

**Exploring Adaptive Leadership Principles to Assist Corporate Leaders in Times of Crisis:
A Qualitative Case Study**

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Abstract

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, numerous organizations were caught unprepared. At the pandemic's start, many technical leaders needed help dealing and communicating with team members who worked from home, leading to compromised productivity and economic losses. The problem addressed in this study was the lack of preparedness and training of corporate technology sector leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to address how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. By examining the effects of companies' unpreparedness for COVID-19 and the subsequent leaders' reactions using a qualitative case study, this research was able to construct a crisis management concept that can help develop effective remote working initiatives during a crisis. Using the purposive sampling technique, the participants recruited were corporate leaders who managed a team with five to nine direct reports, used video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their team, and had been managers for at least three years. Open-ended interview questions using the same questions were used through identical methods in the same context and produced comparable results. The study findings confirmed the postulation of the primary adaptive leadership theory involving the six fundamental behaviors adaptive leaders must work on to include the four important adaptive concepts that adaptive leaders use to cement their actions. This study has shown how helpful adaptive traits can enable leaders to assist their teams in surviving and outpacing the challenges during a disaster. The study's data revealed nine primary themes: Lack of Preparation, Crisis Management, Remote Working, Adaptive Leadership Practices, Virtual Teams, Adaptive Leadership Principles, Corporate Mindset, Remote Workforce, and Crisis Leadership Principles.

The practical implications of this research can relate to a wide range of measures to assist technology leaders in recognizing the process of improving employees' performance in times of crisis. In times of crisis, it is warranted for business leaders to understand the adaptive-related effects between the full-hybrid and semi-hybrid work environments and their effects on remote workers through further research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The current COVID-19 crisis has taken a massive medical and economic toll on humanity (Wiebers & Feigin, 2020). As of August 2021, the SARS-CoV-2 cases worldwide have numbered 211 million and resulted in 4.4 million deaths (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021). Numerous governments have tried to deal with and contain COVID-19's effects on their economy. The COVID-19 pandemic presented one of the global economy's greatest challenges (Aleem et al., 2021). The economies of many countries failed fast and demanded resilient leadership to help provide emergency strategies to combat COVID-19's disastrous effects (Aleem et al., 2021). The economic and healthcare system breakdown signaled a new era on how best to reface the world once the crisis was neutralized (Gopinath, 2020). Government and corporate leadership had a big role in shaping this economic situation (Dirani et al., 2020).

When the COVID-19 crisis started, most governments mandated that employees work from home (Stoker et al., 2021). Working from home (WFH) was not a new concept, as it has existed since the 1970s and was used by organizations to allow flexibility with their employees' schedules (Haddon & Lewis, 1994). One considerable difference when comparing WFH to a normal office setting was that managers supervised their employees at a distance (Bonet & Salvador, 2017). A Gartner survey reported that about half of the global corporations had 82% or more employees working from home (Gartner, 2020). Before COVID-19, many corporations allowed employees to stay at home and work. Once COVID-19 emerged, the scope of work became significantly imperious (Stoker et al., 2021). Managers and employees began working distantly, resulting in a problematic behavioral relationship (Bonet & Salvador, 2017). Since managers and employees were not in the same place, non-verbal communication could not have been perceived well, reducing the manager's effectiveness in coaching and limiting appropriate

assistance when needed (Bonet & Salvador, 2017). With the COVID-19 crisis, employees were deemed to do more tasks because of financial insecurity and perceived or real pressure from employer expectations (White, 2020). Workers tended to work more hours, fearing being laid off and experiencing more burnout (White, 2020).

Remote managers developed trust issues as WFH required a different skill set than face-to-face work (Parker et al., 2020). Parker et al. (2020) purported that trust was missing because the inability to observe employees directly makes managers suspicious of their employees' work. The inability to see workers visually led to employees' micromanagement and decreased motivation and productivity. According to White (2020), another initiative management took as part of remote working was to have employees attend video conferencing to substitute for face-to-face meetings. During the pandemic, managers used virtual applications to meet work requirements by utilizing new software to replace in-house office processes (White, 2020). The adverse effects of video tools were that employees experienced blurred reality, developed difficulty turning off work because of the always-on mentality, and had problems disconnecting from work after office hours (Waizenegger et al., 2020). For managers, the COVID-19 crisis led them to face behavior crises, specifically work delegation, becoming more controlling and less delegatory (Stoker et al., 2021; Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021).

Managers explored productive ways to deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on protecting the well-being and mental health of the workers (Giurge & Bohns, 2020). Inescapably, workers' burnout was a long-term hazard of COVID-19 and made a top concern for management (White, 2020). With the advent of the COVID-19 variants, WFH persisted (Parkinson, 2021). The need to explore corporate leaders' lack of preparedness in adapting the workforce to remote working when facing a corporate crisis becomes even more

important. Corporate leadership accelerated finding the best way to be productive, which became a monumental challenge (Contreras et al., 2020). Contreras et al. (2020) added that condescending traditional or no leadership would jeopardize corporate existence. Leaders found solutions for the risks working from home placed on employees (Pyoria, 2011). WFH became very confining, and workers found it hard to disconnect from society, leading to decreased performance and demoralization (Wojcak et al., 2016). WFH raised ethical concerns such as increasing the employees' capacity and information overload bordering on invading their personal and private lives (Cortellazzo et al., 2019; Gálvez et al., 2020).

From 2007 to 2009, a financial crisis threatened the global system and caused a massive disequilibrium in the financial world (Doyle, 2017). Thakor (2015) stated that many financial institutions had amassed wealth in the guise of profitability. When the market fell, these major financial corporations suffered financial, credibility, and reputational losses for ignoring the increased risk of their investments (Thakor, 2015). This fallout compelled organizations to apply adaptive measures within their corporate environments (Doyle, 2017). Doyle (2017) implied that adaptive leaders helped face uncertainty and vagueness brought about by the financial crisis. As in every situation, adaptation to survival requires careful consideration of how uncertainty is resolved (Heifetz et al., 2009). Creating positive changes in a sustained crisis is treacherous as it requires good timing to build a new reality (Heifetz et al., 2009). Epitropaki et al. (2017) posited that future research on leadership programs focused on crisis management is vital and most effective if directed toward the different levels of leadership within the organization.

This research aimed to define the adaptive leadership principles that will prepare corporate leaders on many levels to adjust to the demands of the situation. The potential practical relevance of this study was to improve managers' decision-making processes. Creating an

efficient managerial method that will identify an adaptive corporate mindset during the COVID-19 pandemic would prove vital for succeeding calamities in the future. Without the proper intervention of adaptive technology and leadership, corporations that would like to adopt changes to prepare their managers and employees for future calamities would find it hard to drive the needed transition to reality (Northouse, 2016). COVID-19's effect on employees was a challenge addressed by mobilizing employees to grow and confront difficulties as they adjusted and thrived in a virtual work environment (Goode et al., 2021). While acknowledging the multidimensional nature of COVID-19, leadership remained cautious of the unpredictability of the situation, the increasing randomness of information, and the many unknown variants that reacted rapidly (Nissim & Simon, 2021; Ramalingam et al., 2020). By putting employees first, corporate leaders focused on the existing strengths in concert with the necessary adaptive leadership traits that molded an adaptive corporate mindset effective against any crisis (Dunn, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was the lack of preparedness and training of corporate technology sector leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. When the pandemic began, remote working precipitated, and the need to efficiently work from home amplified (Mirela, 2020). Corporate leaders experienced difficulty adjusting to the volume of issues, especially in communication, goal setting, and accountability (Toniolo-Barrios & Pitt, 2021). During the pandemic, the U.S. government downplayed its significance. America had no real stockpiles of medical supplies needed to combat the virus. When the public asked for help, the government looked helpless, as stores of masks, gowns, and gloves were nowhere to be found (Baltz, 2020). When Islamic al Qaeda militants carried out

suicide attacks against the United States by hijacking four airplanes, which caused the NYC Twin Towers and the Pentagon to collapse, the government was caught off guard and did not anticipate any efficient actions to take in the aftermath (Pritchard, 2021). When the 2008 financial crisis led to a recession, the U.S. government had difficulty keeping up with the resulting economic havoc, showing how the U.S. government is rarely prepared when disasters strike (Baltz, 2020).

Viruses have been devastating in human history and were publicized in 1990 as the biggest threat to man (Henig, 2020). Many scientists have since been predicting and showing how deadly they are (Henig, 2020). In 2023, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Asia, Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in 2012 in the Middle East, ebola in 2014 in Africa, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) were all global crises. Many governments continued to be complacent, such that world leaders were unprepared when COVID-19 came with a potent force (Henig, 2020) that challenged the American healthcare system (Kemp, 2021). Hospitals were swamped with serious cases that crippled the hospital system, and these patients constituted the general working population of the economic workforce (Kemp, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many companies to require employees to WFH (Waizenegger et al., 2020). Companies adjusted e-working conditions to scale to the employee tasks and job requirements (Zhang et al., 2021). COVID-19 required many people to live in a state of uncertainty as the government needed people to stay and work from home for their safety. Disasters were severe problems for leaders, especially in the COVID-19 era; other leaders rose to the occasion, but others struggled to respond properly and became distrustful in their employees' eyes as they failed to keep up their promises (Abrams, 2020). Poor or toxic leadership resulted in various shortages, fears, contamination, and loss, ultimately leading to the

company's failure (Minge, 2021). Minge (2021) expounded that the lack of good leadership during COVID-19 was the tipping point for all other managerial dominos to fall, with the main cause of leadership deficiencies. Minge (2021) implied that employees' fear of not knowing what the administration would do next resulted in anxiety, depression, and distress. The unhealthy leadership attitude contaminated other people in the company resulting in low motivation to work (Vance et al., 2020). Vance et al. (2020) also added that it led to the overall loss of business volume, and cancellation of work would degrade performance resulting in employees exiting the company. It became evident that corporations did not properly train leaders to supervise employees' WFH, leading to many crises of leadership behaviors that affected productivity at different hierarchical levels in their organizations (Stoker et al., 2021). In the COVID-19 crisis, leaders had to stop and think outside the box to mobilize employees to grow and confront challenges to adjust and thrive in a virtual work environment or suffer the consequences (Goode et al., 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to address how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. This study aimed to seek an adaptive corporate mindset that would prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands of the situation and enact steps that would assist in communication, goal setting, and accountability problems when facing a crisis. In a qualitative single case study, the researcher moves to find the empirical and holistic account of an explicit phenomenon (Willis, 2014). Since this research involved participant observation, it required process-tracing of a single phenomenon (Gerring, 2004). The data gathered using in-

depth questions helped define the adaptive leadership principles that would prepare corporate leaders to create an adaptive corporate mindset during any crisis (Drew, 2014).

The target population for the proposed research consisted of corporate leaders of different levels residing in the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, who managed a team with five to nine direct reports. A sample of 12 managers was recruited to participate. Boddy (2016) added that 12 interviews might be more appropriate to produce a good meta-analysis to be eligible for the study. Participants worked from a home office and used video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their management team. The participants were recruited through LinkedIn. The recruitment process included sending formal requests via LinkedIn message service to the target participants. A respondent-driven sampling technique was applied as more participants were needed after receiving initial responses. This study collected data from the participants using semi-structured individual interviews and open-ended questions identifying how retention of adaptive leadership principles could prepare corporate leaders to be efficient leaders in this pandemic. The study used an IRB-approved consent letter to enlist participants to participate. The anonymity and privacy of the participants were of utmost concern. Confidentiality was managed from recruitment, initial collection of data, use of information for analysis, and dissemination of the findings, including storage and disposal of records (Walford, 2005).

Introduction to Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was the adaptive leadership theory developed by Marty Linsky and Ronald Heifetz. Heifetz et al. (2009) defined adaptive leadership as an effective leadership style where a group turns to a leader to receive help and support to counter variables instigating a state of emergency. With adaptive leadership, leaders do more than affect

the change. They can recognize potential differences between selections and carefully decide the best path for the situation (Mahsud et al., 2010). At the forefront of adaptive leadership is recognizing the leader-follower interactions that produce emergent leader-follower identities, relationships, and social structures that promote the team to evolve dynamically and enhance group adaptation and development (DeRue, 2011).

Adaptive leadership involves adaptation to unfamiliar circumstances that necessitate unconventional responses that are out of the box spanning the gap between an organization's aspirations, goals, and operational capability (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive leadership, when used particularly in a crisis, can help in the rapid attainment of solutions in the face of multifaceted situations where the current authority is insufficient. As COVID-19 continued to ravage the economy and the healthcare industries, adaptive leadership became more important as an effective solution for leaders and managers facing adaptive challenges (Doyle, 2017).

Heifetz compelled a leader to distinguish guidance from authority to pursue technical and adaptive tasks, as many leaders fail if they treat adaptive challenges as simple technical challenges (Gyuroka, 2011). The Heifetz leadership framework encompasses the basic assumptions that promote the capacity to survive and thrive to pursue better intervention (Gyuroka, 2011). The following will allow the team and the leader to bond, resulting in an effective collaboration (Jefferies, 2017). Adaptive leadership is built on the premise that helping others change and grow will provide an efficient work environment. This type of leadership does not rely on the leader as a born leader but that anyone, through training, can become an adaptive leader (Jefferies, 2017). This theoretical framework guided the research investigating the effects of the lack of preparations by corporate leaders in adapting their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction to Research Methodology and Design

Qualitative research was used in this study. Qualitative methodology collects and analyzes non-numerical information to identify concepts, ideas, or practices used to collect comprehensive insights into a problem or generate ideas for research (Rosenthal, 2016). Qualitative research regularly uses purposeful sampling to identify information-rich cases related to the phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). Palinkas et al. (2015) conveyed that purposeful sampling involves recognizing and selecting participants or groups knowledgeable of the phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research for this study collected data effectively using open-ended interviews, gathering information on the subject's thoughts, opinions, experiences, and behaviors (Wienclaw, 2021).

This case study studied a group of participants where an aspect of the participant's life was analyzed to find patterns that cause a learned behavior (Gerring, 2004). The investigation was conducted in a field that involved process tracing of a single case investigating a single phenomenon. This case study aimed to describe a person, organization, event, or institution and identify the case's key issues (Willis, 2014). Once identified, an analysis of the case revealed significant theoretical concepts and recommended a course of action to help solve a problem (Willis, 2014). Early research on leadership used case studies through a qualitative approach, for they allowed a greater understanding of the subject at hand and decreased the potential for any partiality (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative case studies were appropriate when the study's objective did not include controlling behaviors or outcomes (Yin, 2018). Patton (2015) asserted that qualitative methods would address questions about a phenomenon's what, how, and why. The qualitative design tested the relationships and hypotheses and examined the participants' experiences within this study (Kruth, 2015).

This study collected data through semi-structured individual interviews. Semi-structured interviews ensured the maintenance of the structure that gave the participants control over the information shared while maintaining the researcher's control to guide the conversation (Plowright, 2011). The Microsoft Teams video conferencing device was used to record the interviews, as the researcher and participants would not be in the same location. The participants were asked to complete an informed consent form outlining any potential risks of participating in the study. The interview data was carefully reviewed and manually transcribed by the researcher. The researcher was the main instrument for data collection and responsible for thoroughly analyzing case study research (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016). The data organization was important to the quality of the research (Chen & Zhang, 2014). The data collection was performed systematically to enable consistency throughout the entire process and helped preserve the integrity of the study (Saunders et al., 2015). The researcher identified the recurring themes and achieved a high standard of consistency (Stuckey, 2015). The data analysis followed an iterative process and developed a thematic analysis (Saunders et al., 2015). To attain proper data analysis, the researcher underwent the five stages of review: (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpretation, and (e) conclusion (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

Research Questions

The lack of preparedness and training of corporate leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic required a corporate mindset that could help corporate leaders and managers be more effective in any crisis in the future. This research required gathering information and analysis based on the investigation of the problem, identifying the key issues, and recommending the most effective solution based on accumulated supporting evidence. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1

How did corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training impact their ability to adapt the workforce to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ2

How can corporate leaders adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?

RQ3

What adaptive leadership principles do corporate leaders consider as a coping strategy for creating an adaptive corporate mindset?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study identified the adaptive leadership principles that would assist corporate leaders in categorizing steps to create an adaptive corporate mindset to help leaders become more effective when another deadly crisis surfaces. This study was intended to recognize the essentials of good crisis leadership that could assist in creating contingency plans and steps of action that would minimize the effects of future disasters on leaders and subordinates (Abrams, 2020). The lack of preparedness to adapt the corporate workforce to remote working has seriously affected the relationship between the leaders and corporate members (Abrams, 2020). The lack of effective leadership implementation during the COVID-19 period provided the tipping point for all other managerial dominos to fall, leading to other leadership deficiencies (Baltz, 2020). One important thing done was to inspire corporate leaders to prepare, train, and design measures to minimize crisis ineffectiveness (Minge, 2021). This investigation was designed to provide insight into the best practices in strategic planning that may assist leaders in the corporate world in sustaining their organizations in times of crisis.

This qualitative case study examined the adaptive leadership principles that can prove most useful in attaining the foundational knowledge to create an effective corporate mindset and executive action policies for use in any major crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed the corporate sectors to emphasize the importance of proper planning and anticipation (Anzalone, 2021). Corporations were responsible for creating contingency plans and action steps to minimize unpredictable disasters that may evolve (Anzalone, 2021). COVID-19 forced many businesses to have their employees work remotely. The haste for employees to WFH underscored one of the unanticipated needs for communication tools and challenged corporations to develop steps to regulate and improve the current working conditions to keep businesses productive and afloat (Afrianty et al., 2021).

This research aimed to obtain data on WFH and the communication problems managers and employees face with remote work. The data collected became the foundational knowledge that streamlined the creation of policies for managers to manage teams with five to nine direct reports effectively. Leaders leveraging the adaptive style could effectively navigate any situations they face, including any interrelational diversity by their employees, to nurture innovation (Tapia & Polonskaia, 2020). Tapia and Polonskaia (2020) purported that leaders using an adaptive mindset expanded their influence from individuals to teams to larger groups, effectively impacting the whole organization and resulting in a deeper and more efficient working enhancement. Lastly, the research findings of this study further enhanced the knowledge base of adaptive leadership theory with implications for the study of leading-following processes in groups (DeRue, 2011).

Definitions of Key Terms

Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive leadership is the practical solution to finding answers to business issues that guide leaders to identify the important aspects of an occupational operation and remove elements that it cannot do (Gyuroka, 2011).

All-Remote Workforce

All-remote is also known as telecommuting, a working model where team members work from home or anywhere other than onsite (Phillips, 2022).

Corporate Leadership

Corporate leadership comprises executives and managers who manage the organizational resources, working with different departmental teams while inspiring others to do their best work (Canyon, 2014).

COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a deadly infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that can be severe. The disease has resulted in millions of deaths worldwide and can lead to lasting health problems for those who survive the illness (Adim & Emumena, 2020).

Flexible Working

Flexible working enables employees to work according to their needs to have a more balanced work-life, flexible hours, staggered start times, or work from home (Ashworth, 2022).

Flexible Workplace

A flexible workplace features an office with creative or non-fixed workspaces that employees can utilize onsite (Senz, 2019).

Hybrid Meeting

A hybrid meeting is an office event involving onsite and offsite personnel (Stanton & Tiwari, 2021).

Hybrid Workplace

A hybrid workplace, also called a hybrid office, is a working model where employees can work in-office and remotely (Maresco, 2022). They can work on-site or off-site with an opportunity to switch between those environments regularly, depending on the corporate needs (Reindl et al., 2022).

Telecommuting

Telecommuting is an arrangement where employees can work outside the workplace, typically at home or when traveling (Wienclaw, 2020).

Virtual Team

A virtual team is a team where everyone works in different places on the same project (Mutha & Srivastava, 2021). Some members can be separated by time zones and often by different countries and cultures, and a team can be uneven as some members can be working in one place while others are from home or other satellite offices (Campbell, 2020).

Working From Home

Working from home refers to working at an office while at home instead of a traditional office with colleagues but still doing the same work (Mirela, 2020).

Summary

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, many organizations were caught unprepared, while many governments downplayed its significance and were unprepared when the public asked for help (Baltz, 2020). The pandemic required companies to have their employees WFH,

which triggered confusion among workers and managers alike as they were untrained (Waizenegger et al., 2020). Many organizations did not train their leaders on how to supervise employees' WFH, which led to crises of leadership that affected productivity at many hierarchical levels in the organization (Stoker et al., 2021). The problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions were created based on how adaptive leadership principles facilitate effective changes. The selected adaptive theoretical framework guided the research in investigating the lack of preparedness of corporate leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework of the six adaptive leadership behaviors, including the four adaptive concepts: agility, leadership, adaptation, and crisis management. The crisis concept and the general leadership guidelines that effectively combat world crises were thoroughly examined, and a discussion on how adaptive leadership would be useful in today's problems. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all types of leadership, a solution to resolve leadership anxiety using adaptive leadership philosophy was also discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to address how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. The problem addressed in this research was the lack of preparedness and training of corporate technology sector leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The review studied the current literature and historical viewpoints on adaptive leadership that utilized a decision-making process that could assist in finding solutions to critical strategic issues in times of crisis. This review provided a background of any related research on the topic. This chapter analyzed the adaptive leadership theory and discussed the different adaptive management processes that would assist leaders and organizations in combating the challenges that a crisis brings. Chapter 2 was organized by topics relevant to the study's focus and purpose. The chapter consisted of a thorough review of literature topics starting with the description of the adaptive leadership theory framework, adaptive leadership guiding principles, and the adaptive concepts that make the adaptive type of leadership successful in a corporate environment. The chapter concluded by discussing how adaptive leadership performs, adapts, and could become an efficient tool that managerial leaders can use in times of crisis.

The review was performed by searching National University's online library and search engines EBSCOHost, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. The search keywords were *adaptive leadership, crisis concept management, COVID-19 challenges and resolution, working from home, hybrid work office, and virtual teams*. More than 270 publications were identified through these sources. The selection of the publications for relevance to the topic and applying

inclusion criteria of non-replicated data dated within the last five years were conducted in English, where 133 peer-reviewed articles were selected as part of this literature review.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was Adaptive Leadership. Adaptive leadership was introduced by Harvard professors Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky. According to Heifetz et al. (2009), an adaptive leader possesses the flexibility to navigate any situation, leads with empathy, understands varying viewpoints, and learns from mistakes to adjust accordingly, thus, creating win-win solutions. Adaptive leadership is the practical approach to providing leadership solutions wherein a leader seeks to engage and motivate members to tackle challenging problems and thrive when affecting change (Heifetz et al., 2009). Unlike frontline leaders, who see their team members as people to lead, adaptive leadership focuses on finding team leaders who can guide and assist the leader in accomplishing their goal (Heifetz, 1994).

Adaptive leadership necessitates each team member's involvement as they are stakeholders of the process, motivating them to adapt to the situation more effectively (Heifetz et al., 2014). The resulting working condition will allow the followers and the leader to bond, resulting in effective teamwork (Jefferies, 2017). Adaptive leadership is built on the premise that helping others change and grow will provide a capable work environment if the focus is on the process and not on the person (Arthur-Mensah & Zimmerman, 2017). This type of leadership does not rely on the leader as a born leader, but people can be trained to become adaptive leaders (Jefferies, 2017). Heifetz & Laurie (1997) postulated that the six fundamental behaviors of adaptive leaders work, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1*Six Fundamental Behaviors Adaptive Leaders Work On*

Behavior	Related action
Get on the balcony	Observation
Identify the adaptive challenges	Vision of normalization
Regulate distress	Support of social and emotional needs
Maintain disciplined attention	Help members focus on the task
Give the work back to the people	Independence and sharing of responsibility
Protect leadership voices from below	Honor member's needs and ideas

Note. Adapted from “The Work of Leadership” by R. A. Heifetz, and D. L. Laurie, 1997, *Harvard Business Review*, 75(1), p. 124.

Six Behaviors of Adaptive Leadership

Heifetz and Laurie (1997) wrote the six fundamental behaviors adaptive leaders work on (see Figure 1).

1. **Get on the balcony:** Leaders must find a way to observe the situation using a panoramic view to see the synergy of their teams. Leaders will allow the team to see what happened in the past and present to think about what can be done to affect positive changes in the future (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).
2. **Identify the adaptive challenges:** Businesses must adapt quickly and appropriately to survive their challenges. Leaders must not adhere to cultural silos or traditional leadership but must be ready for other efficient forms of leadership that can provide a better work process (Arthur-Mensah & Zimmerman, 2017).

3. Regulate distress: An adaptive leader understands the learning limitation of a member and overcomes them by encouraging each team member to face and adapt to the need to change (Heifetz et al., 2009).
4. Maintain disciplined attention: Organizations employ a diverse set of people that bring different experiences, education, culture, beliefs, and habits. Diversity can be important for innovation but may often lead to conflict. An important role of a leader is to explain to the team the importance of trade-offs, establishing a mutual agreement, compromising congruent operating styles, and the need for consistency to ensure productivity (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).
5. Give the work back to the people: People in leadership should be able to designate tasks that the members understand to work efficiently as a team. The team can become complacent and lazy if the leaders take most of the job. Management should know how to spread the tasks so that all members will provide efficient teamwork and not be controlling (Sabithulla Khan, 2019).
6. Protect leadership voices from below: Leadership must be open to hearing the employees' voices, comments, and feedback from the members; otherwise, they will miss important information and could discourage potential leaders from rising (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). However, when negative voices lead to demoralization, the leadership must find the means to balance the noise to restore stability (Nissim & Simon, 2021).

Figure 1*Six Behaviors of Adaptive Leadership*

Note. “Leadership without easy answers.” by Heifetz (1994). *Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.*

Four Adaptive Concepts

A further review of this theoretical framework reveals four important adaptive concepts: agility, leadership, adaptation, and crisis (Nissim & Simon, 2021).

