Leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace

DISSERTATION (LCMB 7020)

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Abstract

The goal of this dissertation is to analyse the impact of the global pandemic on business leadership and explore what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace, which should benefit organisations as well as leaders (Research aim). To achieve this, an extensive literature review was conducted, covering leadership definitions, the current state of leadership, the Great Resignation trend, and employee dissatisfaction. This review provides a profound knowledge level and a concise synthesis that informs the research (Background research).

To create the aforementioned framework internet questionnaires with quite short and simple-to-follow open-ended and closed-ended questions were used for a purposive sample of participants, who are HR specialists, business leaders, investment bankers, diplomats and lawyers (Research methodology and data collection methods). The sample consists of 47 respondents from the United Kingdom and Lithuania (Sampling).

After receiving the survey responses, the data was first described and analysed and then compared with the academic literature. Thematic analysis was chosen for this study because it can provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the phenomenon under study (Data analysis methods). Core findings are that the attitude of employees to work has been completely changed by COVID-19. For this reason, there is a clear preference for authentic and transformational leaders in the post-pandemic workplace, but organizations need to closely monitor and analyse this because it is evident as well that no universal type of leadership is appropriate for all organisations (Results of the analysis).

Interestingly, considering the reviewed literature and analysis data, it was concluded that the post-pandemic workplace lacks clarity regarding the leadership style: should there be more human leaders (putting employees first) or focus more on achieving business results? This may be an interesting topic for future research (Conclusions and recommendations).

Although this paper could build an academic bridge between academia and practice, it could be improved by interviewing more business people from different countries and

covering more than five years after the global pandemic, which could be considered a limitation and an opportunity in the future (Limitation of the study).

In conclusion, these research findings need to be properly applied to help organizations choose the ideal leader who can transform the business and inspire people in the post-pandemic workplace (Instructions for further research).

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Chapter One: Dissertation Introduction

1.1 Introduction

There are alarming reports on the interesting fact that after the pandemic, people were happy and eager to return to their normal lives, but not to the new world of work (Drebes, 2022). A number of literature have expressed businesses' concern about this very issue of retaining existing employees and recruiting new ones. Due to this, the phrase ‘back to normal’ disappeared from the business world and became a popular new one: “No one wants to work anymore” (Hyatt, 2023).

A recent survey by King's College London shows that work is considered ‘very or rather important in their life’ by only 73% of the British, which is the lowest among the 24 nations surveyed. Between 1981 and 2022, the percentage of British people who believed less importance should be placed on work rose from 26% to 43% (Chohan and Roycroft, 2023). Furthermore, financial institution leaders have alleged that remote workers are not working as hard when they stay away from the office. They consider this to be an ‘aberration’ that needs to be corrected as soon as possible (Ambrose, 2023).

All the evidence mentioned above, supported by the relevant literature, emphasises that there is an increasing need to identify what type of leadership style could keep everyone on track. The title of this dissertation is “Leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace”. This research's overall aim is to explore the leadership styles that can motivate and inspire employees to return after the pandemic to the new world of work. As journalist Felix Salmon (2023) describes it, this world is ‘The New Not Normal’—a world that is emerging from the ashes of the crisis and reshaping various aspects of our lives.

To realise the overall research aim mentioned above, the objectives of this research are to:

-Identify the British labour market that has been entirely changed by COVID-19 and employees in the time of the 'Great Resignation'.

-Evaluate critical pre- and post-pandemic leadership styles.

-Explore the need for a new approach to leadership in the new work environment businesses are facing in the modern day.

-Formulate recommendations for selecting ideal leaders: hire potential leaders for the post-pandemic workplace, not past achievements.

This study aims to find out which business leaders could inspire employees after a pandemic. To achieve this, the study adopts a qualitative approach with an online survey as the data collection method. This survey will consist of open and closed questions. The survey questions aim to gather information on managers' styles, attitudes, challenges and new strategies. It will be distributed to a convenience sample of respondents in the UK and Lithuania. In terms of data analysis, the study will first describe and analyse the responses and then compare them with the academic literature on leadership. This will provide a better understanding of why it is important to rethink leadership and will contribute to the objectives of the study as outlined above. Also, will help to identify gaps in the literature on leadership and how this could be used in future research.

