Leadership in Crisis: An Investigation into the Response ofCypriot Organisations during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained hereinis my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this workhas not been submitted for any other degree or processional qualification except as specified.

_____   05/05/2023
Kasapis Georgios   Date

Abstract

In this project the topic of Crisis Leadership was investigated. This is a topic that has gathered increased academic interest in recent years, due to the frequency and scale on which crises have been taking place. Focus was given on the response of a Cypriot organisation during the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was of interest to investigate how leadership was applied within the organisation but also how this was perceived by those being led. The choice was made to investigate a manufacturing company, as firms in this category were presented with a different set of challenges compared to service-oriented organisations. Kean soft drinks ltd, a prominent firm in the Cypriot economy and industry, was chosen as the company to be studied. The research was carried out in the format of a combined quantitative and qualitative case study through the use of questionnaires and interviews. Both employees and leaders were asked about their experiences during the pandemic. From the collected data it was found that the leadership style during the pandemic was predominantly situational, with leaders doing their best to adapt to the situation. Interestingly, it was found that whilst leaders felt their leadership style remained unchanged, compared to the pre-Covid era, a significant portion of employees reported a change in the leadership style as they perceived it. Data collected on various metrics, such as employees satisfaction, types of support provided by the organisation, and the leaders' personal leadership style preference all provided useful insight into the way that leaders at KEAN navigated the pandemic.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Ever since late 2019, the world has been impacted in an unpredictable manner by the Covid-19 pandemic. This crisis has had an enormous effect on the global econ-omy, forcing a large number of businesses to go bankrupt (Fairlie and Fossen 2022). Economic activity in the U.S. contracted by an astonishing 32% in the second quar-ter of 2022, leading to negative implications with respect to business forecast and disruptions to sales (Meyer, Prescott, and Sheng 2022). The educational sector has faced huge challenges in the delivery of teaching (Daniel 2020), forcing schools and universities to shift to a long-distance learning mode of operation. The requirement for physical distancing, mandated by the infectious nature of the pandemic, ultimately led to a discrepancy in the extent to which different industries were impacted. For example, generally speaking the manufacturing sector was affected more than the ser-vices sector due to factories shutting down (Seetharaman 2020) stopping production of goods entirely. However, whereas the information-product section of the services sector (e.g. legal firms, banks, education etc.) could work from home, other sectors (e.g. arts, entertainment, tourism, hospitality) were affected in an unprecedented adverse manner by the pandemic (Baum and Hai 2020).

In the face of such adversity, effective leadership and perseverance are needed to adapt and respond to a volatile environment in order to survive. Yet the style of leadership needed may differ between industries and it is not immediately clear what the best response might be. Lessons learned from nursing and healthcare, the front-line during a pandemic, have shown that communication is key during a crisis. Unfortunately, communication is not simple during chaotic times, especially in an era of easy access to a large amount of information and misinformation (Eldridge, Hamp- ton, and Marfell 2020). Within an organisation or business unit, research suggests that there can be mismatch between top management and employees, even though effective communication is identified as a requirement for navigating a crisis (Heide and Simonsson 2021). This leads to the question of what style(s) of leadership, or what aspects of leadership, are perhaps most essential within a given company. The style of leadership is intimately linked with the type of communication between man- agement and employees because it can determine how participant employees are in the decision-making discussions and to the design of the instructions that are com-municated to them. In other words, it is the difference between a one-way monologue where directives are issued from above, and a two-way dialogue where input is con-
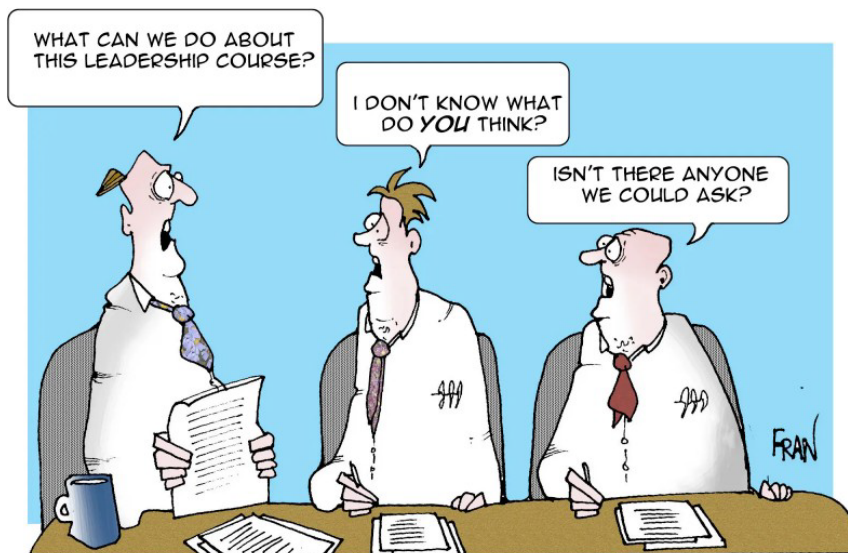
Figure 1.1: Leadership cartoon. Obtained from https://thecontextofthings. com/

sidered from both management and the workforce.

Leadership in the face of a crisis is a great challenge for those in leadership positions. It is also when followers need leaders the most, to provide them with a direction and relieve them of uncertainty (Figure 1.1). Crisis leadership has evolved as a topic of its own (linked to but broader and with a different outlook to risk management) that concerns itself with all matters related to leadership during times of great danger and uncertainty. In the following section, the various aspects of a crisis are explored in terms of how they can affect leaders' perceptions and behaviours and crisis leadership is defined. The aim, objectives and importance of this study are subsequently presented in a general format, to be defined in more detail at the end of the literature review given in the next chapter.

1.1 Salient features of a Crisis

There exist many definitions of the term 'crisis'. Oxford Learner's Dictionaries defines it as a

time of great danger, difficulty or doubt when problems must be solved or important decisions must be made.

A crisis can take many forms (e.g., natural, economic, health) and scales (e.g., local, national, international). The modern world has been experiencing many different types of crises and some have even argued that the frequency of such events has increased to the point that it may form a new normality, where such events can affect how society develops (Lagadec and Topper 2012). Figure 1.2, provides a timeline of some of the biggest crises (and their general category) the world has experienced since the turn of the century. It is interesting to see just how different crises can be by nature, and yet all of these have brought about disruption in some manner.
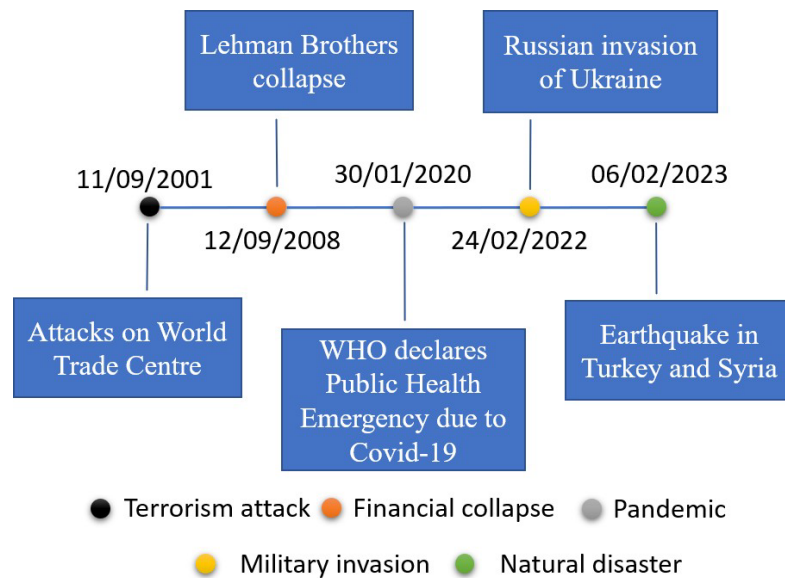
Figure 1.2: Timeline of several, recent crises

One ubiquitous feature of a crisis is that of unexpected, imminent danger creating a sense of urgency (Bundy et al. 2017). On the 9th of September 2011, the World Trade Centre in the U.S. was attacked in an act of terrorism. People in the vicinity were exposed to immediate danger, and many lost their lives. Task forces and medical teams had to be urgently deployed to protect human lives, and the overall situation was that of chaos as people had to be evacuated before the collapse of the damaged buildings. Following these attacks, added security measures were implemented at airports for flights to the United States and many of these have become standard practise (Mendonça and W. A. Wallace 2006).

Another fundamental characteristic of a crisis is that of potential disruption to the future of society (Pearson and Clair 1998). There are many examples of how a crisis acted as a catalyst for change, for better or worse. The credit crunch in 2008 demonstrated how poor banking practises, such as the sale of over-complicated financial products, could have wide ranging, adverse impacts to the global economy. Following the bailout of banks, and the inherent damage to the underlying trust of the entire financial system due to their unethical practises that brought about the financial crisis, central banks had to undergo significant changes in their instruments and application of monetary policy (Cukierman 2013). Another example would be the widespread use of online tools to enable remote working in the face of the Covid-19 outbreak. Although Open Universities that provide education online have existed for some time now, the impact of Covid-19 on classroom or in-person education has been profound. It has been estimated that this pandemic has affected an unprecedented 1.6 billion learners in over 200 nations and the media through which they learn (Pokhrel and Chhetri 2021). For the first time, the world has seen traditional universities switch to an online teaching paradigm and even deliver examinations remotely.

Globalisation and the increased level of the world's interconnectedness complicates matters further by enabling, albeit inadvertently, a grander and more global scale to

the impact of crises. This is the result of multiple factors. For example, in the past, pandemics could not spread nearly as swiftly across the planet because aviation was not as widespread as it is now. The fact that, presently, travel from Asia to Europe,or from Africa to the Americas is more accessible to a significantly greater numberof people, has played a crucial role in the spread of infectious diseases (Christidisand Christodoulou 2020). Further, the fact that national economies have become interdependent means that events occurring in one country, such as a war, can affectthe world economy. The war in Ukraine, has significantly affected the global economy,with supply chains of various goods being crippled (Mbah and Wasum 2022). Given that the world has been experiencing crises at an increased rate, and that the impact of such events is exacerbated by the increasingly connected nature of the world'snations, it is vital for organisations to exercise good leadership during crises. In fact, crisis leadership has been a topic of increased research in recent times due to its increased importance within organisations (Wu et al. 2021).

1.2 Leadership in organisations

The term 'leadership' is an elusive one. It is not simple to define and this can be easily established by going online and searching for definitions. The results will probably be overwhelming in number. The reason for this is that 'leadership' is abstract by nature and yet ubiquitous in human society; it can be observed in virtually endless types of situations. Leaders can be found in governments, armies, companies, organised groups of hikers or in football teams. Leadership can be exercised by top level management teams, highly ranked persons or even from highly experienced individuals at the lowerlevels of a company, e.g., an experienced technician in a shop floor.

As a science, leadership is subdivided into many different schools or disciplines. Some of the different types of leadership are:

- Servant

- Transactional

- Transformational

- Situational

- Authoritative

Each style has distinct features but there is typically a lot of common ground as well. For example, transformational and servant leadership styles place a lot ofemphasis on helping and supporting an employee in a caring manner, whereas trans- actional or authoritative styles are much more conventional and are more likely to impose punishments or exercise formal power due to a hierarchically superior posi- tion (within an organisation). Tannenbaum and Schmidt (Tannenbaum and Schmidt 1973) studied the forces that can influence leaders and were able to identify threemain factors:

1. Personal; traits and characteristics of the individual

2. Followers; the group being lead, team dynamics and related social issues

3. Situational; contextual factors, such as the nature of a complex organisation,timing of an event or a given scenario

Building on the work of Tannenbaum and Schmidt, Helmich and Erzen (Helmich and Erzen 1975) considered two main categories of leaders - task oriented, where theleader emphasises the tasks that need to be completed, or employee oriented, where the leader prioritises the needs of their employees and trusts in them to get the jobdone. They were interested in investigating the correlation between a leader's lackof fulfilment of their personal needs (e.g., their team not achieving the goals the leader set for them) and the tendency of the leader to opt for a task oriented lead-ership style (e.g., transactional leadership). Interestingly they established that male leadership behaviour was more related to esteem and self-actualisation (as defined inMaslow's hierarchy of needs) as opposed to female leaders who preferred to achieve their leadership goals through a satisfaction of a social need. The results of this arenot universal however; the study focused on presidents of manufacturing firms in the
U.S. Nonetheless, it served to show how a leader's priorities and personality can affecttheir leadership style significantly. It also explains why leaders in the same situation (e.g. shop floor managers in car manufacturing firms) may apply different styles.