1. Agility: An agility aptitude must be integrated into a corporate culture for an organization to succeed and survive in its business environment (Overby et al., 2006). Overby et al. (2006) defined agility as the trait of a leader to be available, flexible,

- and quick to respond to any situation. Leadership agility is a concept where a leader grows in stages to evolve more effectively (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). Joiner & Josephs (2007) described agility as the leader's ability to take quick and decisive actions amidst complex and rapidly deteriorating circumstances. The development of a leader is more than just skill acquisition; a leader must combine real-time application with real-time challenges to develop new competencies and think out of the box (Joiner & Josephs, 2007). Agility within an organization affords its processes to be organized by the people managing it, boosting the strategic business value among leaders and followers while creating (Goodarzi et al., 2018).
2. Leadership: Numerous philosophers and intellectuals have broadly defined leadership in literature, sometimes agreeing and disagreeing; however, many researchers settled that leadership is not a single step but involves a process (Malik & Azmat, 2019; Musioł, 2022; Tak et al., 2019). Leadership requires skills that involve creating a goal, defining a vision, carrying out the vision, and leading others to achieve that vision, underscoring the importance of personal relationships to successful leadership (Curphy, 2021). Leadership has been identified as a primary factor that defines work engagement. When provided positively, it will promote a healthy corporate environment where the workers can feel motivated to work and be satisfied (Tak et al., 2019). A person in authority is expected to display leadership characteristics and interact with subordinates as the organizational hierarchy dictates (Nissim & Simon, 2021). Adaptive leadership takes this to a different level by involving stakeholders in creating solutions through inventive thinking that will help identify the most

- appropriate solution and the efficient process of the challenges faced (Randall & Coakley, 2007).
3. **Adaptation:** Since change is never static and constantly evolving, leaders must adapt to corporate growth challenges (Nissim & Simon, 2021). Nissim & Simon (2021) added that often adaptability and agility conflict with each other as the decision-making approaches could vary with one centralized (bureaucracy) and the other decentralized (innovation). Trinh (2019) suggested that adaptation requires leaders to be flexible toward understanding the oriented goal. When leaders free themselves from the rabbit hole of traditional expertise, change their behavior in response to the needed change, and develop a sense of humility, they will make their organizations resilient and develop a better strategic advantage over the issues they encounter (Trinh, 2019).
 4. **Crisis:** A crisis is an unexpected situation or condition that can result in a high degree of damage, giving rise to loss of control, emotional distress, and disorientation (Nissim & Simon, 2021). A crisis requires time-sensitive reactions to safely minimize the damage and control the destructive effects (Hayashi & Soo, 2012). Experiencing a crisis can test an organization's limits, compelling leaders to act on the most effective way to fight its challenges (Kane et al., 2021). A disaster can be apocalyptic to leaders, for it can make or break them (Abrams, 2020).

Some leaders rise to the occasion and restart people's lives, but some struggle with the opportunity because of using inefficient communication to follow through on promises (Abrams, 2020). For a sustained crisis, the task of leading can be not only challenging but also treacherous (Heifetz et al., 2009). During the emergency phase of a crisis (first phase), the challenge of

stabilizing the environment must be prioritized. Next is the adaptive phase, where leadership will assess the situation, find measures to confront the issues brought by the crisis, and find the competence to fare well in that new state of normalcy (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Individuals, like corporate entities, have complex adaptive characteristics – as individuals interact with the environment, they adapt physically and psychologically (Bailey et al., 2012). Bailey et al. (2012) added that the adaptive leadership framework inferred that this results in individuals facing procedural and adaptive challenges. Procedural challenges contain circumstances where the problem and the potential solution can be outlined by an expert and addressed by any technician. In contrast, adaptive challenges require the individual to adjust to the situation because of its complex and ambiguous nature (Bailey et al., 2012). A new set of attitudes, abilities, and the collaboration of the people involved will be required to remedy them successfully (Hernández-Santiago & Pérez-Rivera, 2022). An overview of the adaptive leadership framework clearly illustrates how a lack of preparedness and training of corporate technology sector leaders was insufficient in adapting their workforce to challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges before, during, and after COVID-19 have influential significance on these corporations' existence and their member's welfare. Both natural and manufactured crises have complex and multi-faceted issues that require adaptive strategies to be efficiently resolved by enabling leaders to think out of the box (Jung et al., 2017; Ozen, 2019)).

Adaptive Leadership Today

Many executives and leaders are becoming more familiar with servant and transformational leadership, which uses traits positively by influencing the values of serving others. Adaptive leadership shares the same ideas (Brewer, 2022). In addition, adaptive leadership focuses on understanding the intricacies of assisting individuals in grasping

significant change and facing new and turbulent truths successfully (Brewer, 2022). Ari et al. (2021) added that adaptive leadership had changed the outlook of living virtually and remotely from fear and uncertainty to hope while transitioning organizational leadership participation and productivity to resilience and increased adaptive capacity. Sunderman et al. (2020) listed three types of challenges that adaptive leadership resolves:

1. Technical challenges that are clearly defined and resolved easily.
2. Technical and adaptive challenges that are clearly defined require assistance from others for the leader to resolve.
3. Hard to define adaptive challenges requiring assistance from others for the leader to resolve.

Adaptive challenges that are not obvious or easy to identify must be anticipated or preempted, requiring experience and awareness to consciously understand and resolve the issue (Lateef et al., 2022). Resolving this adaptive challenge involves recognizing that a problem exists or can potentially exist and realizing that this may involve behavior and mindset change. This process takes time, and trade-offs may happen (Lateef et al., 2022). To respond to these challenges, Ramalingam et al. (2020) recommended the 4 A's approach:

1. Anticipation: The leadership must look ahead to future needs and identify the trends and feasible options.
2. Articulation: Communicate with others to achieve collective understanding and gather implementation support.
3. Adaptation: Ensure continued learning that appropriate response to the situation becomes consistent.

4. Accountability: Leaders must be transparent in decision-making and open to constructive comments and feedback.

The Crisis Concept

The word crisis originated as a Greek word that could mean a type of trial, judgment, or a disputed argument with a negative connotation (Hahn, 2020). Hahn (2020) further characterized a trial as unanticipated, resulting in a negative, unstable, and dangerous consequence. In 2020, there were a series of crises that pounded the world. Due to the global climate crisis, the Australian wildfires, and the greatest of all, the COVID-19 pandemic (Golley et al., 2021). Hahn (2020) enumerated five common types of crises. The first is the environmental crisis which can be manufactured or naturally caused. These often start as complex events, with immediate problems that follow, resulting in long-term problems.

An example is the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine, where people were exposed to deadly radiation that leaked from the plant, causing a massive evacuation with long-term housing shortages (Shefte & Khurshudyan, 2022). Another environmental crisis was when Hurricane Sandy struck the northeastern seaboard resulting in massive infrastructural and property damages that led to a slow and tedious recovery (Purdy, 2022). The second common type is the international crisis, where two or more nations come into or are about to conflict. The cold war brought about many of these crises, and closer to the U.S., the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 pitted the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to a near full-scale nuclear war (Tuttle & Ubriaco, 2021). The third type of crisis is the economic crisis, when the market becomes unpredictable and unstable, often followed by a depression or recession. The U.S. experienced the Great Depression in the early '20s, characterized by massive unemployment due to the major fall in stock prices, which lasted for ten years (Tambunan, 2022).

The fourth one is called the public health crisis. Major diseases often caused major health crises, including the 2009H1N1 flu pandemic, the West African Ebola virus epidemic (2014), and the Zika virus outbreak in the Americas in 2015–16 (Kurth & Potter, 2022). The disease can lead to a crisis in two ways: first, it will require people to take special precautions at the risk of infections, such as wearing face masks, minimizing or avoiding traveling, or taking tests and medications to maintain good health. The second is that health officials and authorities will be more focused on remedying the risks that they ignore other health issues unrelated to the health crisis (Hahn, 2020). The last type of crisis is personal, where the person is overwhelmed with the stress associated with an illness, a death of a loved one, losing a job, and a major change in life, like divorce (Marinaci et al., 2021). The symptoms associated with a personal crisis are depression, sudden behavioral changes, and inundation of emotions (Hahn, 2020). Successful treatment for them is often provided by psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, or assistance from religious organizations (Marinaci et al., 2021).

Crisis Leadership Guidelines

Among the deadliest public health crises that humanity currently face is the COVID-19 pandemic (Sridhar, 2020). According to Wardman (2020), addressing this lethal virus and finding an efficient response required a complex solution narrowed down to four choices:

1. Suppress the virus by limiting transmission.
2. Delay the spread of transmission using social distancing.
3. Alleviate the spread of the virus when it escapes the controlled environment using stringent lockdown measures.
4. Do nothing and let the disease run naturally. However, considering how deadly the disease has become, this last one was not an option.

Wardman (2020) recommended thirteen pandemic risk guidelines that leaders can abide by for effective crisis management, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Pandemic Risk Guidelines

Guideline	How best done
Planning and preparedness	Anticipate events, assess the risk, identify areas of concern, warning signs, and trigger points, and be prepared for action
Narrating a clear-sighted strategy	Define and document how best to face the crisis and commit roles to people who will perform it
Meaning making	Provide a complete no-frill description of the risk and contextualize that others will easily understand it
Direction giving	Provide clear and concise information and accurate instructions relevant to the situation
Differentiating people's needs	Gather community information focusing on what the people need
Credibility and trustworthiness	Provide competence through the use of experts while increasing trust through honest and open communication – never over-protect or over-promise, and most of all, do not stretch the truth
Transparency	Communicated information should be easy to validate, understandable, and sensibly supportable

Guideline	How best done
Openness	Be candid and honest, and allow factual and even hard truths to be heard; be apologetic if mistakes are made
Partnership and coordination	Establish internal and external networks at all levels; identify the stakeholders, partner with them, and ask for support as needed
Empathy	Be aware of the situation, feel what others feel, and not be distant
Solidarity	Enact a sense of togetherness with the top and make sure that everyone feels together as a team
Responsiveness and adaptiveness	Act decisively and without delay, provide retrospectives on plans, and finds ways to improve them while involving the stakeholders at all stages
Media engagement	Open communication lines, meet and interact with the media and be proactive in engaging in all platforms and technologies

Note. From “Recalibrating pandemic risk leadership: Thirteen crisis ready strategies for COVID-19” by Wardman, J. K. (2020). *Journal of Risk Research*, 23(7/8), 1092–1120.

The lessons brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic made leadership focus on being less trustful in a centralized and standard approach to crisis mediation and adopt a more differentiated ensemble of strategies using many substantive and interpersonal levers. This

collectively employed approach made COVID-19 management more productive and adaptively as the crisis continued (Wardman, 2020).

Adaptive Leadership During Crisis

For any organization, nothing is darker than a looming crisis. In 2015, Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans; in 2011, a great earthquake hit Japan. Both calamities took tens of thousands of lives (Hayashi & Soo, 2012). These two disasters tell different stories of adaptive challenges (Hayashi & Soo, 2012). In Louisiana, people questioned how the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) leadership acted before, during, and after the calamity as human lives and properties were lost (Buxton et al., 2017). One thousand eight hundred died, hundreds of thousands were made homeless, and the property and infrastructure damage amounted to approximately \$100 billion. Buxton et al. (2017) added that the trend of poor decision-making by FEMA led to delayed relief, inadequate rescues, more unnecessary loss of lives, the decline of public trust, and unnecessarily increased scrutiny of other governmental works. After the Hurricane Katrina debacle, the government investigated the failure to respond appropriately before, during, and after Katrina hit (Buxton et al., 2017). The investigation report listed seven specific areas of collapse:

1. Failure to recognize underlying local infrastructure was understaffed
2. Failure of the emergency telecommunication to communicate appropriate public safety concerns
3. Substandard planning for needs and damage assessment
4. Inability to oversee truthful logistical disbursement
5. Inadequate implementation of the evacuation plan
6. Overwhelmed search and rescue operations

7. Limited shelters

The investigators concluded that FEMA was performing as a politically fragmented and disproportioned agency, failing to demonstrate emotional traits such as empathy and human kindness (Buxton et al., 2017). The FEMA leadership failed to adapt correspondingly to the crisis, if done promptly, could have averted more damages and minimized the loss of lives (Hayashi & Soo, 2012).

On the other side of the globe, adaptive leadership was noticeable in addressing the plight of the Japan earthquake crisis (Hayashi & Soo, 2012). When the 9.0 magnitude earthquake hit Japan, a tsunami caused three nuclear reactors to melt down and flood the surrounding towns (Rafferty & Pletcher, 2022). The total damage amounted to \$360 billion, making it the most expensive disaster to hit Japan, where 20,000 people died or went missing, and around 90% of the deaths were due to drowning (Rafferty & Pletcher, 2022). The Japanese local leadership demonstrated effective leadership principles that helped appease the crisis needs noteworthy by a local company named Lawson (Hayashi & Soo, 2012). Hayashi & Soo (2012) mentioned that Lawson could resume production within four days by adapting through the reorganization of itself to deliver the needed core functions. Lawson achieved this by distributing leadership capacities to all organizational levels with decision-making capacities in a crisis. Lawson's adaptive leadership principles allowed them to counter the crisis's effects effectively, decrease the impact of disasters, and recoup more rapidly (Hayashi & Soo, 2012).

In 2014–2015, the Ebola epidemic became a significant public health threat that significantly affected West Africa and later worldwide (Thomas et al., 2015). The Ebola crisis killed 11,000 people (Nyenswah et al., 2016). The epidemic affected all communities, neighboring local and national governments, and the international organizations that operate in

the region (Nyenswah et al., 2016). Eventually, Ebola was contained with the help of government intervention and global assistance, the proper and open use of public communication, the aid of modern technological instruments, active surveillance to track the outbreak, travel restrictions to compromised areas, and quarantine procedures (Thomas et al., 2015). Nyenswah et al. (2016) listed four phases that helped the West African leadership fight Ebola:

1. The early recognition of the crisis prompted the mobilization of countermeasures.
2. The creation of an emergency phase where the population and health care system were managed so they were not overwhelmed.
3. The subsequent epidemic decline was monitored by effective control of a continued decline.
4. The experience of the long tail, where fewer and fewer cases are experienced, allowed them to focus on reviving and strengthening their healthcare system.

According to Ramalinga et al. (2020), the heart of these approaches is identifying what combination of interventions worked best and why. This adaptive management was the appropriate approach to effectively solve the Ebola crisis in West Africa (Shea et al., 2014). Shea et al. (2014) explained further that adaptive management is a decision-making tool focusing on finding solutions to emotional problems using real-time assessment of alternative solutions. An adaptive management approach systematically incorporates learning into management to reduce indecisiveness in the final analysis (Shea et al., 2014).

The COVID-19 Challenge on Leadership

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone globally in every country. The pandemic has affected all healthcare systems and governmental services and drained humankind's physical,

emotional, and psychological resources (Bajaba et al., 2021). The world experienced lifestyle disruptions and chaos, mainly increased mortality rates, economic losses, joblessness, overhauls of healthcare systems, and corporate renovation (Jones et al., 2021). In these times of disorganization and chaos, corporate and organizational leaders are forced to face how to keep their corporate existence intact during the trials, putting them in a crisis mode that, if unprepared, can lead to their companies' downfall (Ramlachan & Beharry-Ramraj, 2021). Different organizational and governmental entities have made many attempts to remedy the situation. Still, few are certain that the life everyone knew before COVID-19 will be realized again soon (Ramlachan & Beharry-Ramraj, 2021).

Adaptive Leadership and Organizational Success in a Crisis

Heifetz et al. (2009) understood the importance of initiating adaptive leadership to propel organizational realization in any situation, such as a crisis. By nurturing an adaptive culture, future challenges can be guaranteed to be met successfully; thus, leaders must be encouraged to incorporate themselves into the adaptive system (Heifetz et al., 2009). A crisis, in short, is a manifestation of a new challenge that demands new strategies and abilities that adaptive leaders can successfully face (Bajaba et al., 2021). For an organization to succeed, it is pertinent to list the elements that can make them successful (Hernández-Santiago & Pérez-Rivera, 2022). The first is communication, followed by the readiness to act on any circumstance while sharing a common goal (Hernández-Santiago & Pérez-Rivera, 2022). Businesses must know the cost of meeting a goal and try not to exceed the price generating it (Hernández-Santiago & Pérez-Rivera, 2022).

According to Heifetz et al. (2009), five adaptive organizational practices can help business entities adapt. The first is to address the elephant in the room. No questions should be

off-limits, and no issue should be so sensitive that any hidden perspective can be identified at the start. The second is everyone must share the responsibility for the organization's future, and everyone transcends any titles and roles of those involved. The third is to allow independent judgment, which will become catalysts that will guide the decision-making process and cultivate ideas within the organization. The fourth is to initiate an adaptive leadership step ladder phase to ensure incoming leaders implement the same adaptive principles. The fifth is to have a retrospective to learn from what was experienced to document what worked, identify what did not, and improve the process to provide a better impact. Heifetz et al. (2009) underscored the importance of initiating adaptive leadership in organizations as it is the initial groundwork for ensuring organizations meet adaptive challenges in the future. Leaders must analyze their experiences, skills, abilities, traits, and personalities and merge them to form a holistic insight into their capabilities.

Adaptive Response to COVID-19

Countering the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic mandates organizational leadership actions at all levels (Ramalingam et al., 2020). To appropriately adapt the interventions needed for implementation, leadership must identify the organization's current adaptive management state (Struye de Swielande, 2021). Ramalingam et al. (2020) stated that global health centers used strategies to mitigate by allowing the virus to spread to help build up people's immunity until the virus is suppressed. This strategy resulted in medical facilities' beds not being overwhelmed, prompted by the adaptive actions of switching on and off the toleration of infections to propagate from the strict initial measures of preventing infections (Hernandez et al., 2019). The center of this adaptive management is the collective identification of interventions

that work, adjust and combine, iterate, and reiterate as needed to ensure the metrics are safely below the threshold (Ramalingam et al., 2020).

Hernandez et al. (2019) listed the following questions that can assist organizational leaders in establishing adaptation by design:

1. Why the need to adjust? Leaders must identify the triggers that support or challenge the hypothesis that requires intervention.
2. What is needed to adapt? Identify the exact elements and characteristics that have to change. Based on the interventions identified, create a strategy on how to affect change, recognizing when to scale back while keeping others.
3. How should they adapt? Leadership must maintain an open and transparent system of communication that reviews the process and communicates any change when needed.
4. What are the pieces of evidence? Make a list of the facts and data supporting the answers to questions 1 to 3 for stakeholders' and decision-makers' perusal.

According to Hernandez et al. (2019), adaptation by design is the acknowledgment that interventions can be changed and adapted as the learning of the needs grows and that established processes rightly support their evidence. Successfully achieving adaptation management will require the sign-off of the stakeholders and decision-makers on the most effective intervention to implement (Shea et al., 2014). Ramalingam et al. (2020) stated that leadership could use a roadmap adaptive management can take to counter COVID-19. The first is the definition of the key measures or metrics to identify the triggers that can introduce changes to interventions, which could include gathering evidence to monitor spikes in cases, death cases, healthcare capabilities, and the strength of local community support (Hernandez et al., 2019). Once metrics

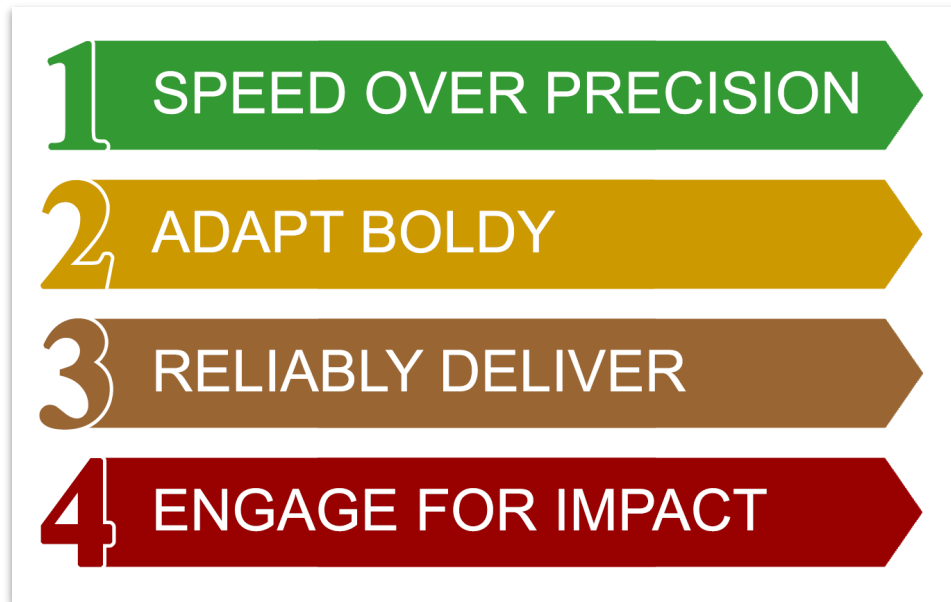
are established, the need to develop a measure to gather the most efficient operational data must be prioritized. Ramalingam et al. (2020) added that clinical data gathering could be organized through collaboration with health professionals, police officers, and community and civic officials concerned about the COVID-19 crisis. When these data are received, they will need to be assessed accurately on how effective the measures are to establish the evidence needed to improve the process of implementing adaptive change. Through careful analyses of the evidence gathered, potential biases can be mitigated (Hernandez et al., 2019). The records documenting the evidence must be transparent for this roadmap to success. Accounting for the actions of all involved in adaptation management can prevent unnecessary biases in the evolution of adaptation changes. Having the records open to the public can have calming effects on minimizing community anxiety and encouraging public engagement (Ramalingam et al., 2020).

Crisis Management Adaptive Behaviors

Leaders must cultivate four behaviors to decide quickly, boldly, reliably deliver, engage for impact, and effectively battle a crisis (Nichols et al., 2020). These four behavior strategies are designed to do that: the first is to decide with speed over precision (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Four Behaviors that Help Leaders Manage a Crisis



Note. “4 Behaviors that help leaders manage a crisis” by Nichols et al. (2020). *Harvard Business Review Digital Articles*, 2-6.

The leader must be decisive, process information quickly, find possible solutions, and decide what actions to take with conviction. When a crisis strikes, pandemonium ensues, and the threat of cognitive overload is real and results in analysis paralysis. The leader must focus only on what matters most and perform quick decision-making to produce a scalable implementation agenda (Nichols et al., 2020). To do this, a leader must define priorities and list three to five important actions, prepare to make trade-offs, list the responsible people, embrace the action to take, and stand to mistakes.

The second behavior is to adapt boldly. The ability to think ahead of the changing situations by asking others for input and recommendations must be achieved. The leader can minimize mistakes by being self-effacing, admitting any shortcomings or lack of knowledge or expertise, and knowing when to bring specialists to the table who can help and document. (Nichols et al., 2020). As any crisis is fluid, the leader must not rely on actions that worked yesterday, as they might not be applicable anymore. Establishing good frontline communication will help find out what is happening and enable a quick reaction to any situation (Nichols et al., 2020).

The third behavior is to deliver reliably. A leader must take ownership even if challenges and turmoil are overwhelming. The team's focus and creation of new metrics must be aligned. Monitoring what is happening, owning responsibility, and creating a culture of accountability within are crucial (Nichols et al., 2020). To successfully do this, a leader must have a bulletin board of daily activities prioritized accordingly, to be managed and updated as reports come in. Metrics that define success and failure must be established, with three to five per week sessions that important people assigned can use to report. Since the leader's role is important, the leader's health and mental acuity must be maintained and upheld, so self-care and a healthy diet and exercise must be routine (Nichols et al., 2020).

The fourth behavior is to engage for impact. Adaptive solutions require a lot of teamwork, so a leader must ensure that the team is equipped, motivated, and thoroughly informed of their responsibilities to the objectives. The leader must know the team's limitations and strengths, be versed in individual members' circumstances, and identify distractions. Connecting with each team member, reaching out for daily status checks, and relating on a personal level will help each member have a sense of teamwork and camaraderie that will

motivate them to be active in the implementation of tasks assigned to them (Nichols et al., 2020). The ability to maintain communication between members of the team and the leader is an important factor in getting things done. Breaking down communication results in subpar results or goals not being completely met. Any success, acts of kindness, or noble deeds must be announced and amplified, as these kinds of deeds in times of crisis can give others hope and motivate them to stay in the course. These four behaviors can make a crisis manageable, but the team must be continually trained to handle a crisis effectively (Nichols et al., 2020).

Pragmatic Model to Combating the Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged corporate and industry leaders to reexamine their leadership skills and competency development preparations. Leaders have quickly developed the competencies needed to adapt to the challenges of the crisis (Wicker, 2021). Many leaders have tried adapting change models to contain COVID-19, focusing on trying to contain the crisis to reestablish stabilization. Still, many have led to disappointment in embracing the disequilibrium in this extended crisis (Jones et al., 2021). To be effective, a leader must carry out a competent decision-making process that requires correctly framing problems, setting outcomes, making plans to affect the measure correctly, committing to actions, and reevaluating the measures to ensure effective implementation (Chandler, 2022). Jones et al. (2021) presented a pragmatic model to assist leaders in having a reliable decision-making process in confronting disasters through crisis zones, adaptation, and growth.

The Crisis Zone

Before a crisis emerges, leaders function in a natural environment facing predictable challenges and normal pressures and accepting disruptions as part of work (Jones et al., 2021). In the crisis zone, it is different as the disruption is uncertain and never seen before and more

magnified. No established rules or processes are set to face them reliably or unexpectedly, with a potentially destructive threat to the company and its stakeholders (Amooee et al., 2022). Jones et al. (2021) stated that chaos, fear, and confusion would prevail, with many organizations and institutions losing control of the situation leading to leaders and employees being pushed out of their comfort zones. These situational factors lead to people's mistrust, undermining their corporate identity and resulting in conflicts regarding their safety and commitment to their work (Jones et al., 2021). In this crisis zone, leaders must gain control of their organization and find means and ways to continue their corporate mission and activities (Chandler, 2022). In an extended crisis like COVID-19, timely and effective communication is pertinent to successfully regaining ground in any organization (Baker et al., 2020). Confidence and trust are attainable through good and capable communication that should include regular updates, validating the current situation, underscoring changes, and updating any new changes as they become available (de Klerk & Palmer, 2021; Jones et al., 2021).

