

Leadership and Decision-Making in Complex Environments

Leadership Dilemmas Portfolio

BMDB7004

Ling Lin
2006204

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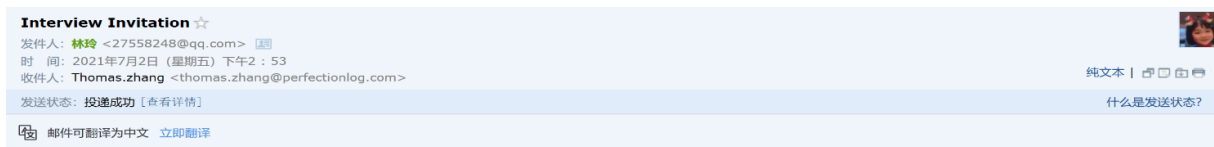
Blog 1: The Interview Part

1.1 The interviewer profile



Thomas Zhang is the General Manager of Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd, who has more than 15 years of management experience and leadership responsibility for 1000 or more people.

1.2 Invitation and Acceptance



Dear Mr.Zhang,

I am a DBA students of University of Wales, Trinity of Saint David in U.K. Professor Zheng recommend you to me. I am learning a course named Leadership and Decision-Making in Complex Environment. I would like to interview with you in terms of the leadership challenges or dilemmas that you have encountered in your working process. As what I know, your enterprise has been expanded markets in other Asian countries like Australia, Singapore, Malaysia etc. besides China, which could catalyse the leadership environment even more complex than ever. Could you please arrange this interview for me and reply me the exact date, time and location asap. Really appreciated your valuable academic support. Looking forward to receive your reply!

Sincerely,

LING LIN

答复: Interview Invitation ☆

发件人: Thomas.zhang <thomas.zhang@perfectionlog.com>
时 间: 2021年7月2日(星期五) 下午6:30
收件人: 林玲 <27558248@qq.com>

纯文本 | 打印 | 删除 | 回复

附件 邮件可翻译为中文 立即翻译

Hi LING LIN,

Yes, Professor Zheng has phoned me this week about your interview issue. I will be available about 30 minutes in July 5th, next Monday. You can come to my office at 3:30 p.m.

Best Regards
Thomas Zhang
General Manager
Global Supply Chain Division
Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd
Add: 5/F, Huqian Building, 203 FuFei Road, Fuzhou, Fujian, PRC
Jiang Yin Industry Zone, Fuqing, Fujian, PRC
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1.3 The interview Protocol or Guide

Interview Protocol or Guide

Interview Protocol Project: the leadership challenges facing in the changing operating environment

Time of Interview: 3:30p.m.

Date: July 5th, 2021

Place: office of Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd

Interviewer: LING LIN

Interviewee: Thomas Zhang

Position of Interviewee: the General Manager of Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd

Questions:

- 1) Mr. Zhang, Could you please introduce your company?
- 2) Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd went public successfully in 2015, any transformation of organisation happens to respond to this development?
- 3) Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd has been expanded market in Asia since

2018, how do you manage the shifting employee demographics?

4) Does Covid-19 pandemic turbulence cause leadership challenges?

5) Could you please talk more about the cross-sector partnership?

6) Does rapid technological change influence Perfection?

7) What do you think is the most significant leadership challenge in Perfection?

Note: for the interview transcripts, please refer to Appendix I in detail.

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Blog 2: Leadership Challenge-All You Need to Know



(Source: Feedough)

In May, I started a challenging and exciting module, leadership and decision-making in complex environments, leading by an excellent senior lecturer Julie Hayward, a Talent Manager at Tata Steel Europe, based in Port Talbot. The combination of her academic and business background experience makes me have a high expectancy of Dr. Julie's module, and it is indeed!

Turbulence is not new and even an enduring feature of contemporary business, especially after the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic. The concept of turbulence refers to 'situations where events, demands, and support interact and change highly variable, inconsistent, unexpected or unpredictable ways' (Ansell and Trondal, 2018, p. 43). It was originally used to describe stormy weather or complex river currents and chaotic fluid dynamics, intimately in line with interdependence and uncertainty concepts. Turbulence is also applied in an organisational context, causing external and internal factors to organisations (Ansell and Trondal, 2018). Taking Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd as an example of whether the Covid-19 pandemic (external) and market expansion causing shifting employee demographics (internal) contribute to leadership dilemma arousing my interest in digging deeper. If the researcher has an awareness of what they do not know, Lincoln and Guba (1985:269)

suggest applying a structured interview in which the researcher could frame questions that rely on the respondent to tell the answers of required knowledge.

A structured interview with a real leader who is having more than 15 years of longevity in leading an organisation with more than 1000 employees could be meaningful to aid my depth understanding of the leadership dilemma theory learned in lectures; Vice versa, highlighting the leadership dilemma identified in this interview underpinned by academic theory also offers consultancy value for the enterprise.

This interview covers both external and internal factors leading to turbulence within the organisation context. The internal reform of Perfection that went to the public in 2015; its expansion into other Asia countries cause even more complex operation; its cooperation with external stakeholders; All these factors make the turbulence embedded in the Perfection enterprise. The technology innovation and Covid-19 pandemic are the external turbulence environment that Perfection has to face. The distinction between technical skills and leadership capability is essential (Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky, 2009; Northouse, 2018). The internal and external factors could be categorised into technical (clearly defined with known solutions mentioned in the interview) or technical and adaptive (challenges are clearly defined but without known solutions). However, motivating employees' innovation and creativity would be the most challenging part of the adaptive category (challenges are not clearly defined but without known solutions). Talent stratification becomes a problem; young generations are good at handling particular business rather than comprehensive consideration due to the lack of working experience. Referring to small self-organizing teams in Amoeba and Haier as "micro enterprises" could be a feasible way to trigger employees' innovation and proactive performance, overcome the talent pool stratification problem; employees share ownership and are responsible for all kinds of decisions like contracting, recruitment and budgeting. Meanwhile, it is also meant to improve leaders'

boundary spanning capability (operational resilience) in a complex, uncertain and interdependent business context (Allen, Datta and Christopher, 2006).

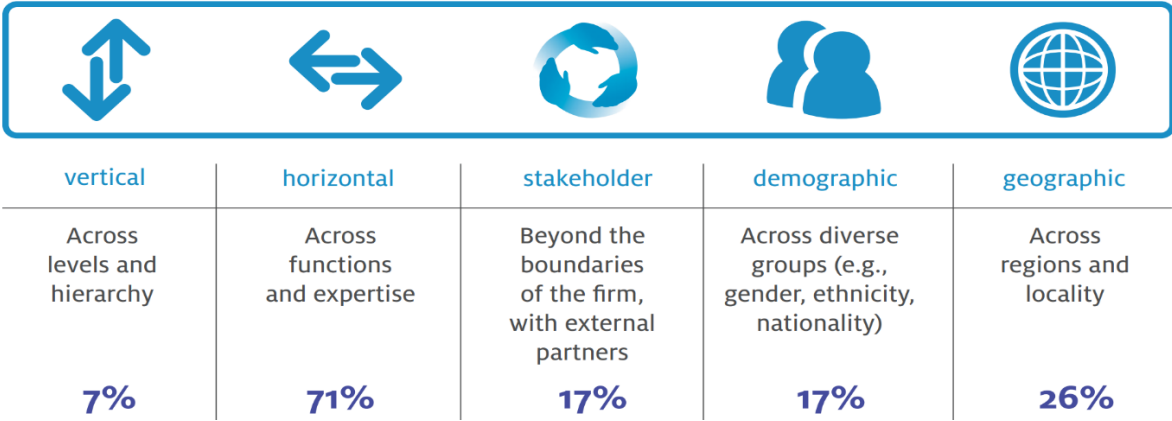


Figure 1 Five dimensions of boundaries leaders have to work across
(Source: Yip, Ernst and Campbell, 2016)

Figure 1 shows the five main dimensions of boundaries cited across senior executives survey. Again, it is noticeable that the horizontal dimension to work across functions and expertise occupied the highest percentage (71%).

