive justice preventing communication	Employees' lack of perceived organizational justice
Neglect of the concept of organizational communication; underestimating organizational communication; lack of enthusiasm for work causing reluctance to communicate; unwillingness to engage in organizational communication	Employee negligence in establishing internal communication
Employees considering communication unnecessary; employees considering communication harmful; lack of awareness of the effects of communication on the organization; failure to explain the importance of communication to employees	Employees' belief that communication is not beneficial
Failure to transmit information correctly; employee negligence in transmitting information; transmission of incomplete information	Employees' failure to provide accurate information
Employees' disregard for the timing of information transmission; transmitting information at inappropriate times; underestimating the importance of information-transmission timing	Employees' failure to provide information at the appropriate time
Managers' inability to establish communication; managers lacking the necessary communication skills; communication being difficult for managers; communication not being clearly defined for managers	Lack of managerial communication skills
Managers' neglect of the concept of communication; disregard for the importance of communication; reliance on their own knowledge in organizational decision-making; managerial arrogance and underestimation of employees' knowledge	Management's lack of understanding of the importance of internal communication
The environment making communication difficult; the environment disrupting communication; the internal organizational environment failing to facilitate communication; an environment that interferes with communication	Environmental conditions causing communication difficulties
Management failing to clearly define communication channels; management underestimating communication channels; organizational management neglecting communication channels	Management's lack of attention to communication channels
Insufficient attention to information received from the internal organizational environment; insufficient attention to information received from the external environment; managers considering their own knowledge superior to employees' knowledge; managers considering their own knowledge superior to received information	Management's lack of attention to information received from employees and clients
Management failing to promote communication; management failing to encourage employees to communicate; management not acting as a facilitator or promoter of communication within the organization	Lack of managerial encouragement for communication
Organizational structure failing to encourage organizational communication; structure failing to institutionalize the importance of communication; structure failing to promote communication among employees; communication not being prioritized within the organizational structure	Underestimation of communication within the organizational structure
Organizational structure failing to specify communication pathways; communication channels not being clearly defined within the organizational structure	Lack of clarity in communication channels within the organizational structure
Organizational structure adversely affecting job satisfaction; structure failing to ensure employees' job security; organizational structure failing to consider employees' convenience and comfort	Organizational structure as a source of employee dissatisfaction
Organizational structure making organizational communication difficult; structure failing to facilitate organizational communication; structure disrupting communication; structure negatively affecting organizational communication	Organizational structure causing delays in organizational communication
Information being distorted within the organizational structure; organizational structure affecting information accuracy; organizational structure altering the meaning of transmitted information	Impact of organizational structure on information accuracy
Incompatibility between management and employees affecting communication; lack of coordination damaging the accuracy of transmitted information	Lack of coordination between employees and management
Informal communication disrupting organizational communication; informal communication causing neglect of formal organizational communication; informal communication slowing formal communication	Presence of disruptive informal communication
Structure failing to facilitate relationships; structure being designed in a manner that does not align individual and organizational goals; structure causing individual and organizational objectives to diverge	Organizational structure's failure to align individual and organizational goals
Organizational culture failing to support communication; culture failing to promote organizational communication; prevailing organizational values conflicting with organizational communication; institutionalized beliefs negatively affecting organizational communication	Prevailing organizational values and beliefs as factors disrupting communication
Differences between employees' and managers' values; incompatibility between employees' and managers' beliefs; cultural differences between employees and management	Cultural conflict between employees and managers
Employees not accepting the organizational culture; employees perceiving organizational culture as conflicting with their own culture; employees not considering organizational culture beneficial	Employees' lack of acceptance of prevailing organizational values and beliefs
Ministries failing to respond to the needs of subordinate organizations; ministries experiencing crises; ministries failing to adequately understand the importance of communication; ministries failing to value received information	Higher-level organizations' neglect of communication
Managers being reluctant to communicate with higher-level institutions; managers perceiving decisions of higher-level institutions as inappropriate; managers failing to correctly understand the importance of communication with higher-level institutions	Managerial negligence in establishing external communication
Managers failing to consider communication with clients beneficial to the organization; managers questioning the accuracy of information received from clients; managers rejecting information received from higher-level institutions; managers questioning the competence of higher-level institutions	Government managers' lack of understanding of the importance of external organizational communication
Lack of clearly specified channels for communication with higher-level institutions; lack of clearly specified channels for managerial communication with clients; communication channels between managers and the external environment distorting information	Lack of clarity in external organizational communication channels