The Adaptive Zone

This zone is characterized by gradually embracing the new reality and where a long-term institutional disequilibrium is accepted as an optimized response to the crisis. An important corporate action is to indoctrinate employees to be prepared to meet the crisis head-on, for doing so will instill confidence and dispel fears (Jones et al., 2021). Any information must be disseminated clearly and transparently to the organization's members to prevent the cycle of fear that can result in a stoppage or delay of work obligations (Abrams, 2020). During this time, leaders must be prepared to answer questions and show their rationale so that ideas from all corners come across more fluidly (Jones et al., 2021). Leaders must identify those sidelined by the crisis and encourage them to go back to work through the appropriate use of contact tracing

and to ask other members of the organization to help find out their situation and how the organization can help as needed (Nelson et al., 2021). Leaders must encourage their employees that holding on to what they are used to will be counterproductive to the reality they currently experience (Su et al., 2021).

The Growth Zone

The growth zone is attained when learning and adapting what works best in a crisis begins to dominate (Nelson et al., 2021). This zone is where leaders develop an adaptive mindset for their employees that would help cement the principles of adaptive change (Jones et al., 2021). Once a majority acquires a fixed mindset, the organization moves forward slowly but will have momentum as more and more people obtain the growth mindset (Lotzer, 2020). The evidence that this zone is reached is people's demonstrability of gratitude, openness to suggestions, view of mistakes as avenues of learning, portraying transparency with themselves and others, and compassion (Lotzer, 2020). One thing that can facilitate this zone moving faster forward is using lower-level leaders to prompt the rest of the employees to implement the adaptive changes (Jones et al., 2021). The crisis, adaptive, and growth zones are framework models that highlight effective processes for working through and learning from crises, intended to help all corporate-level leaders transition from crisis to adaptation to growth (Jones et al., 2021).

Working From Home (WFH)

Working from Home (WFH) or telecommuting is a working concept defined as an arrangement between an organization and an employee that allows workers to work outside the traditional office, typically at home or when traveling. WFH options can range from one employee working remotely to a telecommunication center without any central office (Wienclaw, 2020). From the organization's point of view, offering the WFH opportunity

attracted many highly skilled workers and has been proven to improve employee commitment and engagement (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). About four years ago, four million Americans reported working from home at least 50% of the time, with 52% of employees worldwide working at least once weekly (Chenji & Raghavendra, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic changed this. In 2022, more than 70% of the workers in the U.S. worked remotely, with many employees still doing so (Heidt et al., 2022).

One of the results of the COVID-19 pandemic was making workers work from home. Working from Home (WFH) or telecommuting was an arrangement between an organization and an employee that allowed workers to work outside the traditional office, typically at home or when traveling. Hybrid work or hybrid offices where workers work also resulted from the pandemic. In a typical hybrid work setup, the employee could work from home for certain days and onsite for the rest of the week, ranging from three work days at the office to two at home or vice versa (Ateeq, 2022). In a virtual team, members were disconnected by space and time zone and could come from different cultures (Malhotra et al., 2007). The virtual team working definition consists of two or more workers interacting independently, adapting their work to accomplish a common goal in their specified functions and roles (Mutha & Srivastava, 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses forced their workers to work remotely (Restrepo & Zeballos, 2022). The sudden influx of workers remotely challenged organizational capabilities, including how to manage workers remotely. Under COVID-19, WFH is no longer a luxury. Still, it has become necessary to make businesses productive and keep afloat (Afrianty et al., 2021), and WFH can become a long-term solution in the post-COVID-19 era (Chi et al., 2021). The World Economic Forum reported that 98% of general workers had expressed their desire to telework in their future careers (Dunn, 2020). In the same manner, researchers and

human resource experts estimated that most employees could work efficiently from home (Chi et al., 2021). By the end of 2021, 25–30% of U.S. employees were estimated to work from home, which had increased to 34% by 2020 (Lister, 2020). By 2025, it is estimated that nearly 70% of the workforce will be working from home for five days a month at the least (Castrillon, 2021).

The Benefits of WFH

Alipour et al. (2021) listed a few major benefits that working from home offers:

1. The first is increased productivity and better focus: Working at home enables workers to create working conditions that are optimal for them and afford them a quiet place or solitude to get work done without distractions and interruptions from colleagues (Struck, 1995).
2. Work/life balance: Being at home and without a lengthy commute, workers have more time in their mornings, which allows them to dedicate more time to personal tasks such as caregiving, exercise, or meditation. Working anywhere makes it more efficient for employees to run errands or attend appointments during the day while minimizing commuting time in between; doing so allows them to complete work and personal tasks as efficiently as possible (Beck & Hensher, 2022).
3. No commute: Working from home eradicates the cost associated with commuting work to and from the office. Commuting can be expensive, stressful, or even for employees, depending on where they reside (Goolsbee, 2021). The opportunity to telecommute gives the workers a break from being rushed and the associated stress (Struck, 1995).

The United States Census Bureau mentioned that the average one-way commute is 27.6 minutes nationwide, approximately five hours a week, commuting to the office using a car or

taking the train (Targeted News Service, 2021), and further computation leads to 11 days per year (Alipour et al., 2021). The workers who decide to work from home can get back any commute days and spend those with their families, self-care, and even more on work (Beck & Hensher, 2022). Research has shown that WFH can increase positive emotions, job satisfaction, and commitment levels, plus leverage optimistic feelings that counter emotional fatigue (Niebuhr et al., 2022).

The Negative Effects of WFH

Adaptavist (2020), a digital transformation provider, listed WFH's negative effects based on responses from a survey of 2,800 knowledge workers across the UK, USA, Canada, and Australia. The highest-ranked threat is the absence of boundaries between work and personal lives. The Adaptavist (2020) stated that 21 percent of the respondent cited the integration of work and personal life as the most significant negative impact on their work motivation. The always-active character of technology and the difficulty of turning it off are sources of great stress and frustration, and the incidental temptation to keep working leads to bigger problems (Chi et al., 2021). Dunn (2020) mentioned that most workers do not turn off notifications after work, such as emails or the company's chatting services, leading to this atypical problem.

Palumbo (2020) added another side effect of working from home: the inability to handle the chemistry between work-related commitments and daily life activities resulting from the overlapping interactivity of work and personal life contaminated by personal concerns and work responsibilities (Mudder, 2021). Work engagement lessens the perceptions of work-life balance, and the amplified work produces physical and emotional exhaustion in teleworkers (Palumbo, 2020). Other notable adverse effects are having an anxious disposition due to the prolonged home office activities and the threat of being overweight due to the ready availability of food and

liquid. Other serious effects are compromised work transparency, societal isolation, and the aggravation of closed children's schools and nurseries during the pandemic (Barkin et al., 2022). The following are the top five work factor challenges for managing a remote team: issues with technology use, workload management, difficulty in identifying the status of work, motivation of team members, and understanding their feelings (Adaptavist, 2020).

The WFH Recommendations: COVID-19 and Beyond

Businesses have sustained the lockdowns and work from home since the COVID-19 pandemic triggered the replacement of the official place of work with home offices. Teleworking has ushered in new work behaviors and their associated adverse effects (Agache et al., 2021). Teleworking has its benefits as well as disadvantages. Still, WFH has adverse factors that can lead to losing control of work, thus reducing productivity and resulting in workers' mental and physical deterioration (Barkin et al., 2022). Measures must be performed to counter the negative effects of WFH. Since COVID-19 has forced this WFH adaptive measure, the best practices must be developed to achieve work efficiency, balance life and work, and develop good resistance to physical and mental fatigue (Barkin et al., 2022).

Lopez-Leon et al. (2020) listed recommendations that would help workers combat and minimize stress during the pandemic and then beyond:

1. Create routines: Whether a worker is alone or with others, having a scheduled routine is one of the keys to destressing. An established routine will help organize daily activities, manage time, and allow the worker to focus better on work (Scott, 2022). The worker can train the mind and body to respond positively and gratifyingly. Through time, the more the worker practices managing the WFH situation, the better the worker is less stressed (Paulise, 2021).

2. Be organized: The organization of daily work tasks helps to have efficient productivity and use of time. To-do lists from work must be updated daily, then weekly (Scott, 2022). Once a task is completed, it must be crossed out. Do not stop working not until the task is completed, and if an idea comes up, write it down (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020).
3. Have an adequate home office: Create an ergonomically friendly work area. It must have an appropriate desk, a PC with a keyboard, mouse, monitor(s), an office chair, and adequate lighting (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). The more it resembles the office setup, the better stress reliever it is (Scott, 2022). Finally, defining the home boundary, even if only a small corner of the home is used as a home office, can help the worker mentally shift from work to home duties (Mudder, 2021).
4. Enhance productivity: Maximizing productivity can be achieved by properly prioritizing work, necessitating the worker to enjoy the work (Post, 2022). More challenging work must be addressed first, ensuring the worker's mental capacity is preserved (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). Since work performance will continue to be evaluated, the worker's goals must be sufficiently defined and collaborated with others (managers and coworkers). Productivity will then be met, often raising the productivity bar in the process (Mudder, 2021).
5. Be responsible: Establishing a routine and prioritizing tasks requires an adjusted responsibility to ensure that scheduling is flexible and achievable. Obligatory responsibility is best accomplished by doing things that must be done first, followed by things that must be done (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). The worker overloading oneself with tasks does not reflect good and responsible action. Scheduling meetings

- must be done in good modulation, for an overload is stressful and will take the worker from the allotted time to do the things that must be done (Post, 2022).
6. **Avoid extreme multitasking:** A worker cannot give a hundred percent to one thing and is expected to give another hundred percent to another. Multitasking leads to less attention to detail and being prone to mistakes (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). Suppose a worker has other people in the home. In that case, there must be standing guidelines that the home office is off limits to minimize disruptions when working and to facilitate focus on the fundamental tasks (Paulise, 2021).
 7. **Facilitate communication and networking:** Communicating clearly and promptly enables efficiency when working from home. The worker's manager, coworkers, and subordinates must be updated frequently through regular meetings at least once weekly (Scott, 2022). Connecting with others at work can give the worker a sense of fulfillment; being open to help and allowing others to help generates the same gratification (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020).
 8. **Be balanced:** Every aspect of the worker's wholeness (mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual) must be weighed equally. In addition, eating healthy, sleeping well, and exercising promotes well-being (Scott, 2022). Fresh air and sunlight can help the worker get the needed natural essentials to refresh the body. Taking breaks is a healthy practice and relaxes the body and mind (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020).
 9. **Use available computer programs and platforms:** The worker should use the company's recommended video or messaging software. If these are unavailable, free teleconferencing software can be obtained with minimal costs: Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). Shared files can be stored in a

cloud or as a repository online. A few collaborative online services, such as Google Drive, One Drive, or Microsoft DropBox (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020), provide this.

Working from home carries with it many advantages but also adverse challenges. When workers work from home, the family and work domains collide, integration occurs, and conflicts follow (Mudder, 2021). WFH is isolating and challenges any telecommuting worker's physical and mental state. A plan must be set in action to minimize the adverse effects and to ensure continued efficiency in the job the company requires (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020).

Hybrid Work Office

Hybrid work or hybrid office is a flexible working arrangement between an employer and the employee (Greene, 2022). In a typical hybrid work setup, the employee can work from home for certain days and onsite for the rest of the week, ranging from three work days at the office to two at home or vice versa (Ateeq, 2022). One characteristic of a hybrid work system is that it provides workers with the most efficient way to work that best suits them and feel they can be most productive (Plus Company, 2022). A few workers prefer working primarily in the office, while others opt for a more comfortable home environment. Other workers split their time depending on meeting schedules or the necessity of accessing office facilities and equipment (Christenson & Graham, 2021). The bottom line is that this arrangement provides flexibility enough to allow employees to choose when and where to complete their work tasks using a nontraditional working arrangement (Greene, 2022). By definition, flexible work means the liberty of selecting whether to work remotely or in the office; however, lately, the term hybrid work has expanded to mean the ability to work flexibly (Pelczarski, 2022).

The Benefits of the Hybrid Workplace

Companies converting to hybrid work find the transition intimidating, but the benefits are clear. Hybrid workplaces can help increase productivity, creativity, and collaborative relationship and propagate a more balanced work-life (Donut, 2022). Here are the benefits of a hybrid workplace:

1. **Qualified employees:** Many great workers live in distant cities worldwide, with various cultural and geographical divides. The traditional worker in the office has not allowed many prospects for many who do not live in the company's vicinity or cannot commit to an in-office job (Murugan, 2022). Through a hybrid workforce, companies can open to more qualified employees in any part of the world and diverse workforces (Akhter, 2022). Increasing onsite requirements can improve workforce talent quality and diversity, bringing merit to the word hybrid (Donut, 2022).
2. **Team diversity:** Being at home instead in the office allows workers to contribute to fulfilling corporate goals without driving to and from the office (Mäkitalo, 2021). A multi-diverse team will propagate different perspectives and viewpoints, taking innovation to the next level, as out-of-the-box ideas can result from having a diverse foundation of thoughts as the company moves ahead (The Economic Times, 2021). In addition, having workers from different time zones can benefit the achievement of work ahead of schedule, resulting in the delivery of success not being delayed by being in the 9 AM and 5 PM company's time zone job (Murugan, 2022).
3. **Enhanced creativity:** Time and energy is saved well due to less commute to and from the office (Donut, 2022). Workers who can control their time and schedule can have

more time for relaxation and managing stressors (Murugan, 2022). With less stress and a relaxed atmosphere, workers can have better time management and finish tasks faster, achieving goals quicker (Mäkitalo, 2021).

4. Happy employees: Depending on the city, state, or country, commutes can take up hours for some workers (Mäkitalo, 2021). Letting the workers not worry about traveling or doing it 50% of the time can allow them to have a balanced life at work and home (Donut, 2022). When workers are relaxed, they enjoy their work more, increasing engagement that leads to retention and better productivity (Akhter, 2022; The Economic Times, 2021).
5. Lower operating costs: With fewer onsite workers, businesses can reduce overhead, saving office space rent and operating and maintenance costs (Donut, 2022). More free spaces can translate to converting spaces for communal areas and break places that can be sectioned for workers who want to work solo (Akhter, 2022; Plus Company Updates, 2022).
6. Easy idea tracking and communication: Working at home allows tasks to be easily tracked, simplifying requesting comments or clarification (Donut, 2022). Online communication storage, repository, and archiving have improved greatly over the past couple of years, which resulted in managing messages, chats, online docs, and other files in the cloud more efficiently, producing better brainstorming sessions (Murugan, 2022). This new remote communication phenomenon allowed workers to think creatively and bounce ideas more efficiently (Mäkitalo, 2021).

The hybrid workplace model allows workers to creativity and goal completion faster than in a regular onsite workplace, leading to improved team morale and a balanced work-life

(Murugan, 2022). Employers must fully understand and note these benefits but also acknowledge the risks of having a hybrid workforce before, during, and after transitioning (Donut, 2022).

The Drawbacks of the Hybrid Workplace

The hybrid workplace has pitfalls just as it has benefits because there is no such thing as a perfect working model (Akhter, 2022). Here are the disadvantages of a hybrid workplace:

1. **Difficult to collaborate with remote employees:** Unlike onsite workers who can easily chat over a cooler or bump-ins at the office and, while conversing, can read their body language, remote workers find it harder to communicate with those working onsite and the other way around (Akhter, 2022).
2. **Faster employee burnout:** In a hybrid model, the risk of burnout is greater. Remote workers work more hours and take fewer breaks (Carruthers, 2021). Those working remotely often feel guilty about taking off during the day and overcompensating later. If these are unchecked, they can lead to worker attrition (Akhter, 2022).
3. **Difficulty with hybrid schedules:** As more remote flexibility is ingrained, the work schedule variations become unpredictable (Maresco, 2022). The onsite workers might not be aware of the remote workers' schedules and vice versa, which can lead to resourcing problems (Akhter, 2022).
4. **Not suitable for all industries:** Not every industry can transition to a hybrid workplace. The healthcare field, for example, will not be efficient with the type of care they want for their patients and will require a full-time and onsite setting (Akhter, 2022).

There are so many practical implications the hybrid work puts to the table, such as better health and well-being and encouraging a resilient home life. However, companies must analyze

the disadvantages, such as sedentary behaviors, stress, social isolation, increased rates of overwork, and domestic conflict, that come with it and try to remedy them when transitioning (Moglia et al., 2021).

Challenging Perspectives of the Hybrid Workplace

The norm for the work office is 9 to 5. However, since companies have allowed flexibility regarding where and when workers can work, leaders have recognized the value of work productivity and that it can be done anywhere and anytime (Gratton, 2021). To increase ROI when converting to a hybrid office, companies must consider the challenging perspectives that flexible work brings. The first issue to address is the jobs and tasks. The understanding of the critical factors (energy, focus, coordination, and cooperation) that drive a worker's productivity is influenced by alterations in the working arrangement across time and place (Mitchell, 2021). The next factor that needs action is employee preferences. The ability to work at a peak performance level for workers varies directly proportional to personal preferences (Ateeq, 2022). Each worker is different, so a default preference should not be selected for everybody (Gratton, 2021). Companies should create processes and policies on how work must be done on projects and workflows. Leaders must consider workers' preferences and needs and coordinate how workers can work together with the rest of the team (Gratton, 2021).

Lastly, inclusion and fairness for workers have to be addressed. When telecommuters feel they are not being treated fairly, this dampens their productivity (Mahfoodh et al., 2021), leading to burnout, reduced collaboration, and, worse, attrition (Gratton, 2021). For organizations to effectively use the work anywhere, anytime work model, leaders must identify the key worker jobs and tasks, the workers' productivity and performance drivers, and find the best arrangement

for each (Mitchell, 2021). The process could involve using surveys, meetings, and interviews to filter important qualities of flexible work transition (Gratton, 2021).

Virtual Teams

A virtual team working definition is when two or more workers independently interact, adapting their work to accomplish a common goal in their specified functions and roles (Mutha & Srivastava, 2021). In a virtual team, members are disconnected by space and time zone and may come from different cultures (Malhotra et al., 2007). The virtual team can come with unevenly configured team organization as some workers may work in the same place. Still, others work from home or in other remote locations (Campbell, 2020). Workers placed in a virtual team can possess specialized skills locally or globally, making travel for face-to-face not advisable as it will remove the workers from a local constituency where their vital support is needed (Baldassarre, 2015).

Managing Virtual Teams

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of virtual teams. Virtual teams are expected to continue even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes (Sayenda, 2022). Creating virtual teams poses some serious challenges but can be overcome effectively. The first month of working together for a virtual team is crucial as that determines how functional the virtual team can become (Sayenda, 2022). During that time, operating procedures must be established, and identifying the don'ts must be instituted (Baldassarre, 2015). The entire team must provide individual inputs that can lead to a more achievable venture made real through regular meetings and check-in (Phillips, 2022). Establishing individual and collective capacity must be paired with a continuous review and summary of task progression to establish engagement and baseline productivity (Sayenda, 2022). When organizations provide accurate metrics, correct data-

gathering technology must be used. Leaders must carefully prioritize tasks and filter what has to be done from what needs to be done and from wish lists. The team must view all tasks as shared and take ownership (Phillips, 2022). In leveraging technology for virtual collaboration, software, and platforms have increased and vastly improved team communication (Mutha & Srivastava, 2021). Virtual teams exploring the best medium have better connected the team, efficiently transmitting information, leading to better teamwork (Sayenda, 2022).

Due to virtual distance, the productivity index of work is significantly lowered: trust by 83%, innovation by 93%, and engagement by 80% (Sayenda, 2022). To counter these low levels, leaders must strategically make themselves more available to their team, making their presence felt. That way, members who underperform can be encouraged, and barriers to productivity can be removed (Mutha & Srivastava, 2021). When leaders communicate online, they are sometimes met with silence, a typical result of employees. Leaders must not take this personally, as there is no such thing as over-communicating (Sayenda, 2022). Regular and clear communication is imperative with a virtual team; sending emails is only one option, so leaders must use other forms and communication platforms to reach out (Phillips, 2022).

Finally, employers should empower and promote self-leaders among employees in a virtual workplace. For a leader, the temptation to micromanage a virtual team is always present. Being in a virtual team presents a paradox to the leaders: keep full oversight, but they cannot be in one place at any time (Sayenda, 2022). Leaders can trust their members to do the right thing and should empower each to take action and initiative (Campbell, 2020). By trusting, the members will be emboldened to think outside the box, resulting in innovations and new ideas (Phillips, 2022). By nature, working in a virtual setting challenges workers' well-being (Mutha & Srivastava, 2021). Leaders must be alert to any signs of deterioration of morale. Leaders must

lead by example, embrace this new normal, and not be so focused on productivity that their well-being is compromised (Sayenda, 2022). Leading a virtual team requires a unique management style, which requires considerable attention to maturity (Sayenda, 2022). The leader's primary job is to make the team understand how to be efficient in a virtual setting and facilitate the team to adapt ways to make working in it a reality for each member to have a productive experience (Phillips, 2022).

Summary

This literature review contained comprehensive research information supporting why the adaptive leadership theoretical framework is the solution to the study research questions. The review listed the six fundamental behaviors adaptive leaders work on: get on the balcony, identify the adaptive challenges, regulate distress, maintain disciplined attention, give the work back to the people, and protect leadership voices from below (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). A further review of this theoretical framework reveals four important adaptive concepts that adaptive leaders use to cement their actions: agility, leadership, adaptation, and crisis (Nissim & Simon, 2021). Adaptive leadership focuses on understanding the intricacies of assisting individuals in grasping significant change and successfully facing new and turbulent truths (Brewer, 2022).

This chapter discussed the concepts of crisis, focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic and a list of guidelines leaders can take to combat the challenges that come with it. The information derived is vital to formulating the adaptive leadership principles that can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. This review contained an analysis of how adaptive leadership can effectively deal with a crisis by focusing on what makes crisis management effective and what can make the efforts ineffective (Hayashi & Soo, 2012). A pragmatic model for combating the crisis was also cited.

Many leaders have tried adapting change models to contain COVID-19, focusing on trying to contain the crisis to reestablish stabilization (Heifetz et al., 2009). Still, many have led to disappointment in embracing the disequilibrium in this extended crisis (Jones et al., 2021). To be effective, a leader must carry out a competent decision-making process that requires correctly framing problems, setting outcomes, making plans to effect the measure correctly, committing to actions, and reevaluating the measures to ensure effective implementation (Chandler, 2022).

The concepts of Working from Home and Hybrid Work Office were elaborated. From the organization's point of view, offering the WFH opportunity attracted many highly skilled workers and has been proven to improve employee commitment and engagement (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). The sudden influx of workers remotely challenged organizational capabilities, including how to manage workers remotely. Under COVID-19, WFH is no longer a luxury but has become necessary to make businesses productive and keep afloat (Afrianty et al., 2021). A list of recommendations to help workers combat and minimize stress during the pandemic and beyond was provided (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). A plan must be set in action to minimize the adverse effects and to ensure continued efficiency in the job the company requires (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). In a typical hybrid work setup, the employee can work from home for certain days and onsite for the rest of the week, ranging from three work days at the office to two at home or vice versa (Ateeq, 2022).

Finally, a definition of the virtual team, including how best to manage it, was discussed. In a virtual team, members are dissociated by space and time zone and may come from different cultures (Malhotra et al., 2007). The virtual team can come with unevenly configured team organization as some workers may work in the same place. Still, others work from home or in other remote locations (Campbell, 2020). Workers placed in a virtual team can possess

specialized skills locally or globally, making travel for face-to-face not advisable as it will remove the workers from a local constituency where their vital support is needed (Baldassarre, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of virtual teams, and their existence is expected to continue even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes (Sayenda, 2022). Creating virtual teams poses some serious challenges, and guidelines that will help overcome them effectively were listed and discussed. Leading a virtual team requires a unique management style, which requires considerable attention to maturity (Sayenda, 2022).

Chapter 3 will discuss the research methodology and design that this research used. The target population, study procedures, and data analysis will also be discussed. The study's limitations, delimitations, and ethical assurances will be detailed.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The current COVID-19 crisis has taken a massive medical and economic toll on humanity (Wiebers & Feigin, 2020). During the pandemic, governments worldwide had difficulty dealing with the crisis and its effects on their economy. Emerging and developed countries are trying to deal with COVID-19's economic effects. The economies of many countries were failing fast and demanded resilient leadership to help provide emergency strategies to combat COVID-19's disastrous effects (Aleem et al., 2021). The consequential breaking down of the economic and healthcare systems signaled a new era on how best to reface the world when the crisis is neutralized (Gopinath, 2020). Government and corporate leadership will have a big role in shaping the post-pandemic economic situation (Dirani et al., 2020).

This qualitative single case study addressed corporate technology leaders' lack of preparedness and training to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research addressed how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance and welfare in times of crisis. This study aimed to seek an adaptive corporate mindset that would prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands of the situation and enact steps that would assist in communication, goal setting, and accountability problems when facing a crisis. The research used a process tracing a single phenomenon (Gerring, 2004). The data gathered using in-depth questioning helped define the adaptive leadership principles to help corporate leaders create an adaptive corporate mindset during crises (Drew, 2014).

This chapter contained a summation of the research methodology and design for the study. The population and the number of sample participants used were discussed. A description of the instruments used in the study was provided that aligned with the research process.

Assumptions, limitations, and ethical considerations relating to the study were examined. Finally, the chapter concluded with a summary of the research methods discussed.

Research Methodology and Design

Qualitative researchers are curious about what people ascribe to their lives while trying to understand the innermost frames of mind as reality reveals itself to their being (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Qualitative researchers identify themselves with the people they study to fully comprehend how participants see things through their eyes, focusing on their past and current situations (Blumer, 1969; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). In qualitative research, it is pertinent to set aside notions of how the world functions (Blumer, 1969) and view the events as if it is happening for the first time (Bruyn, 1966). Qualitative research is deemed inductive because the conglomeration of concepts, insights, and comprehension of data patterns can help conceptualize models, hypotheses, or theories (Taylor et al., 2016). Glaser & Strauss (1967) added that qualitative research is flexible, requiring creativity and intuition instead of quantitative or mechanical. Data collection can lead to conclusive findings that render the study findings significant through the correct analytic setup and quality time spent with the participants (Taylor et al. 2016).