"It is painfully obvious: the system in which many people still work was created for a stable, slow and predictable world that no longer exists."(Minnaar and Morree, 2020)

Before Perfection went public, it was common to employ a hierarchical structure. After that, the horizontal rather than vertical dimension has been applied, the development of informal organization networks with flatter organization structure requiring collaborations and social interactions within the organization.

"Management by all" philosophy in the employee training to work across horizontal boundaries in terms of their comprehensive ability and management awareness. From the interview conversation,

Mr. Zhang mentioned solutions to overcome four challenges. Perfection faces, for example, the middle-management problem and employee motivation problem. He mentioned the workshop training to improve employees' consciousness, and then the continuous learning and practice. In my opinion, developing a spanning boundary network to facilitate transitioning relationships for first-time middle managers with six steps should be taken into account by Perfection management (Willburn and Cullen, 2014). Besides that, the single long-term objective could play a beacon role for employees, guiding all employees to judge how to make commitments for themselves and colleagues. Highlighting the desired future is beneficial for employees contributing to it in a free manner.

*If you want to build a ship,
don't drum up the people
to gather wood, divide the
work, and give orders.
Instead, teach them to yearn,
for the vast and endless sea.*

*--Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
the author of The Little Prince*

Here, taking the demographic and geographic dimensions into account, which encourage employees to work across diverse groups, regions and locality (Perfection expands its market in Asia countries, employees come from diverse groups, regions and locality). It is pivotal for leaders to adopt strategies for hugging complexity through simplification by commencing new processes and systems (Backx et al., 2017). Mr. Zhang also mentioned Perfection would like to adopt the modular organisation structure similar to Haier's case (Minnaar, J.,2020), let employees share ownership, and be responsible for all kinds of decisions like contracting, recruitment and budgeting. Role and tasks allocation among employees are all voluntary; employees reach a consensus in terms of decision-making. Leadership roles among these small teams emerge naturally by vote.

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Blog 3: Does it work without social media?

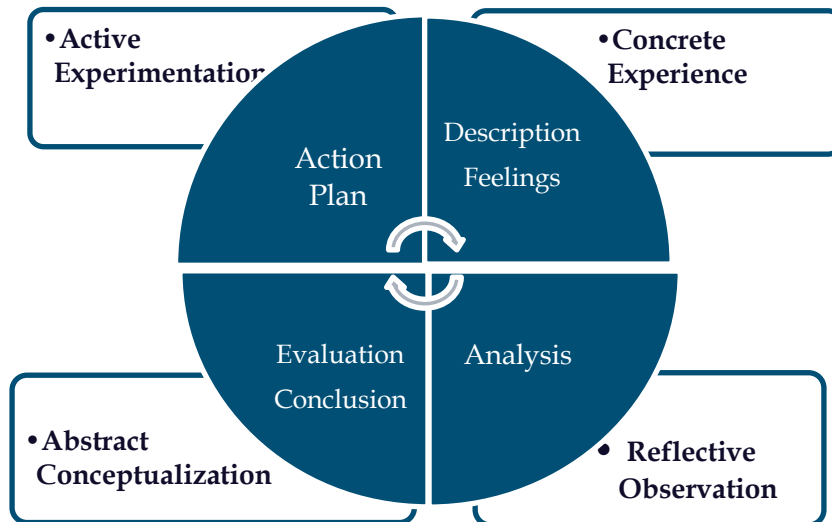


Figure 2 Reflective Learning Cycle (Adapted from Source: Kolb, 2014; Gibbs, 1998)

The reflective learning cycle with four parts (6 steps) in Figure 2 is the combination framework I adapted from Kolb's theory and Gibb's reflective cycle, which facilitates my learning of Actor Network Theory and transforms what I learnt into the reflection of the posts thread quality.

Concrete Experience/Description/Feelings

We are required to write a series of 'tweet' style social media posts that draws attention to the identified leadership dilemma. Due to the firework block limitation, we are suggested to share these posts in the Teams channel. The followings are five of the posts as well as the responses.

The screenshot displays a series of posts and replies in a Teams channel. The posts are written in a 'tweet' style, focusing on leadership dilemmas and organizational complexity. The responses provide feedback and additional insights.

Post 1: Ling Lin (2006204) 6/17 0:55
When we develop our network, it is essential for us to ask ourselves question: is it satisfied with open, deep and diverse criteria? We are encouraged to post our reflection in open network to hear new voice; develop diversified network across boundaries to extend the research breadth; deep network means quality relationship offering valuable resources and perspective. #bmdbleadershipdilemmas #networks

Post 2: Ling Lin (2006204) 6/17 0:34
To be successful in this extremely complex and unstable business environment, simplification matters. This is exactly reflected in David Marquet's leadership behaviors (leader-leader mode), structure (flatter, encourage cooperation, innovation), process and systems (employees are empowered to make decision by justification starting with "I plan...". #bmdbleadershipdilemmas #complexity#simplification