Insufficient budget for organizing internal organizational communication; insufficient budget for communication with clients; inadequate budget affecting the organization's overall performance	Budget constraints
Changes in policies affecting organizational policies as well as internal organizational communication; policy changes affecting relationships between the organization and clients; policy changes affecting communication with higher-level institutions	Policy changes
Regional crises damaging organizations' internal and external communication; unforeseen events affecting internal and external organizational communication	Occurrence of unforeseen events
Emergence of conflict across different organizational units; organizational isolation; lack of environmental feedback; lack of transparency; organizational decline; network failure	Organizational consequences
Lack of human resource development; job burnout; job dissatisfaction; lack of job commitment; employee turnover	Individual consequences

The findings revealed that 34 categories and 117 concepts were extracted as factors associated with organizational stroke in government organizations in Ilam Province.

After determining the categories, the next stage involved constructing the broader theoretical classifications, as presented in the following table.

Table 3

Formation of Main Categories from the Identified Categories

Categories	Main Categories
Lack of employees' communication skills; lack of understanding of the importance of communication; employee dissatisfaction resulting from unnecessary communication; employees' lack of perceived organizational justice; employee negligence in establishing communication; employees' belief that communication is not beneficial; employees' failure to provide accurate information; employees' failure to provide information at the appropriate time	Human Factors
Lack of managerial communication skills; management's lack of understanding of the importance of internal communication; environmental conditions causing communication difficulties; managerial negligence in establishing external communication; management's lack of attention to communication channels; management's lack of attention to information received from employees and clients; lack of managerial encouragement for communication	Managerial Factors
Underestimation of communication within the organizational structure; lack of clarity in communication channels within the organizational structure; organizational structure as a source of employee dissatisfaction; organizational structure causing delays in organizational communication; impact of organizational structure on information accuracy; lack of coordination between employees and management; presence of disruptive informal communication; organizational structure's failure to align individual and organizational goals	Structural Factors
Prevailing organizational values and beliefs as factors disrupting communication; cultural conflict between employees and managers; employees' lack of acceptance of prevailing organizational values and beliefs	Cultural Factors
Higher-level organizations' neglect of communication; government managers' lack of understanding of the importance of external organizational communication; lack of clarity in external organizational communication channels; budget constraints; policy changes; occurrence of unforeseen events	Environmental Factors
Emergence of conflict across different organizational units; organizational isolation; lack of environmental feedback; lack of transparency; organizational decline; network failure	Organizational Consequences
Lack of human resource development; job burnout; job dissatisfaction; lack of job commitment; employee turnover	Individual Consequences

A total of 34 categories were organized into six overarching classes in order to establish sufficient conceptual adequacy for selecting the principal categories used to address the researcher's research question.

Axial coding constitutes the second stage of analysis in grounded theory development. The purpose of this stage is to establish relationships among the categories generated during the open-coding stage. This process is conducted according to the paradigm model and assists the theorist in facilitating the process of theory development. The relational process involved in axial coding is fundamentally based on the elaboration and development of one of the categories (Danaeifard, 2004). Axial coding was conducted on the basis of the paradigm model, represented in the completed model. However, conducting axial coding in this manner is complex and requires four separate analytical procedures to be performed simultaneously:

1. Establishing relationships between an overarching category and its constituent categories through the formulated statements;
2. Validating the statements through reference to the empirical data, that is, examining the evidence to confirm or reject the proposed relationships;

3. Attempting to further develop the properties of the overarching category and its constituent categories in order to enhance the analytical richness of the theory; and
4. Examining variations in the phenomenon through the relationships established among the categories.