The qualitative research used in this study encompassed the collection and analysis of data to develop concepts, understand impressions, and comprehend experiences while gathering insights into a problem or generating new ideas (Bhandari, 2022). The qualitative methodology captured descriptive data of the observable behavior through the participants' spoken words (Taylor et al. 2016). This qualitative research allowed an understanding of how the world was experienced (Bhandari 2022). Qualitative research allowed for flexibility and helped the retention of the rich meaning upon interpretation of the data (Smith, 2021). The qualitative

research was naturalistic and used methods that assimilated participants' actions in real life, underscoring discrete interaction with them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During the participant observation, the researcher tried to blend with the environment and used questions that modeled normal conversation instead of following a question-and-answer guide (Taylor et al. 2016). Taylor et al. (2016) stated that sometimes it is hard to remove researchers' influence on their study participants. Still, the researcher can attempt to minimize these effects during data interpretation, which in this case, the researcher adapted. The intended qualitative data of this study encompassed determining the particular frequency of traits or characteristics of managers on how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. The researcher assessed how an adaptive corporate mindset would prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands of the situation and enact steps that would assist in communication, goal setting, and accountability problems when facing a crisis.

On the other hand, quantitative research requires systematically investigating phenomena through quantifiable data using statistical and computational methodologies (Landrum & Garza, 2015). A quantitative study aims to validate or negate a suggested hypothesis by analyzing data using numbers and statistical procedures to test objective theories (Creswell, 2009). The quantitative process is deductive and uses a higher sample size through a cause-and-effect methodology (Smith, 2021), and is often represented as numbers and analyzed using mathematical expressions (Mulisa, 2021). This type of research is characterized by the study of choice for testing hypotheses and theories while looking for generalized discoveries (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Quantitative research also investigates the cause-and-effect relationship of variables and predicts variability from others, lowering researcher bias and speed of analysis.

Quantitative and qualitative research have dissimilarities in the data used (Choy, 2014). This type of research makes it inappropriate for single-use case studies, for quantitative research displays hard data numerically, while qualitative research uses subjective information that can be opinionated (Maxwell & Reybold, 2015). Apart from data, the distinction between the two becomes philosophical historically as the two share several major characteristics (Mulisa, 2021). Both possess strengths and weaknesses, but the study will flourish if the researchers follow their research purpose and goal (Choy, 2014).

For this study, qualitative research was used as there was a need to understand a new concept: how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. This study did not select quantitative research because quantitative analyses are inexhaustible. Researchers must execute the methodology in every detail, or the resulting numbers will be misleading and lead to pitfalls (Nielsen, 2004). Nielsen (2004) added that if researchers rely only on numbers without proper understanding and discernment, they have difficulty finding an alternative when things do not go well. The intended qualitative data of this study encompassed the determination of the particular frequency of traits or characteristics of managers on how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. The researcher assessed how an adaptive corporate mindset would prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands of the situation and enact steps that help in communication, goal setting, and accountability problems when facing a crisis.

There are five types of qualitative research designs (Creswell, 1994). The first is ethnography, which involves studying the subjects in their natural environment. Ethnographic researchers use observation or face-to-face interviews to gather data over a specified period

(Kruth, 2015). In ethnography, researchers immerse themselves in the participants' environment to better comprehend the experiences regarding their goals, challenges, and motivations to derive a general theme (Sauro, 2015). The researchers experience the participants' environment firsthand and often act as participant-observer rather than relying on interviews or surveys (Roper & Shapira, 2000). Ethnographic situations cannot be exactly reconstructed as they are unique, so researchers find it hard to replicate research methods failing to produce identical data results (LeCompte & Goetz 1982). Ethnography was not selected because the environment to reproduce the manager's work situation will be difficult to duplicate, and immersion in the participants' setting is not feasible due to COVID-19 risks (Hammersley, 2006).

The next type of qualitative research design is narrative inquiry. This approach requires interlacing a series of events from one or two participants to find a unified story (Sauro, 2015). Sauro (2015) added that it uses in-depth interviews that span weeks, months, and even years to form the story participants tell of themselves. Usually, researchers are interested in finding how participants narrate their reality versions and often reject the single truth (Taylor et al., 2016). This qualitative design data is drawn from a relatively small number of subjects making generalization and comparison across organizations difficult (Eastoe et al., n.d.). Eastoe et al. (n.d.) added that the small depth of the participants' experiences and how they interpret the phenomenon can be subjective and tend to skew the story. One huge factor that faces narrative inquiry is that it is difficult to represent the experiences of the participant and the researcher over time, as this kind of research requires living alongside each other for the whole duration (Clandinin, 2018). In addition, the difficulty expressing these progressing experiences in ethical texts, whether for textbooks, journals, or dissertations, has been difficult (Clandinin, 2018). Since the problem to be addressed in this study was the lack of preparedness and training of corporate

leaders to adapt to their workforce remotely, the ability to narrate a story of participants in their natural settings during COVID-19 restrictions makes narrative inquiry inappropriate for this study.

Another type of qualitative research design is phenomenology. This design often describes an event, activity, or phenomenon as human behavior based on what people say and do (Taylor et al., 2016). The phenomenological design uses data-gathering tools such as interviews, reading documents, watching videos, or visiting places and events to understand participants' meaning of the phenomenon being examined, relying on their perspectives to provide purposeful insights (Sauro, 2015). Sauro (2015) added that this requires many interviews between 5 to 25 for common themes to gather the information that will constitute a good data set for analysis to have a valid finding. Regoli (2017) listed the major disadvantages of using phenomenological research. Determining the variables' validity and reliability being researched can make the subjectivity of the study difficult. The drawback of introducing research-induced bias and the near impossibility of presenting the highly qualitative nature of research results makes the findings barely useful (Regoli, 2017). Phenomenology does not apply to this study because the intended research is not to explore the participants' lived experiences but to gather in-depth data on what strategies will prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands when facing a crisis.

The fourth qualitative research design is grounded theory, which involves developing a theory through an accumulation of data collection to compare it with other theories found in related literature (Smith, 2021). Using open and axial coding techniques, researchers using interviews and existing documents can discover what is needed to build a theory based on the data collected (Sauro, 2015). In addition, the researcher must work in authentic environments where the behavior occurs to fully analyze the participants' perspectives based on their living

settings (Goulding, 2002). Bryant & Charmaz (2019) added a few significant disadvantages of grounded theory. First, this type of research collects a huge amount of data that needs to be sifted. Second, the researchers must have a good working knowledge of grounded theory methods. Third, no specific guidelines on labeling categories make categorization difficult. And fourth, grounded theory is founded on building upon existing theories, and this study is not fully based on existing theories found in related literature (Smith, 2021). As this study will address how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic, the grounded theory cannot achieve its purpose because of its exploratory nature, and the aim is not to develop a new theory.

The final qualitative research design is the case study, which involves single phenomenon research through a specific period requiring an intensive, systematic investigation of a single individual, group, or community (Gustafsson, 2017). In business research, case studies can have three significant categories: explanatory, which answers the “how” and “why”; descriptive, which analyzes the event sequence over time; and exploratory, which tries to find the “what and “who” of the study (Sheppard, 2020, p. 59). Exploratory case studies are most useful in understanding problems or phenomena that are not yet fully defined due to little or no previous documented knowledge (Mills et al., 2010). Exploratory case studies propel the definition of the essential questions and hypotheses to progress in consequent studies (Mills et al., 2010). A case study analysis could be made for singular or multiple cases.

There are three types of singular cases: a retrospective, which refers to the gathering of information involving a past phenomenon; the second is a snapshot which studies a unique period juxtaposed over time until an image is formed; third is diachronic, which is the study of change over a longitudinal period (Starman, 2013). For the multiple cases, the distinct types are

as follows: the nested, which compares elements within one case; next is the parallel, where cases are all transpiring and researched simultaneously; and third, sequential, where cases happen consecutively with an assumption that what happens at one time will affect the others (Starman, 2013).

Among these qualitative methods, an exploratory case study was selected for this research. The case study explored corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The single case study, more specifically the retrospective, helped determine if a dealing or other manipulation impacts the phenomenon that can affect a participant more than a multi-case study, even with limited resources (Lobo et al. 2017). Qualitative case studies were appropriate in this study as the objective does not include controlling behaviors or outcomes (Yin, 2018). Gerring (2004) mentioned that the best method to use is qualitative when the investigation is conducted in a field that involves process tracing of a single case investigating a single phenomenon, which this study had. This case study aimed to find a general description of a person, organization, event, or institution and identify the case's key issues (Willis, 2014). Once identified, an analysis of the case revealed significant theoretical concepts that recommend a course of action to help solve a problem (Willis, 2014).

Population and Sample

The target population for the proposed research was corporate technical leaders residing in the Tri-State area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania who manage a team with five to nine direct reports. Since the problem to be addressed in this study was the lack of preparedness of leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic, selecting participants from the Tri-State area ensured alignment after the selection of

technical managers was made from this population. Since technical managers possessed a certain homogeneity, and the purpose of the study was narrowly defined, a small sample size was used (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). A sample of 12 managers were recruited to participate. Boddy (2016) suggested that 12 interviews would be more than appropriate to produce a good meta-analysis eligible for the study. According to Hennink & Kaiser (2022), saturation could be reached within a narrow range of interviews (from 9 to 17) or focus group discussions (from 4 to 8), particularly those with comparatively similar study populations with delineated goals. Qualitative samples that are small and purposively selected by capability can afford relevant information to the phenomenon being studied (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

The purposive sampling technique was used. This type of sampling was a non-probability selection where the researcher relied on judgment when electing participants to participate in the research (Campbell et al., 2020). This purposive sampling enabled the researcher to gather valuable data by sifting information, making it more cost-effective and efficient, especially since there were limited contributors to the study (Campbell et al., 2020). Once a conceptual framework was established, the sampling strategy stemmed logically, addressing the study's research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015). In addition, Palinkas et al. (2015) mentioned that this sampling method required the presence of a clear inference that would allow credible explanations from the study. Once the sampling was feasible, ethical measures were used, and the practicability of data was attained (Campbell et al., 2020).

The eligibility criteria for participants were (1) corporate supervisors for three or more years, (2) have five or more direct reports, (3) work in the Tri-State Area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and (4) use video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their team. The participants were recruited through LinkedIn groups, primarily the UXPA -

User Experience Professionals Association International, Scrum Practitioners, Scrum Masters, Interaction Design Association, Front-End Developer Group, Agile UX, Scaled Agile Framework® (SAFe®), and User Experience Professionals Network. Coordination with the LinkedIn administrators was initiated, and a formal request was submitted requesting permission from LinkedIn to recruit the participants. Once approval was granted, the next step was to send formal invites to the target participants via the LinkedIn message service. The participants were asked to contact the researcher about their intent to participate in the study directly, and participants were scheduled accordingly. This study collected data from the participants using semi-structured individual interviews and open-ended questions with a timeline of 30 minutes, identifying how retention of adaptive leadership principles can prepare corporate leaders to be efficient leaders in this pandemic. The study followed the anonymity and confidentiality protocols strictly. The study observed confidentiality for the whole process: recruitment, initial data collection, recording, use of information for analysis, dissemination of the findings, and storage and disposal of records (Walford, 2005).

Instrumentation

The study collected data through semi-structured individual interviews. Semi-structured interviews ensured that the maintenance of the data structure gave the participants control over the information shared while allowing the researcher to have control in guiding the conversation (Plowright, 2011). The interviews used video conferencing software, Microsoft Teams, as the researcher and participants were not in the same location. The semi-structured interviews used open-ended questions that identified the adaptive corporate mindset that would help prepare corporate leaders to face a crisis. Open-ended questions explored the participants' critical thinking, ideas, creativity, and emotions to elaborate on a point (Sull, 2021). Participants were

made sure not to be led to answer questions that predisposed them to respond positively or negatively (Sull, 2021).

The primary data collection instrument was research interviews. The research interview was conducted to explore perspectives on a particular situation, idea, or circumstance (Creswell, 2009). There are three types of research interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (McLeod, 2014). The structured interview follows an order of predetermined questions that participants answer in the same order. Unstructured is when nothing is prepared and informally conducted. Finally, semi-structured is when components follow both structured and unstructured. The researcher designed the series of questions but made a few additional questions, if necessary, to clarify any points (McLeod, 2014). The semi-structured interviews were used in this study as this allowed for (1) the collection of open-ended qualitative data information, (2) exploring the participant's thoughts, feelings, and opinions about a specific issue, and (3) probing into the personal and delicate substance.

The study interview protocol followed the tips suggested by Jacob & Furgerson (2012):

1. Use scripts to open and close the interview: A script to open will allow the sharing of information and critical details of the informed consent to the participant, and one that closes will enable the participant to share additional thoughts discussed during the interview (Schwandt, 1997).
2. Collect informed consent: A consent form for the participant to read and sign before the interview will be attained (Saks & Golshan, 2013).
3. Start with the basics. Asking a few background information questions can help break the ice and allow an open conversation throughout the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

4. Create open-ended questions: These will allow the user to share a more detailed experience (McLeod, 2014).
5. Ensure questions are informed by existing research: The literature study must be thorough on the topic and design appropriate research questions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).
6. Start with easier-to-answer questions: Then, concrete questions that participants can respond to quickly and easily to establish trust and rapport (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).
7. Use prompts: Prepared prompts will allow participants to discuss the prominence of events, attributes, and experiences, the natural structure of events, insights into the cause and effect of the phenomena, and behaviors and views related to sensitive topics (Jiménez & Orozco, 2021).
8. Be prepared to revise protocol during and after the interview: Depending on the interview, be ready to adapt the protocol to make the conversation flow naturally (Creswell, 2009).
9. Respect the interview's length: Six to ten well-written questions can last about an hour. Value the participants' time for the interview and stick with the time allotted (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).
10. Practice the questions with a colleague: Testing them with a colleague will allow a review of the questions to see if they make sense (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).
11. Clear the study with the school's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB will ensure that correct protocols and ethical study procedures will be followed (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

The research questions guided the development of the interview guide and were made to be open-ended and clear, and did not contain leading questions (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). In addition, the questions avoided the use of jargon, and no familiar languages were included. DeJonckheere & Vaughn (2019) recommended the use of the following set of questions that the study followed: (1) grand tour, which consists of general questions that the participant knows a lot about; (2) core questions, questions related to the information needed by the study; (3) planned follow-up, sub-questions that may be asked in follow up of the core questions; (4) random follow-up questions, which are anything that may arise during the interview based on how the participants respond.

Study Procedures

The first step was to contact LinkedIn Customer Support and ask for permission and guidance on recruiting participants from each LinkedIn group. The LinkedIn groups were: UXPA - User Experience Professionals Association International, Scrum Practitioners, Scrum Masters, Interaction Design Association, Front-End Developer Group, Agile UX, Scaled Agile Framework® (SAFe®), and User Experience Professionals Network. After receiving the IRB approval, the researcher sent a recruitment email to share on the LinkedIn groups using the approved Recruitment Social Media Post that included the instructions to contact the researcher directly if interested. Once contact was made, the researcher emailed the IRB-approved consent letter with instructions to read the consent letter and that if the participant agreed with the content, they replied that they had read and understood the content and consented to participate. Interviews were scheduled depending on the availability of the participant and the researcher after the response email was received. Before the scheduled interview commenced, the consent letter was again discussed with the participant, including an explanation of a \$90 gift card from

Amazon through email for their participation. Upon initial screening of the participants during the interview, many were found not to fit the participant's requirements. A respondent-driven sampling technique was applied to obtain more participants until the 12 number was met.

Interviews were scheduled depending on the participants' availability and the researcher's time.

This study collected data from the participants using semi-structured individual interviews and open-ended questions for 30 minutes to identify how retention of adaptive leadership principles can prepare corporate leaders to be efficient leaders in this pandemic. Video recordings allowed the researcher to accurately capture the participants' answers during the interview (Asan & Montague, 2014). The interview recordings were transcribed using the Transcribe online application. The study followed the confidentiality protocols, strictly observing confidentiality from recruitment, the initial collection of data, the use of information for analysis, the dissemination of the findings, and the storage and disposal of records (Walford, 2005). The research process followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines and abided by the confidentiality protocols. The researcher secured any electronic data to the best of the researcher's ability, using best practices for three years from the collection date. After three years of secure storage, the researcher would destroy the data, rendering it irretrievable. Any electronic data would be erased digitally rather than simply deleting it.

Data Analysis

Once the 12 interviews were transcribed, another instrumentation, NVivo Software, was used to analyze captured audio (Elliott-Mainwaring, 2021). NVivo provided a playback ability for the audio files that automatically perform the transcription of interviews. A possible downside of using NVivo for qualitative data analysis is the time to understand its capabilities and instrumentation. The researcher experienced a learning curve using NVivo that delayed the

data analysis. The data organization was important to the quality of the research, and the NVivo full functionalities were fully maximized to describe the data analysis systematically (Chen & Zhang, 2014). This enabled consistency throughout the entire process and preserved the integrity of the study (Saunders et al., 2015). The researcher identified the recurring themes and was able to answer the research questions, thus achieving a high standard (Stuckey, 2015). The data analysis followed an iterative process to develop a thematic analysis (Saunders et al., 2015). Castleberry & Nolen (2018) described how data analysis can be achieved using five stages: (1) compiling, (2) disassembling, (3) reassembling, (4) interpretation, and (5) conclusion.

The research strategy of triangulation enhanced the validity and credibility of the research results by using multiple datasets, methods, and theories to address the research questions (Carter et al., 2014). Methodological triangulation was used to collect in-depth data from individual interviews, demographic questionnaires, and field notes. The in-depth individual (IDI) interviews allowed spontaneity, flexibility, and responsiveness to the questions. Carter et al. (2014) added that transcribing the conversation and analyzing the text requires substantial effort and time; however, IDI produced more concrete ideas, discussed pertinent topics, and stimulated uncovered themes.

The following steps helped ensure that field notes were effectively taken during interviews (Eisenhauer, n.d.): (1) the researcher organized the notes into sections and subsections, (2) timestamps were recorded to include key phrases or themes to track, (3) the researcher used a note-ready document prepared in advance where important notes and summaries were written down to capture important portions of the interview, (4) and any important quotes during the interview were captured verbatim, with a capture of the time stamp

to bookmark it. Using NVivo, the researcher identified and categorized the primary themes, associated categories, codes, and descriptions for each research question.

Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions followed the qualitative research subjected to the researcher's personal and world views (Creswell, 2013). One assumption was that the study's sample would participate knowingly and willfully without fear of criticism, pressure, or harm and not give impractical answers based on personal interpretation of what approach/strategies would help the study. Another assumption was that the study sample would understand the research question and answer honestly and with integrity. An epistemic assumption was to design this research without personal bias and keep the design, examination, and conveyance of the research questions that produce data with enough quality to ensure a viable study focused on the research problem during data collection. A lack of in-depth understanding of the dynamic range of the research setting could influence researchers to unintentionally impose their views on the research study, resulting in invalid data (Pelzang & Hutchinson, 2018). The researcher assumed that the highest level of familiarity with the research topic would result in data collection and analysis free of preconceived biases.

Limitations

Qualitative research was not completely flawless and without limitations (Queirós et al., 2017). Citing limitations assisted the researcher in ensuring ways to mitigate their effect. The research has the following limitations. First, the single case study could result in more generalized research data of the studied sample. A small number of cases could limit the validity or generality of research findings (Walker & Carr, 2021). To mitigate the effects of generalizability, the researcher emphasized the research scope and variance to include warranting

the performance of more observations or interviews (Barnes et al., 2022). Barnes et al. (2022) added that doing so controlled the average random errors and increased the research's precision. The second limitation was that the reliability and validity of the information obtained through witnesses or participants may be weak (Queirós et al., 2017). Unless actual participants experienced the direct involvement offered during data collection, the information obtained during interviews could be construed as not being from a reliable source. To mitigate this, the researcher ensured that each participant met participation requirements. Participants were corporate leaders who managed a team with five to nine direct reports and used video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their team. They have been managers for at least the past three years. Other potential limitations were identifying the exact time needed for each interview and the probability of scheduling conflicts with the interviews. The researcher scheduled each interview to fit the timeline provided by the participant. Alternate dates are planned if the participant cannot meet the originally scheduled date. Scheduling was done with exact dates, with friendly reminders sent to participants when the date and time neared.

Delimitations

Since the researcher set limitations, the researcher developed the delimitations to ensure the research proceeded efficiently. Delimitations are characteristics that bind the scope of the study, define its boundaries (Simon, 2011) and explain what the study will cover or not cover, including the listing of methodologies and approaches to follow (Naar, 2021). The first delimitation was corporate technology sector leaders' lack of preparedness and training to adapt their workforce to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose statement would address how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. The study explicitly

stated the intent, including what would be covered. The second delimitation was the scope. This study made clear that a single case qualitative research would identify the adaptive leadership principles that would assist corporate leaders in categorizing steps to create an adaptive corporate mindset to help leaders be more effective when another deadly crisis surfaces. Third, the recruitment process was restricted to technical managers meeting the criteria, limiting any additional recruitment that satisfies the requisites. Fourth, participants would be able to respond appropriately to the open-ended interview questions by sharing personal opinions and perceptions of the lack of preparedness and training of corporate technology sector leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, since the COVID-19 pandemic was not totally removed, the researcher conducted the interviews through Microsoft Teams and not face-to-face.

Ethical Assurances

This research study met all ethical codes required by the IRB of the National University. The study was approved by National University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data collection. According to Anabo et al. (2019), informed consent is the most efficient way of ensuring that the ethical principle of volunteering is practiced. The researcher informed all participants of the study's purpose, why it was conducted, the research process, and any risks to participants. Participants were informed that the study would ensure the privacy and confidentiality of their personal information by securely storing the data. Pseudonyms were used instead of actual names to minimize risks or discomfort for participants. The researcher adhered to the three ethical principles regarding human subject research recommended by the Belmont Report: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Anabo et al., 2019). The researcher kept confidential information secure to protect the participants and will notify them if any information

is breached. The data would be stored for three years from the collection date in a safe environment with password protection that the researcher can only open. Lastly, the researcher strived to ensure ethical practices, demonstrate integrity, and adhere to all IRB guidelines.

Summary

This chapter outlined the researcher's research methodologies and detailed the selected qualitative research design. The target population for the study was corporate technical leaders residing in the Tri-State area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania who manage a team with five to nine direct reports. Semi-structured individual interviews were used to collect data and then carefully reviewed and manually transcribed by the researcher. The assumptions followed qualitative research subjected to the researcher's personal and world views (Creswell, 2013). The researcher assumed that the highest level of familiarity with the research topic would result in data collection and analysis free of preconceived biases. Qualitative research is not flawless and without limitations; thus, citing limitations assisted the researcher in mitigating their effect (Queirós et al., 2017). Since the researcher set limitations, delimitations were developed to ensure the research proceeded as expected. Delimitations would bind the scope of the study that defined its boundaries (Simon, 2011) and explained what the study would cover or not cover. This study followed all ethical codes required by the IRB at National University. After IRB approval, informed consent was sent out to participants. The researcher discussed and made all participants aware of the study's information, why it was conducted, the research process, and any risks to participants, plus incentives of a \$90 Amazon gift card for those who completed their participation. The researcher adhered to the three ethical principles regarding human subject research recommended by the Belmont Report: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Anabo et al., 2019).

The intended qualitative data of this study was to be the foundation of determining managers' particular traits or characteristics on how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. Among the qualitative methods, the case study design was determined the most appropriate for it assisted in exploring the corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lobo et al. 2017). The single case study, more specifically retrospective, assisted in determining if a dealing or other manipulation impacted the phenomenon even with limited resources for this research (Lobo et al. 2017). The recruited participants were corporate leaders who manage a team with five to nine direct reports, use video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their team, and have been managers for at least three years. Since they have experienced working during COVID-19, they were valuable sources of information for the research needs.

The research process followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines and strictly abide by the confidentiality protocols. Study permissions were asked from LinkedIn group administrators and LinkedIn support, with the response forwarded to IRB for approval of the study. The research questions guided the development of the interview guide. The data collection focused on semi-structured individual interviews using open-ended questions and identified the adaptive corporate mindset that would help prepare corporate leaders to face a future crisis. The researcher used video conferencing software since participants were not in the same location. The semi-structured interviews used open-ended questions that did not contain leading questions (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Chapter 4 contains the themes discovered by the data analysis based on the interviews, including the summary of the evaluation of the findings with the key points itemized as they relate to the problem, purpose statements, and research questions.

Chapter 4: Findings

The problem to be addressed in this study was the lack of preparedness and training of corporate technology sector leaders to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to address how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. This study sought an adaptive corporate mindset that aimed to prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands of the situation and enact steps that would assist in communication, goal setting, and accountability problems when facing a crisis. Twelve corporate supervisors/managers were interviewed individually. The eligibility criteria were that participants: (a) had been a corporate supervisor for three or more years; (b) have five or more direct reports; (c) work in the Tri-State Area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; (d) and used video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their team. The interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams. The purpose and problem statements addressed three research questions. The research questions that were addressed in the study were:

RQ1. How did corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training impact their ability to adapt the workforce to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

RQ2. How can corporate leaders adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?

RQ3. What adaptive leadership principles do corporate leaders consider as a coping strategy toward creating an adaptive corporate mindset?

This chapter discussed the results and interpretation of data obtained from the interviews. Careful steps were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the data outlined in the

following section. The demographic background of the participants is listed. The study limitations and ethical concerns related to this study were examined. The results from the data were organized based on the research questions and themes. Finally, the chapter concluded with an evaluation of the findings and a summary of the results. A thematic analysis identified the patterns and themes in the data, which described the characteristics respondents felt were needed for core, adaptive, and innovative leadership. This approach to analyzing qualitative data is common and allows for examining and emphasizing patterns in perceived leadership characteristics and describing associated phenomena.