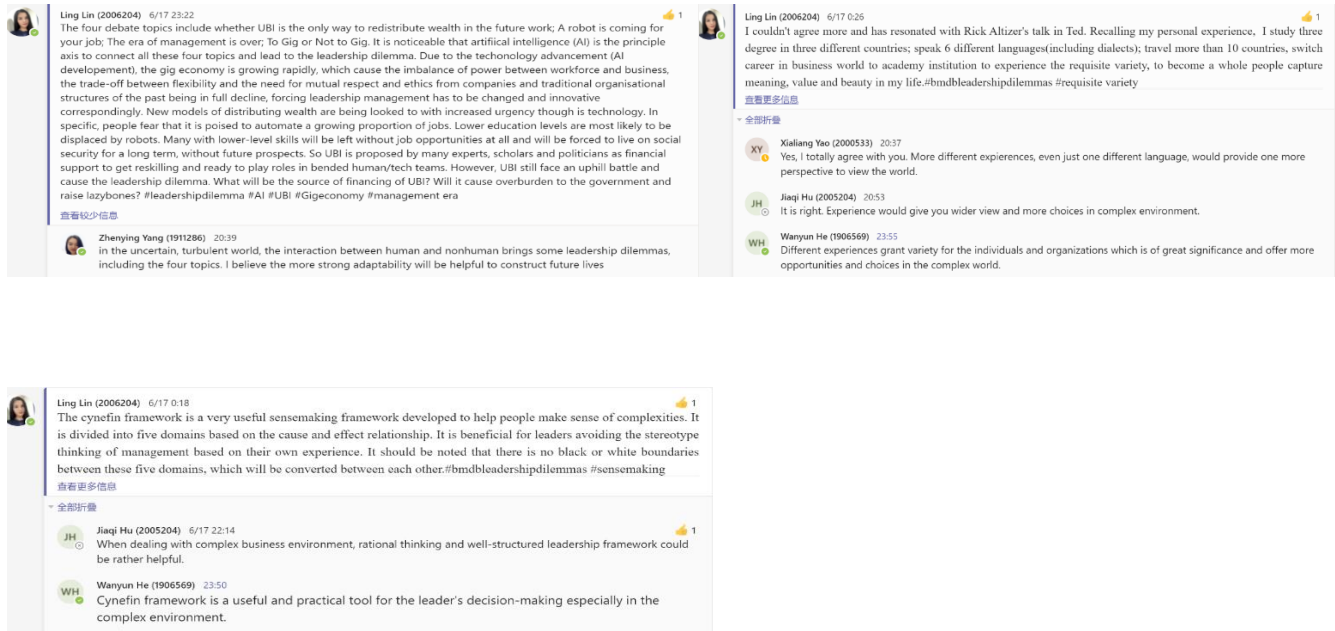
Response 1: Jiaqi Hu (2005204) 6/17 13:49
It is right that we need to rethink about our developing moves or it might cause some troubles.

Response 2: Hilda Ojonugwa Obaje (2009418) 6/22 16:23
As good leaders, we need to make our networks open to all and sundry to grant us access to diverse ideas.

Response 3: Lan Zhang (2005977) 昨天 16:37
and sometime we will forget the non-human actant which is equally important as the human resources.

Response 4: Julie Hayward 6/17 22:36
Have you come across the term 'simplicity' in your reading? This is an interesting article that also refers to Ashby, BMD87004 - LDMICE_GRP: <https://run.unl.pt/bitstream/10362/11582/1/wp534.pdf>

Response 5: Lan Zhang (2005977) 昨天 17:28
"only simple organization provides enough space for individual agency to match environmental turbulence in the form of complex organizational responses." very interesting point!



I feel I adore this task proposed by Dr. Hayward; actually, I always write a mini-blog to reflect after each week's lessons; these posts thread could be inserted in each of the mini blog playing the summary role, which could be super linked to my open social networks like Twitter or LinkedIn. This could be an accurate map of my learning and research network bridging my inside and outside world. It is a pity that I could only post them within the limited Teams channel due to firewall reasons, however, this task still let me realize the significance of network development and have a network perspective (Cullen, et al.,2014)

Reflective Observation /Analysis

"Reflective observation is about critically analyzing the learning and the impact of what has been learned" (HA and Verishagen, 2015, p.193). An actor is always a network (Law, 1992). Actor Network Theory (ANT) proposes that "any system we encounter can most effectively be approached if we look at all of the parts--whether they're natural, technological, or human--as interacting and active members of the system" (Latour, 2007, p.5). The posts, Dr. Hayward, DBA classmates, media platform (Teams channel), learning books, materials and me interact and are all mediators actants, which could cause changes in the system; computers, my study room etc. are intermediaries actants, playing connection roles. Latour emphasized that the

association between actants must be the focus. "Human is embroiled within a nexus of nonhumans" (Michael, 2017, p.161). The role of non-humans is fundamental to ANT. Here, Teams channel is non-human actor, but its connection is relatively limited and closed, it is unlikely to hear new information and voice from outsiders except DBA groups, which could influence the reach of my stories and engagement.

Abstract Conceptualization/Evaluation/Conclusion

Within ANT, the "social" exists when there are connections between actors (Latour, 2007). Referring to the example of gunman (Latour, 2007; Reed, 2018), I exhibit agency in the form of posting action. Although the network fitness of social media platforms provides another instance of action, the weak ties of Teams Channel network would hinder the transformation of the post quality.

Active Experimentation/Action Plan

Next time, it is necessary to tweet these posts out by creating a Twitter account to develop an effective network with open, diverse, and deep features (Willburn and Cullen, 2014). I will keep writing mini-blog in World Press, insert these posts playing the summary roles, and then super link to my Twitter account to circle and communicate with a wider audience. Then please come to browse my blog and respond actively!

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Blog 4: Are you a hub or an isolated node?

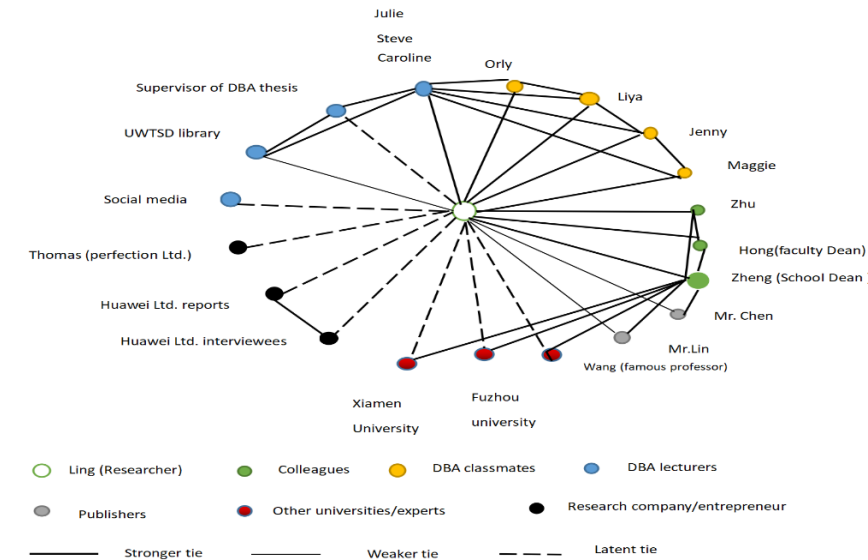


Figure 3 Map of my existing network

Nodes and edges are two basic elements of networks. Nodes could be human or non-human, interacting or be active and could cause changes in the system. Edges connect the nodes. Network science emphasizes the interconnectivity in a system as a whole could justify a phenomenon instead of individual parts.

Aristotle observed the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

It is significant to analyse my personal network as a researcher. Therefore, network science can offer a microscope for helping researchers improve their research work's effectiveness by discovering "what is going on behind the curtain" (Cross and Thomas, 2008, p.166).

Good luck or fortune always happens to higher performers who are more attuned to open, diverse and deep networks. (Cross and Thomas, 2008; Willburn and Cullen, 2014). Has my network got the requisite variety? From an empirical perspective, the researcher should cultivate greater awareness of the requisite role to build up the

co-evolving relationship of the research environment and pave the way for long-term research viability (Palumbo and Manna, 2017). I work across different institutions (business enterprises and academy institutions) and from different discipline areas, which would be beneficial to diversify my network. The map in Figure 3 shows that my network ties extend beyond my working and studying universities, into other enterprises, even broader society, which has equipped me with network perspective (Cullen, Palus, Appaneal, 2014) as a powerful "zoom lens" that would foster my learning, growth and change. Although there still have weak and latent ties with some nodes, I have got ideas to expand or contract to get richer information and insight.

