

## RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

# Enacting Resilience in Small and Medium Enterprises Following the Sustainability Path: A Systematic Literature Review

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## ABSTRACT

This article investigates entrepreneurship literature insights into whether and how changing organizational strategies and processes toward more sustainable ones can allow small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to gain resilience. We deepen the relationship between reorienting SMEs' strategies and processes toward sustainability and gaining resilience by providing a framework and suggesting avenues for future research. Specifically, we cluster the content of 53 articles in five thematic areas using qualitative thematic analysis. These areas are “barriers, contextual factors, and government help,” “entrepreneurial orientation or attitude,” “capabilities and lean thinking,” “means and processes,” and “supply chains, synergies, and collaborations.” The findings suggest that reorienting businesses to more sustainable strategies and processes can also facilitate the shift toward more resilient business models and ecosystems. The article contributes to the literature on SMEs' resilience, binding such literature with the one on sustainable business and SMEs' sustainability, providing a theoretical framework useful for researchers, managers, and policymakers. The novelty of the work consists of emphasizing consciousness of this relationship and suggesting unexplored lines of research.

## 1 | Introduction

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are fundamental to global and national economies (Sharma et al. 2024). Such organizations and the entrepreneurs leading them can contribute to countries' wellness by providing jobs and satisfying customer needs (Sharma et al. 2024). Moreover, researchers and policymakers have started to notice their social and environmental impacts, pointing out that not only large companies should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development but also smaller ones (Lawrence et al. 2006). This is one of the main reasons why the new sustainability reporting directive of the European Union has started to spread the scope of sustainability reporting

to smaller entities (European Union 2022). Furthermore, the United Nations 2030 Agenda (United Nations General Assembly 2015) emphasizes that individuals and business organizations, big or small, should contribute to achieving sustainable development goals (Damiano and Di Maria 2024; Mio, Panfilo, and Blundo 2020). Such a challenge is difficult to cope with and necessitates strongly revising business strategies and operations (Bastian and Caputo 2024; Phillips 2018; Venturelli et al. 2022).

Further than this sustainability orientation that SMEs should address, another topic has found increasing attention by SME researchers and practitioners, that is, SMEs' resilience.

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## Summary

- The work provides an “input, throughput, and output” theoretical framework for converting business strategies and operations to more sustainable and resilient ones.
- The work systematizes the literature linking SMEs’ orientation toward sustainability and resilience, suggesting future research avenues for academics.
- The work addresses managers’ needs, providing helpful knowledge to conceive and design sustainable strategic changes to gain resilience for their organizations to cope with current or partially prevent future shocks.
- The entrepreneurial cycle of conversion to sustainable solutions can enact SMEs’ resilience and, consequently, the resilience and wellness of the overall economic system.

Specifically, SMEs’ survival can be jeopardized because of relevant shocks such as the 2008 financial crisis and the recent one related to the COVID-19 health crisis of 2020–2022 (Fowler et al. 2023; Thukral 2021). Furthermore, such organizations could suffer more from these disruptive events than larger entities due to reduced resources (Cosenz and Bivona 2021; Ruisi, Cosenz, and Damiano 2024). For this reason, in recent years, there has been an increasing focus on how businesses and entrepreneurs can develop resilience to adapt to crises (Apostolopoulos et al. 2024; Aránega, Castaño Sánchez, and Ribeiro-Navarrete 2023).

A relevant branch of literature has focused on SMEs’ sustainability. For instance, studies such as those of Santos and Sant’Anna (2024), Isensee, Teuteberg, and Griese (2023), and Klewitz and Hansen (2014) review the literature on SMEs and sustainability, focusing on factors such as technologies, organizational culture, and innovation. Another one addressed SMEs’ resilience, that is, those of Bak et al. (2023) and Mishra and Singh (2023), which review studies on SMEs and resilience, particularly concerning the role of supply chains. However, to our knowledge, the intersection between SMEs’ sustainability and resilience studies has not been systematically investigated. We found this research gap surprising, considering that SMEs’ sustainability orientation could improve organizations’ performance in several respects (Danso et al. 2019; Varadarajan 2017), thus making it possible that such improved performance could lead the organization to higher levels of resilience.

In this regard, what we want to address in this work is whether betting on sustainability for such small and medium entities could be rewarding, allowing them to bounce back from shocks, therefore gaining “resilience” (Conz, Lamb, and De Massis 2020; Iborra, Safón, and Dolz 2020; Lengnick-Hall and Beck 2005), and making them valuable sustainability players in a global context requiring this. In other words, we want to answer the research question: Can resilience be enacted in SMEs by changing business strategies and processes toward

more sustainable solutions? On the one hand, this could be the case because acting sustainably should also create value in the long term. However, sudden shocks could require different solutions, delaying the adoption of sustainable strategies and processes.

To address such a problem, we conduct a literature review of articles addressing SMEs’ resilience and sustainability features. Indeed, we noticed that while previous literature has already provided reviews on SMEs’ strategies to gain resilience and sustainability (e.g., Apasrawirote and Yawised 2024; Costa and Castro 2021; Gunasekaran, Rai, and Griffin 2011), to our knowledge, no prior literature review has specifically addressed the link between sustainability and resilience in SMEs. We conduct a systematic literature review on a sample of studies addressing this issue and provide a thematic analysis of their content.

In doing so, we critically review such literature to provide a “sustainability to resilience framework” for SMEs that is useful for researchers—by identifying new research avenues—and managers and policymakers—providing significant insights on the link between sustainability and resilience. Overall, this work advances the readers’ knowledge of the relationship between sustainability and resilience within SMEs.

The remainder of the work is as follows. In Section 2, we describe the research methodology. In Section 3, we provide the review results and the thematic areas in the investigated literature. In Section 4, we critically discuss the results. Finally, in Section 5, we provide the conclusions of the work, stating theoretical, managerial, and policy-making contributions.