Trustworthiness of the Data

In qualitative studies, establishing trustworthiness involves four means (Adler, 2022). First is the credibility of how the truth of the research findings is confidently gathered (Polki et al., 2014). The second is the transferability of findings that apply to the same situations, phenomena, or groups of people (Barusch et al., 2011). Third is confirmability, where the researcher's bias or intent is neutral, resulting in the data analysis of participants' responses being the sole reference of the truth (Hayashi et al., 2021). Fourth is dependability which means that the study should be repeatable and that other researchers will have enough information to obtain a similar finding (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Adler (2022) purported that trustworthiness is best evaluated by looking at credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The IRB-approved consent letter was emailed to participants before conducting the interviews. Each participant acknowledged receipt and understanding of the research purpose and topic. At the start of the interview, demographic questions that addressed work history, gender, age, and supervisory experience were asked of the participants. The interview then

commenced with a detailed script that followed the Interview Protocol. Katz-Buonincontro (2022) stated that if interview protocols are designed so that each participant understands what was asked, it will ensure consistent data collection and better analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Participants were sent the \$90 Amazon gift card after the interview.

The interviews were recorded in Microsoft Teams and were transcribed using an online service called transcribe.com. Data accuracy was ensured through a thorough review of each transcription that captured not only the main context of the interview but also by removing unnecessary non-verbal language that makes up human speech (Oi et al., 2015). Using NVivo software helped the researcher organize, analyze and find insights in the semi-structured interviews based on an interview protocol, allowing the classifying, sorting, and arrangement of information through coding to examine relationships in the data. NVivo also helped the researcher combine the analysis by linking, shaping, searching, and modeling to identify themes.

Credibility

Credibility is regarded as the most important condition in ascertaining trustworthiness because it addresses the issue of conformity with reality (Stahl & King, 2020). According to Liao & Hitchcock (2018), credibility necessitates truthful representation of judicious investigative assertions using a systematic course of action in research. This study followed the same process of diligent preparation as required to understand and apply the necessary credibility techniques to have balance to justify the research findings and ensure that the research was conducted properly, ethically, and accurately (Wood et al., 2020). The primary design techniques cover the fundamental elements of describing the design and approaches and their relative alignment to the research questions (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). These techniques included the sampling and participant recruitment plan of 12 managerial participants. The same interview protocol and

process were followed for each participant (Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). Liao & Hitchcock (2018) added that having a neutral demonstration of awareness of assumptions and influence by the researcher in this study assisted in monitoring influence and helped control personal biases leading toward a credible study (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Methodological triangulation, frequently used in qualitative studies, may include interviews, observation, and field notes (Hayashi et al., 2021). The transcription and analysis of the interviews require substantial effort and time to produce more concrete ideas, discuss sensitive topics, and stimulate discussion about the issues asked (Carter et al., 2014). As this research addressed how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis, in-depth interviews were performed to understand what the managers perceived as the best resolution (Nasheeda et al., 2019). The following steps ensured that copious field notes were effectively taken during the interviews: (1) the researcher organized the notes into sections and subsections during the interview, (2) timestamps were recorded to include key phrases or themes to track, (3) a journal was prepared in advance where important notes and summaries were written down so that what was discussed for future references, (4) any important quotes during the interview were captured verbatim with a capture of the time stamp to bookmark it. Methodological triangulation included an in-depth analysis of the interview transcripts, reflective field notes, and demographic questionnaires. The questions designed for the questionnaire produced consistent responses across the research questions and study topic. These responses were made across varying industry office environments as the participants belong to different industry organizations. Many perceptions and notes were coherent with the participants' opinions. The comments and notes

were significant because the themes were built upon common responses. These results suggested that triangulation provided credibility and confirmability that increased trustworthiness.

Transferability

Transferability is replicating the study's findings in a new and specific setting, presuming that its effectiveness would remain the same and that the findings apply to other situations (Burchett et al., 2011). Thick descriptions amplify transferability by providing detailed interpretations of observed situations complemented by contextual information (France, 2022). Open-ended questions enhance responses with thick descriptions to provide meaningful experiences while focusing on people in their context, thus supporting data gathering and analysis (Yin, 2011). This research used the same questions for all participants with the same interview setting to capture detailed descriptions of behaviors, experiences, and context (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Since the sample size of participants in this study was only twelve, sound generalizability may not be feasible as it would require a larger and broader population. However, this study can be defined as extending research findings and conclusions applied to the population at large from research on a sample population (Forero et al., 2018). The study's transferability may not involve broad claims but invites research readers to make connections between how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis and their own experience (Nyirenda et al., 2020).

Dependability

Dependability is work repeatable using similar methods and participants in the same context and with similar results (Janis, 2022). A study depends on how much it can be replicated by one researcher or a team of researchers (Nyirenda et al., 2020). Forero et al. (2018) stated that

for the findings of any qualitative inquiry to be repeatable, it is best to prepare detailed drafts of the study protocol throughout the study, develop a detailed recording of the data collection process, and measure coding accuracy and intercoders' reliability of the research team. This study followed that exact interview protocol, and participants were asked the same questions. A detailed collection record of data received was kept, and since there is only one interviewer and the same data gatherer gathering data, reliability was accomplished (Janis, 2022).

Confirmability

Confirmability ensures that other researchers confirm or corroborate the study's results (Forero et al., 2018). Confirmability conveys the researcher's neutrality when interpreting the data, ensuring it is free of biases since the researcher designed the tools used (Nyirenda et al., 2020). Since qualitative research is reflective, cognizance and openness to the study and results must be maintained. The researcher needs a self-critical attitude, considering how preconceptions affect the research (Janis, 2022). According to Forero et al. (2018), the strategies are to maintain research journals or diaries and apply triangulation techniques to achieve confirmability consistency. As this was an important step in indicating trustworthiness, carefully selecting the participants was conducted where criteria were carefully selected. To prevent bias and be neutral, the researcher wrote the questions objectively and inclusively to receive respect and trust from the participants and avoid alienating any participant. In this study, careful notes were taken in each interview performed through MS Teams. All recorded sessions were transcribed online, and a more thorough review was done for the accuracy of the verbal communication and written notes, including removing unnecessary linguistic ties. NVivo was used to organize, analyze and find insights referencing the transcripts of the interview sessions.

Results

Data collection was conducted using the interviews of 12 corporate supervisors based on how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. All participants were corporate supervisors for three or more years, had five or more direct reports, and worked in the Tri-State Area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Each participant used video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their team. Table 3 provides an overview of each participant's demographic and professional background.

Table 3*Study Participant Demographics*

Participant	Age	Managerial years	Direct reports	Video/audio
1	55–60	24	5	Zoom, MS Teams
2	35–40	6	55	Zoom
3	45–50	18	6	WebEx
4	45–50	20	5	Zoom
5	55–60	25	6	MS Teams
6	45–50	14	6	Zoom, MS Teams
7	55–60	5	13	MS Teams
8	40–45	5	102	Zoom, Skype
9	35–40	10	5	Zoom, Slack
10	45–50	5	200	Zoom
11	55–60	20	185	MS Teams
12	55–60	28	12	Zoom, Google Chat

The interviews spanned two weeks. The participants were recruited through social media, primarily LinkedIn and Facebook. The interviews lasted between 23 and 39 minutes; the average transcription was seven to nine pages (Table 4).

Table 4*Interview Length and Transcripts*

Participant	Length	Number of pages
01	23:28	7
02	28:42	8
03	31:36	7
04	26:57	9
05	30:35	8
06	36:14	9
07	25:07	6
08	30:17	8
09	38:39	9
10	27:14	8
11	28:42	8
12	39:21	10

This research gathered information and conducted an analysis based on the investigation of how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. The study identified the key issues and recommended the most effective solution for corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training to adapt their workforce to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked: How did corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training impact their ability to adapt the workforce to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Research question 1 and the associated interview questions asked of the participants are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Research Question 1 and Associated Interview Questions

Research question 1	Associated interview questions
<p>How did corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training impact their ability to adapt the workforce to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, how prepared was your company to deal with its challenges? 2. Do you think your company equipped you to deal with the crisis? How so? If not, why? 3. Did your company have Work From Home (WFH) arrangements before the pandemic? Can you describe it? If none, why did your company not have one? 4. Do you think if your company had a crisis mitigation policy, it could have impacted how you led your group during the pandemic? Could you explain to me your reason? 5. How did the lack of preparedness impact your ability to adapt your team to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The data collected for Research Question 1 resulted in the themes of Lack of Preparation, Crisis Management, and Remote Working (Table 6). The participants articulated how the lack of preparations and training affected how their company reacted to the pandemic. The participants described the effects of unpreparedness on their companies and the actions their companies took to resolve them. All participants described the effects of the crisis management policies before COVID-19 and whether they could have benefited if a crisis mitigation policy had existed before the pandemic. All participants described the type of WFH arrangements they had before the pandemic.

Table 6

Research Question 1: Primary Themes

Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References
Lack of Preparation	Effects	Unpreparedness	Effects of unpreparedness	5	18
	Resolution	Resolving	What companies did to resolve	12	48
Crisis Management	Existing Policies	Benefiting	Benefits of having crisis management policies	8	14
	Policies before	Presence	Companies with policies	11	12

Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References
	COVID-19	Absence	Companies with no policies	1	1
Remote Working	Working during pandemic	Working from home	Work from home prior	12	13
		Working in person	Work at the office full time	3	7
		Hybrid work	Work at the office a few times a week	3	4
		Flex home	Flexible work from home	1	3
	Meetings	Meeting in person	Mandatory meeting in person	2	2
		Meeting online	Meeting conducted online	1	4

Theme 1: Lack of Preparation

The first theme for research question 1 was Lack of Preparation. The data gathered showed how companies fared during the pandemic in terms of lack of preparation. The information presented by this theme showed the negative impact of unpreparedness on managers

during the pandemic. Figure 3 shows the Mind Map of this theme, showing the resulting two categories of the Effects and Resolution participants did when the pandemic struck.

Figure 3

Theme 1. Lack of Preparation Mind Map

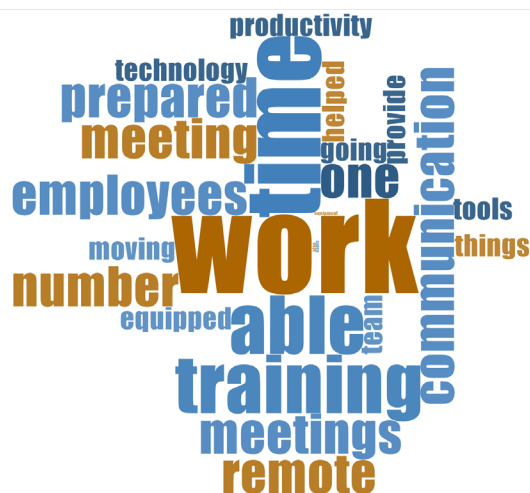


Note. The figure shows the Lack of Preparation Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 4 shows the Word Cloud where Work was mentioned more frequently than others, underscoring how unpreparedness affected Work. This provided the visualization giving importance through the frequency of use, helping validate that Work affected unpreparedness. Meeting and meetings, if added together, are more than Work, which showed how technical managers reacted by immediately conducting online meetings with their teams.

Figure 4

Lack of Preparation Word Cloud



Note. The figure shows the Lack of Preparation Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

The two categories identified were: the effects of unpreparedness to the COVID-19 crisis and the resolutions managers took to adapt their teams to the challenges COVID-19 brought. Five (42%) participants (01, 02, 04, 06, 08) mentioned the adverse effects of the pandemic underscoring productivity was compromised. Participant 01 mentioned they were “shut down for four months across the board, all state, all agencies.” Participant 01 added that “it impacted us

productivity-wise and financially.” Participant 02 said that it affected them “productivity-wise and financially.” Participant 04 stated that “there was a kind of confusion about what to do next” and added that “it affected productivity.” One other participant (06) expressed that the lack of preparations made “keeping track of my team’s productivity was a challenge.” A participant (08) said it impacted him as he cannot reach out to anyone more readily because now “you didn’t have the guy sitting next to you to be able to ask those questions.”

All participants (100%) mentioned taking measures to resolve their problems. Three (25%) participants (01, 02, 04) immediately conducted online meetings to address communication problems. Participant 01 mentioned that “we conducted or started conducting our online meetings.” Another participant (02) stated, “We were given laptops and had meetings using Zoom.” One participant (04) found it more effective to conduct online meetings at various locations. Four (33%) participants (01, 10, 12, 02) ensured their technology supported their new remote working method. Participant 01, “We do have the technology.” Participant 10, “We had the lab structures, so all that was in place led to a successful transition for support.” Participant 12 said, “The technology, on the other hand, has also helped a lot.” Participant 02 said that access to technology provided “more flexibility.”

Two (17%) participants (06, 07) initiated training on managing the remote workforce and focused on the viability of audio and video communication to withstand massive communication requirements. One participant (06) mentioned his company was “equipped for training on managing large-scale employees and remote work.” These same two participants stated the importance of training. Participant 06 mentioned that “What could have helped me is training.” He added, “Having training in dealing with many employees over remote working could have

helped me overcome that.” And Participant 07 said that “the company should have done more training sessions.”

Theme 2. Crisis Management

The second theme for Research Question 1 was Crisis Management. The data gathered showed the effect of existing crisis management policy and its possible usefulness to participants. This theme underscored how the lack of crisis management policies impacted the managers adapting their workforce to remote workforce during the pandemic. Figure 5 displays the Mind Map of this theme, showing the resulting two categories of how the existing policies that existed only on paper did not help the managers adapt to the COVID-19 requirements and the listing of the participants’ companies who had crisis management policies before the pandemic.

Figure 5

Theme 2. Crisis Management Mind Map



Note. The figure shows the Crisis Management Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 6 shows the Word Count where Work was mentioned more than others. Participants described how much work was affected due to lack of preparation because of COVID-19 and that an existing policy would have helped them cope with the challenges.

Figure 6*Crisis Management Word Cloud*

Note. The figure shows the Crisis Management Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

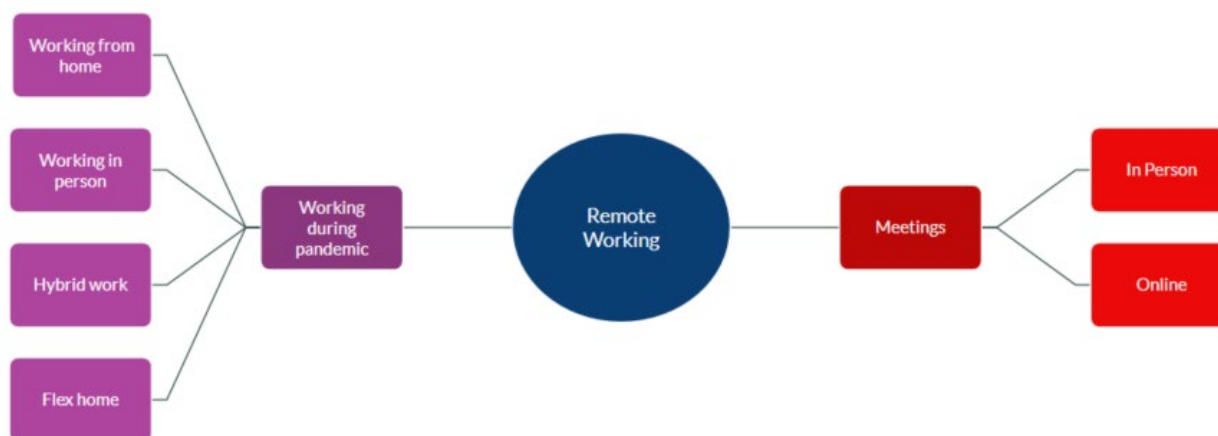
For this theme, the data gathered was on the impact of a crisis management policy and its usefulness to participants. The two categories listed under this theme were the benefits of having crisis management policies and companies that have or did not have policies before COVID-19. Eleven participants (02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12) mentioned they had a semblance of crisis management policy where most had heard of it but barely saw it in action during the pandemic. One participant (01) mentioned that their company is “so small that it does not necessitate a crisis management policy.” Participant 03 mentioned that “their office was visited several times and asked if they were okay and if there were enough supplies and equipment?” and that was it. A small firm manager, Participant 01, mentioned that “it might not have mattered” if they had a crisis management policy but added that in the future, it could prove “effective if there is crisis management.”

Theme 3. Remote Working

The third theme was Remote Working. The data gathered showed who among the participants had WFH policies before COVID-19 and, for those who had, how it helped them adapt to the full-time WFH requirements. Two associated categories were identified: types of WFH that evolved during the pandemic and corresponding types of meetings conducted to adapt to the COVID-19 challenges. Figure 7 represents the Mind Map of this theme and shows the resulting two categories: Working during the pandemic and conducting meetings.

Figure 7

Theme 3. Remote Working Mind Map



Note. The figure shows the Remote Working Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 8 depicts the Word Count where People were mentioned more than others. Participants mentioned that they count their People as the most important factor when adapting remote working for their teams.

Figure 8

Remote Working Word Cloud



Note. The figure shows the Remote Working Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

This theme focused on whether the participants had WFH arrangements before the pandemic and how it helped to face the pandemic. The two categories identified under this theme were what forms of working environment managers took for their teams to continue functioning in the crisis and the kind of meetings they used to conduct them. Seven (58%) participants (03, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11) mentioned that their company had experienced WFH or worked remotely. Five (42%) participants (01, 02, 04, 05, 12) said their team did not have a WFH policy. Three (25%) participants (04, 06, 07) said they had existing hybrid work or WFH policies before COVID-19 ranging from one day to three days working from home a week. One of these managers (Participant 04) said they “had some later amount of hybrid workers at some point, but it was minimal, not at the large scale.” Participant 06 stated, “It’s more like a hybrid situation where you work from home for some time, and sometimes you work in the office.” Participant 07 mentioned, “A hybrid goes two to three times in the office.”

Six (50%) participants (03, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10) said prior WFH arrangements in their company helped them adjust to the full-time work-from-home schedule after COVID-19 hit. Three (25%) Participants (01, 02, 03) said they were mandated to work in the office during the pandemic as their companies' services are vital to the economy. Out of the three participants, Participant 02 said the "owners always wanted us to be on the property." Three Participants (25%) said they initiated hybrid work, allowing personnel to work from home and at the office a few times a week. One (8%) Participant 07 mentioned that their company has to make accommodations for this in the office setup, "They don't necessarily get their desks," considering the required distances workers must respect apart from when at the office or when they eat lunch. The same manager added that for their employees to go to work in the office, they "can reserve a spot online."

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked: How can corporate leaders adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?

Research question 2 and the associated interview questions asked of the participants are listed in Table 7.

Table 7*Research Question 2 and Associated Interview Questions*

Research Question 2	Associated interview questions
How can corporate leaders adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How helpful are Heifetz's statements to your current situation? 2. Can managers like yourself use adaptive leadership to lead a remote workforce? How so? 3. Virtual teams are expected to continue even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes. How would you prepare yourself to be more effective in managing your team in the hybrid workplace since it is here to stay? 4. What are the most important practices to ensure your team functions best in a hybrid or WFH situation? Why is that?

The data collected for Research Question 2 resulted in the identifying themes of Adaptive Leadership Practices and Virtual Teams (Table 8). The participants addressed how adaptive leadership can be useful in a remote workforce resulting in two categories: how good adaptive leadership practices affect the participants and how they are useful. Data was also gathered on how virtual teams are expected to continue even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes. The three categories identified are how they prepared, increased productivity, and offline work effects.

Table 8*Research Question 2: Primary Themes*

Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References		
Adaptive Leadership Practices	Integrity	Challenges	Ethical	2	5		
		Integrity	challenges brought by WFH				
	Usefulness	Adjust to Situation	Recognize	change and adjust	5	6	
			Guide	Helps shape leadership vision of tasks and goals	2	2	
			Introduce Technology	Opened industries to new technology	2	3	
		How Used	Caring	Display kindness	3	5	
			Setting Goals	Organize tasks and objectives	5	14	
		Virtual Teams	How They Prepared	Adjusted Work Practices	Converted work tasks to	8	36

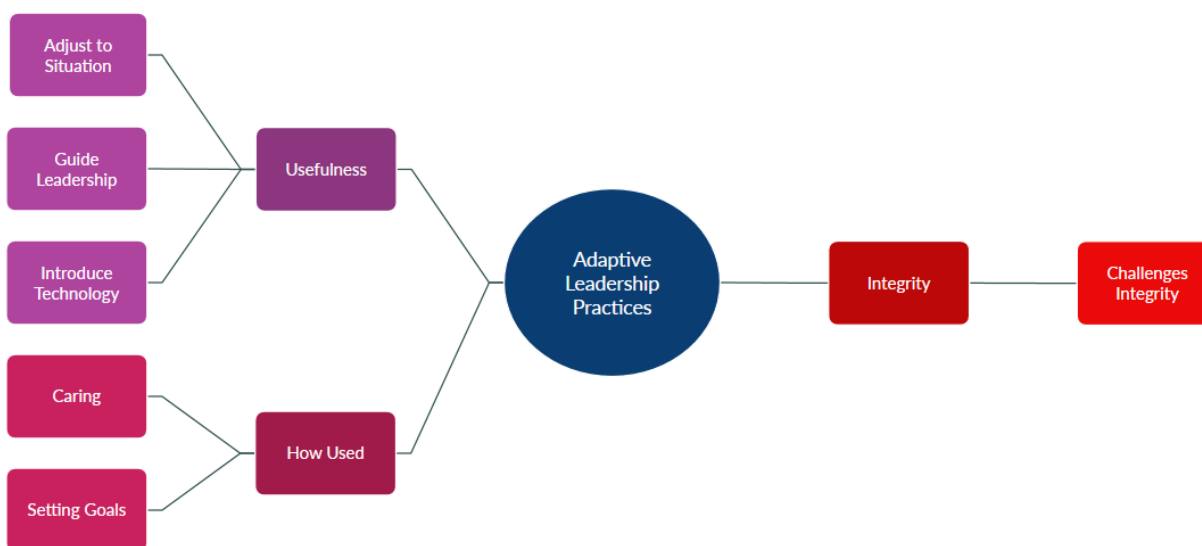
Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References
			accommodate		
			online access		
		Improve	Coordinated	4	14
		Communication	online communication		
		Use Hybrid Work	Alternate work between office and home	7	18
	Increase Productivity	Productivity Methods	Methods to increase productivity	6	8
		Use of Technology	Effects of technology use	4	12
	Offline Work Effects	In-Person	Consequences on In-Person	8	19
		Transportation	Benefits in travel	2	2

Theme 4. Adaptive Leadership Practices

This theme addressed how adaptive leadership can be useful in a remote workforce. Two categories were identified: how good adaptive leadership practices affect the participants and how they are useful. Figure 9 shows the Mind Map of this theme and the resulting two categories: Working during the pandemic and conducting meetings.

Figure 9

Adaptive Leadership Practices Mind Map

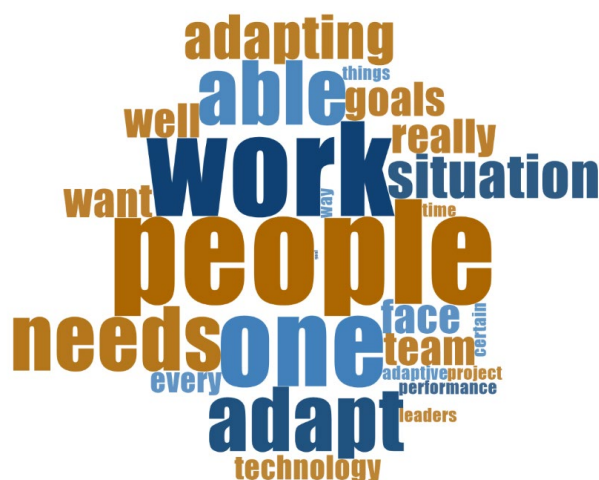


Note. The figure shows the Adaptive Leadership Practices Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 10 illustrates the Word Count where People were mentioned more than others. Participants stated that for Adaptive Leadership Principles to be efficient, they should cater to people's needs. Work is the next word most mentioned as participants were adapting their work schedules to the availability of the people as they adapted to the crisis.

Figure 10

Adaptive Leadership Practices Word Cloud



Note. The figure shows the Adaptive Leadership Practices Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

Eight (67%) participants (03, 04, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12) mentioned that adaptive leadership practices are useful for them as they were able to adjust to the situation by allowing them to recognize the needed change and adjust. Participant 03 said, “You have to adapt to the new things that come your way,” Participant 07 said, “Not just what and where I’m in but also where my teammates are in.” Participant 08 said a member must “adapt that he no longer has the luxury of just watching people physically.” Participant 10 said this will require a leader to be “really sensitive to people’s needs within the group.” Participant 12 said leaders must realize that

“the situation gets better, you just have to adapt to it, and then basically, there’s no more. It lessens a bit, and maybe we could remove some of these obstacles.” Participant 12 explained the usefulness of being ready to adjust this way:

But I think people have to understand the policy. Suppose a company is mandating two to three times in the office. That still has to go on. No one should be entitled to stay home just because they want to.

Technology must be involved. Two (17%) participants (09, 11) mentioned that technology must parallel Adaptive Leadership. Participant 09 said, “The most practical approach during the pandemic and moving forward is to keep up with technology.” Participant 11 stated, “The pandemic forced the world to catch up with technology faster than we wanted to.” The same participant added, “Every time there’s a situation, we have to face it and to face that... technology is available for us, and some of us don’t even want to learn the new technology.”

As a leadership guide, two participants (17%) mentioned that it would help to focus on important aspects to apply to remote working. Participant 04 said it will help leaders “work in such a way that goals and instruction will be precise and straight to the point.” Participant 10 said that “it showcases leadership. People would look up to and retainment, too, because people would want to stay with those types of leaders.”

Five (42%) participants (05, 06, 08, 11, 12) said adaptive leadership principles could be used to set goals. Participant 05 said, “You can’t be rigid in planning in a situation like that. So you have to adapt constantly.” Participant 06 said that adaptive leadership principles will encourage leaders to be able to “use technology to create reminders, make lists on their smartphone and computers, set goals and timelines to reach, setting organizational goals” to be met “in a certain quality and in an acceptable time.” Participant 08 said, “Those goals must be

met somehow and to a certain quality and in an acceptable time.” Participant 11 said, “We have to work with the times to create work schedules because we support worldwide.” Participant 12 said, “Implement checks and balances and maybe like a goal, what do you need to do.” Setting goals will ensure productivity and that tasks are accomplished within a certain time.

Three (25%) participants said the principles would allow them to be more caring to the need of their members. Participant 03 said it would make him “mindful about how we communicate that to the teams.” Participant 06 said, “One way to encourage them to increase productivity is by having regular one-on-one interactions,” and Participant 07 said, “adapting to each other’s needs... that their personal needs are taken care of.”