A related topic to leadership in organisations is that of management. Leaders will typically engage in leadership and management activities at the workplace and it is important to make a distinction between the two. Leadership is intimately linked, but ultimately separate, from management. An empirical study (Toor 2011)on the differences, and overlap, between these two sciences reviewed much of whatis discussed in the literature and further expanded on the topic through a qualitative study (interviews of leaders) and thematic network analysis of the collected data. Thestudy concluded that there is no consensus on the definition of leadership, but that inthe literature 'management' is generally described by a a set of fundamental functionsthat is largely agreed upon. Figure 1.3 depicts various differences between the twofields and is a result of the empirical study (ibid.).

A detailed discussion of the many differences that exist is outside the scope of thisthesis. Instead, focus will be given on some of the most significant differences high- lighted in Figure 1.3. Leadership draws on a leaders personal power (e.g., charisma and inspirational behaviour) whereas management focuses on power bestowed on theindividual due to their position. This relates back to other claims in the literature that a leader's personal characteristics exert an influence on them and their leader-ship style. In turn, leadership concerns itself with the long-term goals and vision ofan organisation, whereas management has a short-term focus. Management oftenis defined in the context of dealing with logistics issues, real time issues of ongoingevents, or day-to-day activities. Lastly, leadership asks the question of how should anorganisation **change** in the future given that the world around us is ever evolving,whereas management aims for stability and order.

The discussion up to this point focused on aspects of leadership in a general sense. There are many different approaches and disciplines of this science that can beadopted. Academic research in the field is active due to its importance for organisa- tions everywhere. Having also discussed some of the most salient features of a crisis,
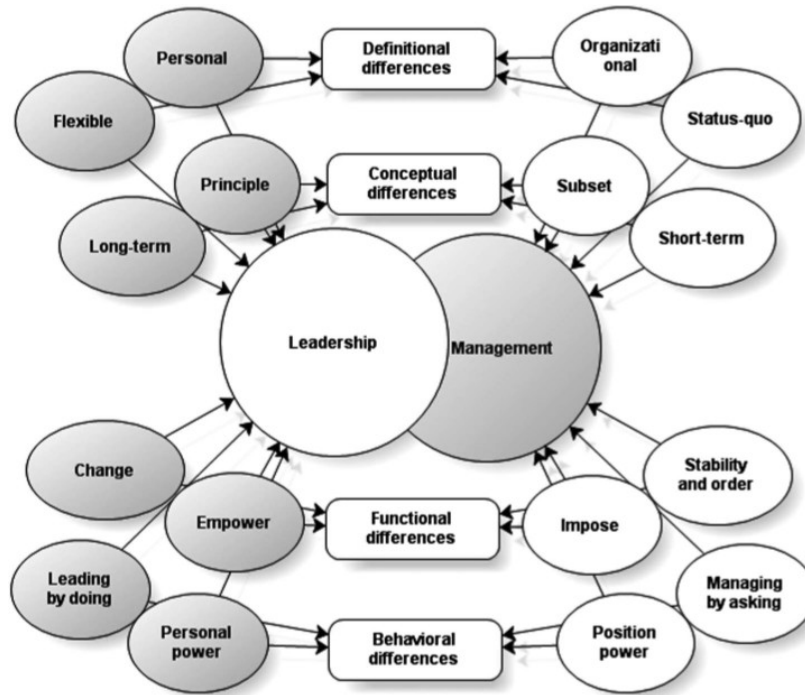
Figure 1.3: Differences between leadership and management presented as a thematic network, obtained from (Toor 2011)

attention is now focused on leadership specifically during a time of crisis. This is arguably one of the most challenging situations that a leader can find herself/himself in. So what exactly is 'Crisis Leadership'?

1.3   Crisis Leadership

Accurate, succinct and general definitions of crisis leadership are not easy to come by.This is partly because much of the work on crisis leadership comes from memoirs or testimonials of those who exercised crisis leadership on a finite number of occasions and are, consequently, case specific. Additionally, though there has been much work on risk and crisis management, academic research on crisis **leadership** is not as extensive. It is tempting to define crisis leadership as simply leading during a crisis. The main pitfall here lies in the use of the word 'during', which refers to leaders' actions and decisions while the events of a crisis are taking place or perhaps to those of emergency response teams at the time of being called. This definition ignores someof the most important features of, or rather requirements for, good crisis leadership practice.

   The excellent introductory chapter in the book on crisis leadership by Tim Johnson(Johnson 2018) defines crisis leadership via a more general approach. Leading as the events of a crisis unfold, forms one part of the responsibilities of the effective crisisleader. Another essential part is adequate preparation of systems, processes, scenarioplans etc. that requires much work in advance of a crisis taking place. In the words of

Confucius 'success depends upon previous preparation, and without such preparationthere is sure to be failure'. In search for a definition of crisis leadership, the discussionby Tim considers what competencies and behaviours of leaders are employed/neededunder business-as-normal conditions and which are required specifically during a crisis. Interestingly, the conclusion reached is that arguably all of leaders desired char- acteristics (passion, compassion, effective communication, resilience etc.) are neededboth in business as usual and in crises as well. What is fundamentally different, is thesituation under which leaders need to be able to demonstrate these characteristicsand not buckle under the immense pressure that ultimately ensues. In light of this, crisis leadership was defined as:

> the ability of leaders not to show different leadership competencies butrather to display the same competencies under the extreme pressures thatcharacterise a crisis – namely uncertainty, high levels of emotion, the needfor swift decision making and, at times, intolerable external scrutiny. Itis this that will define success or failure.

The above definition looks at crisis leadership from a situational perspective and focuses on the leaders ability to demonstrate key competencies. Further, it suggests that crisis leadership is an extreme example of situational leadership, mentioned pre- viously. Situational leadership, which itself has sub-categories, refers to factoring inor taking into consideration contextual aspects (i.e., the situation setting and people involved) to adapt the style of management for the situation at hand.

It also possible to define crisis leadership as a process, which is also useful to highlight other important features of this complex discipline. Researchers (Wu et al. 2021) have performed an extensive review of the relevant literature on crisis leadershipin an effort to compile and cohesively present overarching themes from past researchon this topic. To achieve this, they initially searched for keyword terms on an online database (Web of Science) to generate a pool of relevant articles. They then employeda series of filters (e.g., journal quality, academic disciplines etc.) to limit the sample space to high quality articles. From there they employed co-citation and bibliographic coupling analyses to parse through large volumes of data and generate collections (referred to as clusters) of the major crisis leadership themes present in the literature.Based on their analysis, and with reference to the work on crisis leadership and management of others such as (James, Wooten, and Dushek 2011), Wu et al. define crisis leadership as

> a **process** in which leaders act to prepare for the occurrence of unexpected crises, deal with the salient implications of crises, and grow from the disruptive experience of crises

This definition shifts the spotlight onto some salient features of crisis leadership, asopposed to management. For one, it emphasises the fact that it involves adapting to the disruption caused by the crisis, and embracing necessary changes. It may be seenas an opportunity to leave outdated methods and norms behind and move towardssomething new. Or, double down on what is already in place and actually works. Ina recently published book chapter titled 'What is Crisis Leadership' (Firestone 2020),

the author points out several differences between leadership during and management of a crisis. Whereas crisis leadership has a long view of events, is proactive, aims to learn from the mistakes made during the response to the crisis, and tries to involve others in the planning and response, crisis management instead has a short view of events, is reactive, is solely focused on responding to the crisis and acts as the sole driver of the response once the crisis strikes. It should be noted that crisis leadership does **not** define the precise leadership style that is to be adopted by leaders in an organisation. This is because the leadership style that is most appropriate for a given crisis and for a given organisation will depend on the situation and contextual factors.

1.4 Study aim and significance

Crises take many shapes and forms and organisations need to be prepared for future events that will undoubtedly occur. Crisis leadership is a complex topic that has attracted increased research interest, as will be seen in the following chapter as well, and it has evolved as a discipline of its own. Definitions of crisis leadership have shown that leaders have to be resilient and able to demonstrate key competencies under extreme and challenging conditions, and that crisis leadership is a process that stretches from preparing for various potential scenarios to adapting and changing after the events have taken place and the dust has settled. Given that the world is now gradually moving away from the tight grasp of the Covid-19 pandemic, this project aims to perform a case study in a Cypriot organisation and investigate how crisis leadership was applied and evaluate its effectiveness. The research objectives will focus around:

- Leadership style identification

- Analysis of how leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic was applied

- Evaluation of its effectiveness

- Identification of lessons learnt and suggestions for the future

The importance of this study lies in the fact valuable knowledge and lessons may be missed if people and organisations do not reflect in an engaging way on their course of actions during the recent pandemic. While a crisis is ongoing, it can be difficult to document, analyse and evaluate in real time the effectiveness of a leadership teams' response and choices. A reflective study, i.e., one that following the events of the Covid-19 pandemic retrospectively analyses how an organisation responded to the challenge, can generate important knowledge, shed light on lessons learnt and document what went well and what did not work as expected. This can then help to publish results from which other organisations may benefit in future situations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In the opening section of this chapter, a review is given of relevant literature on crisis leadership during not only pandemics, but crises in general, for service oriented organ-isations. Following this, a discussion is presented specifically for the manufacturing sector, which will be the focus for the work performed in this project. Comparisons are drawn between leadership as applied to manufacturing and the previously discussed service organisations. The penultimate section of this chapter focuses on the impact of Covid-19 on the Cypriot economy and the research work conducted into the re-sponse of Cypriot organisations. Finally, a summary of the key findings and identified gaps resulting from the literature review are presented, along with a brief outline of the scope of this research.

2.1 Crisis Leadership in Service Organisations

A large number of people may be called to lead during critical times, e.g. political fig- ures, military commanders, and emergency response teams (police, fire brigade etc.).In addition, top level management in business organisations also need to practise leadership during times of great uncertainty. In fact, depending on the organisa- tional structure and culture, leadership may be practised across various levels within a company. The way leadership is applied during a crisis will depend strongly on various factors, such as the nature of the crisis itself, the type of organisation and the overarching political and economical environments.

When the form of a crisis is a pandemic, healthcare professionals are called to the front-line to protect society. It has been argued (Knebel, Toomey, and Libby 2012) that nurses have to act as leaders across multiple levels during disasters either on-site, in medical facilities and even in medical transportation planes (e.g., during World War II). The choice of vocabulary in the study by Knebel et al. is interesting as it is states that nurses "**serve** as leaders", which emphasises the aspect of societal servitude that bestows great merit to the profession. This is related to the concept of "servant leadership" which has been acclaimed as an effective method of leadership within nursing, particularly during pandemics (Simon 2021). Other types of leadership styles have also been applied in nursing, such as transformational leadership. Burns (Yusof 1998) defined this style of leadership as one "in which the leader goes beyond satisfying the basic needs of the subordinate, in terms of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of

needs, by inspiring and empowering the subordinate to a higher level of motivation". This has been cited by other researchers as the most effective leadership style within the nursing discipline (Kiwanuka et al. 2021). This apparent discrepancy on the most effective leadership style (i.e., servant vs. transformational) demonstrates the absence of consensus in the literature.

During pandemics, healthcare professionals have their work cut out for them. In general, they are one of the few professions that need to be physically present at their place of work, in spite of the grave danger they are exposed to. An entirely different picture can be seen if the focus is shifted to an alternative sector, such as education, during similar periods.

Universities are no strangers to pandemics. Many higher educational institutions have long histories, over the spans of which different pandemics have occurred. For example, medieval English Universities suffered from a significant decline for decades following the Black Death pandemic which reached the United Kingdom in 1348 (Courtenay 1980). During the Spanish influenza, Stanford University isolated anyone that was infected and hosted classes outside in the open in response to the pandemic(Carlton 2022). Masks were compulsory to be worn by everyone and some universities also had to go into quarantines should outbreaks occur on their campuses. Despite many crises over the years, Universities have proven to be resilient entities and have survived. However, pandemics have brought about disruption to the way most organ- isations conduct business, and universities are no exception. The Covid-19 pandemic has arguably been the first occurrence where technology is advanced enough to enable the delivery of most aspects of education remotely. It has acted as a catalyst for the higher education sector to adopt means of remote teaching and it looks like these will be modes of teaching that will not go away in the post-pandemic era.