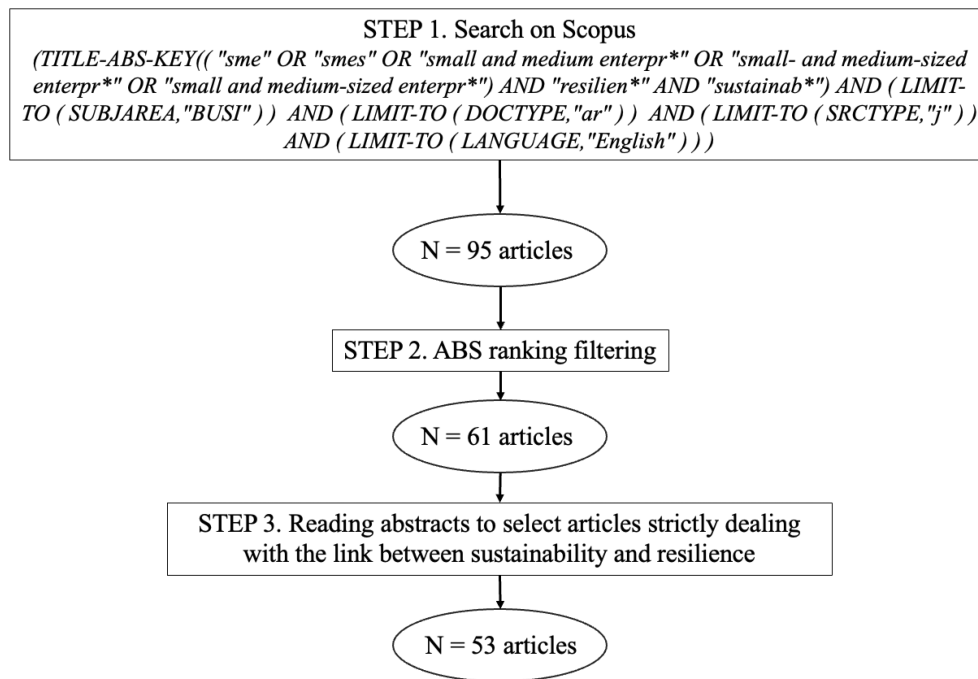
## 2 | Review Method

The review approach we use in this study follows the approach already adopted by previous ones (Luz Martín-Peña, Díaz-Garrido, and Sánchez-López 2018; Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022; Valenza, Caputo, and Calabrò 2021). Precisely, we follow a two-step approach characterized by the sample selection and the identification of commonly addressed research themes (Pateli and Giaglis 2004; Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022; Valenza, Caputo, and Calabrò 2021).

Concerning the first step of our approach, Figure 1 shows the article selection protocol adopted.

As regards the sample selection, we retrieved the articles for our literature review from the SCOPUS database. SCOPUS is a scientific research database introduced in 2004 by Elsevier (Vieira and Gomes 2009). We decided to rely on SCOPUS because it is a high-quality scientific database with comprehensive coverage of authoritative and influential scientific journals, and it is increasingly used in academic research, challenging the leading role of other research databases such as Web of Science (Baas et al. 2020; Zhu and Liu 2020).

We carried out our search using the terms “SME” or “SMES” or “SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPR\*” or “SMALL- AND



**FIGURE 1** | Article selection protocol.

MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPR\*” or “SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPR\*” to retrieve articles investigating SMEs. We accompanied such terms with “RESILIEN\*” and “SUSTAINAB\*” to retrieve only articles addressing both sustainability and resilience in SMEs. In SCOPUS, the use of the symbol “\*” allows for searching for variants of the term (e.g., “resilien\*” stands for “resilience” but also “resilient”).

We search for these terms within the abstract, title, or keywords. To investigate only reliable contributions following the approach used in previous literature reviews (Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022; Valenza, Caputo, and Calabrò 2021), we further filtered the initial results by selecting only scientific journals’ articles in business, management, and accounting published in English. This first search led us to gain a sample of 95 articles.

We continue to filter these contributions using a quality criterion (Pateli and Giaglis 2004). While researchers in the entrepreneurial field acknowledged that articles’ quality assessments in systematic reviews remain debatable and challenging, there is agreement that a generally accepted view of what constitutes quality research aligns with the ranking of the journals in which the articles are published (Denyer and Tranfield 2009; Hiebl 2023; Sousa and Hendriks 2008; Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart 2003). In this regard, relying on journal rankings is a commonly employed method to ensure the analysis of high-quality scientific articles in conducting systematic literature reviews (Baldacchino et al. 2015; Cincimino et al. 2024; Rojon, Okupe, and McDowall 2021; Zahoor et al. 2020). Therefore, we consider the sources’ quality by including only articles from journals in the CABS ranking (2021) in the sample presenting 1, 2, 3, 4, and 4\* ratings. We decided to rely on this ranking because of its high level of reliability and wide acceptance as a fair means of ranking journals within the academic community (Morris, Harvey, and Kelly 2009).

Such a selection reduced the number of articles from 95 to 61. Then, to maintain only relevant articles to answer our research question in the sample, we adopted two additional criteria following Zott, Amit, and Massa (2011) and Luz Martín-Peña, Díaz-Garrido, and Sánchez-López (2018). We read the abstracts of the articles and, in case of doubts, the article overall, and included only those dealing with the link between sustainability and resilience in SMEs in a nonmarginal way.

Finally, we selected only articles referring to sustainability and resilience concerning strategic and process changes. After this second selection step, the final sample consists of 53 articles.

Then, after gaining the articles aligning with our research question, we reviewed them, performing a narrative synthesis and a thematic analysis highlighting the main themes capable of allowing for a coherent interpretation of the literature (Bailey et al. 2017; Cincimino et al. 2024; Popay et al. 2006; Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart 2003). Thematic analysis is a qualitative and narrative synthesis of reviewed studies, highlighting and systematizing the main findings and contributions in the literature (Popay et al. 2006; Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022; Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart 2003). However, for its nature, thematic analysis is affected by subjective bias (Bearman and Dawson 2013). To reduce such a bias, following previous studies (i.e., Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022), we performed an inductive analysis of the articles (Popay et al. 2006) through multiple reading and coding to highlight features of the studies answering our research question. Specifically, each of the authors of the work meticulously and independently read all the selected papers of the sample and gathered information about them. According to previous studies (i.e., Cincimino et al. 2024; Dumay et al. 2016; Guthrie, Ricceri, and Dumay 2012; Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022), we coded and categorized

the articles by taking into consideration their research assumptions, objectives, findings, and future research avenues. Thus, the thematic analysis was conducted after the data was familiarized. In particular, each one of the authors developed literature schematizations to discuss with the other authors in plenary meetings (Cincimino et al. 2024).

We identified the following thematic areas (Al-Debei and Avison 2010; Luz Martín-Peña, Díaz-Garrido, and Sánchez-López 2018; Pateli and Giaglis 2004; Zott, Amit, and Massa 2011): (1) “Barriers, contextual factors, and government help;” (2) “Entrepreneurial orientation or attitude;” (3) “Capability and lean thinking;” (4) “Means and processes;” and (5) “Supply chain, synergy, and collaboration.”

The thematic areas in the study were selected by both the research question and the existing gaps in the literature, ensuring that the identified themes would directly contribute to understanding how sustainability can enhance resilience in SMEs. Concerning the relevance to the research question, the thematic areas needed to directly address the components of sustainability and resilience within the context of SMEs. Regarding the prominence in existing literature, we ensured that the chosen themes were well-represented, reflecting prominent focus areas within the broader research fields of sustainability and resilience in SMEs.