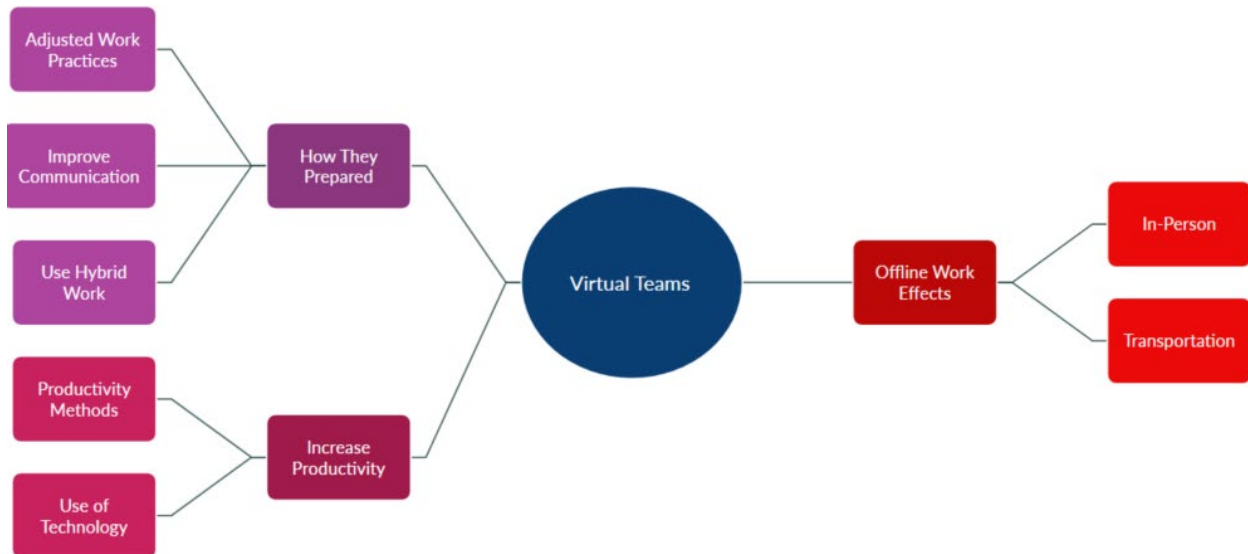
Two participants (17%) stated that adaptive leadership principles challenge the integrity of remote workers. Participant 11 said, “At home, nobody can see you. All they know is that you’re logged in. And the challenge is that they want to ensure I’m productive.” Participant 12 expressed, “You should monitor them, and you should make sure that their performance doesn’t go down,” and “implement checks and balances and maybe like a goal, what do you need to do.”

Theme 5. Virtual Teams

This theme addressed how virtual teams are expected to continue even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes. The following are three identified categories:

1. How They Prepared: Improve Communication, Adjusted Work Practices, and Use Hybrid Work
2. Increase Productivity: Productivity Methods and Use of Technology
3. Offline Work Effects: In-Person, Productivity, and Transportation

Figure 11 exhibits the Mind Map of this theme, showing the three categories: how they prepared, increased productivity, and the offline work effects.

Figure 11*Virtual Teams Mind Map*

Note. The figure shows the Virtual Teams Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 12 illustrates the Word Count where the word Person was mentioned more than others. Participants underscored the importance of the Person's role in a Work-from-home environment, with Work placing second. The three words tied after Work were Communication, Hybrid, and Team, showing their relationship with Virtual Adaptation.

Figure 12*Adaptive Leadership Practices Word Cloud*

Note. The figure shows the Adaptive Leadership Practices Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

All participants (100%) said they prepared their teams for hybrid work by adjusting their work practices, improving communication, and maximizing the full potential of hybrid work. Eight (67%) participants (02, 03, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10) shared their process for adjusting their work practices. Participant 02 said their company used technology after they could “have more grasp of the technology.” Participant 03 mentioned that trust was important, “I would say that you would if you trust the person and the person is being productive, and all the work is being done regardless if they’re sitting in an office next to you or at home.” Participant 05 added that communication helped in the process, “Communication is extremely important because it keeps employees and managers constantly updated and apprised of each other and what the other person is doing, whether it’s a manager or the employee.” Participant 06 stated, “More improvement and attention to my listening skills.” And Participant 07 added, “Make sure that your team understands the goals and that you cascade down to them very clearly. Not just

verbally but in writing.” Participant 08 also said, “Establishing a regular call, a regular meeting every week, and knowing exactly what will be discussed in those meetings is a key way of keeping the dynamics in this hybrid environment.” Participant 09 underscored the importance of following company policy with trust, “If they tell you they will do their work, even working from home, they will finish it and not slack off. It’s pretty much a lot of it about trust.”

Participant 10 said they focused on security, “Number one is security... if a company doesn’t have a good security strategy, it will be limited data and communication-wise, on what you can and can’t share.”

In continuing how managers prepared their teams for hybrid work, seven (58%) participants (03, 05, 07, 08, 10, 11, 12) said they optimized meeting goals using hybrid conditions. The participants said a hybrid working environment is the way to go during the crisis. Participant 03 said, “A hybrid way would be a lot better.” Participant 05 said, “We decided to approach it with a hybrid schedule.” Participant 07 said, “And even if it’s in-person meetings, there are teammates within or outside of the team that is still on hybrid and WebEx.” Participant 08 said, “The best way to evaluate the delivery of work in a hybrid environment.” Participant 10 said, “I think it’s going to be a hybrid model.” Participant 11 said, “So we have to work with the times to create work schedules because we support worldwide.” Participant 12 said, “Companies now going into like four days at work and one day at home.” They appreciated the new hybrid setup and think it will still be predominant in the foreseeable future. But if a company mandates certain times to be at the office, no one should be entitled to stay home just because they want to. They used various hybrid setups. Participants 07 and 12 stated they had two days of WFH and three days in the office. Participant 10 said they have three days of WFH and two days in the office. Participant 05 mentioned one day of WFH and four days at the office. Participant 09

underscored that their company has a Flex Home day where a team member can be off a week with the manager's permission as long as the work quota is achieved.

Four (33%) participants (01, 02, 04, 06) mentioned that to be an effective manager, they must communicate proficiently with their team and other company members. Participant 01 said this includes conducting online meetings, which are "very convenient, and the effectiveness is still the same." Participant 02 said that since they better grasp the technology, "we know how proper communication with my team and scheduling meetings and proper report sessions with them in other for me to tend to their issues and concerns." Participant 04 said, "In-person communication is needed as part of their aspect of productivity and them attending to their work." Participant 04 said, "You have to be a very good listener and talk about the line of communication with your team, be precise, straight at the point, putting out the instruction and goals without confusing terms."

Ten (83%) participants (01, 02, 04, 05, 06, 07, 09, 10, 11, 12) stated that to increase productivity, they adapted methods to increase productivity and advanced the use of technology to accomplish their tasks. Six (50%) participants (01, 04, 05, 06, 11, 12) stated statements that could improve their productivity methods: Participant 01 underscored the delivery and maintenance of productivity and service effectively "In-person communication is needed as part of their aspect of productivity and them attending to their work." Participant 04 said, "In-person communication is needed as part of their aspect of productivity and them attending to their work." Participant 05 mentioned that the level of productivity was heightened when everyone was "not having to commute an hour and a half or two hours from home to the office and being able just to work and focus and not be distracted by many different things." Participant 06 said, "In the office encourages team bonding and boosts productivity." Participant 11 accentuated

integrity when working and said, “Nobody can see you at home. All they know is that you’re logged in. And the challenge is that they want to ensure I’m productive.” Participant 12 said, “You should monitor them and ensure their performance doesn’t go down.”

Four (33%) participants emphasized using technology to enhance productivity.

Participant 02 said, “We know how to use Zoom, and we know how to use Teams.” While they have face-to-face meetings, Participant 02 added that using communication applications assists in better collaboration, “Our WebEx is still on to ensure that others continue to engage.”

Participant 07 said that communication online is important but that in-person meetings should not be restricted, “We can start using Zoom, but there has to be an in-person meeting.”

Participant 09 stressed the importance of the difference between in-person meetings, saying, “We will continue doing what we can do remotely for the most efficient events or tasks that, as I said, are most efficient via Zoom or virtually.” Participant 10 added, “In the corporate world, where there’s much technology in place, I would say that it will be a hybrid.”

Eight (67%) participants (01, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 10) made known the offline work effects of virtual teams. They stated that it compromised in-person interactivity. Participant 01 said regarding physical-related health care services, “It should be in person.” Two participants (17%) said in-person meetings promote better productivity and collaboration. Participant 04 said, “They’re expected to work in the office in person because they are a working group” as a technical team. Participant 03 said, “In the office encourages team bonding, is new, and boosts productivity.” Participant 05 echoed this:

When employees are in the office, you see the interaction of everybody. There’s a lot of happiness when you see everybody together, and there’s a lot of satisfaction that they’re

not just stuck at home a hundred percent. They're just not stuck in the office a hundred percent of the time.

Participant 07 said in-person is needed for any new hires, "Brand new hires, it has to be in person." That participant added that meeting in person regularly adds "human connection." Another Participant (08) said there is an "advantage for managers to look at their people when they were working visually, suppose they were slacking off or what." Two (17%) participants (03, 05) said a benefit of using virtual teams is less use of transportation. Participant 03 said, "Also, the transportation. So I think if we keep people in the same way, like, no, you have to come to work, you have to be here seven to five. I think it's dissatisfier in this day and age." Participant 05 added that recognizing the "level of productivity that everybody has by not having to commute an hour and a half or two hours from home to the office and being able just to work and focus and not be distracted by a lot of different things."

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked: What adaptive leadership principles do corporate leaders consider as a coping strategy toward creating an adaptive corporate mindset?

Research question 3 and the associated interview questions asked of the participants are listed in Table 9

Table 9*Research Question 3 and Associated Interview Questions*

Research Question 3	Associated interview questions
<p>What adaptive leadership principles do corporate leaders consider as a coping strategy toward creating an adaptive corporate mindset?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How important is a corporate mindset in creating a coping strategy during a crisis? <li>2. What leadership principles do you think are vital during a crisis? How so? <li>3. How important are the adaptive leadership principles in creating a coping strategy during a crisis? Why? <li>4. How can you, as a manager, adapt your leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis? <li>5. What are the most important practices to ensure your team functions best in a hybrid or WFH situation? Why is that?

Table 10*Research Question 3: Primary Themes*

Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References
Adaptive	Importance	Importance	Perception of importance	7	8
Leadership	Vital	Teamwork	Collaboration effort of a group to achieve a goal	8	20
Principles	Principles	Creativity	Generation of ideas useful in problem-solving	6	16
		Innovative	Producing something nothing created before	6	10
		Character	Mental and moral qualities of an individual	5	6
		Receptive	Acceptability of new suggestions and ideas	4	11
		Credibility	Trustworthy and believable	3	3
		Flexible	Changeability/adaptability to different conditions	3	3
		Integrity	Honesty with moral uprightness	2	2
		Decisive	Quick and efficient decision making	2	2

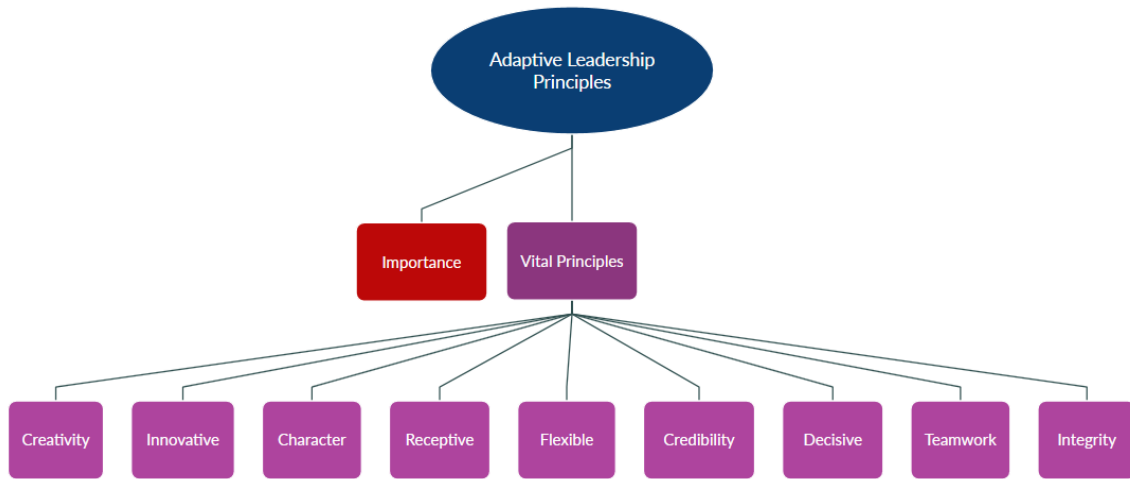
Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References
Corporate	Human	Human Factor	Ensuring the fit of people, tasks, and environment	2	5
Mindset	Understanding				
	Importance	Goal	Aim or desired result	6	6
		Guide	Directs the positioning of the process	5	8
		Transparency	Easy to perceive or detect	3	4
		Productivity	Effectiveness of an effort	3	3
		Support	Give assistance	3	6
Remote Workforce	Challenges of Adapting	It is New	Adapting to a crisis is new	2	2
		Not Adapting	Ability to not adapt	1	3
	How to Adapt	Teamwork	Coordinate the effort of a group to achieve a goal	7	9
	Leadership	Creative	Ability to make or think of new things	6	10
		Communication	Impart or exchange information	4	6
		Adaptive	Ability to change based on changing conditions	4	5
		Goals	What to commit and achieve	3	7

Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References
		Approachability	Accessible and easy to meet or deal with	3	5
		Receptive	Acceptability of new suggestions and ideas	2	4
		Trustworthy	Reliable, honest, and truthful	2	4
		Resolution	Purposeful, determined, and unwavering.	2	4
		Above and Beyond	Exceptional service beyond the normal	1	1
Crisis Leadership Principles	Vital Principles	Communication	Sending or receiving information	7	9
		Adaptive	Ability to modify for a new use	3	8
		Transparency	Easy to perceive or detect	3	3
		By Example	Lead by example	2	4
		Compassion	Sympathetic and concerned for others	2	4
		Reliability	Trustworthy and perform consistently well	2	4
		Visibility	Readily be noticed	2	4

Primary themes	Category	Codes	Description	Files	References
		Confident	Feeling sure of oneself and abilities	1	1
		Conflict Resolution	Ability to find a peaceful solution	1	1
		Earn Trust	People feel safe	1	2
		Emotional Intelligence	Able to manage emotions and understand others	1	1
		Honesty	Speak and act truthfully	1	1

Theme 6. Adaptive Leadership Principles

This theme focused on the importance of adaptive leadership principles during a crisis. The managers discussed the adaptive principles that would prove most useful in times of crisis and any coping strategy they used during the crisis. Figure 13 shows the Mind Map of this theme and the two categories: Importance and Vital Principles.

Figure 13*Adaptive Leadership Principles Mind Map*

Note. The figure shows the Adaptive Leadership Principles Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 14 shows the Word Count where People and Work were mentioned more than others. Both words were central in all the participants' statements. People were mentioned to indicate the employees in their organization while work connotes the effort members of the team exert while performing the roles given them during the crisis.

Figure 14*Adaptive Leadership Practices Word Cloud*

Note. The figure shows the Adaptive Leadership Practices Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

The participants listed the following leadership principles considered vital in coping with the crisis. Seven (58%) participants (01, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09) acknowledged the importance of adaptive leadership principles in creating a coping strategy during a crisis. Participant 01 said creativity is required, “You must be creative in whatever situation to show your team that you’re there no matter what problem arises.” Participant 04 touched on the ability to create out-of-the-box solutions for “some crises are so sudden that the organization was unprepared for them.” Participant 05 said that due to the fluid nature of the pandemic, “We had to adapt, we had to be nimble, and we had to think of creative solutions for our staff.” Participant 06 said, “The leader’s strong character and integrity impact people and are valued positively.” Participant 07 stated that adaptability is important for “creating innovative approaches.” A related statement by another participant (08) said, “The leadership qualities needed in a crisis – the ability of that leader to be flexible.” Another participant (09) added the importance of buy-in: “I needed the leaders of the

departments to agree with me... so that when their people call them after the memo is released, they have answers.”

All participants (100%) contributed to itemizing the adaptive leadership principles vital during a crisis. The list includes Teamwork, Creativity, Innovative, Character, Receptive, Credibility, Flexible, Integrity, and Decisiveness. Eight (67%) participants (02, 05, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12) said a leader who can structure a team to work together is imperative. Participant 02 said it would promote a “Unified group mentality” needed to “influence your co-leaders and your own to understand the pros and cons of your ideas.” Another participant (05) said it makes the members happy and “their needs satisfied.” Teamwork helped mitigate risks, as substantiated by Participant 07, who said, “We post the questions so that they can get others to agree on what needs to be done, working on it as a whole team. It develops that win-win situation because now you’re on one page.” A participant (08) said it helped “gain the trust of the people who work with and get targets done on time and with quality.” Participant 09 said that teamwork is getting others’ buy-in, “They agree with me... There are some that it is not win-win, but you can create a situation where people will think that they won because they were consulted.” Another participant (10) mentioned that developing a unified group mentality is a challenge, “So usually, this is hard to answer because it depends on the group you have. Because you can have many introverts, you need to be more easily adaptable to change. If we fail, we all fail. The main thing is, let’s not leave out the outliers.” A participant (11) said that teamwork should be “Like more a family setting. It’s not personal, and it’s related to work. When it is related to work, you must learn to respect everybody’s decision, leading to a winning mentality.” Participant 12 said, “Everybody should have a winning mentality..”

Six (50%) participants (01, 02, 03, 04, 09, 11) said creativity, which generates ideas useful in problem-solving, is important in crisis resolution. Participant 01 mentioned, “You must be creative immediately for a backup plan in whatever situation to show your team that you’re there no matter what problem arises.” Another (Participant 02) stated that every manager should know and possess an out-of-the-box mentality, for “if you’re faced with problems, you really have to think outside the box on how to solve them and innovate.” Participant 03 said similarly about out-of-the-box, “You have to come up with a fast way to deal with that kind of problem before the organization comes up with a very straightforward way to deal with it.” One participant (04) said, “Sometimes out-of-the-box solutions work, but sometimes they also do not,” and added, “Being out of the box can be good because good thinkers can always give good suggestions. Sometimes bad thinkers give you bad suggestions, but you know they’re bad. But sometimes, the bad suggestions can also make sense.” Participant 09 articulated, “Out-of-the-box solutions, for example, innovation.”

Six (50%) participants (05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 12) stated that innovation is necessary for adaptation. One participant (05) said, “We felt the need to respond to the needs of our immediate society. We proactively donated money to different charities, care packages, gifts, and gift baskets to our employees during Christmas.” Another participant (06) said they innovate by “quickly forming a policy, just how you can devise a quick solution to deal with the crisis.” A participant (07) said, “So innovative approaches ... It’s the what and how, and I’ve seen this happen.” Participant 08 stated that “to be innovative” is to “get targets done on time and with quality.” One other participant (09) said forced by circumstances, members innovate by themselves, “So there were so many things that we had to do to be able to teach online. And these things had to be developed not by the leaders, me, or the chairs. The faculty themselves

developed them themselves.” Participant 10 added, “You should be ready to look for improvement. You should be ready to look for another solution that maybe that’s the solution right now. The best solution may not be good or applicable to the next crisis or situation.”

Five (42%) participants (01, 06, 07, 11, 12) said leaders must possess a character with mental and moral fortitude. A participant (01) said it starts with “maintaining your composure, and you must maintain your strong leadership.” Another (06) mentioned that having a strong character “will also impact your employee so that they will trust you, be loyal to the organization, and give their best.” One participant (07) added that character involves “a strong vision of what needs to be done and the ability to pull each of those together.” Participant 11 said it makes members “value work and job responsibility and work for a company that you enjoy.” And Participant 12 said, “A strong character and integrity create credibility.”

Four (33%) participants (01, 03, 11, 12) said that being receptive is needed by a leader to face a crisis successfully. Acceptability of new suggestions and ideas is vital for facing the unknowns. A participant (01) said to be “receptive to whatever approach you will use and be open-minded about it.” A manager said, “You must listen to your team because most of them may often have better suggestions and ideas than I do.” That participant manager added, “You have to listen to them and encourage them to share bright ideas with you. And not all of them will be like rocket science, but sometimes little things make people’s life so much easier.” Participant 03 mentioned, “You have to listen to them and encourage them to share bright ideas with you.” A participant (11) said to try to be more adaptive “when it comes to good and bad thinkers because once you put them together, sometimes they work just fine,” and added, “You just need to be open-minded a little bit.” Another participant (12) said, “You should be open to

ideas and not just open to ideas from other groups or your other, maybe from your people or your peers, or from the people above you, from the people who report to you.”

Three (25%) participants (06, 08, 12) said that credibility is a principle that helps members view the leader as trustworthy and believable. A participant (06) said, “When a leader doesn’t have credibility, your teams and people under you will not have that respect for you.” Participant 08 stated that credibility is “knowing exactly what needs to be done and when it needs to be done,” but added, “to make sure that you get acceptance from everyone who will be working it out.” The other participant (12) stated, “A strong character and integrity create credibility.” Three (25%) participants (05, 08, 11) said that having a flexible leader will accommodate the team’s changeability and adaptability to different conditions. Participant 05 stated this on flexibility, “We had to adapt, we had to be nimble, and we had to think of creative solutions for our staff.” Two participants (05, 11) validated the flexibility of the leader is important in crisis management. Participant 05 said, “The ability of that leader to be flexible is one of the leadership qualities needed in a crisis,” Participant 11 added, “You must learn how to adjust and adapt to situations.”

Two (17%) participants (06, 10) said that integrity with honesty and moral uprightness helps the team develop focus during the crisis. Participant 06 said, “When you don’t have integrity, your teams will not be able to get the grips of the situation at hand, and it will not direct them in the right direction.” The other participant (10) said integrity involves “leading by example and having mental focus.” Two (17%) participants (06, 10) said that being decisive allows quick and efficient decision-making required by the crisis. Participant 06 said, “It helps in such a way that it leads to the quick formation of policy, just how you can devise a quick

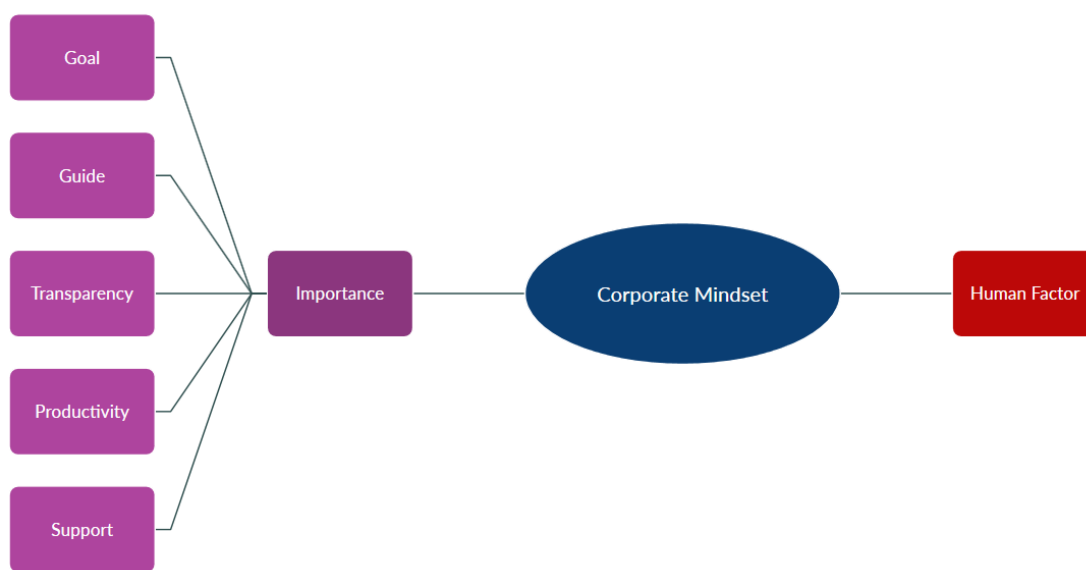
solution to deal with the crisis.” The other participant (10) stated it required “having mental focus.”

Theme 7. Corporate Mindset

This theme focuses on how important a corporate mindset is in creating a coping strategy during a crisis and its effects on the human factor. Figure 15 shows the Mind Map of this theme, showing the two categories: Importance and Vital Principles.

Figure 15

Corporate Mindset Mind Map



Note. The figure shows the Corporate Mindset Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 16 shows the Word Count where Corporate and Important were mentioned more than others. Corporate was used with either the mindset or organization. The word Important was used by participants underscoring the significance of the corporate mindset in creating a coping strategy.

Figure 16

Corporate Mindset Word Cloud



Note. The figure shows the Corporate Mindset Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

Two participants (17%) said a leader must not take the human factor out of the corporate mindset context. A participant articulated, “The ability to have compassion is an important principle of corporate leadership and practicality.” Another participant added that the corporate mindset outlines the do’s and don’ts for the employee, “enabling them to abide by the rules of the organization and know the consequences of breaking the rules of the organization.”

All participants (100%) stated that having a corporate mindset in creating a coping strategy during a crisis is important. Six (50%) participants (01, 02, 03, 04, 08, 12) mentioned that it

would help them set goals. Participant 01 stated to “set long-term goals and vision in place.” Participant 02 said, “Set up policies and philosophies to cope with a strategy.” Participant 03 mentioned, “Work with people to correctly place them to last the crisis.” Participant 04 said, “Make the employees feel safe, appreciated, and valued.” Participant 08 stated, “Prepare the teams to address future crisis challenges.” And Participant 12 added, “Create cohesively and defined rules and policies to allow everyone in the organization to be on the same page.”

Five (42%) participants (01, 05, 06, 10, 11) said it would guide members of the organization and the people they interact with. Participant 01 stated, “Conduct business effectively to clients, the State, Federal, and across the board, and how to move forward as a company.” Participant 05 mentioned, “Setting the tone of the actions to take and outlining the do’s and don’ts for the employee.” While Participant 06 suggested, “Abide by rules and know the consequences of breaking the rules.” Participant 10 said that “it drives the company’s response when faced with a crisis.” Lastly, Participant 11 articulated that “upper management directs everyone, and everybody adheres to the policy.”