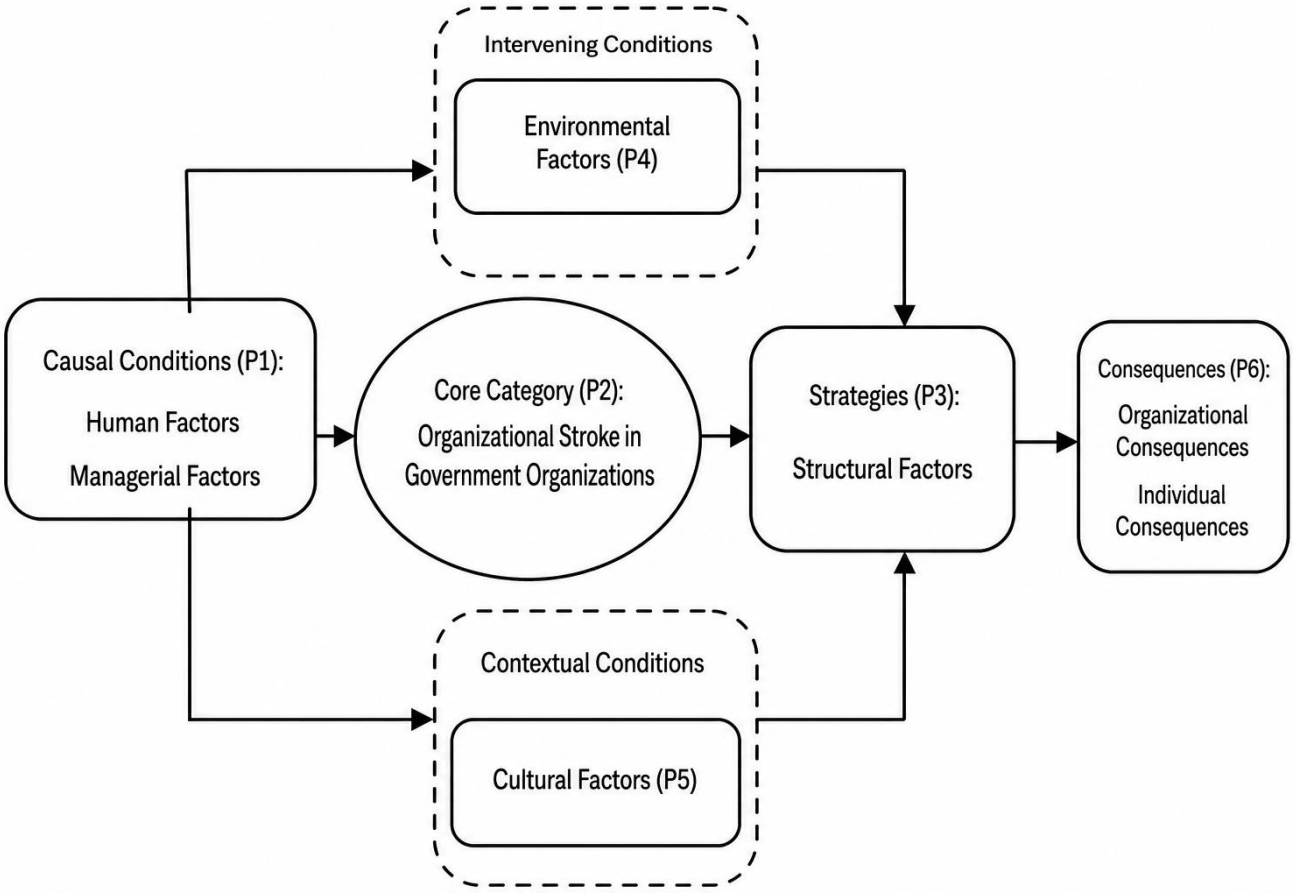
Because the design of a model requires the components to be identified first, followed by an explanation of the relationships among them and subsequently an articulation of the rationale for selecting these components and specifying their interrelationships, the second step focused on identifying the factors influencing organizational stroke in government organizations in Ilam Province on the basis of the data obtained.

The six factors were derived from the data generated through in-depth interviews and the subsequent processing and categorization of those data. The resulting findings were subsequently provided to several university faculty members for validation.

As previously stated, the objective of grounded theory is to generate theory rather than merely describe a phenomenon. To transform analyses into theory, the categories must be systematically related to one another. Selective coding, which is based on the results of the two preceding coding stages, constitutes the central stage of theory development. In this process, the core category is systematically related to the other categories, the relationships are presented within an integrated narrative framework, and categories requiring further refinement and development are revised. At this stage, based on the researcher's understanding of the context of the phenomenon under investigation, the paradigm model may either be presented narratively or reorganized and represented graphically as the final theory.