The relevance of the thematic areas was determined through a multistep method. Initially, a preliminary literature review was conducted to identify recurring themes and key focus areas within SME sustainability and resilience. This early review helped pinpoint thematic areas directly related to the research question and widely discussed in the literature. Following this, the authors, experts in sustainability, resilience, and SME management, engaged in in-depth discussions to further refine these themes. These expert consultations ensured that the selected areas were theoretically robust and aligned with current academic and practical trends. Finally, during the thematic analysis, an iterative coding process was employed. As the authors independently reviewed and coded the articles, they continuously revisited and refined the preliminary themes based on emerging insights from the data, ensuring that the final thematic areas accurately captured the focus and content of the literature.

To reach a consensus among the authors, we discussed the codes and categories of the articles in the sample in plenary meetings until a total agreement was reached on them (Cincimino et al. 2024). Five plenary meetings were necessary to reach total agreement among the authors.

The final classification of the articles followed a taxonomy focused on input, throughput, and output factors, as in previous literature reviews (Dagnino, Picone, and Ferrigno 2021; Pinello, Picone, and Mocchiari Li Destri 2022; Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022).

### 3 | Results of the Thematic Analysis

Table 1 presents the results of our systematic literature review. For each cluster, the table highlights the internal composition

(articles), the methods used (quantitative, qualitative, mixed, and conceptual/review), and the key findings. Each of these five themes encapsulates distinct but interconnected aspects of how SMEs can navigate the path toward sustainability while enhancing their resilience.

The first theme, “Barriers, Contextual Factors, and Government Help,” primarily addresses the external challenges SMEs face, such as regulatory hurdles, environmental disruptions, and the varying levels of government support available during crises. This theme highlights the importance of understanding the external environment that significantly impacts SMEs’ ability to adopt sustainable practices and build resilience.

The second theme, “Entrepreneurial Orientation or Attitude,” focuses on the internal drivers within SMEs, particularly the role of entrepreneurial mindset and orientation in fostering resilience, which implies the adoption of innovative practices and sustainability-driven strategies that can significantly influence the firm’s ability to withstand and adapt to disruptions.

“Capability and Lean Thinking,” the third theme, delves into the operational aspects, emphasizing the importance of building dynamic capabilities and lean practices that allow SMEs to be more agile and responsive to changing conditions. These capabilities are essential for implementing sustainable practices and ensuring long-term resilience.

The fourth theme, “Means and Processes,” explores the strategies and processes SMEs can employ to enhance sustainability and resilience. This theme includes digital transformation, the adoption of e-commerce, and the strategic use of intellectual capital, all of which are crucial for maintaining competitive advantage and operational continuity in the face of disruptions.

Finally, the fifth theme, “Supply Chain Synergy and Collaboration,” underscores the importance of supply chain management and external collaborations. By integrating sustainable practices within their supply chains and fostering collaborative networks, SMEs can not only enhance their resilience but also contribute to the resilience of the broader economic system.

The articles constituting each theme are discussed in detail in the following subsections.

#### 3.1 | Barriers, Contextual Factors, and Government Help

The first theme we located concerns articles mainly exploring the external environment in which SMEs operate. Specifically, these articles address contextual factors and barriers hindering SMEs from acting sustainably and building resilience. The emphasis is on disruptive events such as extreme weather events and crises like COVID-19. Such articles focus on deepening the readers’ knowledge of external barriers, contextual factors, and institutional support, such as the role of government in supporting SMEs during crises. The journey is fraught with external challenges and opportunities in the complex landscape of SMEs striving for resilience and sustainability. The path toward

**TABLE 1** | Results of the thematic analysis.

| <b>Theme</b>  | <b>Authors and years</b>   | <b>No. of articles</b> | <b>Quantitative</b> | <b>Qualitative</b> | <b>Mixed</b> | <b>Concept/ reviews</b> | <b>Framework/ theoretical lenses</b>  | <b>Key findings</b>   |
|---|--|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| (1) Barriers, contextual factors, and government help | Agarwal et al. (2023); Ali, Saddidin, and Cattaneo (2023); Beebejaun (2022); Etemad (2023); Gamage, Pyke, and De Lacy (2024); Halkos et al. (2018); Howard, Böhm, and Eatherley (2022); Kantabutra (2017); Messabia, Fomi, and Kooli (2022); Musa, Haji Besar, and Anshari (2023); Sharma et al. (2024); Williams, You, and Joshua (2020). | 12                     | 1                   | 5                  | 2            | 4                       | Business model innovation, dynamic capabilities theory, grey systems theory, instrumental stakeholder theory, organizational resilience, place-based perspective, program evaluation, sufficiency economy philosophy, sustainable human resource management, systems resilience.                                      | Contextual factors influencing SMEs, barriers to sustainable practices, impact of disruptive events, institutional support and government role, knowledge deepening on external barriers. |
| (2) Entrepreneurial orientation or attitude           | Avelar et al. (2024); Beech et al. (2020); Castañeda García et al. (2023); Dressler (2020); Glowka et al. (2024); Isensee, Teuteberg, and Griese (2023); Kantabutra (2014); Le, Ngo, and Pham Hai (2023); Novaczek and Stuart (2006).  | 9                      | 4                   | 3                  | 1            | 1                       | Digital entrepreneurship, dynamic capabilities theory, ecological stewardship, familiness, organizational resilience, resource-based view, responsible leadership, social capital, socioecological systems, stakeholder theory, sufficiency economy philosophy, sustainable entrepreneurship, sustainable leadership. | Entrepreneurial orientation and resilience, sustainable entrepreneurship, role of innovation, digitalization as a resilience tool, entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors.               |
| (3) Capability and lean thinking                      | Apasrawirote and Yawised (2024); Ates and Bitici (2011); Awad and Martín-Rojas (2024); Caldera, Desha, and Dawes (2019); Elf, Werner, and Black (2022); Liang and Li (2024); Melin and Barth (2018); Thomas et al. (2012); Trieu et al. (2024); Ufua et al. (2022).  | 10                     | 3                   | 4                  | 1            | 2                       | Absorptive capability, change management, dynamic capabilities theory, institutional theory, lean entrepreneurship, lean thinking, organizational agility, organizational resilience, resource-based view.  | Capability development, lean thinking and sustainability, change management, dynamic capabilities, integration of lean and green practices.   |

(Continues)