Research into leadership at academic institutions, which often has to be performed by academic faculty, has shown that leaders can sometimes be unprepared for such dire and volatile situations (Kruse, Hackmann, and Lindle 2020). This is because crisis leadership also involves a preparatory stage for which institutions may not proactively train academic faculty who often have to deal with a multitude of other complex tasks in their workplace. This is further supported by the fact that leadership in public universities has come under scrutiny, with research published shortly before the Covid-19 outbreak suggesting that academic faculty is sometimes excluded from leadership tasks and decision making (Pearce, Wood, and Wassenaar 2018). The same study asks whether shared leadership, a mechanism of faculty representation in the leadership and decision-making processes, should be the way forward for academic institutions. This serves to show that crisis leadership is a topic that warrants further research since the current state of literature demonstrates that organisations still struggle to apply crisis leadership effectively. A recent, and in fact rather positive trend in crisis leadership, is that mental health and caring for one's employees and co-workers has seen increased importance. For example, research suggests that effective leadership involves caring for employees during a crisis (Beilstein et al. 2021), a view that is shared by other studies both in the university sector (Beilstein et al. 2021;Kruse, Hackmann, and Lindle 2020) and in nursing (Simon 2021).

Research conducted up to this point does not agree on what the best leadership approach is for a given profession or type of organisation. What may instead be

deduced is that, when a research project does arrive to the conclusion that a particular style of leadership is most appropriate, this was achieved after having considered a large array of contextual and case-specific organisational factors. There is likely no 'best' approach or 'one size fits all' solution. The general discussion in the literature suggests that leaders will have to adapt to evolving situations. Having considered briefly crisis leadership within the services sector, the focus is now shifted towards firms engaging in manufacturing and the production of goods.

2.2 Crisis Leadership in the Manufacturing Sector

The nature of the manufacturing sector differs greatly to that of the tertiary (services) sector. Firms in manufacturing produce physical, tangible products and their supply chains can be much more susceptible to crises than those of other professional services (banking, accounting, legal etc.). For example, natural disasters may affect the supply of raw materials driving up production costs or destroy a bridge and disallow transport vehicles to deliver supplies. As such, the way that a crisis (of a scale that affects national economies such as a financial crisis, natural disaster or pandemic) impacts manufacturing firms may be nothing like the impact on service firms.

It is perhaps surprising, then, that leadership styles employed in the services sector find application in manufacturing companies. In the nursing discipline, transactional and transformational leadership styles are often encountered in practise and used by nurses (McGuire and Kennerly 2006). Transactional leadership means that leaders engage with their sub-ordinates in 'transactions'. If the employee does a good job they are rewarded; if not, then they are penalised. A recent online article (Bennett 2022) summarises this style nicely by stating that a

> hallmark of this style is [that transactional leaders] like to create a struc- tured environment where nothing is left up to chance. Transactional leaders believe that standardised processes, clear directions, and defined procedures are how their goals will be achieved.

'Structured environments' and 'standardised processes' are two features that can be found both in production centres and healthcare units. Organisations with hier-archical structures (such as healthcare and manufacturing facilities) have such char- acteristics. This explains, then, why transactional leadership is also found in the manufacturing industry. In fact, this style of leadership has been shown to be effec- tive at the supervisory level for health and safety in the energy and manufacturing sectors (Flin 2004).

An interesting effect that a crisis can have on organisations is that it can disrupt and change the style of leadership used within firms in the post-crisis period. This has been demonstrated by research conducted after the 2008 Global Financial Cri- sis (GFC). Following the credit crunch and collapse of large investment banking and global finance firms, such as Lehman Brothers, the effects of the GFC cascaded into virtually all aspects of the global economy. The manufacturing sector was not an ex- ception and begun to collapse, with a huge number of businesses filing for bankruptcy (Naidoo 2010). A large scale study across 980 organisations over 36 nations, demon- strated that such an exogenous event had led to the rise of directive leadership, with

the effect being stronger in the manufacturing sector (Stoker, Garretsen, and Soudis 2019). Directive leadership follows a more hierarchical philosophy, where leaders direct followers as to what and how to achieve their goals. This is fundamentally different to other, more collaborative disciplines such as transformational leadership. The same study asserts that there is a lack of understanding of crises on the leadership field and particularly within organisations.

2.2.1 Studies from European manufacturing firms

Several studies on the impact of Covid-19 on manufacturing firms in Europe were conducted, with the aim of collecting and assessing qualitative data on their response. Unfortunately, they were focused on organisational resilience and crisis management, without considering leadership. Nonetheless, these are topics that are closely related to leadership and these studies provide much needed insight into the response of leadership teams in European manufacturing firms during the Covid-19 pandemic. Here, two such studies are considered.

A recent qualitative study (Rapaccini et al. 2020) focused on the geographical region of northern Italy, where most of the country's industry is located. The focus was on the impact of the pandemic on both the goods and services business units of industrial firms. They used a four stage research framework that included pre- liminary data collection, in-depth interviews and subsequent model formulation for a crisis management model. Results from that study indicated that the product-based operations of the firms were more negatively affected than services. This was perhaps to be expected given that production activities, warehouses and essential on-site pres- ence of workers were complicated, or shutdown entirely, by the pandemic. However, services that could be delivered remotely proved to be more resilient.

The researchers were interested in what is called digital servitisation and how that could potentially help protect manufacturing firms. Servitisation is defined as a shift in the business model and logic of organisations from product-centric to service- centric (Kowalkowski et al. 2017). An example would be Rolls Royce plc, the jet engine manufacturer. The UK based company makes most of its profit not from the sale of their engines but by the after sale care packages it sells and from all subse- quent services provided (e.g., maintenance) during the product's life-cycle. Digital servitisation refers specifically to a shift towards services that leverage innovations in the digital space (Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence, online platforms) for the provision of services, something that provides flexibility to an organisations since the requirement for close proximity to the customer is eliminated, or at the very least weakened. The researchers refer to the fact that services business units have helped traditional manufacturing firms develop resilience and survive through a series of fi-nancial, and other, crises during the 20th century. They further assert that at least for pandemics, and arguably for other types of crises, digital servitisation can help manufacturing firms be more flexible and navigate a volatile economic environment. The study by Rapaccini et al. (2020) inspired further work by Gil Fombella et al. (2022) in the DACH region (Germany-Austria-Switzerland) who followed a similar research philosophy, with surveys and in-depth interviews as primary tools for data collection. The results of this new study showed, among other things, that a large

percentage of respondents (of the order of 90%) felt that digital technologies werecrucial for the continuing operation of their respective firms. However, many alsoadmitted that, especially during the early stages of the pandemic, they did not have the necessary infrastructures in place. For example, companies did not have sufficientinternet speed, web-cams, laptops and software licenses to enable an immediate switch to remote working. Further, much of their personnel needed training to be able tomake use of such tools. Thus, the study by Gil Fombella et al. (ibid.) revealed that the preparedness level of manufacturing organisations was arguably insufficient. This is consistent with findings from the Italian study (Rapaccini et al. 2020) that companies in more problematic regions of the world (and therefore naturally think of crises asmore likely) than northern Italy, have a tendency to be better prepared as the sense of imminent threat is more common.

Ultimately, the above two studies showed that the impact of the Covid-19 pan-demic has been severe on manufacturing firms, but that the service business units of such companies have been able to do better than the product-centric units. Both studies suggested that digital transformation can play a crucial role for the survivalof firms since it can boost their resilience and flexibility. However, the fact that preparedness levels appeared from both studies to be inadequate, suggests that man-ufacturing firms do not engage sufficiently in crisis leadership. This, in turn, supports the argument for a study into crisis leadership within the manufacturing sector.

2.3 Impact of Covid-19 on the Cypriot economy

There has been a significant amount of research on the impact that Covid-19 has hadon various aspects of the Cypriot economy. One example was a Mediterranean-wide study, that included Cyprus, by Kapitsinis and Sykas (Kapitsinis and Sykas 2021) on the level of unemployment and the non-uniform way in which it changed acrossdifferent European Union nations. Interestingly, according to that study, the impact on the Cypriot economy, in terms of GDP and unemployment, was not as profoundas that suffered by other member states. Figure 2.1 shows example results from that study.

One of the Cypriot economy sectors that was most adversely affected by the pandemic was that of tourism and hospitality. A recent study (Pappas and Farmaki2022) on Cypriot tourism investigated the perceptions and impact of Covid-19 on UK holidaymakers' decision making process through a longitudinal qualitative study. Theirresults showcased the extensive uncertainty holidaymakers faced and in part explainedthe complete wipe-out of a big part of the holiday season in 2020 as stated by theCyprus Hotel Association (Folinas and Metaxas 2020). The effectiveness of strategic management in the hotel and tourism industry has also been studied (Komodromos etal. 2022), with research suggesting practical advice and courses of action to alleviate the negative impact of the pandemic. However, that study focused on management, rather than leadership. In fact, many of the studies found in the literature focus on'managing' the risk, reacting or evaluating the impact on the economy with not much research being published with a focus on leadership.

One example where leadership was considered, but was not the researchers' focalpoint, was in the study by Hadjielias, Christofi, and Tarba (2022) on contextualising
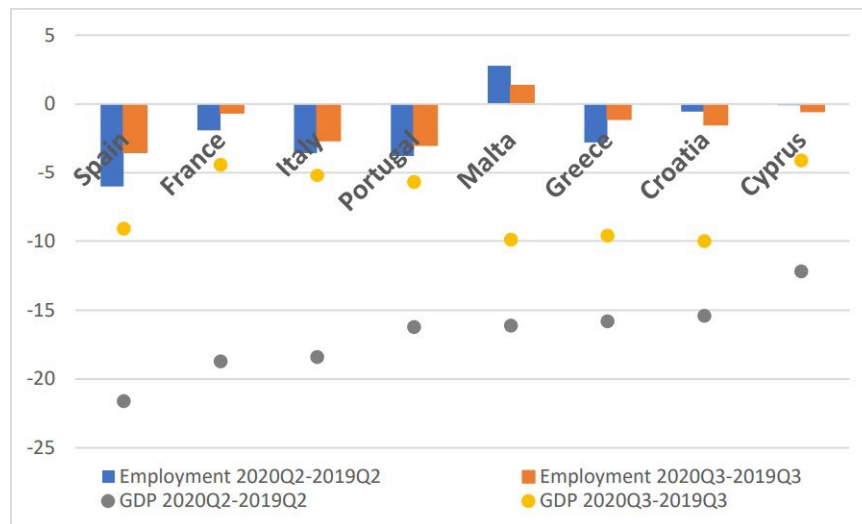
Figure 2.1: Annual change of GDP and employment in various Mediterranean coun- tries (obtained from (Kapitsinis and Sykas 2021))

small business resilience. They asserted that business micro-dynamics, which may be dormant under normal circumstances, may be unlocked by focusing on (i.e. studying the, for example, psychological perspective of) the owner-manager. This may in turn enhance the understanding of resilience during a crisis. Resilience is a related concept to crisis leadership, but has been largely defined in the literature as a type of capacity of a firm/business to respond to a natural or man-made disaster (Hadjielias, Christofi, and Tarba 2022). That study provided useful, actionable data and analysis on a large part of the Cypriot economy, having considered a large number of small to medium enterprises (SMEs). However, the main theme of the study was on business resilience with a focus on the owner-manager, rather than specifically leadership. Additionally, mostly SMEs were considered meaning that many of the enterprises considered were smaller in scale and perhaps not representative of the manufacturing sector.

2.4 Summary and Scope of Research

From this review of the literature several key points can be taken:

- Crisis Leadership (and leadership in general) is an essential discipline for the long term survival of firms and a topic that has not been researched sufficiently within organisations

- There are many styles of leadership, and there is no consensus on the best approach. The current state of discussion in the literature suggests that many different approaches can be taken, and that contextual factors can strongly influence the ideal leadership discipline.

- Although there has been some research done in Cyprus, the manufacturing sector has not been explicitly targeted. Where industry research was conducted,

the focus is rarely on leadership and this is appears to be true for research outsideof Cyprus as well.

- Specifically for the field of leadership, qualitative studies are very common, as these can encapsulate a broader picture during large scale exogenous effects (such as a crisis) that may potentially escape studies that are numerically ori- ented. This is not to undermine the value of quantitative studies that have also been successfully implemented (e.g., (Stoker, Garretsen, and Soudis 2019))

Given the above, the scope of this research is to perform a qualitative study into the response and leadership style of top level management in a Cypriot manufacturing firm, retrospectively, during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. This will addressthe gap in research within the Cypriot manufacturing sector with focus on the field of leadership. To assess the perceived effectiveness of the response and chosen leadership style, the study will also obtain data from employees, thus it will have a two-sidedapproach (i.e., leaders' and followers' perspectives).