Figure 1

Model of Factors Influencing Organizational Stroke in Government Organizations in Ilam Province



Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to develop a grounded theory-based model for building resilience against organizational stroke in governmental organizations in Ilam Province. The qualitative analysis yielded 117 concepts and 34 categories that were ultimately organized around several major domains, including human, managerial, structural, cultural, and environmental factors, together with organizational and individual consequences. Within the paradigm model, human and managerial factors emerged primarily as causal conditions; organizational stroke in governmental organizations constituted the core phenomenon; structural factors were positioned as strategies; environmental factors operated as intervening conditions; cultural factors represented contextual conditions; and the resulting consequences were manifested at both organizational and individual levels. Overall, the findings indicate that organizational stroke is not an isolated communication problem or a short-term managerial deficiency. Rather, it is a multidimensional process that may gradually develop when communication, coordination, managerial responsiveness, organizational structure, organizational culture, and environmental adaptation become dysfunctional simultaneously or cumulatively. This interpretation is consistent with earlier conceptualizations of organizational stroke as a complex phenomenon characterized by interacting antecedents, indicators, and consequences rather than a single organizational malfunction [1]. It also corresponds closely with research conducted in governmental organizations showing that intra-organizational stroke is associated with multiple individual, managerial, structural, and communicative determinants [2].

One of the most important findings concerned human factors, including employees' lack of communication skills, insufficient understanding of the importance of communication, dissatisfaction resulting from unnecessary communication, inadequate perception of organizational justice, negligence in establishing communication, beliefs regarding the limited usefulness of communication, and failure to transmit information accurately and at the appropriate time. These findings suggest that employees constitute an essential component of organizational communication resilience. When employees lack communication competence or perceive organizational interaction as unnecessary, inequitable, burdensome, or ineffective, information flows are gradually weakened, and the organization becomes more vulnerable to coordination failure. This result is consistent with the organizational stroke framework proposed by Shajari et al., which emphasizes that dysfunctional employee behavior and communication patterns can contribute to the emergence and escalation of organizational stroke [1]. It is also consistent with evidence showing that resilient employees and positive organizational conditions contribute to subjective well-being and more adaptive organizational functioning [6]. The present findings therefore extend previous research by suggesting that employee resilience is not solely an individual psychological characteristic; it is also expressed through willingness and capacity to participate in reliable organizational communication.

The identification of employees' perceived organizational justice as an important human factor is especially noteworthy. Employees who perceive inequity in organizational procedures, interactions, or decision-making may become reluctant to communicate openly, share knowledge, provide feedback, or actively participate in organizational processes. The resulting withdrawal can impair organizational information networks and intensify the risk of organizational stroke. This interpretation is supported by evidence that organizational justice contributes significantly to employee job engagement, demonstrating that fairness perceptions influence whether employees invest cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy in organizational roles [7]. From a resilience perspective, justice can therefore be understood as a relational resource that promotes employee participation and preserves organizational connectivity. Furthermore, the finding that employee dissatisfaction and

communication fatigue contribute to organizational stroke is compatible with studies linking organizational resilience to job satisfaction. Ntow and Nukpezah demonstrated that resilient organizational conditions can contribute to employee satisfaction, suggesting that the relationship between employee attitudes and organizational resilience is reciprocal rather than unidirectional [5]. In the context of the present study, declining satisfaction may weaken communication, while deteriorating organizational communication may further reduce satisfaction, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of organizational dysfunction.

A second major finding related to managerial factors. Managers' lack of communication skills, insufficient understanding of internal and external communication, neglect of communication channels, disregard for information received from employees and clients, and failure to encourage communication were identified as important contributors to organizational stroke. These findings highlight leadership as a central mechanism through which organizational resilience is either strengthened or undermined. Managers act as gatekeepers of information, interpreters of environmental signals, facilitators of employee participation, and coordinators of organizational responses. When managers disregard employee knowledge, undervalue external information, or fail to establish clear communication mechanisms, organizational decision-making becomes increasingly disconnected from actual operational conditions. This interpretation is consistent with evidence that leadership style interacts with employees' psychological capital in shaping organizational resilience during crises [3]. It is also aligned with research emphasizing that leadership systems are fundamental to maintaining psychological health and organizational resilience during prolonged disruption [4]. Accordingly, the present study indicates that resilience against organizational stroke requires managers who are capable not only of issuing decisions but also of maintaining multidirectional information flows, encouraging feedback, and integrating organizational knowledge into decision processes.

The role of managerial factors also corresponds with research highlighting strategic agility and human resource management as mechanisms of organizational resilience. In the present study, managerial disregard for communication and information may reduce the organization's ability to detect emerging problems and respond rapidly to internal and external changes. By contrast, responsive management can transform information into timely adaptation. Previous research has shown that human resource management strategies can improve organizational resilience when accompanied by strategic agility [8]. This finding provides an important explanation for the present results: communication-oriented management contributes to resilience because it allows organizations to recognize changes, mobilize employees, reconfigure resources, and adjust strategies before emerging dysfunction develops into organizational paralysis. Managers who actively promote communication may therefore function as resilience builders by reducing informational bottlenecks and creating the conditions for collective problem-solving.