TABLE 1 | (Continued)

| Theme                                       | Authors and years   | No. of articles | Quantitative | Qualitative | Mixed | Concept/ reviews | Framework/ theoretical lenses  | Key findings  |
|---|---|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-------|------------------|--|---|
| (4) Means and processes                     | Akpan, Effiom, and Akpanobong (2023); Ben Abdelaziz, Chen, and Dey (2024); Bhatia and Diaz-Elsayed (2023); Costa and Castro (2021); DiBella et al. (2023); Gunasekaran, Rai, and Griffin (2011); Hansen, Christiansen, and Lassen (2024); Hong, Huang, and Li (2012); Michalakopoulou et al. (2022); Paoloni et al. (2022); Perramon et al. (2024); Restrepo-Morales, Valencia-Cárdenas, and García-Pérez-de-Lema (2024); Shukla and Shankar (2024); Zighan and Dwaikat (2023). | 14              | 7            | 5           | 2     | 0                | Competence development, crisis management, digital technologies, digital transformation, evolutionary theory, organizational agility, organizational resilience, practice-based view, resource-based view, sociotechnical systems perspective, theory of change, transition management.  | Digital transformation, e-commerce adoption, business resilience plans, strategic role of intellectual capital.                         |
| (5) Supply chain, synergy and collaboration | Baral, Singh, and Kazancıoğlu (2023); Dey et al. (2024); Gray and Jones (2016); Le (2023); Lu, Ding, and Gu (2024); Moore and Manring (2009); Nayal et al. (2024); Shweta, Kumar, and Chandra (2023).   | 8               | 5            | 1           | 1     | 1                | Complex network theory, dynamic capabilities theory, industrial ecology, knowledge-based view, organizational development and learning framework, resource orchestration, resource-based view, risk management theory, stakeholder theory, supply chain resilience, sustainable enterprise resilience, systems theory, triple bottom line. | Supply chain resilience, sustainable supply chain practices, collaboration and synergy, role of technology in supply chain performance. |

sustainability and resilience begins with focusing on the external barriers SMEs face. These challenges are not just obstacles but catalysts for change, pushing SMEs to re-evaluate their strategies and operations.

Sharma et al. (2024) use bibliometric analysis to identify SMEs' barriers to survival during the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, they offer a diagram highlighting organizational, operational, technological, and supply chain-related barriers. After providing this analysis, the authors emphasize approaches to overcome them, mainly based on entrepreneurial decisions and government policies. The authors posit that SMEs can reorient their operations by adopting sustainable strategies and exploring new opportunities to gain resilience. Howard, Böhm, and Eatherley (2022) discussed SMEs' challenges in transitioning to a circular economy and the importance of place-based systems resilience. They posit that SMEs capable of recognizing their role in place-based circular system resilience, comprehending the importance of cooperation, value sharing, and wide engagement following the sustainability agenda, become more resilient. In another study, Kantabutra (2017) explored sufficiency economy principles, highlighting the importance of perseverance, moderation, and resilience for sustainable performance. The research emphasizes significant relationships between the local community, engagement, and responsible leadership to assure long-term business success. Williams, You, and Joshua (2020) investigated small enterprises' geographical disadvantages in gaining resilience in remote islands. They posit that valuable partners and mutually beneficial interactions positively affect coping with the crisis. However, they also observed negative effects from other types of support, such as, as they state, "surprisingly" government policies. Ali, Sadiddin, and Cattaneo (2023) explored how COVID-19 disrupted SMEs in developing and developed contexts and what measures were embraced to cultivate their resilience, unveiling noticeable differences between those contexts. Messabia, Fomi, and Kooli (2022) focused on the role of government assistance during COVID-19, highlighting controversial outcomes as well. For instance, they found that support programs for workers who lost their jobs became barriers for entrepreneurs to employ them. Furthermore, the authors add that entrepreneurs should invest more in strategic human resource management because human capital is a consistent factor in contributing to business success and resilience. As in Messabia, Fomi, and Kooli (2022), Beebeejaun (2022) also assessed SMEs' supporting policies during COVID-19. Particularly, the author focuses on the effectiveness of fiscal policies to generate resilience. However, by conducting a survey, the author demonstrates that SMEs were not fully aware of the supporting measures, and thus the fiscal support benefits were not fully utilized. Then, Gamage, Pyke, and De Lacy (2024) analyzed the impact of crises on sustainable human resource management and resilience, highlighting that macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors (e.g., business type and location, owner-manager skill sets and networks, workforce management, and previous experiences with crises) strongly influence SMEs' sustainability and resilience. Halkos et al. (2018) investigated resilience barriers SMEs face during extreme weather events. They pointed out external barriers related to institutional and market conditions and the critical role of supporting mechanisms for guiding SMEs in these

crisis periods toward sustainable development. Furthermore, in this study, the pivotal role of managers and their perceptions is highlighted as a factor that can positively and negatively affect SMEs' resilience. Etemad (2023) explored the need for strategic redirection and changing business models due to the impact of evolving forces on the international entrepreneurship environment. This work highlighted forces of change, such as environmental, socioeconomic, and technological, that SMEs must cope with to act sustainably and gain resilience. Musa, Haji Besar, and Anshari (2023), investigating the impact of COVID-19, emphasized that moving toward a more resilient and sustainable local food system necessitates nations boost SME production by supporting local initiatives and digital platforms for business transactions. Finally, Agarwal et al. (2023) examined the resilience challenges and strategies related to SMEs' sustainability and viability in the Indian handicraft industry post-COVID-19. The study revealed several challenges, from competition to insufficient government support and incentives for export. However, in their study, the authors also accompanied external factors with internal ones, such as inefficient managerial concerns and responses to the challenges of internationalization.

Together, these studies depict a compelling story of SMEs navigating a complex web of challenges. In such a scenario, resilience is not just a goal but a continuous adaptation and strategic evolution process. On the one hand, SMEs must be aware of the challenges and opportunities surrounding them and the role they should play within social systems, while, on the other, policymakers should adequately provide and disseminate functional supporting policies.

### 3.2 | Entrepreneurial Orientation and Attitude

The second theme focuses on entrepreneurial orientation, attitudes, and behaviors in fostering resilience and sustainability in SMEs. It examines how sustainable entrepreneurship, innovation, and digitalization contribute to building resilient businesses. In the dynamic world of SMEs, entrepreneurial orientation and attitudes emerge as powerful drivers of resilience and sustainability. This theme weaves together the stories of entrepreneurs committed to innovation and sustainability who navigate their businesses toward long-term success in the face of adversity.