Three (25%) participants (02, 03, 05) quantified that a corporate mindset requires full organizational support. Participant 02 mentioned that the “corporate office must support these adaptive practices to succeed.” Participant 03 stated, “Corporate must understand what it means to survive the crisis; otherwise, nobody will benefit.” And Participant 05 said, “Managers will have difficulty enhancing their employees’ productivity without corporate support.” Three (25%) participants (05, 07, 08) indicated the importance of transparency in implementing a corporate mindset. Participant 05 mentioned that “it improves employees’ trust in the organization as they will know what to do and what not to do.” Participant 07 said, “Transparency in planning guides what steps to take.” Participant 08 added, “Transparency in what’s happening must be made

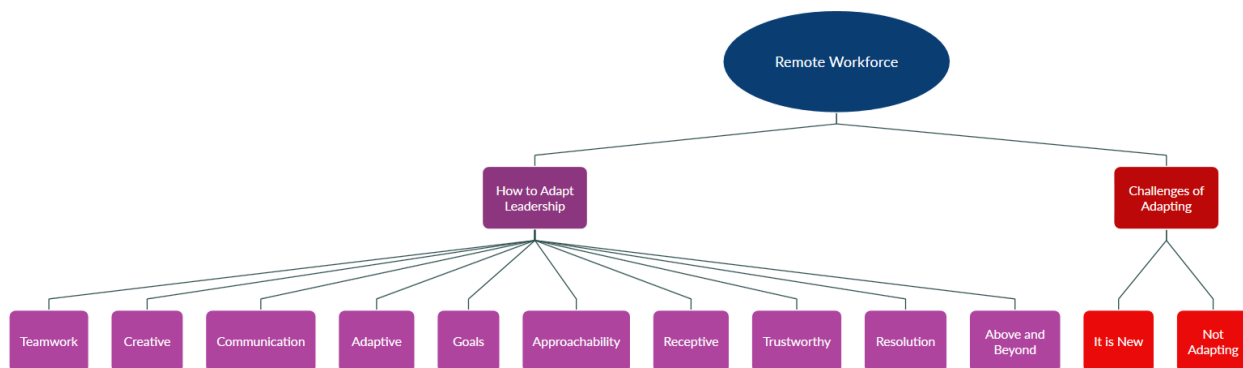
available quickly and broadly to address appropriately.” Three (25%) participants (02, 05, 06) stated the effects of corporate mindset on productivity. Participant 02 said, “It allows transparency with clients’ collaboration increasing satisfaction and productivity.” Participant 05 added that “not having a supportive corporate mindset leads to decreased productivity and leaves employees disgruntled.’ And Participant articulated, “A unified set of goals, rules, and objectives amplifies productivity.

Theme 8. Remote Workforce

This theme focused on how managers can adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis, including the challenges of adapting. Figure 17 shows the Mind Map of this theme, showing the two categories: How to Adapt Leadership and the Challenges of Adapting.

Figure 17

Remote Workforce Mind Map



Note. The figure shows the Remote Workforce Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 18 shows the Word Count where stemmed words Work, Working, and Works were mentioned more than others concerning working from home. People were next mentioned as the context of the workers' WFH involved in the remote working policy.

Figure 18

Remote Workforce Word Cloud



Note. The figure shows the Remote Workforce Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

Two (17%) participants (01, 11) said that adapting the strategy of leading a remote force is challenging as this concept is new. But they added that it can be made efficient and will become easy as time passes. Participant 01 said, “Remote leadership is new and possibly works for us because it saves us time.” Another participant (11) said, “From the beginning, it will be challenging. But as you work with it, I think people become aware of it.” The same participant added that managers had to apply them consistently, “otherwise, this will become a challenge because everybody has their agenda.”

All participants (100%) stated that adapting the principles is attainable. Seven (58%) participants (03, 05, 07, 08, 09, 10, 12) said that teamwork would facilitate the coordination of the team effort. Participant 03 said, "Working with a team allows for coming up with solutions." Participant 05 stated, "Responsibility to attend to and be around our employees' needs." Participant 07 mentioned, "Each member carries a different load but can be spread evenly to accomplish the goals." Participant 08 added, "Tune in on what people and company leadership need and meet it somewhere in between." Participant 09 articulated, "Balancing the members' and upper leadership needs and having the former know their backs are covered." Participant 10 said, "Instill team-building exercises to enhance relationships." And Participant 12 acknowledged, "Clarifying the process and understanding the whole team will help deliver success."

Six (50%) participants (01, 03, 04, 06, 10, 12) said creativity would make adaptation efficient. Participant 01 stated that "creativity makes for a better team." Participant 03 said, "Get flexible and creative with the task, as few resources are left." Participant 04 said, "Organize, brainstorm, get in touch with inner creativity, and be able to come up with an actual working plan." Participant 06 added, "Focus on the problem, develop an innovative approach, and solve the problem by thinking creatively and trying to deal with my situation." Participant 10 stated, "Think of out-of-box solutions to problems that may present themselves within the group." Participant 12 added, "Look at the general situation, find means to be better, and improve to solve crises at the front."

Four (33%) participants (01, 02, 03, 06) said communication is vital. Participant 01 said, "Maintain effective communication and open lines of communication between members and clients." Participant 02 said, "Maintain person-to-person interaction and meet regularly with each

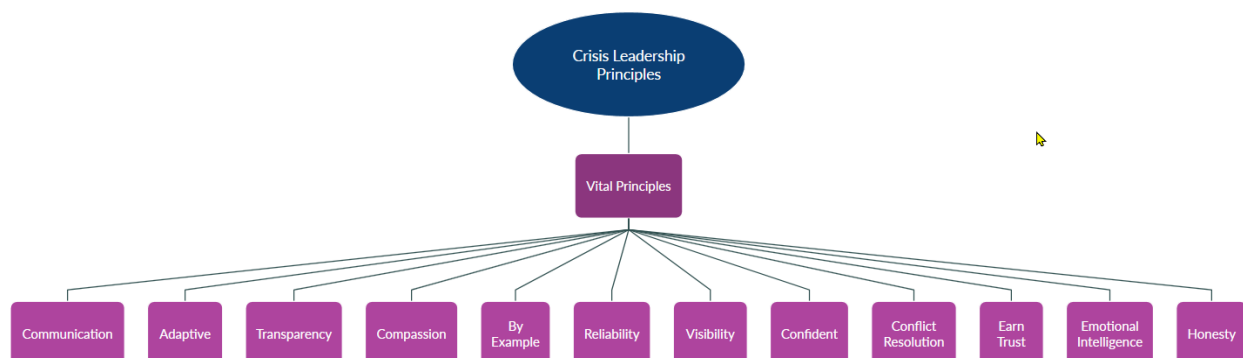
member, in-person or online.” Participant 03 added, “Involve people to develop solutions as you talk to them; they can help you make it happen.” Participant 06 mentioned, “Let your team know what’s happening, and be truthful when sharing or exchanging information with them.” Four (33%) participants (01, 05, 07, 10) said being adaptive and being able to change based on changing conditions make adaptation efficient. Participant 01 mentioned that “the company’s needs dictate the leader’s level of adaptation.” Participant 05 added, “The ability to be flexible and adapt will teach managers and leaders to respond properly to the impacts of the crisis and the needs of their employees.” Participant 07 said, “The leader must adapt to the team’s needs while balancing the business needs.” And Participant 10 stated that “being adaptive means being able to change with the environment.”

Three (25%) participants (02, 06, 11) said having goals accelerate the attainment of adaptation. Participant 02 said, “Part of the adaptation is listing projects and objectives to be completed. “ Participant 06 added, “Having a clear draft of plans, schedule, and execution of work allows for tracking member performance and activity, ensuring productivity.” And Participant 11 stated, “A disparity will exist if the middle management does not follow corporate goals, leading to confusion.” Three (25%) participants (06, 08, 09) said a leader’s approachability could facilitate adaptation. Participant 06 mentioned that “being accessible and easy to meet or deal with during a crisis opens a dialog with team members leading to trust.” Participant 08 said, “Willingness to listen and get ideas from others, not just relying on one’s research, can lead to uncovering dissatisfaction and remedying dissent.” Participant 09 stated, “Doing a lot of listening with empathy allows members to feel that the decision arrived at is of the team benefiting the organization as a whole.”

Two (17%) participants (01, 12) said being receptive and willing to receive something helps develop trust. Participant 01 mentioned, “Be open to suggestions, comments, and feedback regarding the company’s needs.” Participant 12 added that to be “open to changes and open to having anyone come up with ideas.” Two (17%) participants (06, 11) said trustworthiness allows influencing the team to go in the right direction. Participant 06 stated, “Being trustworthy can direct the employees in the right direction, making fulfilling tasks more efficient.” Participant 11 said, “Trustworthiness allows accountability to every team member, allowing team pride and integrity to take hold.” Two (17%) participants (06, 10) said having the ability to resolve conflicts is important in crisis adaptation. Participant 06 articulated, “Resolving conflict and misunderstandings early enables leaders to challenge issues quickly, making resolutions go smoothly and easier.” Participant 10 indicated. “In having a resolution, you can still win by losing, even if you lose. Sometimes you win, but you lose winning. So it is important to have the ability to see the glass as both full and useful even when it’s half empty.” One (8%) participant (05) responded that going above and beyond is a mark of a dedicated and unselfish leader and that it is “necessary when facing the pandemic; that allows team members to realize that extra efforts make the team function more effectively.”

Theme 9. Crisis Leadership Principles

This theme lists the aggregated leadership principles the participants stated are best needed to effectively lead a remote workforce during a crisis. Figure 19 shows the Mind Map of this theme, showing the final category ascertained by this research, the Vital Leadership Principles managers need during a crisis.

Figure 19*Crisis Leadership Principles Mind Map*

Note. The figure shows the Crisis Leadership Principles Mind Map, NVivo (Version 14).

Figure 20 shows the Word Count where stemmed words Need, Needed, and Needs were mentioned more than others. The second word most mentioned is leadership. The participants stated that leaders need vital leadership principles to perform efficiently during crises.

Figure 20*Crisis Leadership Principles Word Cloud*

Note. The figure shows the Crisis Leadership Principles Word Cloud, NVivo (Version 14).

All participants (100%) contributed to the vital crisis leadership principles. Seven (58%) participants (01, 03, 05, 06, 07, 10, 12) said that the ability to communicate with the team members and stakeholders is one of the foremost principles. Participant 01 stated, “The ability to update the status of the situation to members and clients alike makes comprehension of the situation realistic and ascends to trust.” Participant 03 articulated, “Communication should be two-way, from what is happening and what is needed to succeed.” Participant 05 mentioned, “Communication should be between team members, the leader and member, and the corporate leadership.” Participant 06 stated, “Communication should allow members to know what’s happening and be truthful about that towards them.” Participant 07 indicated that “transparency reflects honesty and paves to trust and confidence in leadership.” Participant 10 said, “Communication should be based on being mindful of who you are talking to, with active listening and the ability to respond, which necessitates emotional intelligence.” And Participant 12 added, “Communication should be made public, not hidden or secret, as a crisis requires constant transparency of information that trickles in that necessitates sharing.”

Three (25%) participants (05, 08, 10) said that a leader’s adaptability and ability to adjust to the situation would alleviate the finding of solutions to issues raised by the crisis. Participant 05 said, “Adaptability requires being nimble as the situation is fluid, and no one knows what will happen next.” Participant 08 mentioned, “Adaptability needs to anticipate that a certain crisis will last not only one or two months but could be a long-term issue.” Participant 10 stated, “Adaptability requires innovation and creativity because if one does not have creativity, depending on the situation, innovation cannot happen.” Three (25%) participants (03, 04, 07) underscored that being transparent is an element that crisis requires from leadership. Participant 03 emphasized, “Transparency requires nothing to be hidden, and the accurate information

shared is truthful. A leader should not communicate just to talk but be factual about the information shared.” Participant 04 said, “Transparency is being honest with the situation, explaining everything to the employees, and making them aware of the situation and the plan for the organization.” And Participant 07 added, “Transparency includes clear goals and communicating well so everyone knows what part to function.”

Two (17%) participants (02, 05) mentioned that compassion with sympathy during a crisis is important to building the team’s care and trust. Participant 02 stated that “compassion could be key to getting the team’s support during a crisis. Believing in coworkers and the team drives success because a leader can never achieve success alone.” Participant 05 added, “Compassion in corporate leadership is an ingredient to be successful in the context of the pandemic because corporations are made up of people, so leadership in a company and the management with a high level of compassion will be able to communicate and connect with their employees in uncertain times.” Two (17%) participants (02, 09) declared leading by example in a crisis leads to the team’s involvement in performing the tasks assigned. Participant 02 said, “Leading by example is an important leadership style, as team members can model the behavior seen, leading to consistent team actions.” Participant 09 underscored, “Walk the talk. Trying to set a perfect example to show team members how to do it encourages buy-in, and they will know how to go from there.”

Two (17%) participants (06, 11) said the leader’s reliability to perform consistently well influences the team’s behavior to perform better. Participant 06 mentioned that “reliability requires the consistency of correct actions. The ability to perform well and correctly influences others to do the same.” Participant 11 said, “Reliability requires being prepared to use previous actions that worked because one does not know the situation at that instant, so being reliable

gives the team confidence that it will go right.” Two (17%) participants (03, 12) stated the leader’s visibility could appease fears and raise confidence. Participant 03 said, “Visibility involves just being there. The presence of a leader alone gives the members a sense of being appreciated and that the leader is ready to sympathize with them.” Participant 12 added, “Visibility does not need to be there physically. Often, hearing a leader’s voice giving directions gives them the confidence to do their tasks within a crisis.” Participant 04 said the leader’s confidence could make team members feel safe, “When the leader is confident, employees feel safe. They will see the situation is under control, and fear will dissipate.” And Participant 06 acknowledged that a leader must have conflict resolution skills, for “conflicts and misunderstandings may arise more frequently than normal in a crisis due to the pressure the crisis elicits. The leader must know conflict resolution strategies to iron out differences when they happen.”

Participant 01 said that a leader must have the ability to earn trust, “One of the first leadership attributes a leader must possess the ability to earn the team’s trust, especially if the leader is new to the team. The leaders must maintain that character because if the members do not trust the leader, achieving the team’s goals is hard.” Participant 10 stated that emotional intelligence, or the ability to manage emotions and understand others, is important in a crisis, “Understanding the audience, the organization, or the business needs requires the emotional intelligence of the people you work with within a crisis.” Participant 03 underscored that being honest during a crisis allows that trait to propagate within the team, “Honesty from a leader, especially of high leadership status, encourages buy-in of the corporate policies. Defining the situation truthfully and asking people to act on it encourages a willingness to fulfill the ask.”

Evaluation of the Findings

The theoretical framework for this study was Adaptive Leadership. Adaptive leadership was introduced by Harvard professors Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky. According to Heifetz et al. (2009), an adaptive leader possesses the flexibility to navigate any situation, leads with empathy, understands varying viewpoints, and learns from mistakes to adjust accordingly, thus, creating win-win solutions. Using this framework, the study addressed how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. This study gathered data to seek an adaptive corporate mindset that will prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands of the situation and enact steps that will assist in communication, goal setting, and accountability problems when facing a crisis.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked: How did corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training impact their ability to adapt the workforce to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The data collected answered this by identifying three significant themes: Preparations, Crisis Management, and Remote Working. All participants were unprepared for COVID-19 but took action to prepare their teams for the challenges the pandemic brought. The pandemic impacted managers, causing companies to shut down, affecting employees financially, and triggering confusion about operating as the health crisis ravaged their teams. These impacts are consistent with Hahn (2020): disease crises could lead to people taking precautions, ceasing going to work, and minimizing traveling as health authorities focus on finding remedies. The managers took action by conducting online meetings to address communication problems, procuring laptops and resources, and installing online communication applications. Managers also started training their teams on using communication applications and instilling the policies

on the WFH situation. These actions are consistent with what Wardman (2020) listed in his report on thirteen pandemic risk guidelines that leaders abide by in effective crisis management, notably on responsiveness and adaptiveness. Most participants said they had a semblance of an emplaced crisis management policy but never saw it in action. One mentioned their company did not have one, as they were small. All stated that a crisis management policy would help them face a crisis in the future. On remote working, half of the participants had WFH arrangements before the pandemic and stated that it helped them facilitate the use of WFH with their team. The managers' consolidated WFH policies range from one day to three weekly days at home, with the rest in the office. These WFH conditions are consistent with what Afrianty et al. (2021) reported under COVID-19, that WFH is no longer a luxury and has become necessary to make businesses productive and keep afloat. Also, Chenji & Raghavendra (2021) stated that Americans reported working from home at least 50 % of the time, with 52% of employees worldwide working at least once weekly.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked: How can corporate leaders adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?

The study answered this by identifying four helpful traits which emerged based on participants' statements regarding Heifetz: Adaptability, Practicability, Focused, and Understanding. The ability of the leader to be flexible and adjust to the situation is important when leading a remote force. Leaders must adapt to what is happening, ascertain the challenging situation, look at the big picture, and be ready to change. This aligns with Nissim & Simon (2021), who said that change is never static and constantly evolving, so leaders must adapt to challenges. In addition, this also aligns with Trinh's (2019) advice that adaptation requires

leaders to be flexible toward understanding the oriented goal. Participants said that leaders must be capable of getting things done as everything evolves and changes quickly in a crisis requiring a practical approach to solving problems. Practicability involves effective management using contingencies, introducing feasible new processes for more acceptance, and using beneficial intuition during a crisis. A leader's eyes should be fixed clearly on the goal and have a plan of action for whatever issues might arise and an objective, for without a focused leader, the team can not go anywhere. A leader should have a mantra or guidance to help direct decisions, understand what is important, discard anything irrelevant, to deal with the more serious issues. This lines up with Curphy's (2021) statement that leadership requires skills that involve creating a goal, defining a vision, carrying out the vision, and leading others to achieve that vision, underscoring the importance of personal relationships to successful leadership.

A leader's ability to understand situations and the feelings of their team is vital to a remote workforce. Comprehension of human psychology of how people work in a group and what the leader can and cannot do is a useful aspect of collaboration as it will help deal with the situation and lead to efficient management of teams. This holds concerning Adaptavist's (2020) study, which says that one work factor challenge for managing a remote team is understanding their feelings. A thorough understanding of what the team members can do remotely will facilitate tracking any assigned work. Brewer (2022) stated that adaptive leadership focuses on understanding the intricacies of assisting individuals in understanding significant change and successfully facing new and turbulent truths.

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked: What adaptive leadership principles do corporate leaders consider as a coping strategy toward creating an adaptive corporate mindset?

The study answered this by identifying themes of Adaptive Leadership Principles, Corporate Mindset, Remote Workforce, and Crisis Leadership Principles. The data collected identified the adaptive leadership principles vital in a crisis: Teamwork, Creativity, Innovation, Character, Receptivity, Credibility, Flexibility, Integrity, and Decisiveness. A leader who can structure a team to work together virtually is crucial as it would promote a unified group mentality needed to influence the team, promoting understanding of the pros and cons of ideas. This parallels Mutha & Srivastava's (2021) definition of a virtual team working as two or more workers independently interacting and adapting to accomplish a common goal in their specified functions and roles in the virtual world. Teamwork would improve team satisfaction and mitigate risks since everyone is on one page. Teamwork leads to trust and affords buy-in from others because when it is related to work, everyone learns to respect everybody's decision, leading to a winning mentality.

A leader must have the creativity to create contingencies to show the team that the leader has the upper hand in the situation. Every crisis manager should know and possess an out-of-the-box mentality so that when faced with a problem has a better chance of finding a solution. Sometimes out-of-the-box solutions work, but sometimes they do not. However, being out of the box can be good as good thinkers can give good suggestions, though bad thinkers can give bad inputs but taken in its whole context, the bad suggestions can also make sense. A leader needs an innovative mind to produce something not created before. This aligns with Tapia & Polonskaia's

(2020) statement that leaders leveraging the adaptive style could effectively navigate any situation, including interrelational diversity by their employees when nurturing innovation.

In this study, participants revealed how they innovated. A manager donated money to different charities, care packages, gifts, and gift baskets to our employees during Christmas to alleviate the alienating effects of COVID-19. Another invited people without homes to their hotel to help people in need as their hotel was empty of tenants. A manager stayed up all night speaking to members who have experienced lives lost in their families and other COVID-19-induced difficulties to alleviate pain, keep them from depression, and give them hope. One manager asked team members to innovate solutions using any resources available due to being forced by circumstances, such as a dance instructor teaching a dance class using a camera bought from Amazon and a huge TV monitor. These innovative actions align with Heifetz et al.'s (2009) statement: an adaptive leader can navigate any situation, leads with empathy, understands varying viewpoints, and learns from mistakes to adjust accordingly, thus, creating win-win solutions.

The final data category listed the aggregated leadership principles best needed to lead a remote workforce during a crisis successfully. The ability to communicate with the team members and stakeholders helps collaboration between team members be effective in a crisis. Communication allows the update of the situation to members and clients alike, allowing the understanding of the situation to be realistic. This statement aligns with what Nichols et al. (2020) recommended: establishing good frontline communication will help determine what is happening and enable a quick reaction to any situation. Communication should not be one-way but two-way: what is happening and needed to succeed should be communicated between team members, the leader and member, and the corporate leadership. Communicating with

transparency indicates honesty and overlays trust and confidence in leadership and must be based on respect and listening, with the intent to respond. This statement is corroborated by Nichols et al. (2020), who stated that the ability to maintain communication between members of the team and the leader is an important factor in getting things done. Communication should be made public, not hidden or secret, as a crisis requires constant information transparency that trickles in with new challenges. This aligns with the statement of Baker et al. (2020), who wrote that in an extended crisis like COVID-19, timely and effective communication is imperative to the successful recovery of any organization.

Summary

The key points in this chapter started with identifying how the trustworthiness of the data was established. The data collected for Research Question 1 resulted in Preparations, Crisis Management, and Remote Working themes. The data for Preparations detailed how companies fared during the pandemic. The two categories identified under Preparations were the effects of unpreparedness to the COVID-19 crisis and the resolutions managers took to mediate their teams to the challenges COVID-19 brought. For Crisis Management, the data gathered focused on the impact of a crisis management policy and its usefulness to participants. The two categories listed under this theme were the benefits of having crisis management policies and companies that have or did not have policies before COVID-19. For Remote Working, the data was on whether the participants had WFH arrangements before the pandemic and how it helped to face the pandemic. The two categories identified under this theme were what forms of working environment managers took for their teams to continue functioning in the crisis and the kind of meetings they used to conduct them.

The data collected for Research Question 2 identified four helpful traits based on Heifetz's statements. Adaptability: A leader can be flexible and adjust to the situation. Practicability: A leader must be capable of getting things done because everything is evolving and changing fast. Focused: A leader's eyes should be fixed clearly on the goal. And Understanding: A leader's ability to comprehend situations and feelings of their team. The data collected for Research Question 3 resulted in the themes of Adaptive Leadership Principles, Corporate Mindset, Remote Workforce, and Crisis Leadership Principles. Adaptive Leadership Principles underscored the importance of adaptive leadership principles during a crisis, with the participants listing leadership principles considered vital in coping with the pandemic. Corporate Mindset discussed how important a corporate mindset is in creating a coping strategy during a crisis and its effects on the human factor. Remote Workforce collated information on how managers can adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis, including the challenges of adapting. The Crisis Leadership Principles listed the aggregated leadership principles the participants stated are best for leading a remote workforce during a crisis.

The data evaluation of this study indicated much consistency with the theory and current research. For RQ1, this was answered by identifying three significant themes: Preparations, Crisis Management, and Remote Working. All managers were unprepared for COVID-19 but acted to prepare their teams for the challenges the pandemic brought. For RQ2, this was answered by identifying four helpful traits based on Heifetz's statement: Adaptability, Practicability, Focused, and Understanding. For RQ 3, this was answered by identifying Adaptive Leadership Principles, Corporate Mindset, Remote Workforce, and Crisis Leadership Principles. The next chapter will discuss this study's implications, recommendations, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This chapter addressed several areas of the research study. The main focus points were the implications, recommendations, and conclusions. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to address how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. This study aimed to seek an adaptive corporate mindset that will prepare corporate leaders to adjust to the demands of the situation and enact steps that will assist in communication, goal setting, and accountability problems when facing a crisis. This research followed the same process of diligent preparation and applied the necessary credibility techniques to justify the findings, resulting in the proper conduct, ethically and accurately. This study used open-ended questions and followed the IRB-approved interview protocol where participants were asked the same questions using identical methods in the same context producing comparable results.

A detailed data collection record was kept, and since there is only one interviewer and the same data gatherer, reliability was achieved. As confirmability was an important step in indicating trustworthiness, carefully selecting participants was conducted, and after data collection, a thorough review was performed to ensure accuracy. The study interviewed 12 corporate supervisors. All participants were corporate supervisors within the Tri-State for three or more years and had at least five direct reports. All used video and audio-conferencing technology to communicate with their team. The participants were recruited through social media, primarily LinkedIn and Facebook. The research encountered limitations, particularly that it uses a small number of cases limiting the validity or generality of research findings (Walker & Carr, 2021). The researcher emphasized the research scope to include warranting the performance of interviews, controlling the average random errors, and increasing the research's

precision (Barnes et al., 2022). This chapter will discuss the implications and recommendations based on the study results and the theoretical framework of adaptive leadership.

Implications

The implications provided in this chapter are presented for each research question. The data gathered indicated consistency with the theory and similar research. The data was organized by research question. For RQ1, three significant themes emerged from the data: Preparations, Crisis Management, and Remote Working. The participants were unprepared for COVID-19 but acted to prepare their teams for the challenges the pandemic brought. For RQ2, four themes emerged based on Heifetz's four helpful traits based on Heifetz's adaptive leadership theory: Adaptability, Practicability, Focused, and Understanding. For RQ3, the four themes identified were Adaptive Leadership Principles, Corporate Mindset, Remote Workforce, and Crisis Leadership Principles.