The findings further identified structural factors as an important component of the model. These included the low priority assigned to communication within the organizational structure, unclear communication channels, structure-induced employee dissatisfaction, delays in organizational communication, distortion of information, lack of coordination between management and employees, disruptive informal communication, and failure to align individual and organizational goals. These findings indicate that organizational stroke cannot be prevented solely by improving employee attitudes or managerial competence if the formal architecture of the organization itself obstructs information flow. Excessive hierarchy, ambiguous responsibility, procedural complexity, fragmented communication pathways, and poorly coordinated organizational units may systematically delay information and create conditions under which communication errors become institutionalized. The

finding is broadly compatible with resilience research emphasizing the importance of adaptive organizational arrangements and strategic agility [8]. Organizational resilience requires structures capable of supporting coordination, rapid information exchange, and flexible responses rather than structures that reinforce rigid boundaries and slow decision-making.

This structural finding can also be interpreted in light of contemporary research on technological and digital transformation. Digital communication systems can reduce structural barriers, improve access to organizational information, and support faster decision-making, but such advantages depend on effective change management and organizational integration. Research has shown that digital transformation contributes to organizational resilience when organizations successfully manage change and integrate new processes into their operational systems [12]. Similarly, the transition from resistance to resilience during crisis-driven digital transformation has been associated with organizational learning and the capacity to adapt institutional routines [13]. These studies reinforce the current finding that structural resilience is not merely a matter of organizational charts or formal hierarchy. It also concerns whether communication infrastructures, technologies, decision processes, and organizational routines facilitate or inhibit coordinated action. Moreover, the expansion of digital processes introduces cyber-related vulnerabilities, and an integrative organizational cyber resilience framework emphasizes that resilience requires alignment among technology, governance, human behavior, and organizational processes [14]. Thus, structural strategies for preventing organizational stroke should simultaneously address administrative, communicative, and technological dimensions.

Another major result was the importance of cultural factors, including prevailing organizational values and beliefs that disrupt communication, cultural conflict between employees and managers, and employees' lack of acceptance of dominant organizational values. These findings demonstrate that even when formal communication channels exist, they may not function effectively if the organizational culture discourages openness, mutual respect, participation, or information sharing. Culture determines what employees consider legitimate, safe, and worthwhile in organizational interaction. Where managers and employees operate according to incompatible assumptions or values, communication may become defensive, fragmented, or symbolic rather than substantive. The result is consistent with findings showing that organizational culture is linked to employee performance through workplace resilience [9]. It is also supported by evidence that organizational virtuousness, resilience, agility, and collectivism interact in shaping employees' subjective well-being [6]. These findings help explain why the cultural context identified in the present study may either intensify or mitigate organizational stroke: shared values based on trust, cooperation, and collective responsibility can strengthen communication resilience, whereas cultures characterized by distrust and incompatibility can make organizational breakdown more likely.

The model also identified environmental factors as intervening conditions, including the neglect of communication by higher-level organizations, managers' insufficient appreciation of external organizational communication, unclear external communication channels, budget constraints, policy changes, and unforeseen events. This result is especially relevant to governmental organizations because they operate within broader administrative, political, financial, and social systems. Their functioning may be strongly influenced by ministries, supervisory institutions, policy changes, resource allocations, public expectations, and external crises. Organizational resilience therefore requires an ability to absorb and respond to disturbances originating outside organizational boundaries. Research on the long-term effects of COVID-19 crisis management has demonstrated that major external shocks can alter organizational routines, coordination processes, and workforce functioning long after the immediate crisis has passed [10]. Similarly, system dynamics research has highlighted

the role of social capital in organizational resilience during crises, indicating that relationships, networks, and trust influence adaptive capacity [11]. The present findings thus suggest that governmental organizations that maintain weak communication with higher-level institutions, citizens, or environmental stakeholders may become informationally isolated and less capable of anticipating or managing disruptive changes.

The importance of environmental information is also increasingly evident in organizations that rely on advanced analytical and digital systems. Emerging evidence suggests that artificial intelligence-integrated measurement and modeling may enhance organizational performance and economic resilience by improving the capacity to generate and interpret decision-relevant information [15]. However, such analytical capability is useful only if external and internal information is actually incorporated into organizational decision-making. In the present study, managers' neglect of received information and ambiguity in external communication channels were identified as important components of organizational stroke. This implies that technological sophistication cannot compensate for weak managerial receptiveness or dysfunctional communication pathways. Moreover, the organizational environment can influence how leadership characteristics translate into resilience. Research on top management teams has shown that organizational environment interacts with leadership diversity in shaping corporate resilience [16]. Accordingly, governmental organizations must be understood as open systems in which resilience results from continuous interaction between internal capabilities and external environmental conditions.