Among these studies, Avelar et al. (2024) explored the confluence of sustainable entrepreneurship, innovation, and digitalization in SMEs. The authors link sustainability and resilience, emphasizing how sustainable entrepreneurship can positively change the economy, thus increasing resilience. They clarify that sustainable entrepreneurship involves addressing environmental, societal, and economic concerns through innovative and digitalized approaches. Sustainable entrepreneurs integrate sustainability, innovation, and technology to create powerful synergies between the organization and its embedded system, minimizing footprints and enacting resilience. According to this study, sustainable entrepreneurs can transmit values oriented to preserving the environment and promoting the social system, merging environmental, social, and financial values, stressing their connectivity with stakeholders' values, and increasing overall

wellness and organizational resilience. Isensee, Teuteberg, and Griese (2023) explored sustainable digital entrepreneurs and their approaches to enhancing organizational resilience, providing a taxonomy for them. They point out that sustainable digital entrepreneurs are pivotal in generating organizational resilience. In another study, Glowka et al. (2024) investigated how strategic orientations and risk perceptions influence resilience in family-owned hospitality SMEs. Specifically, they highlighted that family SMEs can have different strategic orientations, and such a feature also influences their perception of risks. The authors provide a taxonomy of family SMEs' entrepreneurial orientation, among which are proactive, sustainability-oriented, and destination-affirmative resilience-oriented. SMEs with such orientations are more inclined toward the realization of innovations and destination development than others. Still, Beech et al. (2020), exploring resilience in family SMEs, examined how familiness and relationship dynamics influence performance, demonstrating that family businesses, consisting of complex interrelationships between social-ecological complementary systems embedded in familiness, present complexities in decision-making and helpful implementation to gain sustainability and resilience. Also, the work of Novaczek and Stuart (2006) focused on entrepreneurs' orientation and attitude. Precisely, they investigated woman entrepreneurship in small islands, highlighting their resourcefulness and ecological caregiving attitudes as generators of resilience. Then, Castañeda García et al. (2023) identified responsible leadership practices (i.e., social and environmental orientation, ethics, stakeholder involvement, and power-sharing) that enhance resilience in SME restaurants. Specifically, they found that the key to advancing business sustainability and resilience is innovation and that responsible leadership practices enable improvements toward innovation in SMEs. Dressler (2020) showed that proactiveness, innovation, and ambition are entrepreneurial traits that can positively affect sustainable growth and resilience in the wine industry. Le, Ngo, and Pham Hai Nguyen (2023) investigated how entrepreneurial orientation and business model innovation promote resilience in the food and beverage sector. Specifically, they showed that entrepreneurial orientation positively influences corporate social responsibility and business model innovation, likely building resilience toward circular economy principles and adaptation to crises. Finally, Kantabutra (2014) highlighted how the sufficiency economy philosophy can ensure sustainability, demonstrating that attitudes such as perseverance and resilience are predictors of sustainability and that SME entrepreneurs should develop such attitudes to enhance corporate sustainability.

Together, these studies depict entrepreneurship as a powerful force for resilience and sustainability in SMEs and the overall economic and social system. Through innovation, strategic orientation, and a commitment to responsible leadership, entrepreneurs can navigate the challenges of complex business environments, ensuring their businesses remain resilient and sustainable in the face of crises and providing beneficial effects for society.

### 3.3 | Capability and Lean Thinking

The third theme we located addresses the development of capabilities and the implementation of lean thinking as critical

factors in achieving sustainability and resilience in SMEs. It includes discussions on change management, dynamic capabilities, and integrating lean and green practices. In the pursuit of sustainability and resilience, developing capabilities and adopting lean thinking emerge as pivotal strategies for SMEs. This theme connects studies that explore how these practices enable businesses to adapt, thrive, and contribute to sustainable development.

Thomas et al. (2012) identified characteristics that make manufacturing SMEs economically sustainable through lean practices. The authors outline Lean as the primary means, on the one hand, to reduce operating costs and, on the other, implement innovation, allowing for sustainability and competitive success. Caldera, Desha, and Dawes (2019) emphasized the co-evolution of lean and green thinking in manufacturing SMEs to successfully transition toward more sustainable and resilient business strategies that contribute to the circular economy. Melin and Barth (2018) proposed a framework to examine Lean thinking and implementation, observing challenges in doing so, such as those related to agricultural sustainability, resource efficiency, and resilience. Ufua et al. (2022) explored lean practice among SMEs in Nigeria in the post-COVID-19 period. The study emphasizes the need for lean entrepreneurs on business sustainability, recommending a critical review of operations and processes. Ates and Bititci (2011) highlighted the importance of change management in building resilient SMEs, acknowledging resilience as an organizational capability linked to sustainability. They highlighted that SMEs' resilience and sustainability can be fostered by embracing organizational and people dimensions and proactively driving changes. Elf, Werner, and Black (2022) explored how dynamic capabilities and customer engagement advance the circular economy in fashion SMEs. Their study highlights that dynamic capabilities allow SMEs to act agilely, introducing and fostering circular economy processes and providing them with more resilience in crises. As in Elf, Werner, and Black (2022), Awad and Martín-Rojas (2024) also relied on dynamic capabilities to reveal how corporate social responsibility, digital technologies, and corporate entrepreneurship can synergistically enhance SMEs' organizational resilience. According to them, embracing CSR allows SMEs to stay competitive during crises and cultivate resilience. Specifically, the authors posit that the synergy between CSR, digital technologies, and entrepreneurship enhances SMEs' resilience. Apasrawirote and Yawised (2024) provided a strategic framework for sustainable business resilience plans based on organizations' responsiveness, reactivity, and proactiveness capabilities. Trieu et al. (2024) focused on the roles of IT competencies, ambidexterity, and paradoxical leadership in building organizational resilience. They find that such capabilities foster organizational resilience by reducing missed opportunities and increasing organizations' responsiveness to market volatility. Liang and Li (2024) also focused on dynamic capabilities, highlighting that strategic change and managerial myopia mediate the relationship between resilience and firm growth.

Together, these studies weave a narrative of how lean thinking and capability development can empower SMEs to tackle complex scenarios. By adopting these practices, SMEs can build resilience, achieve sustainability, and prepare themselves to grow in the dynamic global landscape. Systematizing these studies

leads us to realize that implementing lean thinking and enhancing internal capabilities within the SME leads to a fortification of its performance in the light of economic, social, and environmental sustainability, likely fostering resilience.

### 3.4 | Means and Processes

The fourth theme explores SMEs' processes and strategies to enhance resilience and sustainability. In the journey toward resilience and sustainability, SMEs should increasingly turn to innovative processes and strategic transformations. This theme explores the diverse means by which SMEs can navigate the complex landscape of modern business, focusing on topics such as digital transformation, e-commerce adoption, business resilience plans, and the strategic role of intellectual capital.