The primary research question is:

How did leaders adapt to or persevere in the face of the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic? In other words, how effectively and in what ways was crisis leadership exercised?

In pursuit of answering the primary research question, several secondary queries were considered such as:

- Leadership style: What styles of leadership can be found in the company? Are this consistent across leaders and orgnisational levels?

- What actions and choices did leadership take to address the Covid-19 crisis?

- How did the workforce react to the directives issued from management? How did the company do financially during this crisis and in the immediate post pandemic period?

- What can be learned from this company's actions and decisions? Can any general conclusions be made?

The following section explains that a case study research strategy was chosen, highly explorative by nature. This flexible approach allowed for any further interesting ques- tions that surfaced during the research process to be considered.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research philosophy

There are many available methods and tools to use for a research project. Underlying any chosen methods is a research philosophy that lays the foundation for subsequent data collection and analysis. In the following sections, the research framework chosen is presented and discussed. The opening sections discuss research philosophy, and introduce the general research approach and why this was chosen to be qualitative. Following this is a discussion on the research design which involved primarily a case study. Given this the subsequent section presents and justifies the case selection, as well as provides information on the organisation to be considered. The following two sections address data collection and data analysis methods. Finally, a set of additional considerations with respect to ethics and GDPR are briefly discussed.

3.1.1 Research paradigm

In the world of research there exist many different philosophies and paradigms. A research paradigm can be considered as an overarching worldview or framework that encapsulates one's perception and assumptions of the world around them and how it functions. Klenke, Martin, and J. R. Wallace (2016) explain that each paradigm makes assumptions about three key paradigmatic questions, that lay the philosophical foundation of a work of research. These are:

- Ontology; 'What is the nature of reality?'

- Epistemology: 'How do we know what we know?'

- Methodology; 'How should we study the world?'

They further explain that a researcher needs to be transparent about the research paradigm they adopt, as this can affect the research process through these concepts, and it is in fact essential in evaluating the quality of qualitative research. A fourth item was included by Klenke, Martin, and J. R. Wallace (ibid.) as an expansion of the paradigm triangle, referred to as axiology, which refers to the role of values and ethics in research. This addition is a consequence of the increasing role of axiology in qualitative research. Figure 3.1 depicts these concepts graphically.
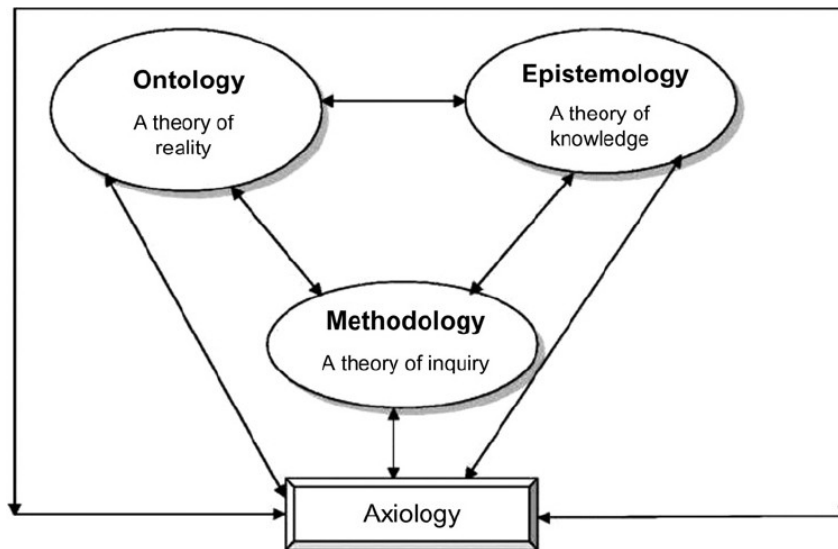
Figure 3.1: Paradigm triangle, expanded with the inclusion of axiology as foundation, taken from (Klenke, Martin, and J. R. Wallace 2016)

Historically, the field of research in leadership was dominated by the (quantita-tive) paradigm of **Positivism** between the 1950's to the 1980's (ibid.). Positivism asserts that reality is objective and a social phenomenon is one that can be observed, measured and recorded. This is why most of the body of work was quantitative, with qualitative research basically unheard of until the late 1980's (Parry et al. 2014). In recent years there has been an emergence of qualitative paradigms, such as interpre-tivism, that have led to a surge in qualitative studies. In short, interpretivism assumes the following:

- Interpretivism's position with respect to ontology is that of relativism; multiple realities are possible due to reality being subjective and can therefore vary from person to person. This suggests that individual experiences create a different 'reality' in which they exist.

- Interpretivism's position on epistemology is that knowledge is constructed as people investigate, analyse and interpret experiences in and of the world (Scot-land 2012).

- Research methods that are consistent with interpretivism's assumptions on on- tology and epistemology include: Case studies, interviews, phenomenology and ethnography.

Based on the author's personal beliefs and characteristics, as well as the array of available and consistent methodological tools, interpretivism was identified as the paradigm that should form the foundation for this research project's design. Although this is considered a qualitative research paradigm, it is still possible to employ different types of research of approaches (e.g., purely qualitative or mixed method). In the following section the choice of a research approach is further explored.

3.1.2 Research approach

One of the main decisions that had to be made was on whether the research approach should be quantitative or qualitative. The two disciplines have many differences and these will not be discussed in detail here. Quantitative studies aim to enumerate, quantify and evaluate a research hypothesis through numerical or statistical methods and in an objective manner. They are generally considered to be objective and deduc-tive in nature and aim for causal explanation. Qualitative studies on the other hand aim to contextualise and interpret data obtained from the personal experiences of participant's voices. In contrast, to quantitative studies, qualitative research is sub-jective and inductive by nature. The points made are consistent with the significantly more in depth discussion by Klenke, Martin, and J. R. Wallace (2016, chapter 2).

When it comes to the study of leadership both types have been applied with success but there has also been criticism (Bryman 2004; Palanski et al. 2021). How- ever, the topic to be studied here is specifically crisis leadership. From the definitions provided in the literature, it was shown that crisis leadership can be considered an extreme example of situational leadership, where contextual factors play an important role. Given that contextualisation is an important part of qualitative studies, whereas quantitative studies are instead focused on reducing contextual factors in search of generalising results, a qualitative approach was deemed to be appropriate. This is not to mean that quantitative approaches are fundamentally inapplicable to the study of crisis leadership but rather that qualitative methods naturally lend themselves more appropriately to smaller scale studies of this particular topic. The need for a large sample size is also alleviated.

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative research frameworks can vary significantly depending on chosen strategy, method choices and time horizon. The research design chosen will be described in the following sections.

3.2.1 Strategy

The chosen strategy was that of a case study. This involves studying a single 'entity' (here an entity can be a single organisation even though this involves multiple people) to obtain a complete understanding of that case. A case study was the preferred option for several reasons. Firstly, leadership can be exercised by different individuals across different levels of an organisation. Collecting data from multiple individuals within a single organisation was deemed to be of significant research interest as it addressed the question of 'is crisis leadership across the organisation consistent?'. Secondly, a case study is more flexible when it comes to data collection. Case studies are inherently amiable towards the use of multiple data collection methods (questionnaires, surveys, interviews etc.) as the purpose is the extraction of any useful data that can help generate a 'big picture' outcome. Finally, case studies allow for the detailed inspection of a single entity, a strategy that is consistent with the underpinning research paradigm of interpretivism.

The case study selected was KEAN soft drinks ltd, which produces numerous products for the food and drink industry. The choice was based on the fact that KEAN is a Cypriot manufacturing firm with production facilities and warehouses located in Limassol and Nicosia and because the company agreed to participate in the research project. Further background information about the company is provided in section 3.3.2.

3.2.2 Method and time horizon

A two-sided research was used were data was collected from two main categories of persons within KEAN: leaders and employees. This was essential to avoid leader bias and to see the logic and reasoning behind leaders' actions but also the consequences and reception of those actions by employees. In this way, data would be collected from different organisational levels and present a more complete picture of the organisations response. Given the limited time available for the project and the intention of collecting qualitative data from multiple individuals (which can potentially take significantly longer to parse and analyse) a cross-sectional study time horizon was chosen to simplify the process and prevent an overwhelming amount of data from being collected.

3.2.3 Data collection

All data collection was accomplished using survey methods. Because data was collected from both leaders and employees, different data collection procedures were employed accordingly. These are discussed below.

Leaders

For leaders, a mixed method model was used. The two main methods of data collection were questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

First, a leadership style identification questionnaire was given to five leaders within KEAN. An existing leadership questionnaire used by the UK's National Health Service[1] was chosen. Reasons for choosing this questionnaire included the fact that it had already been tested by a known organisation (validity), its simple design and to avoid designing a new questionnaire which is no trivial task. There is a limitation to using a questionnaire designed for a different industry (healthcare vs production), as its applicability may be debated. However, as was pointed out previously in the literature review, similar leadership styles have in fact found application in both these types of organisations. The questionnaire is a set of 16 statements, which the participants indicate how strongly they agree/disagree with. Each statement receives a score that contributes towards four leadership styles:

1. Authoritative: The preferred approach of such leaders is to take decisions first and then 'tell' or 'sell' them to the rest of the group

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[1] The questionnaire is available online at https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/262878/leadership-questionnaire-fillable.pdf

2. Democratic: The leader is determined to include all group members in decisions about how the group should operate

3. Facilitative: This style is concerned with offering suggestions which group members may or may not take up. Structure, content, and operation of the group are left to group members to determine

4. Situational: This leadership style is an approach in which the leader attempts to adapt how he/she behaves according to the needs of each situation. The situational leader will vary their style so that it is appropriate for the group

The same leaders then participated in an in person, semi-structured interview were they answered various questions designed to extract data pertaining to the aforementioned research questions. Leaders were allowed to answer in their own words a set of primary questions. Depending on their responses, and any relevant comments, secondary questions would be asked to further explore key concepts, and approach consistent with a semi-structured design. Information was collected on the interviewees':

- Background at KEAN (business unit, length of service etc.)

- Typical week as a manager

- Personal view of "Leadership"

- Leadership oriented training

- Pre-, during, and post-pandemic work conditions.

The leadership style questionnaire and the interview guide are included in Appendix A.

Employees

For employees, data were collected anonymously via questionnaires. The questionnaire was developed by the author and in collaboration from the thesis supervisor. In an attempt to maximise the response rate from employees, and to avoid an over- whelming amount of data being collected, closed-ended questions were used. These are in, general, simpler to respond to, minimise the time required to complete the questionnaire and make it easier to apply numerical metrics to the accumulated results. The questions were designed to collect data for three main areas:

- Demographics (gender, age, profession etc.)

- Perceived leadership style in the company before and during Covid-19

- Satisfaction of management's response to the challenges presented during the pandemic

Out of a total of 185 employees at KEAN, 34 employee responses were collected. This corresponds to a sample of just over 18%, a percentage significant enough to justify the use of basic statistical metrics (e.g., averages, percentages etc.) to represent the workforce. The questionnaire is included in Appendix A.

3.2.4 Data analysis

Leadership style questionnaire

The questionnaires used to identify the style of leadership of the interviewees were analysed by summing up the numerical scores of the participants responses. These then indicated their mixture of leadership style (it is possible to contribute towards all four) while the style that received the highest score was identified as the dominant style for the individual.

Employee questionnaire

Data collected through the employee questionnaire were analysed in two ways. Since employees could only choose from a set of responses, the number of responses for each option were summed up, and then percentages could be calculated from the total of respondents. The results were also analysed graphically (pie charts and column charts) to facilitate data visualisation while also looking for trends.

Leader interviews

The interviews were audio recorded so that they could be subsequently revisited and analysed. Interviews can be dense data forms that need to be thoroughly combed. Analysis for such data can become highly complex in search for patterns, underlying concepts, possible biases etc. Due to the limited time available, thematic analysis was used here to identify key concepts arising from the collected responses, with primary research focus on the leaders perception of whether their leadership style changed during the pandemic (as compared to pre-pandemic times). The responses of the leaders were compared to those of the employees in search of any interesting findings (e.g., inconsistencies in perceived leadership style)

3.3 Additional considerations

When conducting a research project there, in general, ethical matters to consider as well. For example, in healthcare experiments it can be challenging to obtain approval to run tests on human subjects. Although, none such complications existed in the context of this project, it was still necessary to consider relevant issues such as privacy, consent, and data protection.