“Network perspective is the ability to look beyond formal, designated relationships and see the complex web of connections between people in and beyond your organization.” (Cullen, Palus, Appaneal, 2014, p.3)

Network with stronger ties is active networks fostering the reciprocal and mutual trusted relationship. On the map, it is noticeable that Ms. Zheng is one of the crucial influencers because of her strong relationship with publishers, other universities' research center, and experts with weak and latent ties. Dr. Caroline, another significant influencer, the DBA programmer, has strong ties with all my lovely, professional lecturers, kind classmates, UWTSD library resources and my unknown supervisor of DBA thesis. It would be meaningful to identify these influencers in my network who could help me with opportunities to span boundaries and reach far-off person offering much-needed information and resources. The referral potential could make a personal network powerful (Ibarra, Hunter, 2007), and the stronger ties with more influencers could establish a deep network.

Because my research direction will be the language management in a multinational enterprise like Huawei from tension management between what its CSR reports talk and do, the CSR reports and Huawei's employees

I will interview are the latent network and new relationship I need to develop, which is critical for my current DBA student role and getting prepared for my coming thesis writing.

In my network, people I know are not all connected to ascertain its openness. Like what I plan in Blog 3, I will open social media accounts like Twitter and attend more high-quality conferences I have never been before to create "structure diversity," emerging dissimilar ideas. Weak ties with the UWTSD library could be strengthened from frequency first, interacting with library staff frequently to learn more about database and software applications that play a pivotal role in the thesis research. Latent ties with the unknown supervisor of the DBA thesis can start from the mini proposal; this is the key to get in touch with the supervisor; reciprocity, trust and frequency will be satisfied in the following interaction every two weeks.

Spanning boundary networks not only address "what we do" but also "who we are," which allow us to adapt to changes and create direction, alignment and commitment (Cross, Ernst and Pasmore, 2013).

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Blog 5: Are you good at a debate?

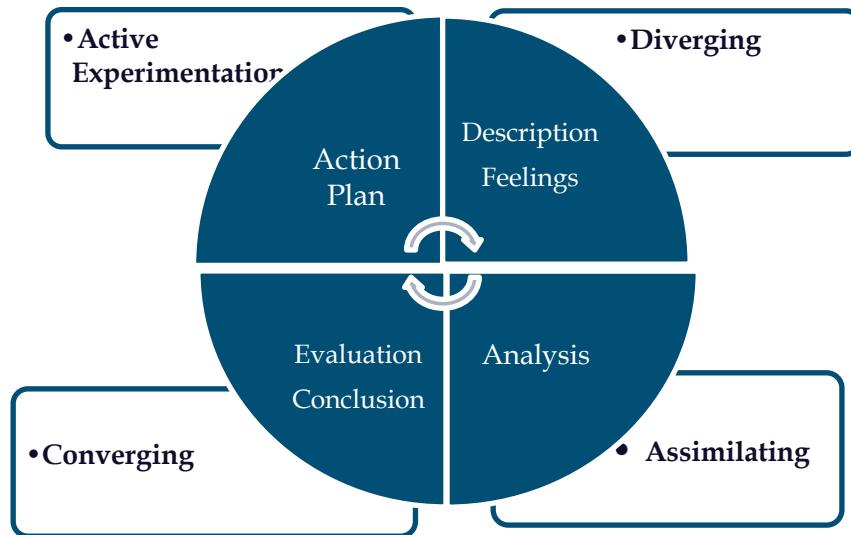


Figure 4 Reflective Learning Cycle (Adapted from Source: Kolb,2014; Gibbs,1998)

5.1 Thoughts and feeling about UBI topic

Bias always influences our decision-making, which may "cause to feel or show inclination or prejudice for or against someone or something." (Lexico,2021). When our group and I were given the Universal Basic Income debate topic, my thoughts and feelings are consistent with the four main problems that would produce bias (see Figure 5).

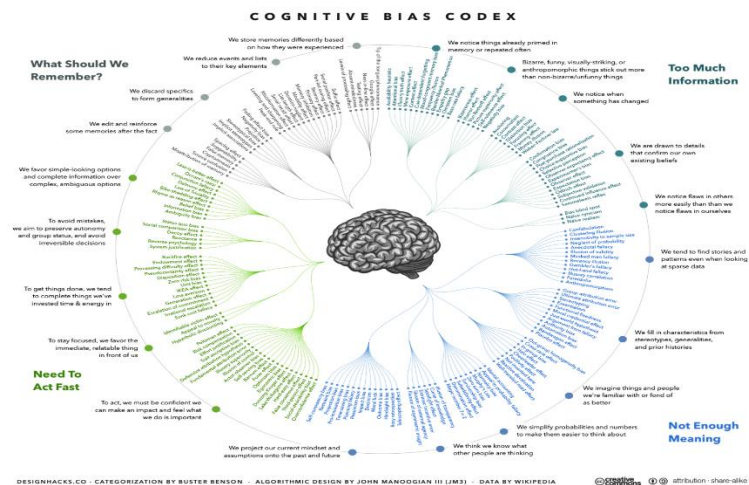


Figure 5 The Cognitive Bias Codex (source: teacherthought.com)

There has too much information relating to the UBI topic: UBI as policy option (OECD, 2017); the overview of UBI from an international perspective (Wong and Lui, 2021); UBI case of Finland (OECD, 2018), but we still do not have enough meaning of UBI, besides UBI, what else ways of redistribution wealth? We are constrained by only one week to get prepared for the debate topic: "UBI is the only way to redistribute wealth in the future of work." Usually, we would favor complete and straightforward information over complicated, ambiguous options. We store our memories based on our cognition and experience.

5.2 Analysis and Evaluation

In my opinion, a debate is a helpful way similar to a sensemaking type approach (Ancona, 2012) to mitigate the cognitive bias mentioned above. Both affirmative and negative together could seek out as many as possible kinds of data and resources. Affirmative focuses on UBI way of redistribution wealth in the future of work, negative could get prepared for other ways, such as Universal Credit, Stakeholder Capitalism (Sharp, 2019) and even Dibao in China context. Although Liya and I are negative, we both felt "only" was the too definitive word when we looked at this debate topic and reached a consensus that there should have other ways to redistribute wealth in the future of work. This debate rebuttal is a very good way to test and modify the mental model of wealth redistribution approaches. It is essential to move beyond stereotypes with open mind and new eyes. Although I am negative, I tried to understand UBI, UC, SC and Dibao nuances to know more about these concepts in each unique context. I try to be sensitive to their operations. For example, UBI is said to feasible for developed countries with solid and targeted social safety nets. What about its shift to other parts of the world, the developing countries like China? I try to dig deeper, proposing the UBI and Dibao in China (Leung,2020).