Costa and Castro (2021) discussed the relevance of adopting e-commerce solutions to perform a smooth digital transition for SME resilience and survivability. Akpan, Effiom, and Akpanobong (2023) identified adopting digital technologies, innovating business models to enhance operations, securing funding for digitization exploring nontraditional financing like crowdsourcing, and using virtual technologies as key processes for enacting resilience and sustainable growth in the postpandemic period. Restrepo-Morales, Valencia-Cárdenas, and García-Pérez-de-Lema (2024) provided empirical evidence that while a portion of SMEs that has faced significant negative impacts on their financial situation due to the COVID-19 crisis, it has also increased innovation actions, gaining resilience and sustainability. Gunasekaran, Rai, and Griffin (2011) reviewed strategies and technologies that enhance resilience and competitiveness in SMEs, finding that IT, Internet, e-commerce, and globalization strategies positively influence SMEs' resilience. Ben Abdelaziz, Chen, and Dey (2024) demonstrated that digital technologies and organizational flexibility enhance SMEs' performance and resilience. Paoloni et al. (2022) focused on structural and relational capital contribution to resilience and sustainability in agri-food firms. According to their findings, these capitals lead to the innovation of internal process technologies that improve the execution and control phases. The authors show that innovative processing reduces farm staffing costs and minimizes cultivation risk related to climatic factors. Michalakopoulou et al. (2022) investigated firms in the legal service industry and pointed out that inadequate and limited training on IT and cybersecurity threats, collaboration, and communication can hinder innovation toward sustainable and resilient firm growth. Addressing SMEs, they notice that these firms differ from large global ones in their capacity to operate "outside the box." Hansen, Christiansen, and Lassen (2024) investigated digital transformation, pointing out that this valuable source is still slow-going within SMEs. They argued that digital transformation strongly depends on the workers' competencies and proposed a scaffold approach to support SMEs in the early steps of digitalization to improve their skills to allow for digital transformation strategies. Similarly, Bhatia and Diaz-Elsayed (2023) noticed the same underdevelopment in implementing smart manufacturing technologies in SMEs. They suggested a roadmap to enact such an implementation to generate more sustainable and resilient SMEs. Hong, Huang,

and Li (2012) explored crisis management mechanisms focusing on detection, occurrence, recovery, and resolution processes, noting that, despite lacking resources, SMEs present resilient market responsiveness. Zighan and Dwaikat (2023) investigated organizational agility and its impact on SME sustainability and resilience, focusing on applying organizational agility as implementing flexibility, innovation, responsiveness, adaptability, and resilience in SMEs. Their study proves that SMEs cannot adopt agility as their larger counterparts. They pointed out that this problem is related to SMEs' resource constraints. Shukla and Shankar (2024) assessed the impact of smart manufacturing systems on SMEs' resilience in India. Their findings show that technologies are pivotal in positively impacting the Indian economy regarding sustainability and ecosystem innovation to generate resilience. Perramon et al. (2024) showed a positive relationship between adopting circular economy principles and processes and organizational resilience, denoting the implementation of the former as a catalyst for an organization's responsiveness to external challenges. Finally, DiBella et al. (2023) emphasized shifting toward business practices to more sustainable ones to enhance individual, organizational, and community resilience. Their work suggests that SMEs should use environmentally, socially, and economically oriented transformative approaches to become more sustainable and gain resilience. However, it is essential to highlight that their study suggests that SMEs performing such a transition must also overcome the firm-centered sustainable business practices orientation to deal with a more holistic and strategic approach encompassing a more collective/community-oriented resilience-building process.

Together, these studies show how SMEs can leverage digital transformation, innovative processes, and strategic thinking to build resilience and ensure sustainability. Through adaptability and a commitment to continuous improvement, SMEs can navigate today's challenges while preparing for tomorrow's uncertainties. Nonetheless, such a path is challenging and not trivial, and it can be better internalized through a major comprehension of the system in which the SME is embedded.

### 3.5 | Supply Chain, Synergy, and Collaboration

The last theme concerns the importance of supply chain management, collaboration, and synergy in building sustainability and resilience in SMEs. It includes discussions on supply chain resilience, sustainable supply chain practices, and the role of technology in enhancing supply chain performance.

In the intricate dynamics of supply chains, collaboration, and synergy, SMEs can find the keys to unlocking sustainability and resilience. This theme delves into how SMEs can fortify their operations through strategic partnerships, advanced technologies, and robust supply chain management practices.

Moore and Manring (2009) highlighted the strategic development of sustainable supply chains and collaborative networks among SMEs. In particular, the authors focus on SMEs' incentives to optimize their sustainability. They state that such

a process can allow SMEs to become efficient suppliers, partners, and investment targets for larger companies. According to the researchers, adopting such a perspective in guiding business can generate resilient organizations and strong economic networks and realities. Shweta, Kumar, and Chandra (2023) focused on the medicine supply chain of SMEs to develop a resilience framework, highlighting the importance of dealing with transportation breakdown, human resources, and supplier losses to generate sustainability and resilience. Gray and Jones (2016) explored the role of organizational development and learning in enhancing SME resilience through collaboration. Specifically, they stress that organizational development and learning programs focusing on collaboration and learning positively affect SMEs' business confidence, clarity, and action-developing resilience. Dey et al. (2024) examined the role of AI in enhancing supply chain resilience in Vietnamese manufacturing SMEs. They found that AI adoption improves decision-making and positively influences the circular economy, risk management, and supply chain agility processes, and thus, it has positive effects on supply chain resilience. Nayal et al. (2024) discussed that the digital supply chain can foster supply chain agile practices and resilience, generating competitive advantages. Specifically, they showed that managers concerned with investing in a digital sustainable supply chain can obtain a competitive advantage and increase SMEs' sustainability. Le (2023) investigated how food supply chain performance measures contribute to sustainable corporate performance during disruptions. The authors determine that measures of flexibility, agility, inventory efficiency, diversity, redundancy, and robustness allow for measuring supply chain performance in times of crisis. Baral, Singh, and Kazançoğlu (2023) analyzed the factors impacting the survivability of SMEs' sustainable supply chains during COVID-19. They found that factors such as supply chain cooperation, positioning, and administration are pivotal in such a respect. Lu, Ding, and Gu (2024) analyzed regional economic vulnerability, showing that the best strategy to bolster regional resilience is to encourage investment in small towns in remote areas' SMEs.

Overall, these studies show how SMEs can enhance their resilience and sustainability through strategic supply chain management, collaboration, and the adoption of advanced technologies. Furthermore, by embracing these approaches, SMEs secure their survival and contribute to the resilience of the broader economic landscape, creating a network of robust,

interconnected businesses ready to face the challenges of the future.