3.3.1 Ethics, GDPR and consent forms

To protect the privacy of participants, the data were collected anonymously.

The employee questionnaires were both completed and submitted anonymously. No information that could identify the individual (directly or indirectly) were re- quested. Submission was also anonymous. The questionnaires were circulated internally by company managers, but the employees were requested to complete them privately and submit them in a sealed envelope. Participation was, of course, voluntary and a front page attached to the questionnaire informed the participants of
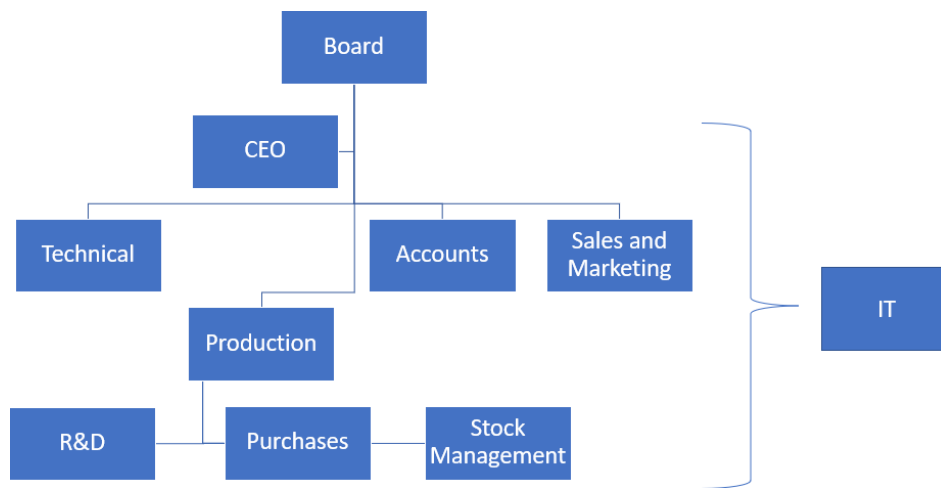
Figure 3.2: Simplified organisational chart for Kean Group

how their data would be handled, reported on and that they could withdraw from the survey at any point in time.

For the leaders a "Data Collection Consent Form" was prepared that informedthe participants on several matters such as:

- General Information about the project

- How data will be collected

- Issues regarding their involvement in the survey

- Privacy and data management (handling, storage, publishing etc.)

The consent form was presented to the participants prior to the interview. Once consent was provided, and the form was signed, the interview could commence. The consent form is included in Appendix A.

3.3.2   Information on KEAN soft drinks Ltd

From its founding in 1949 by Takis Christodoulou, KEAN has been a major player of the Cypriot economy and a prominent industrial firm. The company has had a special place in the hearts of Cypriot citizens, many of whom have grown up withbeloved products such as the highly popular "Keanita". From its humble beginnings producing a few products to be sold in the cypriot market, the company has developedinto a group of companies that act in combination as a large supplier of food products to the economy. The KEAN Group consists of three main subsidiaries: KEAN Trading, KFL Logistics Ltd and Kean Food Link Ltd. The group has an impressive porftolio of 'products and brands: HEINZ, Kraft, HP, Amoy, Vitalia, Farleys, Calvo and Olympos[2]'.

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[2]From the company's website About Us

KEAN has one main production facility, which has steadily grown over the years. A series of investments into TetraPak machinery enabled the firm to ramp up production allowing the firm to service both local and international customers. The company now exports to many countries including China, Australia and the Caribbean. Being a traditional manufacturing firm, KEAN has a fairly conventional vertical (hierarchical) organisational structure. This is depicted in Figure 3.2. At the top of the company are of course the shareholders. KEAN has traditionally been a family owned company, although as of April 2023 the company has announced that it has been sold, pending to the successful completion of an outstanding due diligence. Reporting to the Board, is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who acts as the highest ranking officer in the organisation. The company is then split into five main departments, categorised by function: a) Technical b) Production c) Accounts d) Sales and Marketing and e) IT. The first 4 departments are shown as independent units under the CEO, whereas IT serves and supports everyone across the organisation. The production department then branches out into 3 other sub-units including research and development, purchases and stock management.

Knowledge of the organisational structure of the company was useful because it provided context to the collected data. Further, it also served as a guide in an attempt to obtain data from as many departments of the firm as possible.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Results and Analysis

The results obtained from the case study are presented in this section. In Section 4.1,the data obtained from the employee survey are discussed. Employee characteristic metrics, to demonstrate the mix of participants, are shown. Following this, the results of the perceived leadership style questions are shown and briefly explained before subsequently presenting the employee satisfaction study. Then, Section 4.2 presents the results from the leaders' interviews and leadership style questionnaires. The leaders preferred approach to leadership are discussed as well as their views on how the pandemic impacted their line of work.

4.1   Employee Survey Results

4.1.1   Employee characteristics

Figures 4.1a-4.1d show the gender, age, job and years of experience mix for the sample of the employee workforce, respectively. Figure 4.1a shows that out of the34 participants, 22 (65%) were female. Though a minority, the male population nevertheless had a significant presence at 35% and so was not marginalised. Figure 4.1b depicts the participants' age distribution (sampled at 5 different age groups)which is seen to follow an approximately normal distribution. This is unsurprising incompanies that employ people of all ages. The largest portion of participants (15,about 44%) exist in the 35-44 years of age group, with only a few at the outer groups of 18-24 and 55+. Figure 4.1c shows that participants employed from various different departments responded to the survey. This is close to ideal, since the surveyis intended to be company wide and not to focus on a single department. It shouldbe acknowledged that warehouse workers are over-represented since they are a clearmajority in the sample (11 individuals, or about 32% of the sample). However, it was impossible to control the mixture of jobs since the questionnaires were circulatedinternally and since the more important requirement of sampling from many different departments was satisfied this limitation was ignored. One of the key questions' purpose was to investigate each employee's perception of leadership both prior to and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of this, it was important to establish whenthe individual had begun working at the firm.   Figure 4.1d shows the experience mix of employees, with a clear majority (23 individuals, about 67%) having worked for

more than four years.

An explicit instruction was given in the questionnaire to ignore the question regarding pre-Covid leadership if the participant begun working at the firm after January 2020. Responses that showed less than a year at KEAN, but nevertheless indicated perceived leadership style before Covid-19 were still deemed valid, minus the response for leadership prior to the pandemic.

4.1.2 Perceived leadership style

The second section of the employee survey, asked participants if the leadership style (as they perceived it) changed when comparing conditions before and during the pandemic. Here it is important to note a few things. Leadership style is often considered as a personal characteristic and is typically attached to an individual. In the questionnaire, the participants were not asked about the leadership style of their direct supervisor. That would be impractical for several reasons,

- Not every leader could be interviewed, meaning direct comparison would not always be possible

- Often people serve under different leaders, not only a direct manager.

- Even if the survey is anonymous, people may still feel uncomfortable writing about their supervisors.

- Precisely because the survey is intended to be anonymous, giving information about your direct line manager could potentially identify the individual (some teams are quite small)

Given this, the participants were asked about how they perceived the leadership style within the company on average. One may think of this almost as an organisational culture question. In their minds, participants would be thinking about various incidents (i.e., personal experience) when they were led by different leaders, how they were treated, and coming up with an aggregate answer. This limits the quality and weight of an individual answer because it asks about leadership in a general sense, not in an individualistic sense (which is how leadership is typically thought of). However, it does not invalidate trends in a group of data and, as shall be subsequently shown, useful conclusions or findings may be observed from such trends.

Figure 4.2 shows the results from the employee survey regarding the leadership style at KEAN, with Figure 4.2a and 4.2b showing the mixture of (perceived) leadership before and during the pandemic, respectively. Because of data control leading to the invalidation of some answers (for before the pandemic), the total number of responses in Figure 4.2a is 28. From the six responses that did not indicate a perceived leadership style before the pandemic, 4 of them selected 'Situational' and 2 of them 'Facilitative' as their choice for leadership during the pandemic. This is an important piece of information to note when drawing conclusions regarding trends between Figure 4.2a and 4.2b. For example, looking at Figure 4.2b it looks like the number of responses choosing 'situational' nearly doubled from 8 to 15. However,
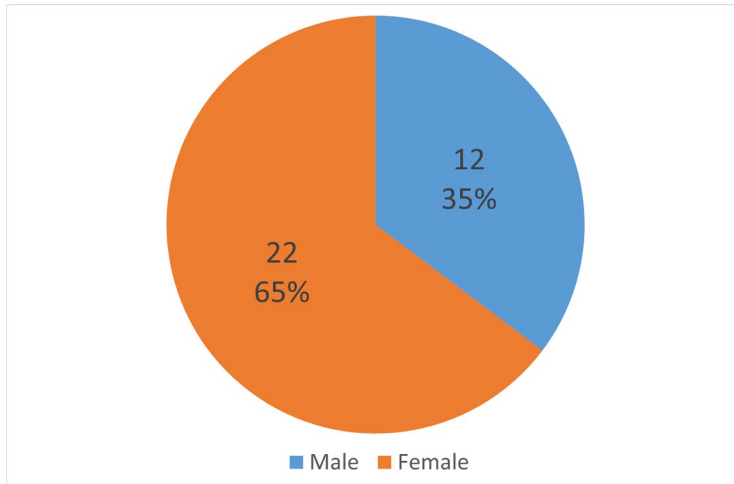
(a) Gender distribution
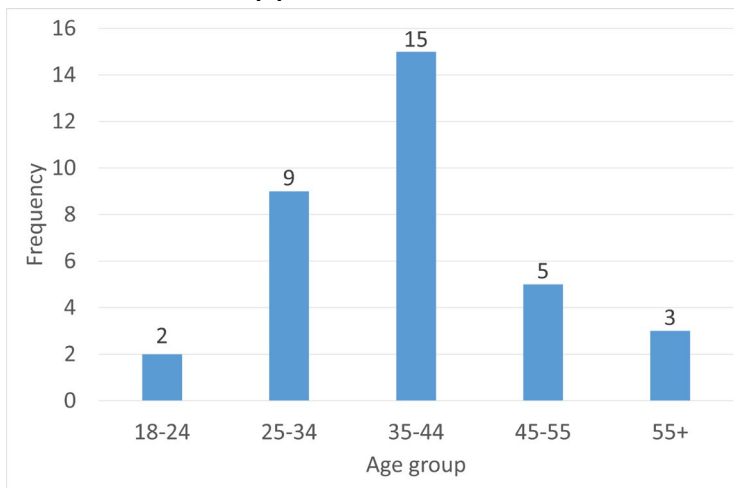
(b) Age distribution
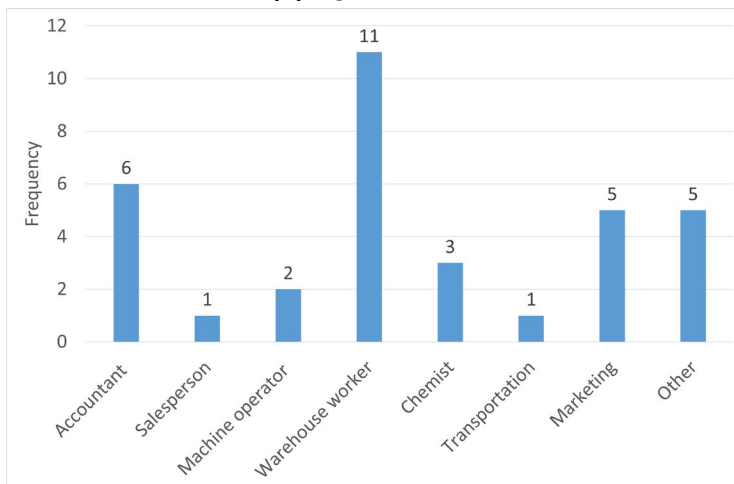
(c) Participants' job distribution

(d) Years of experience at KEAN

Figure 4.1: Employee characteristics

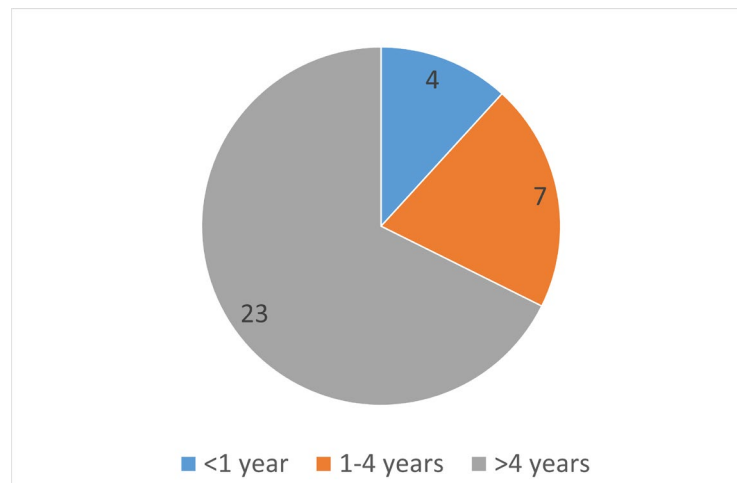this ignores the fact that 4 of the respondents did not indicate a pre-pandemic leadership style, which may have also been situational (in which case the true increasewould be from 12 to 15). To avoid such confusion trends are calculated separately,as described below.