5.3 Conclusion

As negative, we did a good job in this debate. Dr. Hayward commented on our rich evidence

supporting our opinions. However, there are still rooms to improve my performance in terms of task allocation, debate time arrangement. Task allocation means Liya and I should focus on one other way besides UBI (either UC or SC rather than both) and go deeper to prove our standpoint within limited 30 minutes, which would be beneficial for the rebuttal performance, both of us could respond to the affirmative's question at the same direction. Due to lack of debate experience, debate time arrangement needs optimization, shortening opening time, and extending rebuttal time to improve our debate depth.

5.4 Action Plan

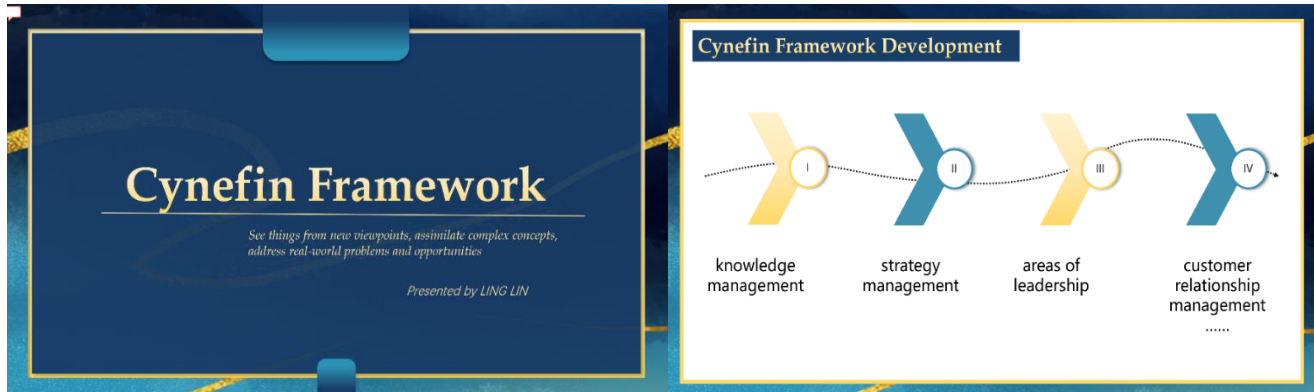
"To consolidate bits and pieces into a compact, a sensible pattern frequently requires that one look beyond those bits and pieces to understand what they might mean" (Weick et al., 2005). Therefore, it is essential to see an appropriate framework emerging from the understanding of this UBI topic, capture the key elements from it and elaborate in the closing statement. Sensemaking comes in dealing with ambiguity, uncertainty. It is wise to apply sense making approach to course-correct.

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Blog 6: Cynefin Framework Slideshow

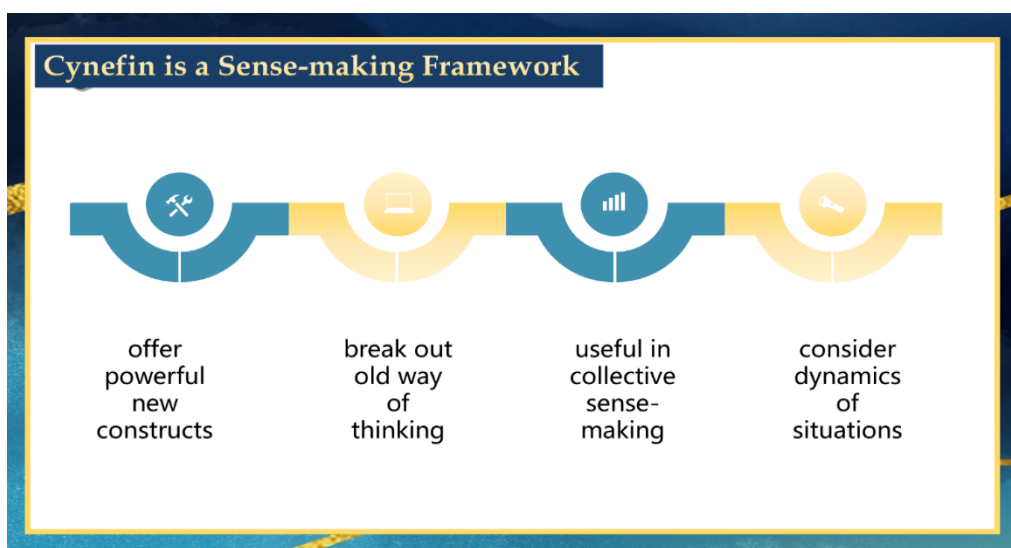
6.1 Background



Cynefin framework is developed as a sensemaking device to aid executives in organisation to make sense of complexity through looking at things from new viewpoints, assimilating complex concepts, and seizing opportunities that other people usually miss (Snowden and Boone, 2007; Brandenburger, 2019).

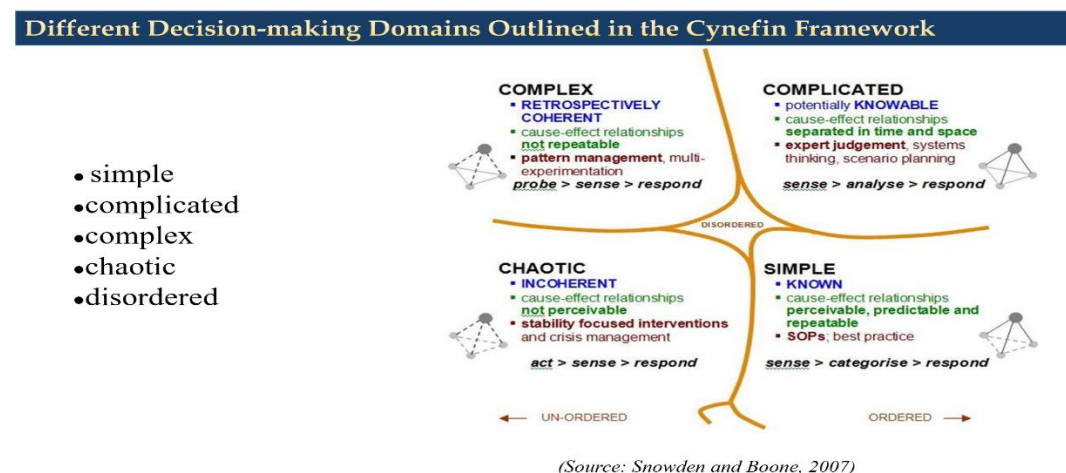
Cynefin framework originated from knowledge management and then outgrown in strategy management in terms of branding and product development. However, after the year 2000, it began to be applied in the areas of leadership, gradually extended to customer relationship management and so on (Kurtz and Snowden, 2003).

6.2 Definition



Cynefin is a sensemaking framework, just like the slide shows, it "offer powerful new constructs, breaks out the old way of thinking, is especially useful in collective sensemaking and take dynamics of the situation into consideration" (Kurtz and Snowden, 2003, p.468).