## 4 | Discussion

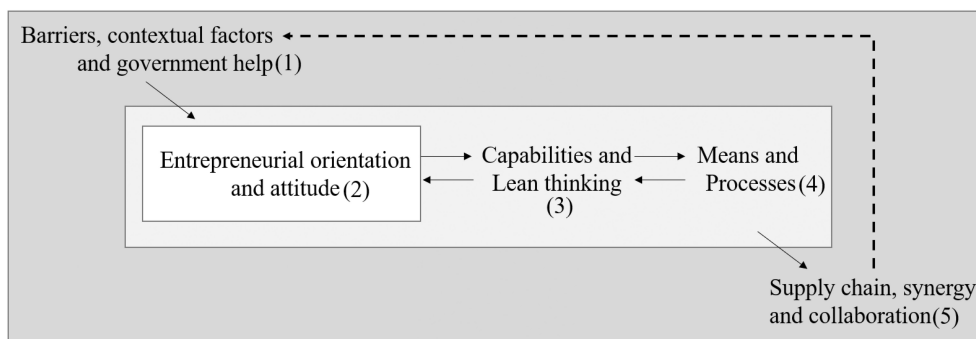
### 4.1 | The Sustainable and Resilient SMEs' Framework

The analysis of the 53 articles revealed the presence of five underlying themes in the literature that investigated the link between sustainability and resilience in SMEs. As we showed in the previous sections, such themes are “barriers, contextual factors and government help,” “entrepreneurial orientation and attitude,” “capabilities and lean thinking,” “means and processes,” and “supply chain, synergy and collaboration.”

Following our research question on whether it is possible to enact resilience in SMEs by changing business strategies and processes toward more sustainable solutions, we drew a theoretical framework based on the revised literature (see Figure 2). The studies we reviewed mainly confirm that embedding sustainability in SMEs' businesses can help them gain resilience. These studies have deepened such an insight according to the thematic areas we located that can be connected following an input, throughput, output (and outcomes) review framework (Quarchioni, Paternostro, and Trovarelli 2022).

Specifically, the first theme we located emphasized that SMEs are essential players in a larger social, environmental, and economic context. Systemic crises can jeopardize the survival of single SMEs and the overall system. Therefore, SMEs suffer from problems affecting the entire system and should gain advantages from the same system to try to recover from adverse effects and create recovery for the whole system.

Then, while the first theme mainly highlights factors external to the organization that can affect its conversion toward sustainability to gain resilience, part of these studies also emphasized the fundamental role that the entrepreneur plays in such a conversion. This connection allows us to link to the second theme, “entrepreneurial orientation and attitude.” Studies in this branch of literature highlight how the characteristics of entrepreneurs, mainly related to their orientation and perception of how business should be conducted, allow for implementing more sustainable solutions guiding toward resilience.



**FIGURE 2** | Theoretical framework of enacting resilience through sustainability in SMEs.

However, while such characteristics are the fundamental steps in the path of sustainability and resilience, these must be followed by the capabilities of thinking and action. This consideration is evident from several studies in this branch and allows us to shift to the third theme, “capabilities and lean thinking.” While the features in the previous theme are embedded in the entrepreneurs, the capabilities in this topic are generated from the entrepreneurs’ orientation and attitude and transmitted to the organization. Such capabilities, particularly dynamic ones, allow organizations to address sustainability necessities, fostering organizational adaptability and, thus, contributing to gaining resilience.

However, to conduct the organization toward the sustainability and resilience path, these capabilities are just the preliminary step to process and means conversion to more sustainable ones. This aspect is deepened by the fourth branch of studies we located. Therefore, innovation, digitalization, and circular economy became the pivotal conversion processes needed to address sustainability and resilience.

Finally, as we started with an external perspective, again, the conversion of SMEs to more sustainable strategies and operations has repercussions on the external environment. Such a conversion strengthens the role of the SME as a contributor to the economy, making it a fundamental link in supply chains, empowering these, making them sustainable, and fostering the economy overall.

The thematic analysis conducted in this study corroborates some of the existing findings while offering new perspectives. For instance, in line with the work of Apasrawirote and Yawised (2024) and Gunasekaran, Rai, and Griffin (2011), our review identifies that digital transformation and lean practices are crucial for both sustainability and resilience, highlighting how these practices are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, particularly within the dynamic and often volatile environment in which SMEs operate. Moreover, while Costa and Castro (2021) discussed the role of e-commerce in enhancing SME resilience, our findings suggest that the strategic integration of digital technologies can serve as a conduit for sustainability, amplifying resilience. This nuanced relationship underscores the importance of adopting technologies and aligning them with sustainability goals to achieve resilience. Furthermore, our research highlights the critical role of entrepreneurial orientation, which is a theme that recalls the findings of previous studies (e.g., Isensee, Teuteberg, and Griese 2023) but with a novel focus on how these orientations drive the adoption of sustainability practices that, in turn, foster resilience. In addition, our study provides a more detailed exploration of the external factors, such as government support and contextual barriers, which can either facilitate or hinder the sustainability-resilience nexus. While prior research (e.g., Bak et al. 2023) has touched upon the importance of external support, our review emphasizes the need for a more coordinated approach that integrates these external influences with internal capabilities.

In conclusion, while previous studies have laid the groundwork for independently understanding sustainability and resilience in SMEs, our study is among the first to investigate their

intersection systematically. This integrative approach highlights the dual benefits of sustainability—improved performance and resilience—positioning SMEs as pivotal players in achieving broader economic and environmental sustainability goals.

Moreover, in addition to systematizing the current literature, the proposed framework also allows us to highlight “gray zones” needing more attention from researchers, allowing us to propose a research agenda.

## 4.2 | The Sustainable and Resilient SMEs’ Research Agenda

The present study builds upon the extensive body of literature that has explored various dimensions of sustainability and resilience within SMEs. Santos and Sant’Anna (2024), Isensee, Teuteberg, and Griese (2023), and Klewitz and Hansen (2014) significantly contributed to our understanding of the factors influencing sustainability in SMEs, emphasizing the roles of technology, organizational culture, and innovation. Similarly, Bak et al. (2023) and Mishra and Singh (2023) explored SMEs’ resilience, focusing on supply chain resilience and revealing how these enterprises can withstand and adapt to external shocks. We contribute to this debate with a comprehensive synthesis that directly links sustainability to resilience in SMEs, an intersection that previous reviews have not systematically addressed. While it has been recognized that sustainability practices can enhance organizational performance (Danso et al. 2019; Varadarajan 2017), the potential for these practices to contribute specifically to resilience has remained underexplored. Our findings show that sustainability-oriented strategies improve performance and equip SMEs with the tools to rebound from crises, thereby enacting resilience. This insight is particularly novel in the context of SMEs, which face unique challenges in adopting sustainable practices and achieving resilience due to their size and resource limitations.

Based on the provided framework, we suggest the following topics need to be addressed by further research.