To begin with, 21 (62%) responses indicated no change in perceived leadership style, whereas 7 (21%) responses indicated a change (the remaining responses only indicated leadership during the pandemic). Out of those 7 responses, the changeoccurred either towards a 'Situational' (4 instances) or an 'Authoritative' style. Therefore, the pandemic, at least according to a not insignificant part of employees, may have brought about some perceived change in leadership approach. Further,several interesting observations can be made from the data in Figure 4.2, such as

- Pre-covid the 'Democratic' leadership style was considered to be more com-mon. This gave way to a 'Situational' type of leadership during Covid

- Employees do not consider the 'Facilitiative' style to be commonly embraced by leaders

- The 'Democratic' style of leadership may have experienced a drop during the pandemic

Overall, the majority of employees felt that the pandemic did not bring a changein the way leadership was exercised at KEAN. However, at the same time a non-negligible number of employees did not share this view and in fact the data suggesta potential shift in the mode of the distribution with the most frequently selected option shifting from 'Democratic' to 'Situational'.

4.1.3 Employee satisfaction

In an effort to partially evaluate the effectiveness of leadership at KEAN, a short employee satisfaction survey was included in the questionnaire. This included 4 state-
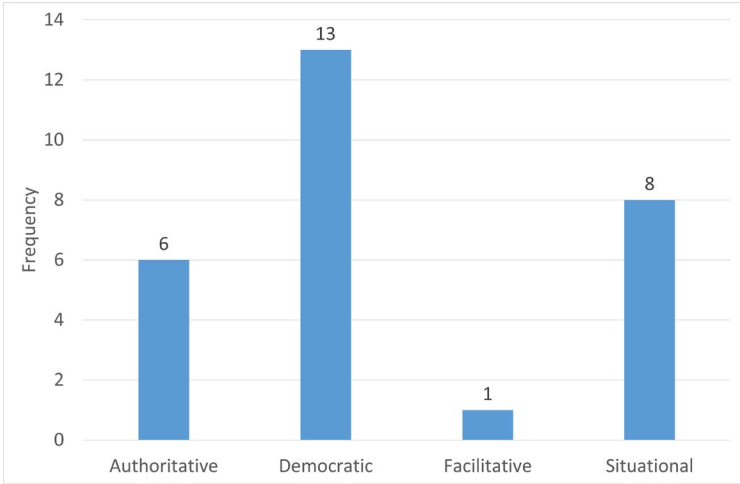
(a) Perceived leadership style before pandemic
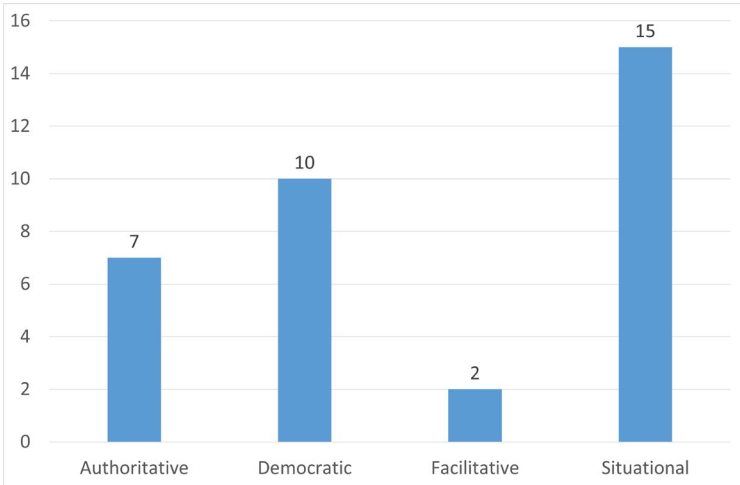
(b) Perceived leadership style during pandemic

Figure 4.2: Leadership style results as perceived by employees

Table 4.1: Employee satisfaction survey

Statement	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Neutral	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sufficient health and safety measures were implemented to secure workers' wellbeing during Covid-19.	24	5	4	0	1
The company supported me during the Covid-19 pandemic so I could continue to do my job.	24	6	4	0	0
Management responded effectively to the challenges presented by the pandemic	21	8	4	1	0
Management demonstrated flexibility/adaptability (e.g., by revising instructions) as the pandemic developed	19	9	5	1	0

ments, for which the participants could indicate how strongly they agreed/disagreed with each one. The results were tabulated and are presented in Table 4.1. Overall,the employees felt that leadership had risen to the task and faced the challenges of thepandemic effectively. This included implementation of health and safety procedures, employee support and management adaptability. There was of course a subset ofparticipants who indicated that more could have been done. Again, though a minority, this group of responses indicate nonetheless that there is room for development, particularly with respect to management flexibility/adaptability in face of an evolving situation which received the lowest score.

Lastly, the employees were asked to identify which (if any) forms of support were offered to them by the company. The results are shown in Figure 4.3, with personal protective equipment being the most frequently selected option. The indication of 'well being programs' and 'health and safety seminars' was a particularly positive indication given the significant impact that the pandemic has had on both physicaland mental health.

4.2 Leaders Results

A total of 5 leaders, each from a different department, were interviewed. The departments were as follows: Purchasing, Marketing, Technical, IT and Exports. Due to the relatively small size of the departments it is not possible to attach a department toeach Leader without potentially compromising their anonymity. Each individual hasbeen given the alias Leader 1-Leader 5 but the purpose of sampling from differentdepartments is to improve the quality and breadth of the data while minimising bias. Finally, it is worth noting that the leaders were asked to fill the questionnaire the waythey felt about leadership at the point in time when this research project was being
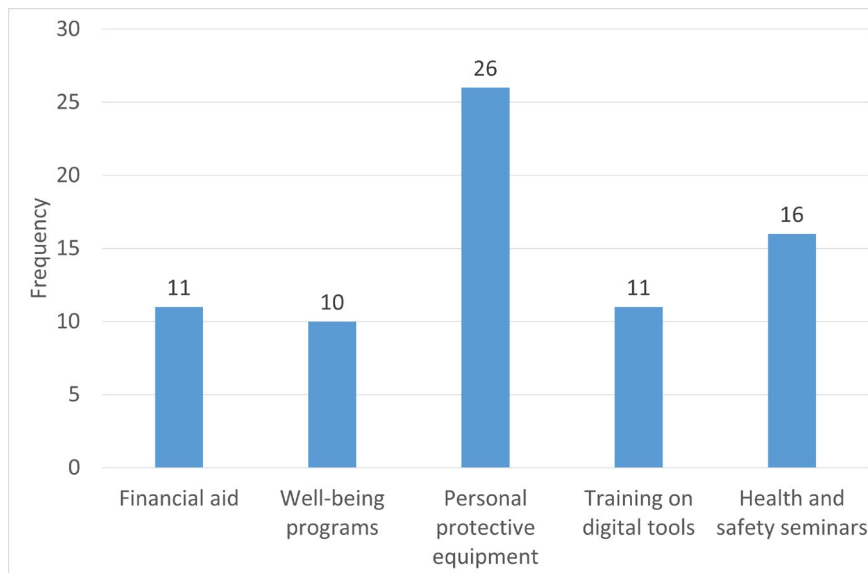
Figure 4.3: Types of support offered by the company as identified by employees

conducted and not retrospectively of how they felt during the pandemic.

4.2.1   Leadership style preference

The results of the leadership style questionnaires are presented in Table 4.2. Eachleader's score to each leadership style is shown, with a maximum possible score of 12 and a minimum of 0. The highest scoring leadership preference is deemed the dominant preference and is indicated with a bold score. It is possible for an equal,highest score to be given to different leadership styles.

Leaders 1,2 and 5 had a single preferred leadership style, namely Facilitative, Situational and Authoritative respectively. Leaders 3 and 4 both gave an equal, highest score to Authoritative and Facilitative. The list below indicates how many times each style was selected as the preferred option, as well as the total score achieved by summing all Leaders' contributions.

- Authoritative - selected 3 times (Leaders 3,4 and 5) with a total score of 45/60

- Facilitative - selected 3 times (Leaders 1,3 and 4) with a total score of 44/60

- Situational - selected 1 time (Leader 2) with a total score of 42/60

- Democratic - selected 0 times with a total score of 35/60

The total scores were calculated by summing the scores across leaders. Although this simple calculation is not an exact scientific method by any means, it does serveas a simple metric to compare and contrast the 'performance' of each leadership stylein an easy to understand manner.

In general, the scores given to each leadership style were fairly close, resulting in a fairly balanced mix of scores for each Leader. This is arguably a limitation of the chosen questionnaire due to its use of a small range of possible results (0-12) with only

Table 4.2: Summary of leadership style questionnaire results, showing the scores attached to each style per participant. Maximum score possible for a style is 12 and the minimum is 0. Equal scores are allowed.

Leadership Style	Score				
	Leader 1	Leader 2	Leader 3	Leader 4	Leader 5
Authoritative	9	7	**8**	**9**	**12**
Democratic	6	5	7	6	11
Facilitative	**11**	7	**8**	**9**	9
Situational	9	**8**	7	7	11

4 possible scores (0, 1, 2 and 3) attached to each of the 16 statements. Nevertheless, the results do show some interesting trends in the preference of the interviewees. Given the small sample of leaders, it is difficult to draw concrete conclusions from the preferred leadership styles as presented in Table 4.2, but some interesting comparisons can be made between these data and those depicted in Figures 4.2a and 4.2b (the employee perceived leadership style survey presented subsequently). There are a few discrepancies between leaders and employees results that present an interesting finding First, none of the leaders' results indicated that the 'Democratic' style of leadership was a preferred option. This is contrast with the employees perception who indicated that democratic leadership was the dominant style before the pandemic. Secondly, the leaders results provide evidence that the facilitative leadership style is a popular choice. However, the facilitative style was the least indicated leadership style by employees. Therefore, the data <u>suggests</u> that there are discrepancies between the way in which leaders think they lead and in how that is perceived by their followers. However, these discrepancies in the data have to be taken with caution as there are limitations to both the methods used and the amount of leader data collected. For example, although the democratic style was not indicated as a preferred option by leaders, it also did not score terribly against other styles (although it did score consistently below them). Nonetheless, the data does suggest that there is a difference in opinion between leaders and followers which is an interesting finding and perhaps an inherent challenge of leading in that the person leading does not fully understand the individuals they lead nor vice versa.

4.2.2 Leaders' Interviews

Following the completion of the questionnaire, the leaders took part in a semi- structured interview. The main focus of the interview was to establish how these leaders exercised leadership during the pandemic and if they felt that this was significantly different to how they acted previously. However, as discussed earlier, crisis leadership is a process that involves a proactive stage as well. Therefore, it was also of research interest to establish whether or not leaders had received relevant training and what processes or resources had the company made available (if any) with the aim for being prepared for such a crisis event.

Table 4.3: Participants perception of leadership and management.

Leader	Leadership	Management
1	Being able to push othersto follow you, if and only if you really believe in them and want them to follow you.	It has more to do with formalities."This is how things must be done"or " this is the company policy".
2	A person's ability to communicate with their 'subordinates' [i.e., employees] and to solve their problems, either personal or at work.	No difference, in my opinion.
3	As a leader you have to developthe people, i.e. your colleagues, so that they can one day take up your position as well and to move forward.	A strong management team will lead the company if it has a vision and goals.
4	To be able to inspire the people around you so that you can guide them and so that they can be guided.	Management is something youcan develop. Leadership is something you can perhaps develop further, but you need to have it.
5	To be a mover. To motivate, inspire people and guide people. When a person looks at you they have to get a sense of confidence and feel supported.	Management is the day to day running of the business.