6.3 Different domains in the Cynefin framework



Cynefin framework does leaders' favor to divide the issues they are facing into five contexts based on the cause-and-effect relationship: simple, complicated, complex and chaotic domains, the fifth domain is called disorder. Leaders should gather more information to make judgement which the above four main domains they need to move into and take the corresponding action, the fifth will only be applied when none of these four is dominated. This framework is beneficial for leaders avoiding the stereotype thinking of management based on their own experience when making pivotal decisions.

The cause-and-effect relationship is clear and perceptible in both the right side, simple and complicated domains with "known knowns" and "known unknowns," which are order worlds with "fact-management" (Sridharan, 2018). The correct answers could be figured out based on completed accessible data. However, when the accessible data is incomplete, the correct answer is hard to define, and the situation the leaders need to make decisions will be transferred from complicated to complex.

The cause-and-effect relationship is unapparent or does not exist in the left side complex and chaotic domains with "unknown unknowns" and "unknowables" which are un-order worlds with "pattern-based management" (Sridharan, 2018).

6.4 Application in Perfection case

From the interview conversation, I get to know that Perfection Ltd. went public, expanded into the Asia market, cooperated with external stakeholders, encountered technology changes innovation and Covid-19 pandemic turbulence. Its biggest leadership challenge is people management. How to motivate employees' innovation and creativity to facilitate Perfection's future development. Cynefin framework is very useful here to help Perfection Ltd. figure out which domain it is located in so that Perfection could take corresponding actions. Apparently, complex context suits Perfection case, its situation is unpredictable. Leaders are encouraged to probe, experiment, and then sense the process and respond to emerging new patterns. The cause-and-effect relationship can only be perceived by retrospect. In this context, leaders need more patience and get prepared to tolerate failure, otherwise, the new patterns will be exempted, and creative business modes will be missed.

Simplification

"To be successful in this extremely complex and unstable business environment, executive leaders must do all that they can to simplify" (Kerr, 2014, p.2).

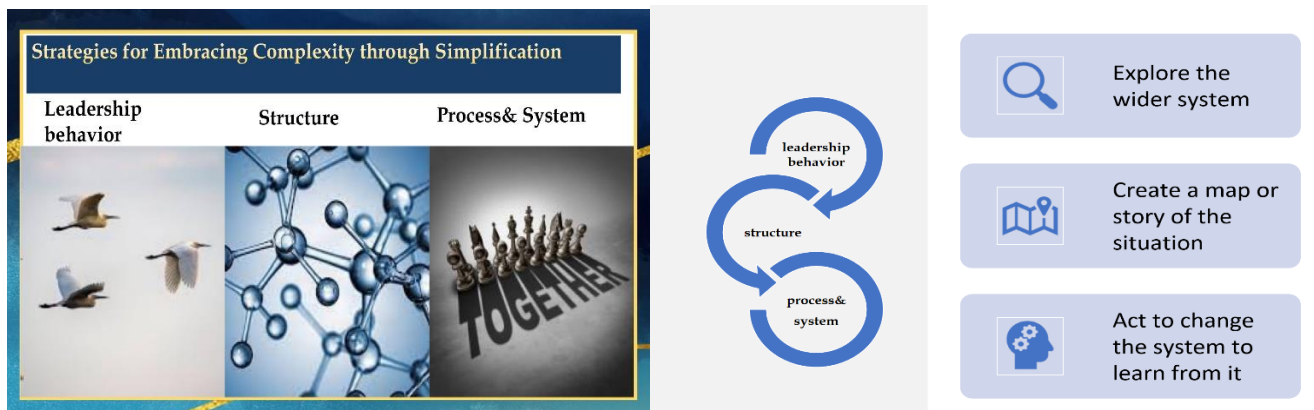


(source: Duperrin, 2017)

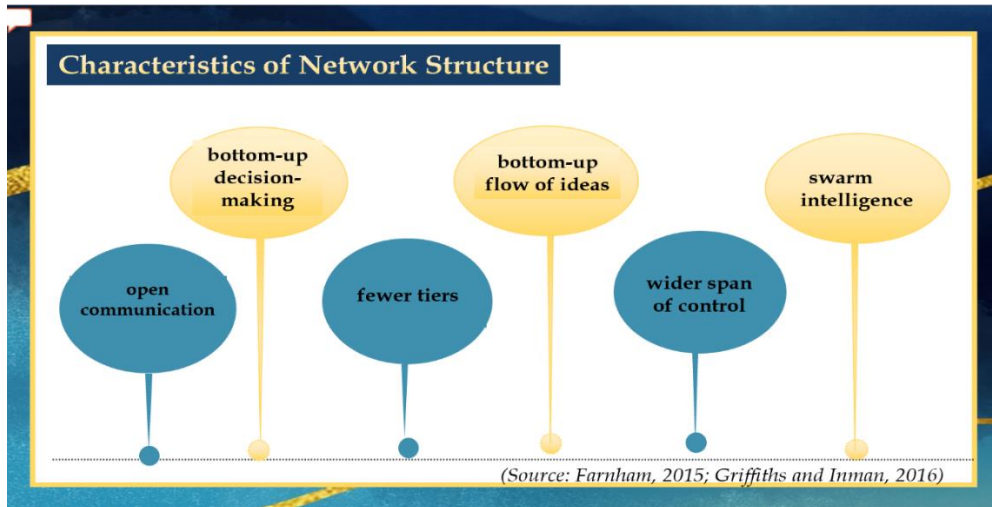
I do agree with the simplification proposed by Kerr. However, as the internal and external dynamic changes, Perfection Ltd. will become complex unintentionally, just like Ashkenas (2007, p.102) claims that "complexity is the cumulative byproduct of organizational changes."

"If you want to be fast and agile, keep things simple"
(Highsmith, 2009, p. 72).

Cynefin framework is a sensemaking device, and leaders probe wider system, for example, listen to front line employees and get access to updated technologies, "give work back to people," "protect leadership voice from below" (Northouse, 2016), are just some of the things that determine a leader's impact on their operating environment (Backx, et al., 2017). Leaders sense the nuances of context, test and modify their mental models through interaction and go beyond stereotypes.



In order to motivate employees' working performance, network structure with reducing layers and increasing controlling span (Ashkenas, 2007) makes all employees have a sense of accountability and responsibility. The characteristics of the network structure are shown in the slides below.



Network structure emerges, Perfection leaders could act to simplify process by cultivating 'swarm intelligence' (Highsmith, 2009) to generates innovation and creativity (Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2011). Referring to small self-organizing teams in Amoeba and Haier as "micro enterprises," it would be a feasible way to trigger Perfection employees' innovation and proactive performance, overcome its talent pool stratification problem, employees share ownership, and are responsible for all kinds of decisions like contracting, recruitment and budgeting. System changes as ole and tasks allocation among them are all voluntary; every decision is made by reaching a consensus. Leader role among these small teams emerges naturally by vote and could be replaced if performance declines.