Finally, the findings showed that organizational stroke produces both organizational and individual consequences. Organizational consequences included conflict among organizational units, organizational isolation, lack of environmental feedback, lack of transparency, organizational decline, and network failure. Individual consequences included insufficient human resource development, job burnout, job dissatisfaction, low job commitment, and employee turnover. These consequences demonstrate that organizational stroke can become self-perpetuating: communication failures produce dissatisfaction and withdrawal, while employee withdrawal further weakens communication and coordination. The organizational consequences identified in this study are consistent with the original conceptualization of organizational stroke, in which prolonged dysfunction may negatively affect organizational cohesion, performance, and survival [1]. They also accord with empirical work identifying multidimensional antecedents and consequences of intra-organizational stroke in governmental settings [2]. Furthermore, the relationship between resilience and employee job satisfaction reported in previous research supports the present identification of dissatisfaction as a major consequence of insufficient organizational resilience [5]. Collectively, the results indicate that building resilience against organizational stroke requires a comprehensive intervention logic that simultaneously addresses employees, managers, structures, organizational culture, and environmental relationships rather than attempting to resolve isolated symptoms after organizational deterioration has already occurred.

The present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the qualitative phase was conducted with 15 experts from governmental organizations and academic environments in Ilam Province; therefore, the findings are grounded in the institutional and administrative characteristics of this specific context and should not automatically be generalized to all governmental organizations or private-sector institutions. Second, purposive and snowball sampling were necessary because individuals with specialized knowledge of the phenomenon were not readily identifiable, but these methods may have resulted in a relatively homogeneous network of participants and may have limited the range of perspectives represented. Third, the findings were based primarily on semi-structured interviews and participants' interpretations, which may have been influenced by professional experiences, perceptions, organizational

positions, and recall. Fourth, organizational stroke is an emerging and relatively underdeveloped construct, and the boundaries between some of its components, antecedents, and consequences may overlap conceptually. Finally, because the study adopted a qualitative grounded theory approach, it did not statistically test the magnitude or direction of relationships among the components of the resulting model.

Future studies are recommended to quantitatively validate the proposed model using larger and more diverse samples of employees and managers from governmental organizations in different provinces and administrative sectors. Researchers could develop and psychometrically evaluate a standardized organizational stroke and resilience instrument based on the concepts and categories identified in this study and subsequently test the proposed relationships through structural equation modeling. Comparative studies between governmental, private, nonprofit, educational, healthcare, and industrial organizations could clarify whether the antecedents and consequences of organizational stroke differ according to organizational context. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable for examining how communication dysfunction develops over time and for determining whether organizational stroke progresses through identifiable stages. Future research could additionally investigate mediating and moderating mechanisms such as organizational trust, psychological safety, employee engagement, leadership style, digital maturity, organizational learning, strategic agility, and perceived organizational support. Intervention studies evaluating specific resilience-building programs would provide stronger evidence regarding which managerial, structural, and cultural strategies are most effective in preventing or reversing organizational stroke.

Governmental organizations should establish integrated organizational resilience programs that address the human, managerial, structural, cultural, and environmental dimensions identified in this study. Practical measures should include systematic communication-skills training for employees and managers, transparent communication protocols, clear internal and external information channels, mechanisms for timely feedback, participatory decision-making, and procedures for monitoring communication breakdowns before they become severe. Managers should be trained to recognize early indicators of organizational stroke, respond constructively to employee and citizen feedback, promote organizational justice, and encourage open communication without creating unnecessary information overload. Organizational structures should be reviewed to eliminate avoidable bureaucratic barriers, clarify responsibilities, accelerate information transfer, and improve alignment between individual and organizational objectives. Organizations should also foster cultures of trust, cooperation, learning, and psychological safety while establishing contingency plans for policy changes, budget constraints, crises, and other unexpected environmental disruptions. Finally, periodic assessments of employee satisfaction, burnout, commitment, turnover intentions, communication quality, network functioning, and organizational transparency should be incorporated into routine management systems so that vulnerabilities can be identified and addressed before they develop into widespread organizational dysfunction.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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