Participants view of leadership and management

Table 4.3 presents the definitions given by the interviewees, regarding leadership. Thechoice of vocabulary by the participants indicated that leadership is fairly abstract in nature. Words like 'believe', 'inspire', 'push others' and 'motivate' all found their ways into the responses given and indicated that leadership is a type of driving force that fuels some kind of 'motion'. The second aspect that was common across answerswas that of providing a sense of direction. Words such as 'follow' and 'guide' werechosen to indicate that a leader navigates their employees towards something, e.g., agoal a vision or to even 'one day take up your position as well' (quote from Leader3). Leaders 1 and 5 argued that that management is distinct from leadership and in general can has to do with running the business the way it is meant to be operated. Leaders 2 and 3 felt indicated that leadership and management are essentially toointerconnected to distinguish. Leader 4 indicated a difference between the two based on

the more abstract concept of 'A leader is born'.

Impact of Covid-19

All leaders agreed that the impact of Covid 19 was largely negative. However, thedegree of impact of Covid-19 varied by department. Because the department in which each leader worked cannot be disclosed, the results here will be discussed on adepartment basis.

In the exports department, for example, although work was complicated by the pandemic things run smoothly following a transition to working from home. The digital infrastructure was made available to the team and online conferences meant that most work could be carried out as normal. In the technical department (among other things responsible for the maintenance of production machines) work carried out essentially as normal, with the exception that health and safety procedures for on-site employees had to be implemented. With the companies activities in the food and beverage sector deemed essential by the government, production carried out as normal. The IT department reported increased workload at the beginning ofthe pandemic, mandated by the need for physical distancing brought about by thepandemic. Following an upgrade of the network system at KEAN and procurement of more devices, the transition to remote working occurred without significant challenges.The fact that in the early stages of the pandemic the need for more devices was predicted proved to be a catalyst for the transition process (towards working fromhome).

In contrast, the purchasing department reported a complete change in the way that they worked and in the way that they engaged with partners. The global supply chain issues brought about major complications to and lead time issues. A similar picture was experienced in the marketing department, particularly the creative sub- units, who really struggled during the pandemic with workload plummeting since manyactivities (especially group based ones) could not be carried out.

Overall, the impact of Covid-19 was to bring major issues in how the company operations were carried out. However, whereas in some departments, such as pro- duction, activities could carry out as normal following a transition to working fromhome, other departments were more severely affected.

Change in leadership style

In trying to establish how Crisis leadership was implemented during the pandemic, it was of research interest to ask participants if they felt that their leadership approach changed compared to the pre-pandemic period. All leaders reported that they felttheir approach to leadership was the same during the Covid-19 pandemic, as before. The only reported changes where logistical or procedural, i.e. changes to the way they and their departments performed their duties. However, data collection in social science experiments suffer from various biases that come naturally from sampling social beings. For data collected retrospectively, it is possible that the collected responses suffer from recall bias which has been studied as a problem in case studiesand/or cross sectional studies (Raphael 1987), both of which categories apply to the work ofthis thesis. Given this, even though all leaders have reported that theirleadership approach remained the some caution must be exercised before accepting these statements at face value.

For example, in all cases, leaders explained that they had to adapt to the changesbrought by the pandemic. Some of these changes were forced by government directives. In fact, when asked about doing something differently if they could go back in time, Leader 1 reported that they did not feel that they could change anything even ifthey wanted to. Other changes, however, had to do with managing people remotely, something most leaders were unfamiliar with. Some of the leaders seemed to suggestthat, one thing that changed was the importance of their employees' personal matters. That is, that they had to be even more mindful of such issues which they mayor may not be fully aware of. Leader 3 mentioned that employees with very young children who had to work remotely while their kids were now also attending school from home, would sometimes face problems working online. Leader 2 indicated that part of being a leader is acknowledging mistakes and giving credit where credit isdue as a lesson learned from being a leader, something perhaps ever more important during a crisis.

Thus, although consensus among the interviewed leaders was that there was no change in leadership style, there is evidence to suggest that there may have been some subtle changes due to the intricacies of the situation. Given that all leaders hintedat the importance of being able to adapt to a situation, it is possible that there mayhave been a shift towards a more situational-type of leadership. From the leaders' responses, it became clear that the company was digitally advanced enough such thatit did not struggle significantly with a transition to working from home. The exportand marketing leaders, for example, both praised their employees digital literacy whilealso reporting no issues from the procurement of new devices from purchasing or IT. Hence, the company proved to be effective in responding to the crisis due to its digital'flexibility', despite being a manufacturing company. The potential shift towards a more situational-type leadership is further supported by acknowledging the fact that recall bias does exist (though given the recent occurring of the pandemic this would have been likely minimised) as well as a significant part of employees reporting achange in perceived leadership style.

Chapter 5

Discussion of findings

In the preceding chapter, the data and results have been presented mostly in isolatedsections with some brief comparison. A more thorough discussion will be given here, and the data will be considered in a holistic manner. The primary research questionis now brought again into focus:

> How did leaders adapt to or persevere in the face of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic? In other words, how effectively and inwhat ways was crisis leadership exercised?

5.1 Application of crisis leadership at KEAN

The leadership style results, as perceived by the employees, present useful information regarding the general leadership at KEAN during the events of the pandemic. Figure 4.2b demonstrates that a situational style of leadership was dominant, as this wasthe mode (highest frequency) of the data set. This finding is consistent with the assertion that crisis leadership is an extreme version of situational leadership, which was discussed in Section 1.3. In that same section, some of the arguments put forth by Tim Johnson (Johnson 2018) were discussed. An interesting conclusion was that good crisis leaders are those that can demonstrate the same desirable leadership characteristics both under business-as-usual conditions and during a crisis. Consistentwith this conclusion is the fact that most leaders identified solely logistical changes to the way they and their workers had to perform their duties (e.g., working from home) but no changes to their leadership style. All leaders reported that they engaged inthe same way with their employees.

However, the employee survey has indicated that there may have been a change inthe mode of perceived leadership style once the pandemic struck. A minority section ofthe employees indicated a change in their leaders' approach. It is difficult to establish unambiguously if this was the case, given the amount of data that was collected, and the general nature of the questions asked. Nevertheless, the fact that the reportedchange was towards a situational leadership style again follows suit with the discussionon of crisis leadership being adaptive and situational in nature by nature.

Overall, the data suggests that the way leaders responded to the challenges ofCovid-19 was by adapting to the situation, following directives issued by the government over which they had no control, and doing the best they could with the

aspects that they could control. For example, given the specifics of KEAN's industry (food and beverages) their primary production activities were allowed to continue.Compared to other lines of work, (lab research, arts, music, non-essential production etc.) the company was able to keep its operations running, while office jobs had to move from home. This meant that, with adequate health and safety measures and a proper upgrade of its digital infrastructure, KEAN was able to carry on in a relatively 'business-as usual' manner, minus of course various complications. From the collected responses, it is known that most departments were able to carry on withtheir operations, and it was found that production stayed at the same, pre-pandemic level. With respect to health and safety measures, employees answered that sufficientaction was taken. In terms of digital infrastructure, leaders stated that in general the company was well prepared, and they generally praised the digital literacy of theiremployees, which helped the process of establishing a work from home culture. Furthermore, employees indicated a variety of supports offered by the company (Figure 4.3), including training on digital tools. This would have facilitated the process of transition.

The satisfaction survey suggests the workforce was generally pleased with management's handling of the situation. Interestingly, the results shown in Table 4.1 showed that the lowest score given to management was in flexibility and adaptability. Thatis, although a positive score was given, employees felt this was an area that could be improved upon. Given that the mode of the perceived leadership styles by employees was situational, it is interesting to notice it is in this same area of adaptation thatthe workforce indicated more could be done.

To summarise, leadership at KEAN during the pandemic was mainly situational, with leaders adapting and responding to the events of the pandemic as they unfolded.In general, people had to work from home, except for the production crew that was given the green light by the government to continue. Leaders focused on leveraging the digital resources available to them already and investing in whatever otherequipment was necessary (e.g., laptop devices, improving company network, health and safety measures etc.). This appears to be confirmed both from the employeeand leader results. When comparing these, there is some disagreement to whether the leadership style did in fact remain unchanged during the critical times of the pandemic, with some arguing that there was a shift towards a more situational approach. The data further suggest (though this is inconclusive) that leaders may have favoured less democratic approaches. A small detected drop in the frequency of the democratic leadership style (see Figure 4.2a to 4.2b) complemented by a consistentlylower score of given by leaders (Table 4.2) suggests leaders exercised formal power and minimised employee involvement in the decision making process. This is perhaps unsurprising given that many of the actions, changes, and directives that the company had to implement were imposed by external agents in its macro-environment, suchas directives mandated by the national government based on advice from the medicalsector.

5.2 Evaluation

Up to this point, what was largely discussed was the approach taken by leaders atKEAN. But just how effective was this approach? At face value, the collected data(e.g., employee satisfaction survey) suggest that the response was, indeed, effective.The company offered multiple types of support to its employees, and leaders reportedincreased sensitivity towards taking care of their employees needs. Production levels remained largely the same and the company, unlike so many others, did not go bankrupt during the pandemic. However, crisis leadership defined as a process also involves a pro-active stage. Given that the nature of this crisis was a pandemic (i.e.,a health related crisis), the main challenge was arguably how to enable employeesto transition to a work from home routine. This process was helped tremendously by the global trend of digitalisation and the continuous improvement of information technology.

Has the world been developing all this technology (cameras, fast internet con-nections, team collaboration software such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom etc.) in preparation for Covid-19? Unlikely. Nobody could have predicted how fast and howfar around the globe Covid-19 would travel. The fact that an ongoing, global trend automatically facilitated addressing perhaps the greatest challenge of Covid-19 (from a business continuation perspective) is nothing short of serendipitous. This is not to downgrade the importance of KEAN's leaders during the pandemic or to criticise the adaptive/reactive approach taken. This approach proved effective for what it as intended to do, i.e., to address volatility of a rapidly unfolding situation. However,not every crisis will be accompanied by a fortuitous technological development that addresses part of the issue as effectively as digital technology did with Covid-19'sphysical distancing requirement. Thus, it is important for companies to take moreproactive steps to address future crises.

On the other hand, it is impossible to predict every crisis event that may occur.Both because the possibilities are endless and because if they could be predicted accurately crises would not be as dangerous or threatening. This is why large firms, (where it makes sense to do so), need to invest more into the training of their leaders with respect to crisis leadership. The fundamentals of this science are general in scope and strengthen the leader such that they can be apply leadership to any typeof crisis. Beyond that, how the specifics of each critical event are addressed depends on each particular situation, which is why adaptability and flexibility are crucial andwhy ultimately the approach taken at KEAN proved to be effective.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In the face of a storm, often enough people look towards a leader for guidance and for re-assurance that this what they are facing is temporary. It is up to the leader to remain composed and act logically, absorb the huge amount of information that is being emitted (e.g., through media) and to help support their followers to navigate such troubled waters. Leading during a time of crisis is arguably the greatest challenge that a leader will face in their career. In preparation for such challenges it would be beneficial both for the individual, and for the organisation at which they serve, to become acquainted with the science of crisis leadership.

The case study presented here considered a major manufacturing firm on the island of Cyprus, namely the KEAN Group. A two-sided survey, both from employees and leaders, showed that the response to the Covid-19 pandemic was largely effective. It was found that leaders approach was generally situational, staying informed and acutely aware of the events as they developed and addressing challenges as they came. Though this proved to be an effective way to deal with the given crisis, the fact that digitalisation was naturally ongoing in the background certainly helped. To be better prepared for possible future events, it would be beneficial for organisations to invest in their leaders training, particularly with respect to crisis leadership. The latter is an continually growing subject which has attracted academic research and so collaborations with researchers, who possess more knowledge on the subject, may simplify the process of an organisation training their leaders while also addressing all other business related matters and issues.

Thesis Word Count: 13483

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Appendix A

Survey tools

This appendix includes 4 documents that were used in the data collection process.These are (in order of appearance):

- The employee questionnaire (titled 'Survey of organisational response to Covid-19')

- Leaders' 'Data Collection Consent Form'

- Leadership Style Questionnaire

- Interview sequence of events (guide used during leader interviews)

Survey of organisational response to Covid-19

Aims of this study

Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey!

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain information, from the perspective of employees, on KEAN's leadership response to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Eligibility Requirements

All employees at KEAN Group who are not in a senior-level managerial position.