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Blog 7: Perfection's Sensemaking Leadership Model

"After all, when compared to large companies, the most adaptable things on the planet are either under-managed or, Mon Dieu, un-managed" (Hamel, 2007: 180)

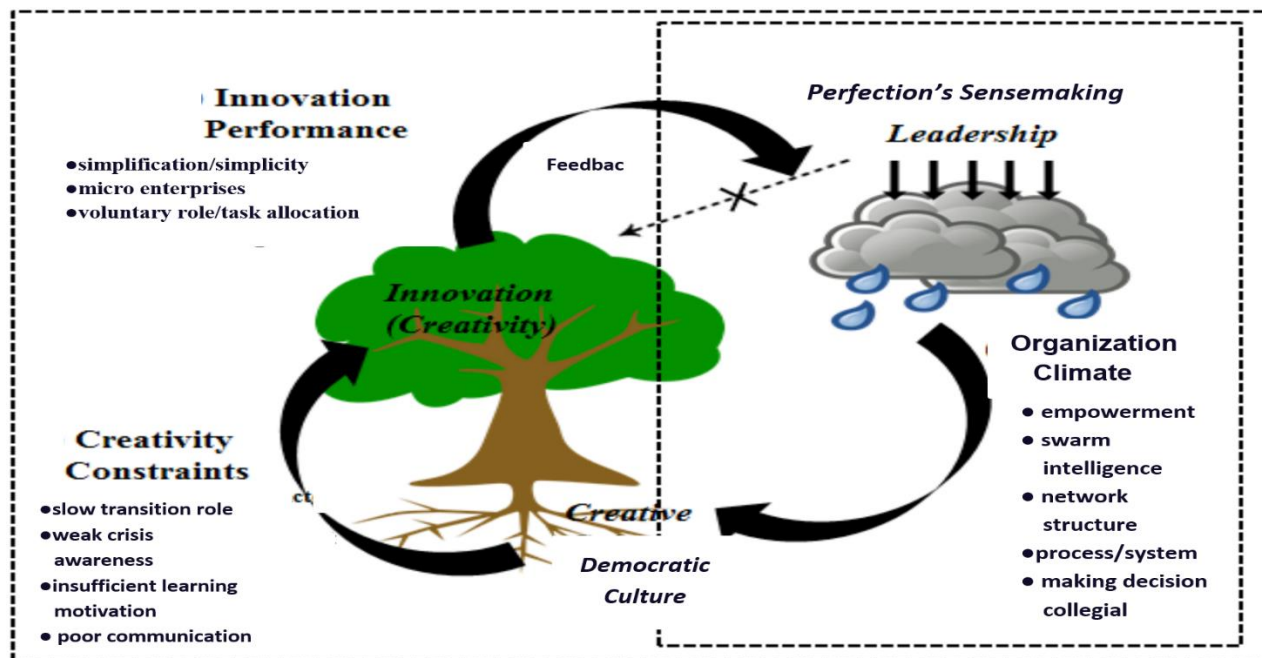


Figure 6 Perfection's Sensemaking Leadership Model
(Adapted and modified from source: Moon, et al., 2016)

7.1 Leadership dilemma identified in Perfection

As mentioned in task 1 and 2, the biggest leadership dilemma facing by Perfection is how to manage people, that is, how to motivate its employees to be creative and innovative in the globalization era with an increasing emphasis on information and knowledge.

7.2 Why is it?

How to enact the deeper inner meaning for themselves and others is the biggest challenge for leaders nowadays (Kriger and Seng, 2005). Inner meaning helps create leaders' worldview: 'having,' 'doing' or 'being.' Situational, behavioral leadership models, such as authentic leadership, president leadership, transformational leadership, all fit in the categories of 'having' or 'doing' or both. Kegan (1994) refers to 'being' as meaning making; the teams would unconsciously decide on the best course of action, such as intent-based leadership.

Sensemaking is not a new process. People choose to get involved in the process as participants instead of leaders and followers make it renewable in leadership (Quinn, et al.,2009). Leadership constructs shifted to focus on collaboration and cooperation. Employees who are capable of communication and problem-solving skills are new favorites of employers. Sensemaking leadership emphasizes how to delegate leadership behavior in teams by integrating 'having' 'doing' and 'being' views of leadership.

7.3 What is it?

This model is named "Perfection sense making leadership model". Although, I am really fond of intent-based leadership model and adaptive leadership model, both could offer solutions to leadership skills deficit: to develop leader-leader mode in all employees; to empower all employees rather than selected a few of them (APQC, 2014). Leaders probe and sense the organisation context, fostering organisation climate as rainfall to nurture creative, democratic culture, the root of the organisation, both are pivotal to cultivate employee innovation and creativity (Vandael, 2013). In this model, organisation climate includes leader behavior, organizational structure, process and system; all are the characteristics of simplicity to be fostered in complex and dynamic environments and contexts. Within such climate, participatory culture could be formed to affect innovation performance. Creativity constraints (mentioned in the interview part in detail) are also considered in this model, which will block the cultural effect on Perfection that should be removed in its daily management

process. Leaders receive feedback from innovation performance. The loop structure emerges in this model that cannot be seen in both adaptive and intent-based leadership.

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Appendix I

Interview transcripts

1. Interviewer:

Mr.Zhang, Good afternoon! Thank you for your time to help me to finish my academic task. I am a DBA student of the University of Wales, Trinity of Saint David in the U.K. Professor Zheng highly recommends you. I am learning a course named Leadership and Decision-Making in Complex Environment. I would like to interview you about the leadership challenges or dilemmas that you have encountered in your working process. As I know, your enterprise has expanded markets in other Asian countries like Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, etc., beyond China, which catalyses the leadership environment even more complex than ever. Before we really get started, could you please introduce you company first?

Interviewee:

Ok. Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd (NEEQ:833570) is comprehensive provider of logistics services, specializing in associated international supply chain management solutions and B2B joint distribution. The company was established in 1993, as one of private enterprises to get first-class international freight forwarding qualification earliest in Fujian Province, is National AAAA comprehensive service logistics enterprise, ISO9001 certified company.

By combining "Internet, Trade Flow, logistics", Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd is becoming the only 3PL company has preliminary ability of integrated distribution function in FMCG and Fresh Food area of Fujian Provinces. Company's trading platform has become the largest FMCG and Fast consumer online marketplace in Fujian.

Since 2015, China has been continuously developing the One Belt and One Road economic zone, which involves 49 countries along the Belt and Road, covering the Asia-Pacific, Central and West Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, Mediterranean and Africa. The export of goods and services involved accounts for 23.9% of the global total, and the economic scale is about 21 trillion US dollars, accounting for 29% of the global total. We found the overseas extension business integration opportunities of our existing attribute customers growing in matrix in this turbulence environment with national policy support. In 2017, we started to set up offices in Shanghai in East China and Fuzhou in South China. In Xiamen, Perfection has set up Frontier Distribution Centre (FDC) of three import ports, which is mainly engaged in the transit warehouse of imported FMCG and pre-packaged food. The storage area is about 20,000 square meters, which has formed the offline trading center of FMCG, and has experimentally extended the B2B online trading platform. We do not get involved in commodity sales, but integrate the personalized needs of small, medium-sized agents and dealers to the procurement through the big data analysis of overseas mining and domestic sales. In 2018, pilot stage of this single business revenue was about 10 million RMB, and the number increased to nine times in 2019, until now, this business brings to revenue has exceeded 2019, now it is the biggest port of FMCC and pre-packaged food in south China region. For different industries, we set up a 10,000 square meters RDC in Singapore for consumer electronics customers in 2018, which is mainly engaged in the integrated warehousing and distribution business of black home appliances and beige home appliances. At the same time, we continue to set up FDC according to customer demand to ensure the improvement of supply chain delivery efficiency of B-end customers and reduce their overhang cost ratio in Asia-Pacific region, for example, we set up FDC/RDC and CDC in Thailand, Malaysia and New Zealand successively.