First, regarding the input of our framework, despite the studies in the first theme being capable of emphasizing the importance of the external environment for SMEs’ sustainability and resilience, we noticed that few studies had provided comparative evidence on the characteristics of the external sociopolitical environment more capable of stimulating sustainability and resilience in SMEs. In this regard, we posit that more research efforts are needed. It could be helpful to perform more cross-countries or cross-territories studies investigating which cultural, political, sociological, and economic characteristics of the macroenvironment help nudge business sustainability transition and resilience. For instance, most of the studies in this thematic area posit the achievement of resilience, although only a few studies do this providing benchmarks.

Second, as regards the throughput of our research framework (i.e., the second, third, and fourth themes), these strands provide valuable insights into the critical role played by the entrepreneurs when it comes to re-adapt the business model by improving skills, leveraging on capabilities, adopting new

technologies, and embracing sustainable operations and strategies. What is possible to understand from these studies is that the starting point to convert business to more sustainable and resilient solutions relies on the entrepreneur. However, we noticed that only a few studies focused on how entrepreneurs can cultivate such attitudes and skills (e.g., Gray and Jones 2016). We posit that a relevant research gap can be found in business education studies. Studies are needed on how it could be possible to educate about sustainable and more resilient entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, studies must investigate managerial tools to orient entrepreneurs on such a path. For instance, we surprisingly noticed that, despite our search for articles in the business field, including accounting ones, no accounting studies (mainly managerial accounting studies) were present in our sample. We posit that managerial accounting tools can be pivotal in orienting and guiding SME entrepreneurs to convert to a more sustainable and resilient business. Therefore, more studies from this field of knowledge are needed.

Then, as regards the outputs of our research framework, the studies addressing supply chains, collaborations, and the generation of synergies emphasize the role of single SMEs as essential players in the social, environmental, and economic system overall. This overall finding is relevant to achieving the sustainable development objectives, for example, those listed in the 2030 Agenda. In this respect, further studies should be carried out in this perspective. Additional studies could show that SMEs can become sustainable and resilient while pursuing the sustainable development goals of the Agenda. Studies in this branch could have relevant impacts, particularly regarding managerial and policy-making implications.

## 5 | Conclusion

Overall, the articles in the review suggest that shifting SMEs' strategies and processes to more sustainable solutions can make these organizations more resilient. In particular, according to our review, the literature providing such insight and deepening the linkage between sustainability and resilience in SMEs focused on five thematic areas that can be depicted in a framework emphasizing the process's input, throughput, and output.

The input of such a process regards external influences related to the adverse effects of crises and supporting policies that need a reaction from the entrepreneurs and SMEs. The second central theme leads the reader to look inside SMEs and, precisely, at their core: the human defining their strategies or, in other words, the entrepreneurs with their entrepreneurial orientation and behavior. Then, the entrepreneur will transmit specific capabilities to the organization to convert its strategies and processes to more sustainable solutions. Finally, such choices will affect the external environment again in terms of synergies and collaboration, fostering supply chain efficiency and sustainability and benefiting the overall economy. Overall, such an entrepreneurial cycle of conversion to sustainable solutions can enact SMEs' resilience and, consequently, the resilience and wellness of the overall economic system.

Our work makes theoretical, policymaking, and managerial contributions by depicting such a framework. Specifically, as regards the theoretical contributions, our work not only systematized literature on the link between SMEs' orientation toward sustainability and resilience but also suggested future research avenues that can be useful in theoretical and practical ways by addressing practitioners' needs.

Regarding policymakers' implications, following previous studies, our framework suggests that supporting policies could be helpful in times of crisis. However, it also highlights that such policies could fail. In this regard, we suggest policymakers follow the proposed framework in defining supporting measures for SMEs. Thus, they should consider that such aid should serve only as the first step leading to more sustainable and resilient organizations. Such a process can start with such aids. Still, these should serve to nurture entrepreneurial ideas and organizational capabilities and to convert means and processes to more sustainable and greener solutions capable of being beneficial for groups of SMEs, supply chains, and the entire economy in the long run.

Regarding managerial implications, managers could use the knowledge provided in the review and the related theoretical framework to conceive and design sustainable strategic changes to gain resilience for their organizations to cope with current or partially prevent future shocks. Specifically, the five steps and related linkages of the theoretical framework we provided can be considered by managers of organizations searching for resilience or researchers conducting case studies on such organizations. For instance, the framework can be applied in real-world settings by guiding multiple organizations in a sustainability-oriented resilience path based on our framework's steps. In carrying out such a task, it will be possible to highlight and monitor whether and how different entrepreneurial attitudes, organizational capabilities, means and processes, and geographical contexts facilitate or hinder such a path. In this respect, our framework can be used by researchers, managers, and consultants. Based on our framework, managers must recognize the various barriers to sustainability and resilience and act to develop strategies to leverage financial incentives and invest in employee training. Since external factors significantly influence SMEs' ability to adopt sustainable practices, managers must stay informed about relevant policies and initiatives and engage with government programs that offer financial aid, training, or other resources to support sustainable business practices. Furthermore, SMEs must build dynamic capabilities that enable them to adapt to environmental changes. Finally, to become sustainable and resilient, SMEs need to innovate their business processes and adopt new technologies to embrace digital transformation, circular economy practices, and innovation in products and services, including the adoption of renewable energy sources, recycling materials, and utilizing digital tools to optimize supply chain management.

This work is not without limitations. First, as this work is a systematic literature review, it lacks primary data for its nature. Furthermore, several studies in this review do not investigate large samples of organizations nor use analysis techniques guaranteeing highly generalizable results. Therefore, such limitations should be considered by managers and consultants

who want to rely on the framework we propose to guide organizations toward a sustainability path to achieve resilience. Second, to conduct our systematic literature review, we relied on a single database, that is, SCOPUS. Another limitation in this respect is including only articles published in journals in the ABS ranking in this systematic literature review. On the one hand, such a criterion assures quality, but on the other, this can cause the exclusion of relevant articles from our analysis. Furthermore, the qualitative approach we employed to conduct the thematic analysis can be partially affected by subjectivity. Indeed, since the qualitative approach implies subjectivity in the choice of articles and their analysis, the results and implications may lack objectivity, even if the various discussions among the authors in plenary sessions have tried to limit this problem. Considering these limitations, future reviews on the topic can expand our analysis by relying on further scientific repositories (e.g., Web of Science and EBSCO) relying on alternative ranking to ensure the high quality of the sources, such as the Scimago ranking (2021). They can employ different types of thematic analysis, both top-down and bottom-up.

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### Ethics Statement

The authors have nothing to report.

### Consent

The authors have nothing to report.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

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