What you will need to do and time commitment

The questionnaire is to be filled anonymously. It consists of 13 questions and should not take more than 10-15 minutes to complete. You will also be asked to provide information about some personal characteristics such as your age, gender, and length of service; however, no questions will be asked that will make your identity known to the researchers.

Risks/Discomforts involved in participating

We do not foresee that participation in this study will cause any discomfort or distress.

How to complete and submit

This survey can be completed either digitally, by using the "Fill & Sign" tool in Adobe Acrobat Reader, or by hand, by printing out a copy. To submit, place a printed copy of the completed form in an envelope, seal it and return it to your manager.

Confidentiality of your data

Any responses you provide will be treated confidentially. Any publication resulting from this work will report only aggregated findings or fully anonymized examples that will not identify you.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Even after you agree to participate and begin the study, you are still free to withdraw at any time. The questions are straightforward and there are no right or wrong answers.

Section 1: Personal information

Question	Answer
1) Please indicate your gender	☐ Male ☐ Female
2) Please select your age group	☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-55 ☐ 55+
3) What is your job role?	☐ Mechanical Engineer ☐ Accountant ☐ Salesperson ☐ Machine operator ☐ Warehouse worker ☐ Chemist ☐ Transportation ☐ Marketing ☐ Technician ☐ Other
4) If you selected "Other" please specify	
5) How long have you worked at KEAN for?	☐ Less than a year ☐ 1-4 years ☐ More than 4 years

Section 2: Organisational leadership and response

This study considers 4 general types of leadership. Brief descriptions of each are provided below. Please read these and answer the questions that follow.

a. Authoritative: The preferred approach of such leaders is to take decisions first and then 'tell' or 'sell' them to the rest of the group.
b. Democratic: The leader is determined to include all group members in decisions about how the group should operate.
c. Facilitative: The facilitative style is concerned with offering suggestions which group members may or may not take up. Structure, content, and operation of the group are left to group members to determine.
d. Situational: Situational leadership is an approach in which the leader attempts to adapt how they behave according to the needs of each situation. The situational leader will vary their style so that it is appropriate for the group.

6) In your opinion, which style best describes the general leadership approach at KEAN **prior** to Covid-19? (If you started working at KEAN after January 2020 skip this question)	☐ Authoritative ☐ Democratic ☐ Facilitative ☐ Situational
7) In your opinion, which style best describes the general leadership approach at KEAN **during** to Covid-19?	☐ Authoritative ☐ Democratic ☐ Facilitative ☐ Situational

For questions 8-11, please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with each of the statements. <u>The statements refer to actions/decisions taken by leadership at KEAN during Covid-19.</u>

8) Sufficient health and safety measures were implemented to secure workers' wellbeing during Covid-19.	☐ Strongly agree ☐ Moderately agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Moderately disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

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9) The company supported me during the Covid-19 pandemic so I could continue to do my job.	☐ Strongly agree ☐ Moderately agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Moderately disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
10) Management responded effectively to the challenges presented by the pandemic.	☐ Strongly agree ☐ Moderately agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Moderately disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
11) Management demonstrated flexibility/adaptability (e.g., by revising instructions) as the pandemic developed.	☐ Strongly agree ☐ Moderately agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Moderately disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
12) Which of the following forms of support were provided to you during Covid-19? **Please select all that apply**.	☐ Financial Aid ☐ Well-being programs ☐ Personal protective equipment ☐ Training on digital tools and platforms ☐ Health and safety seminars
13) If any other forms of support were offered/provided, please list them here	

Data Collection Consent Form

- General Information

This consent form refers to data that are to be collected in the form of interviews and questionnaires for the responsible researcher's (Georgios Kasapis) master thesis, titled "*Leadership in Crisis: An Investigation into the Response of Cypriot Organisations during the Covid-19 Pandemic*". Aim of this study is to gain insight into the application of crisis leadership and the challenges of being a leader during the Covid-19 pandemic. The responsible researcher is an MBA student within the school of Business Studies and Administration at the Open University of Cyprus. Information that concerns those participating in the interviews follows.

- How data will be collected

Data will be collected through a leadership-style questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The interview will be digitally recorded only if explicit authorisation and consent is provided by the interviewee.

- Issues regarding your involvement in this survey

Participation is voluntary and necessary precautions will be taken to ensure participants' anonymity. Real names will not be collected for any documentation and will not be asked for during the recording of an interview. If they are accidentally mentioned during an interview they will be substituted by pseudonyms during transcription. Any other potentially identifying characteristics (e.g., very specific and unique role within company) will be scrambled. At any point participants are allowed to alter any terms concerning their involvement or opt-out of the interview process without providing justification. They may answer all, some or none of the questions according to their preference.

- Privacy and data processing

The collected data will only be handled and analysed by the responsible researcher. Interview recordings will be transcribed, and the resulting original text files (as well as the related original audio files) will be moved (not copied) to a PC inside a password locked, unique folder. The files will be named in a way that does not risk the participants anonymity (via pseudonyms or numbers). The data will not be used for any other purpose other than this master thesis. Once analysis is completed and the results inserted in their final form in the thesis, all the collected data will be deleted.

- Publishing of data

The master thesis (which will include the analysed data) will be reviewed by examiners and presented in a final examination. If the examiners and the university decide that they are of publishable quality, the data may be published in an academic journal. Anonymity will be preserved even in the case of publication. At any given point prior to publication, a participant may opt out of having their data being published by contacting the responsible researcher.

NB: *Please sign on the next page*

For any queries or further information please contact:

Georgios Kasapis

Email: georgios.kasapis@st.ouc.ac.cy

Signatures and agreement
I have read and fully understood the above terms and conditions as stated by the above
"Data Collection Consent Form". I hereby give my explicit authorisation for this interview to
be digitally recorded. As such:
☐ I agree to participate in this study
☐ I agree to the handling of my data in the manner prescribed in the above consent form

Participant's Name:……………………………………………………………….

Participant's signature:………………………………………………………….

Date:……………………………………………………………………………….

Researcher's Name:……………………………………………………………

Researcher's signature:………………………………………………………

Date:…………………………………………………………………………..

Leadership Styles Questionnaires

There are different leadership styles, each of which can be appropriate and effective in different situations. Most of us, if we find ourselves in a leadership role, have a preference for a particular style. This questionnaire is designed to help you think about your preferences. Please read each statement and tick the appropriate box, indicating what you think is true for you.

		Exactly like me (3)	Much like me (2)	A bit like me (1)	Not me at all (0)	Score
1	I believe teams work best when everyone is involved in taking decisions					
2	I am good at bringing out the best in other people					
3	I can take on leadership role when needed, but do not consider myself as a 'leader'					
4	I am happy to act as the spokesperson for our group					
5	I am good at adapting to different situations					
6	I am determined to push projects forward and get results					
7	I think people should be allowed to make mistakes in order to learn					
8	I enjoy working on committees (different groups/teams)					
9	I think the most important thing for a team is the wellbeing of its members					
10	I can see situations from many different perspectives					
11	I do not mind how long discussions last, so long as we consider every angle					
12	I am good at organising other people					
13	I think all team members should abide by formal decisions, so long as we follow proper procedures					
14	I set myself high standards and expect others to do the same for themselves					
15	I enjoy role playing exercises					
16	I love helping other people to develop					

Once you have ticked **one** box for each of the statements, please note the score for each question in the right-hand column

In the table below, add scores for listed combinations of questions and total this for your Leadership Style Preference.

Question Numbers	Scores (List your score for each question)				Total	Leadership Style Preference
4, 6, 12, 14						Authoritative
1, 8, 11, 13						Democratic
2, 7, 9, 16						Facilitative
3, 5, 10, 15						Situational

Leadership is exercised in different ways by different people in different situations. The following are examples of different leadership styles. None is the 'right' way; each has their strengths and weaknesses, and each would be 'right' for certain people at certain times.

Authoritative		Democratic	
This style is based on the idea that leaders should assume personal responsibility for decisions. The authoritative style is attractive to people who are restless, action-oriented, and have a strong personal vision of what's needed. While the authoritative leader may sometimes 'consult' group members before taking decisions, their favoured approach is to take the decisions first and then 'tell' or 'sell' them to the rest of the group.		The leader is determined to include all group members in decisions about how the group should operate. The democratic style is based on a belief that groups cannot be effective unless all members have an opportunity to participate fully. The democratic leader's role is largely one of establishing a structure and ground-rules for the group, protecting these, and enabling group activity	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
Team members know where they stand Decisions can be taken rapidly, which is good in a crisis Team members can concentrate on 'operational' tasks, without having to worry about 'strategic issues'	Unlikely to win full commitment from all group members Can lead to un-informed and shallow decisions. Does not allow team members any space to develop	Gives power to team members Energises and motivates team members to achieve their tasks Builds individual responsibility amongst members	May slow down tasks, encouraging talk not action Can frustrate members who like clear direction Inappropriate when rapid decisions are needed •The most popular decisions are not always the best
Facilitative		Situational	
The facilitative style is concerned with offering suggestions which group members may or may not take up. Structure, content and operation of the group are left to group members to determine. While facilitative leaders may have their own clear opinions about the best courses of action, they are not willing to influence the group unduly with their personal ideas. They believe that group activity should be a constant learning process, and that it is OK to make mistakes so long as people learn from them. The journey is seen as more important than the destination		Situational leadership is an approach in which the leader attempts to adapt how they behave according to the needs of each situation. The situational leader will vary their style so that it is appropriate for the particular group (for example, their current levels of skill and confidence), and for the particular task in hand.	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
Gives plenty of space for creative ideas to emerge and be explored Enables individual learning Can be empowering in the right circumstances	Can allow the group to become aimless and chaotic The leadership 'gap' can get filled by other people, who have to operate as 'informal' leaders	Allows groups to change over the time. Adapts to urgent and nonurgent situations	Difficult to carry off effectively – group members never know what to expect, and may resist changes in style.

Interview sequence of events

- Request permission to record audio

Begin recording audio

Self-introduction
- Say a little bit about myself and that I'm studying at the Open University of Cyprus for my MBA
- Say a little bit about the general topic of leadership during times of crisis. Say that I am specifically interested for the Covid-19 period. Explain that this interview concerns how the interviewee exercised leadership prior to and during Covid-19.
- Ask person to sign "Data Collection Consent Form".

Courtesy question
First, do you have any questions for me?

1. Leadership style
- Could I ask you to fill in this questionnaire?
- May I ask you to read these four boxes?
- Which of these styles would you say best describes your leadership style?

2. Background on the interviewee
- Could you please describe your responsibilities at KEAN? In which business unit do you and your team belong to?
    o Could you tell me a little bit about you arrived at this position?
    o What is your educational background?

3. Participants view on Leadership and Management
- "Leadership". What does that mean for you?
    o "Management". What does that mean for you?
    o What would you say are the key responsibilities of a manager?
    o How many people approximately are you the manager of?

4. Organisational factors and setting
- During your time at KEAN have you received any formal training oriented towards leaders? If yes, please tell me a bit more about the nature of this training
    o Did you have managerial experience before taking up your position at KEAN? Were you aware of exactly what the role here demanded?
    o Would you say the company allows for flexibility how you lead employees?
- Tell me about your typical week as a manager here
    o What is your involvement as part of strategy formulation for the company?

5. Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic
    a. Pre-Pandemic work conditions

- Tell me about your experience leading your employees before the pandemic?
  - Tell me a little bit about the beginning of the pandemic
  - What were the early effects on your team?
  - Were digital tools a big part of your work before the pandemic?
  - If yes, ask for more information

  b. Changes during the pandemic

- Tell me about your experience leading your employees during the pandemic.
  - Would you say this was significantly different than pre-pandemic?
  - Did any of your team members struggle? If yes, how did you address that?
- The pandemic obviously brought about major disruptions. Tell me about how your team members worked during the pandemic.
  - If working from home, how was the infrastructure implemented? Were tools already in place? Was training of staff necessary to work from home?
  - If carried on working from the office what safety protocols were used?
  - What would you say were the greatest challenges of working in a manufacturing organisation?
  - Would you say that there were positive outcomes, i.e., some silver linings, because of the pandemic?

  c. Post pandemic work conditions

- What would you say are some of the key lessons learned from this experience? Do you feel different as a leader now?
  - How do you and your team work now? Has the company imposed a return to the office? Have the employees chosen to come back at the office?
  - Looking back, would you have done anything differently?

6. Concluding questions

To conclude, are there any further remarks, comments or issues you would like to share?

Thank you very much for your time!