Today, the end user would like to pursue the highest cost performance and superior service experience, which requires the brand company not only focus on their price and infighting, channels need to be flatter to demand change orders for agility, or demand change orders for the adaptability of the flexible supply chain. Take the Philip black home appliance LED TV as an example, before the establishment of FDC and CDC, we

analyzed their overburden cost ratio (average performance cost per ticket/average revenue per ticket) of about 18%~22%, which means that the logistics cost is accounted for the 18 ~ 22 RMB in every 100 RMB appliance cost, the market competitiveness of their products is fatal. through the optimization of the process, FDC intelligent allocation system, unnecessary logistics node reduction, the overall cover rate reduced to about 9.5%. This project has greatly promoted the sales competitiveness and market share of Philip black home appliance.

2.Interviewer:

Perfection Logistics Service Co.,Ltd went public successfully in 2015, any transformation of organisation happens to response to this development?

Interviewee:

After we went public in 2015, we adjusted the overall operation culture and mode of the company, focusing on the training of Amoeba operation and management concept for the core backbone and employees with development potential. We have restructured our organization structure as streamlined by reducing the levels and layers, which has made the leadership and management flatter and could adapt to the market agilely. As we all know, development is people-oriented, so we advocate "management by all" philosophy in the employee training to work across horizontal boundaries in terms of their comprehensive ability and management awareness. For example, we have weekly corporate training and set up a reading workshop. In the past, we had four disadvantages: First, the transition role of the staff is slow, the management awareness and ability need to be developed further. Second, the crisis consciousness is weak, learning motivation is not sufficient. Third, middle-level managers have strong business skills, but poor communication skills. Fourth, the lack of motivation, always feel that is the work for others. To improve the above problems, we increase the cross-boundary practice, let employees aware of the necessity of their role transition through the reading workshop first, and then improve

their management ability gradually. Because the latter could not be achieved within a short time, it needs to continue learning and practicing.

When we face extremely difficult business environment, such as the impact of this pandemic of covid 19, it is essential to have continuous encouragement to employees, constantly strengthen their crisis awareness, management position is just like "a boat sailing against the current, sink or swim" Only to keep learning to make progress and become innovative.

Most of the middle management have been promoted from the lower level, so they are relatively strong in business capability. However, their skills of leadership and communicating with superiors and parallel departments still needs improvement. This requires middle-level managers to be aware of this and adjust as soon as possible to transform their business ability into management ability and strengthen communication ability. Middle managers are like the "spine" connecting the "mind" and "limbs". Only when they have the sense of ownership, can they actively transmit the decision-making thought and strategy execution of the senior leaders, and influence the employees below.

3.Interviewer:

Perfection Logistics Service Co., Ltd has been expanded market in Asia since 2018, how do you manage the shifting employee demographics?

Interviewee:

For middle and senior managers in each region, we will introduce internal training similar to amoeba operation and management based on different working environment and cultural factors in each country, and conduct online reading workshop training. At the same time, we regularly rotate the middle and senior managers of overseas subsidiaries. Some of them are transferred back to the group headquarters for training, and some are exchanged across regions, so as to enrich the comprehensive management ability of each leader and the ability to lead different teams for innovation.

4. Interviewer:

Does Covid-19 pandemic turbulence cause leadership challenges?

Interviewee:

It is pivotal for leaders to sense the context they work in; this Covid-19 pandemic is unpredictable and make the context chaotic. From the macro perspective, the epidemic has a great impact on the global commodity supply chain and import and export trade. Many traditional manufacturing enterprises shut down; the global volume of shipments fell sharply. From the micro perspective, logistics enterprise is highly dependent on the circulation of goods, shutdown means that the logistics industry suffered a huge impact, so do my enterprise. Our company's operating data has also been greatly affected. Business came to a standstill because all the staff could not work in the office as usual. Leaders need to take action to maintain order and enterprise stability. We followed the government governance, adopting top-down communication to react this unpredictable situation clearly and directly. The cross-sector partnership is also our current direction to overcome turbulence.

5. Interviewer:

Could you please talk more about the cross-sector partnership?

Interviewee:

As the organisation expansion, we try to expand our footprint to every corner of Asia country. The headquarter has been set in Singapore, we go beyond the enterprise boundary to cooperate with external partners, like Philips, Millet, Lenovo, Shanghai Automotive, Nanfu Battery, Heineken beer, Australian Joe Will wine, Amber wine, Uni-President foods, Biho foods, so that we can pool all talent people and resources to develop further, especially during the pandemic turbulence, local partners alliance are beneficial for us to carry out localization strategy, gaining competitive advantages.

6.Interviewer:

Does rapid technological change influence Perfection?

Interviewee:

Technology is the primary driving force of logistics innovation, such as OMS omni-channel orders of various types, WMS in warehousing and logistics parks, DMS in sorting system and TMS in distribution nodes, which are exactly our professional field and core competitiveness. Big data continuously push the development and change of the whole logistics industry, the data value in the logistics field will become the key point of success or failure in the next few years, the personalized demand, efficiency and cost optimization are ubiquitous. Improving supply chain efficiency, reducing manufacturing cost in order to enhance vitality of the front-end customer group and avoid marginal effect. This is also our core competitiveness to facilitate customer stickiness. Perfection has set up a supply chain technology platform to collect data through cloud computing and big data etc., taken data computing as the basis for technical applications. At the same time, it carries out mutual system data exchange, classification, analysis and application with B2B clients, services more customers through supply chain model design, sales order forecast, intelligent goods complement, supply chain finance.

7.Interviewer:

What do you think is the biggest leadership challenge in Perfection?

Interviewee:

Just like the internal factors including organization structure, leadership behavior, cooperation with external stakeholders and external factors covering technology changes innovation, Covid-19 pandemic we talk about, all could be dealt with known solutions. I think the biggest leadership challenge is about people management. How to motivate employees' innovation and creativity would be the most difficult part. The talent stratification

becomes a problem, young generations are good at handling particular business rather than comprehensive consideration due to the lack of working experience. So referring to small self-organizing teams in Amoeba and Haier as "micro enterprises" could be a feasible way to trigger employees' innovation and proactive performance, overcome the talent pool stratification problem, employees share ownership, and are responsible for all kinds of decisions like contracting, recruitment and budgeting. Role and tasks allocation among them are all voluntary, every decision is made by reaching a consensus. Leader role among these small teams emerges naturally by vote and could be replaced if performance declines.