Research Question 1

RQ1 asked: How did corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training impact their ability to adapt the workforce to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The participants underscored how the lack of preparations and training affected how their company reacted to the pandemic. The participants elaborated on the effects of unpreparedness on their companies and the actions their companies took to resolve them. The leaders were confused about what to do and reported that their companies were affected productivity-wise and financially, challenging how to continue their corporate work. According to Waizenegger et al. (2020), the pandemic required companies to have their employees work from home (WFH), triggering confusion among workers and leaders alike as they were untrained. However, each leader took immediate measures to mitigate the circumstances that COVID-19 brought about.

According to Ramalingam et al. (2020), countering the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic mandates organizational leadership actions at all levels, which these leaders initiated. Online meetings were conducted, technology and proper equipment were procured and used to communicate, and training was initiated on managing the remote workforce effectively and using remote communication. These actions were consistent with what Struye de Swielande (2021) reported, that leadership must identify the organization's current adaptive management state to adapt the interventions needed for implementation appropriately.

Additional data gathered was on the impact of a crisis management policy and its usefulness to participants. The two categories listed under this theme were the benefits of having crisis management policies and companies that have or did not have policies before COVID-19. There was a semblance of Crisis Management policies in the participants' companies where most had heard of it but barely saw it in action during the pandemic. The participants agreed that if there were specific crisis management policies that deal with crises like the pandemic, they would have been better prepared on what to do, and they are willing to help create one for the future. The data also showed who among the participants had WFH policies before COVID-19 and, for those who had, how it helped them adapt to the full-time WFH requirements. The findings presented that those who had WFH arrangements before COVID-19 helped them adjust to the full-time work-from-home schedule after COVID-19 hit. Before COVID-19, the participants without WFH policies were forced to initiate them by creating a hybrid working environment. All these align with what Restrepo & Zeballos (2022) reported, that during the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses forced their workers to work remotely.

Research Question 2

RQ2 asked: How can corporate leaders adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?

The data gathered showed how Heifetz's adaptive leadership theory can be helpful to managers in a crisis. The participants indicated that leaders need to demonstrate the following traits when leading a remote workforce during a crisis:

1. **Adaptability.** A leader's ability to be flexible and adjust to the situation. A leader should be flexible to adapt to what is going on, ascertain the challenging situation, look at the big picture, and be ready to change. The leader must be agile to identify areas to use teamwork and innovation to prioritize tasks effectively.
2. **Practicability.** A leader must be capable of getting things done because everything is evolving and changing fast. A leader must have a practical approach to solving problems. Practicability requires effective management using contingencies on how tasks are to be done properly, including introducing feasible new processes for more acceptance and use of beneficial intuition during a crisis.
3. **Focused.** A leader's eyes should be fixed clearly on the goal. A leader should have a plan of action for whatever issues might arise in the future and an objective. Without focus, the team is not going anywhere. A leader should have a guiding statement that will help direct members when deciding and focusing on what is important to discard anything unimportant to deal with the more serious issues.
4. **Understanding.** A leader's ability to comprehend situations and feelings of their team. A leader must understand the human psychology involved in how people work in a group and what the leader can and cannot do. Understanding what the team members

can do remotely will facilitate tracking any assigned work, which is a useful aspect of collaboration as it will help deal with the situation and lead to efficient management of teams.

Heifetz et al. (2009) defined adaptive leadership as an effective leadership style where a group must turn to a leader to receive help and support to counter variables instigating a state of emergency. With adaptive leadership, leaders do more than affect the change. They can recognize potential differences between selections and carefully decide the best path for the situation (Mahsud et al., 2010). Heifetz et al. (2009) added that adaptive leadership involves adaptation to unfamiliar circumstances that necessitate unconventional responses that are out of the box spanning the gap between an organization's aspirations, goals, and operational capability.

The data collected showed how adaptive leadership can be useful in a remote workforce during a crisis. The participants stated that adaptive leadership practices are useful as leaders can use them to adjust to the situation by recognizing the needed change to adjust accordingly. The participants added that technology must help with the adaptive efforts. Adaptive leadership principles could be used to set goals as the situation is so fluid and unpredictable that leaders must constantly adapt, requiring managerial checks and balances. Since remote working is hard to supervise, the adaptive principles will help leaders deal with the integrity issues of who is working. The adaptive principles will allow for better caring for the need of their members through communication that will allow leaders to adapt to each member's needs. The data gathered on Virtual Team showed that virtual teams among these leaders are expected to continue even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes. Mutha & Srivastava (2021) defined virtual team working as when two or more workers independently interact and adapt to accomplish a

common goal in their specified functions and roles in a remote environment. The data gathered showed that leaders prepared their teams by improving communication using the latest technology, adjusting work practices, and maximizing the full potential of hybrid work. In a virtual team, members are disconnected by space and time zone and may come from different cultures (Malhotra et al., 2007).

Research Question 3

RQ3 asked: What adaptive leadership principles do corporate leaders consider as a coping strategy toward creating an adaptive corporate mindset?

The findings showed the importance of adaptive principles that would prove most useful in times of crisis and any coping strategy that can be used in a crisis. The data showed that adaptive leadership principles are vital during a crisis. Leaders must possess a character with mental and moral fortitude by maintaining composure and a strong leadership pose. A strong character will gain the employee's trust, value work and job responsibility, and work for a company with joy. Character involves a strong vision of what must be done and the ability to pull it together. All these align with what Curphy (2021) stated: leadership requires skills that involve creating a goal, defining a vision, carrying out the vision, and leading others to achieve that vision. Being receptive, which allows the acceptability of new suggestions and ideas, is an important leadership trait for facing the unknowns. Receptiveness involves listening to the team for suggestions and ideas and encouraging them to open up. Being receptive is being open to not just ideas from the team members but from other groups, other people or peers, or the leadership above. Hearing them out can make people's lives easier, especially during the pandemic. These align with Heifetz & Laurie's (1997) statement that leadership must be open to hearing the

employees' voices, comments, and feedback from the members; otherwise, they will miss important information and could discourage potential leaders from rising.

Leaders must possess credibility by helping members view the leader as trustworthy and believable. When a leader does not have credibility, respect and trust are gone. Leaders who demonstrate credibility know exactly what needs to be done and when it needs to be done, which leads to acceptance by everyone. A flexible leader will accommodate the team's changeability and adaptability to different conditions. To be flexible, a leader has to adapt, be nimble, and think of creative solutions for the team. A leader must learn how to adjust when adapting to situations. Adaptation requires leaders to be flexible toward understanding the oriented goal (Trinh, 2019). A leader should have integrity, honesty, and moral uprightness. These traits can help the team develop focus during the crisis. When integrity is absent, a team cannot get a good grip on the situation, leading to indecisiveness. Integrity goes hand-in-hand with leading by example and having mental focus. A leader's decisiveness allows quick and efficient decision-making required by the crisis that can lead to the quick formation of policy. Being decisive requires having mental focus. According to Joiner & Josephs (2007), taking decisive actions amidst complex and rapidly deteriorating circumstances is part of leadership development. A leader must prioritize the human factor context within the corporate mindset.

The data from this study reported the importance of having a corporate mindset in creating a coping strategy during a crisis. A corporate mindset helps set long-term goals, vision, policies, and philosophies to cope with a strategy and create defined rules and policies for the organization. Goals guide employees in defining the expected output and enable employees to feel safe, appreciated, and valued. Organizational goals can assist the team in addressing future crisis challenges. A corporate mindset guides members of the organization and the people they

interact with: conduct business effectively with clients, set the tone of actions, and outline the do's and don'ts for the employee. A company's policy and procedures help employees abide by rules and teach them the consequences of breaking them, driving the company's response when faced with a crisis when upper management directs everyone to adhere to the policy. Leadership requires skills that involve creating a goal, defining a vision, carrying out the vision, and leading others to achieve that vision, underscoring the importance of personal relationships to successful leadership (Curphy, 2021).

The corporate office must support these adaptive practices to succeed and understand what it means to survive the crisis. Without corporate support, managers will have difficulty enhancing their employees' productivity. Corporate supports aid in establishing internal and external networks at all levels, identifying the stakeholders, partnering with them, and ask for support as needed (Wardman, 2020). Adapting the strategy of leading a remote force is challenging but can be made efficient and become easy as practiced. Adapting from the start will be challenging but will become easier as it is applied consistently. These adaptation statements are corroborated by Nelson et al. (2021) that the growth zone is attained when learning and adapting what works best in a crisis begins to dominate.

The participants in this study reflected that adapting the leadership principles is attainable, and teamwork facilitates the coordination of efforts as working with a team allows coming up with solutions. Working with a team makes it easier to identify, attend to and be around the employees' needs. Each member carries a different load, so they can be spread evenly to accomplish the goals. The clarity in the process and understanding of the whole team through collaboration will help deliver success. In addition, the leader must balance the team's and upper leadership needs and have the former realize its backs are covered when doing teamwork. The

conduct of team-building exercises will enhance relationships. A new set of attitudes, abilities, and the collaboration of the people involved could help organizations maintain afloat amidst these unusual circumstances (Hernández-Santiago & Pérez-Rivera, 2022)

Creativity makes for a better team, making members flexible and creative. Hybrid workplaces can help increase productivity, creativity, and collaborative relationship and propagate a more balanced work-life (Donut, 2022). The essence of creativity is organizing, brainstorming, and getting in touch with inner inventiveness to develop an innovative approach. Finding a solution to the problem by thinking out of the box and trying to deal with my situation allows the general look of the situation that improves finding a solution for a challenge the crisis brings. The hybrid workplace model allows workers to achieve creativity and goal completion faster than in a regular onsite workplace, improving team morale and a balanced work-life (Murugan, 2022).

Communication is vital to adapt leadership principles. Leaders must maintain effective communication and open lines of communication between members and clients. , Establishing good frontline communication will help find out what is happening and enable a quick reaction to any situation. Employees must sustain person-to-person interaction and meet regularly with each member, in person or online. Phillips (2022) described regular and clear communication with a virtual team as imperative. Leaders must inform the team of what's happening and be truthful when sharing or exchanging information. Leaders must maintain an open and transparent system of communication that reviews the process and communicates any change when needed (Hernandez et al. (2019).

A leader must be adaptable and possess the skills to change based on changing conditions. The company's needs should dictate the level of adaptation the leader takes.

Ramalingam et al. (2020) recommended that adaptability ensures continued learning and that appropriate response to the situation becomes consistent. The capacity to adapt and be flexible will make managers and leaders respond properly to the impacts of the crisis and the needs of their employees. Trinh (2019) suggested that adaptation requires leaders to be flexible toward understanding the oriented goal. The leader must adapt to the team's needs while balancing the business needs. Being adaptive means being able to change with the environment. A leader with a set of goals, including listing projects and objectives to be accomplished, will accelerate the attainment of adaptation. A clear draft of plans, schedule, and execution of work allows for tracking member performance and activity to ensure productivity. The worker's goals must be sufficiently defined and collaborated with others (managers and coworkers) to meet productivity; otherwise, a disparity will exist if the middle management does not follow corporate goals leading to confusion.

A leader's approachability could facilitate adaptation during a crisis. Being accessible and easy to meet opens a dialog with team members building trust. Being open to listening and getting ideas from others, not just relying on one's research, can lead to discovering dissatisfaction and remedying dissent. Leadership must be open to hearing the employees' voices, comments, and feedback from the members; otherwise, they will miss important information and could discourage potential leaders from rising. Doing a lot of listening with empathy allows members to feel that the decision arrived at is of the team benefiting the organization as a whole. Wardman (2020) recommended being candid and honest, allowing factual and even hard truths to be heard, and apologizing for mistakes. Being receptive and willing to receive something helps develop trust. In addition, Lopez-Leon et al. (2020) validated

this statement, saying that connecting with others at work can give the worker a sense of fulfillment; being open to help and allowing others to help generates the same gratification.

Trustworthiness allows influencing the team to go in the right direction. Being trustworthy can direct the employees in the right direction, making fulfilling tasks more efficient. Trustworthiness allows accountability to every team member, allowing team pride and integrity to take hold. This statement aligns with Wardman's (2020) recommendation: credibility and trustworthiness can provide competence through experts while increasing trust through honest and open communication – never over-protect or over-promise, and most of all, do not stretch the truth. The ability to resolve conflicts is important in crisis adaptation. Conflict resolution and assessing misunderstandings early enables leaders to challenge issues quickly, making resolutions go smoothly and easier. Going above and beyond is a mark of a dedicated and unselfish leader allows team members to realize that extra efforts make the team function more effectively.

A leader's adaptability and ability to adjust to the situation would accelerate the finding of solutions to issues raised by a crisis. Adaptability requires being nimble as the situation is fluid, and no one knows what will happen next. This aligns with Heifetz & Laurie's (1997) assertion that businesses must adapt quickly and appropriately to survive their challenges. Adaptability needs to anticipate that a certain crisis will last not only one or two months but could be a long-term issue. Adaptability requires innovation and creativity because if one does not have creativity, depending on the situation, innovation cannot happen. Adaptation requires leaders to be flexible toward understanding the oriented goal.

Being transparent requires nothing to be hidden, and the accurate information shared is truthful. A leader should not communicate just to talk but factual about the information being

shared. Transparency is being honest with the situation, explaining everything to the employees, and making them aware of the situation and the plan for what's next. Abrams (2020) substantiates this statement by saying that any information must be disseminated clearly and transparently to the organization's members to prevent the cycle of fear that can result in a stoppage or delay of work obligations. Transparency includes clear goals and communicating well with everyone so everyone knows what part to function. Leadership must maintain an open and transparent system of communication that reviews the process and communicates any change when needed (Ramalingam et al., 2020).

Compassion with sympathy during a crisis is important to building the team's care and trust. Believing in coworkers and the team drives success because a leader can never do it alone. Corporations are made up of people, so leadership in a company and the management with a high level of compassion must communicate and connect with their employees during an uncertain crisis. The evidence that compassion is reached when people demonstrate gratitude, openness to suggestions, view mistakes as avenues of learning, and portray transparency with themselves and others (Lotzer, 2020). Leading by example in a crisis leads to the team's involvement in performing tasks assigned. When people see an example, team members model that behavior, encouraging buy-in and leading to consistent team actions. Sayenda (2022) stated that leaders must lead by example, embrace this new normal, and not be so focused on productivity that their well-being is compromised.

The leader's reliability to perform consistently well influences the team's behavior to perform better. Reliability requires the consistency of correct actions. The ability to perform well and correctly influences others to do the same. Reliability requires being prepared to use previous actions that worked because one does not know the situation immediately, so being

reliable gives the team confidence that it will do right. One of the behaviors that leaders cultivate is to deliver results reliably, even if challenges and turmoil are overwhelming. The leader's visibility could quiet down fears and raise confidence. Visibility involves just being there for the presence of a leader alone gives the members a sense of being appreciated and signals that the leader is ready to sympathize with them. However, visibility does not always mean physical, for just hearing the voice online is enough to give the team the confidence to do their tasks. This is supported by what Mutha & Srivastava (2021) emphasized: leaders must strategically make themselves more available to their team, making their presence felt.

The leader's confidence could make team members feel safe and see the situation is under control. An important corporate action is to indoctrinate employees to be prepared to meet the crisis head-on, for doing so will instill confidence and dispel fears. In a crisis, a leader must have conflict-resolution skills to iron out differences when they happen. Conflicts and misunderstandings arise more frequently than normal in a crisis due to the pressure the crisis elicits. Chaos, fear, and confusion prevail in a crisis leading people's to mistrust, undermining their corporate identity, and resulting in conflicts regarding their safety and commitment to their work (Jones et al., 2021). One leadership attribute a leader must possess is the ability to earn the team's trust. The leaders must maintain a trusting character because if the members do not have trust, the team's goals accomplishment is difficult. These statements aligned with Wardman's (2020): increasing trust through honest and open communication. In addition, de Klerk & Palmer (2021) and Jones et al. (2021) similarly stated that confidence and trust are attainable through good and capable communication, regular updates, validating situations, underscoring changes, and updating new changes as they become available.

A crisis is defined by Nissim & Simon (2021) as an unexpected situation or condition that can result in a high degree of damage, giving rise to loss of control, emotional distress, and disorientation. This study underscored that emotional intelligence is imperative in controlling crisis stressors. Understanding the team, the organization, or the business requirements necessitates the emotional intelligence of those in a crisis. Heifetz & Laurie (1997) corroborated this saying to regulate distress by supporting people's social and emotional needs. Being honest during a crisis propagates honesty within the team. Defining the situation truthfully and asking people to act on it encourages a willingness to fulfill the ask. Honesty from a leader, especially of high leadership status, encourages buy-in of the corporate policies. Trust is gained through honest and open communication while not stretching the truth.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings of this research apply to many organizations of today. The relational concept of virtual teams and Adaptive Leadership were elaborated thoroughly. Sayenda (2022) purported that The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the use of virtual teams, with them continuing even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes. This research has validated Sayenda's statement and concurred that creating virtual teams countered the serious challenges COVID-19 brought. Nissim & Simon (2021) said that since change is never static and constantly evolving, leaders must adapt to corporate growth challenges. Adaptive leadership necessitates each team member's involvement as they are stakeholders of the process, motivating them to adapt to the situation more effectively (Heifetz et al., 2014).

The following adaptive leadership traits/skills are recommended for organizations currently encountering any residual crisis of COVID-19 or to face any similar crisis in the future. The first is teamwork, as it would facilitate the coordination of the team effort. The resulting

working condition will allow the followers and the leader to bond, resulting in effective teamwork (Jefferies, 2017). Next is creativity, which would make adaptation efficient due to the lack of resources available during a crisis. Hybrid workplaces can help increase productivity, creativity, and collaborative relationship and propagate a more balanced work-life (Donut, 2022). Another is communication through the proper use of technology. Wardman (2020) said that maintaining effective communication and open lines of contact between members and clients helps involve people in developing solutions as they talk to make things happen. In leveraging technology for virtual collaboration, software, and platforms have increased and vastly improved team communication (Mutha & Srivastava, 2021).

Adaptability and the ability to change based on changing conditions make the adaptation process efficient. The capacity to adapt and be flexible will teach managers and leaders to respond properly to the impacts of the crisis and the needs of their employees. This ability aligns with what Trinh (2019) suggested, that adaptation requires leaders to be flexible toward understanding the oriented goal. Being receptive and willing to receive something helps develop trust. Another is to have goals because part of adaptation is listing projects and objectives to be completed. Being at home instead in the office allows workers to contribute to fulfilling corporate goals without driving to and from the office (Mäkitalo, 2021). A clear draft of plans, schedule, and execution of work allows for tracking member performance and activity, ensuring productivity. Being approachable could facilitate adaptation for being accessible and easy to meet or deal with during a crisis and opens a dialog with team members leading to trust. Others are the skill of listening to get ideas from others, not just relying on one's research, which can lead to uncovering dissatisfaction and remedying dissent. Doing much listening with empathy allows members to feel that the decision arrived at is of the team benefiting the organization as a

whole. According to Heifetz et al. (2009), an adaptive leader can navigate any situation, leads with empathy, understands varying viewpoints, learns from mistakes, and adjust accordingly, creating win-win solutions. Trustworthiness is a trait that allows influencing the team to go in the right direction. A trustworthy leader will influence the team to go in the right direction because as trust is earned, cooperation follows, making fulfilling tasks more efficient. Another is to have the ability to resolve conflict and misunderstandings. Jones et al. (2021) stated that chaos, fear, and confusion prevail, with many organizations and institutions during a crisis losing control of the situation leading to both leaders and employees being pushed out of their comfort zones. These situational factors lead to people's mistrust, undermining their corporate identity and resulting in conflicts regarding their safety and commitment to their work (Jones et al., 2021). Resolving conflicts early enables leaders to challenge issues quickly, making resolutions go smoothly and easier. Lastly, going above and beyond is a needed mark of a dedicated and unselfish leader, allowing team members to realize that extra efforts make the team function more effectively.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to dissipate slowly and is pushed to the back view, additional research is needed to validate further the findings of how adaptive leadership principles can be effective in times of crisis, especially concerning the hybrid working environment. One recommendation would be to explore the vital adaptive-related effects between the full-hybrid and semi-hybrid work environments and how adaptive leadership can deal with them more efficiently. Now that many companies are leaning towards full hybrid work, the effects on productivity, psychological impacts on employees, and costs of maintaining hybrid work must be quantified. Smite et al. (2023) stated that COVID-19 exposed the significance of

WFH experiences better than expected. Companies have invested heavily in WFH equipment, and employees have become used to remote working, leading toward better work-life balance. However, this has led to the isolation between employees resulting in decreased team integrity and overall weakening corporate culture, as this research has detailed. The COVID-19 pandemic became a crossroads in replacing traditional face-to-face work with remote work (Stasiła-Sieradzka et al., 2023), requiring continuous investigation and research.

Conclusions

The research addressed how adaptive leadership principles can assist corporate technology leaders in identifying steps to improve employees' performance in times of crisis. The analysis resulted in categorizing adaptive leadership traits and skills that would prove helpful for organizations currently encountering any residual crisis of COVID-19 or facing any similar crisis in the future. By examining the effects of companies' unpreparedness for COVID-19 and the subsequent leaders' reactions, this study addressed the research problem through a construct of a crisis management concept that can help develop effective remote working initiatives during a crisis. While many companies stumbled during the COVID-19 pandemic, the characterization of crisis leadership principles applied to the remote workforce effectively maintained operational team function and improved workers' morale and mental health during the crisis. The study findings confirmed the postulation of the primary adaptive leadership theory involving the six fundamental behaviors adaptive leaders must work on to include the four important adaptive concepts that adaptive leaders use to cement their actions. This study has shown how helpful adaptive traits can enable leaders to assist their teams in surviving and outpacing the challenges during a disaster. The practical implications of this research can relate to a wide range of measures to assist technological leaders in recognizing the process of

improving employees' performance in times of crisis. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic is declining, but remote work is here to stay (Smite et al., 2023). The extent of adaptive leadership that can be harnessed to assist corporate leaders as WFH blossoms are not fully comprehended yet, underscoring the need to continue this research, such as understanding the adaptive-related effects between the full-hybrid and semi-hybrid work environments and their effects on remote workers.

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Introduction

Hi, my name is Leo Primero, and I am a doctoral student at Northcentral University. Before we start, I would like to thank you for participating in this interview. I am conducting a research study on how the COVID-19 crisis has affected corporate leadership and find ways to adjust to the demands of the situation. With your permission, I will record this conversation and what you have to say. The recording will only use for the transcription of our conversation.

Demographic Questions

1. Please tell me your name, title, the company you work for, and what you do.
2. What is your Gender? Race/Ethnicity? Age?
3. How many total years of corporate supervisory leadership do you have?
4. How many years have you worked in the Tri-State Area of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania?
5. How many people do you manage?

Main Questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions that apply to RQs
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<p>RQ1 - How did corporate leaders' lack of preparedness and training impact their ability to adapt the workforce to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When the COVID-19 pandemic started, how prepared was your company to deal with the challenges it brought?2. Do you think that your company prepared you to deal with the crisis? How so? If not, why?3. Did your company have Work From Home (WFH) arrangements before the pandemic? Can you describe it? If none, why did your company not have one?4. Do you think if your company had a crisis mitigation policy in place, it could have impacted how you led your group during the pandemic? Could you explain to me your reason?5. How did the lack of preparedness impact your ability to adapt your team to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic?<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Why do you say that?b. Explain what could have helped you be prepared for the crisis.
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<p>RQ2 - How can corporate leaders adapt their leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?</p>	<p>According to Heifetz et al. (2009), an adaptive leadership style is a practical approach to solving issues. It guides leaders in identifying and focusing on the important aspects of a procedure and can discard anything unnecessary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How helpful are Heifetz's statements to your current situation?2. Can managers like yourself use adaptive leadership to lead a remote workforce? How so?3. Virtual teams are expected to continue even if the COVID-19 situation normalizes. How would you prepare yourself to be more effective in managing your team in the hybrid workplace since it is here to stay?4. What do you say are the most important practices to ensure that your team functions best in a hybrid or WFH situation? Why is that?
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<p>RQ3 - What adaptive leadership principles do corporate leaders consider as a coping strategy toward creating an adaptive corporate mindset?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How important is a corporate mindset in creating a coping strategy during a crisis? 2. What leadership principles do you think are vital during a crisis? How so? <p>The five adaptive leadership principles expounded that adaptive leaders look for innovative approaches and out-of-the-box solutions to their problems. They generate a unified group mentality focused on developing win-win resolutions. They possess a strong character and integrity that let them not lose credibility.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. How important are the adaptive leadership principles in creating a coping strategy during a crisis? Why? 4. How can you, as a manager, adapt your leadership style to lead a remote workforce during a crisis?
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Conclusion

1. Do you have any other thoughts or comments on how adaptive leadership can help you manage your team in a crisis?
2. If none. I want to thank you for the opportunity to conduct this interview.

Appendix B
IRB Approval Letter

Date: November 30, 2022

PI Name: Leopoldo Primero

Chair Name (if applicable): Deanna Davis

Application Type: Initial Submission

Review Level: Exempt - Category 2

Study Title: Exploring Adaptive Leadership Principles to Assist Corporate Leaders in Times of Crisis: A Qualitative Case Study

Approval Date: November 30, 2022

Expiration Date: N/A

Dear Leopoldo:

Congratulations! Your IRB application has been approved. Your responsibilities include the following:

1. Follow the protocol as approved. If you need to make changes with your population, recruitment, or consent, please submit a modification form.
2. If there is a consent process in your research, you must use the consent form approved with your final application. Please make sure all participants receive a copy of the consent form.
3. **If there are any injuries, problems, or complaints from participants (adverse events), you must notify the IRB at IRB@nu.edu within 24 hours.**
4. IRB audit of procedures may occur. The IRB will notify you if your study will be audited.

5. When data are collected and de-identified, please submit a study closure form to the IRB. See the [IRBManager instructions on our website](#).
6. You must maintain current CITI certification until you have submitted a study closure form.
7. If you are a student, please be aware that you must be enrolled in an active dissertation course with NU in order to collect data.

Best wishes as you conduct your research!

Respectfully,

National University Institutional Review Board

Email: irb@nu.edu