The chosen area of research is topical and urgent, as companies are faced with the problem of retaining existing employees and recruiting new ones in the wake of a pandemic. For this reason, the need for a new approach to leadership has become more important than ever. This study is significant in helping companies understand what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace and how it can be used to mitigate the challenges especially since most people prefer to be led rather than managed (Schultz, 2022).

1.2 Background information and study context

How can leaders inspire their employees in the post-pandemic world? This is the central question that this dissertation explores, as the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the world of work and challenged traditional assumptions about leadership and employee behaviour (Brown, 2021). Furthermore, in the report published by the CIPD, the leaders emphasised that the new world of work encompasses more than just hybrid work. Understanding the impact of the global pandemic on business and employee behaviour is important for organizations to reconsider leadership, asking the question: what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace?

Previous research on this topic has explored various aspects of leadership and employee behaviour, such as:

-The British labour market after COVID-19 (Chohan and Roycroft, 2023);
-Employees in the time of the 'Great Resignation' (Ng and Stanton, 2023);
- Employee dissatisfaction at work after the global pandemic (Ignatius, 2023);
-Pre-pandemic leadership styles (Havard, 2017);
-Adapting leadership to meet the post-pandemic workplace (Bersin and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019).

However, there are still gaps and limitations in the existing literature, such as:
-There is a lack of comprehensive literature that can fully explain the impact of the global pandemic on leadership and employees;
-At the moment, research is still being carried out that will be able to determine what transformations the business will have to go through in order for it to adapt to the new normal.
-More contextual and nuanced analysis is needed to lead, guide and engage remote employees.

Therefore, this dissertation aims to address these gaps by examining how the post-pandemic world is changing leadership, employee attitudes toward their work, and managers. The dissertation also explores what kind of leadership is needed to have an absolutely first-class view of where the world is going (Nadella, 2021) and effectively lead remote workers.

The research uses an online survey to collect and analyse qualitative data from people working in organizations in the United Kingdom and Lithuania. The dissertation hopes to contribute to academic knowledge and provide more information to organizations on how they can choose the ideal leader who can transform the business and inspire people to work in the post-pandemic workplace.

1.3 Significance of the Study

COVID-19 has disrupted all businesses and challenged their ability to retain and recruit employees. The management is struggling to cope with the changing environment. Therefore, a new leadership approach is essential in the post-pandemic era.

This study explores the type of leadership that motivates employees in the post-pandemic workplace. The study will enrich the literature on leadership by showing how the pandemic has influenced leadership and employee work attitudes. The study will also offer valuable insights for leaders and organizations who want to adjust to the post-pandemic reality and enhance employee engagement across different work modes. The study will also propose a new research question: can people-oriented leadership lead to better business outcomes?

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of this research is to explore what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace.

Research Focus: To investigate what type of leadership inspires employees to work and get the job done in the post-pandemic workplace.

Research Aim: The overall aim of this research is to advance an understanding of why leadership needs a fresh approach to keep up with employees in the new world of work.

In order to realise the overall research aim mentioned above, **the objectives of this research** are to:

-Identify the British labour market that has been entirely changed by COVID-19 and employees in the time of the 'Great Resignation'.

-Evaluate critical pre- and post-pandemic leadership styles.

-Explore the need for a new approach to leadership in the new work environment businesses are facing in the modern day.

-Formulate recommendations for selecting ideal leaders: hire potential leaders for the post-pandemic workplace, not past achievements.

1.5 Research questions

The questions in this section reflect the main research problem to which the answers will be sought.

-What kind of leadership (transformational, transactional, situational, organisational, strategic, authentic, coaching, humble heroes (Appendix B) inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace?

- What should be first for leaders in the post-pandemic workplace?

How to transform a company to succeed in the future:

To show empathy and compassion for their employees and customers.

How can adapt to changing situations, overcome challenges, and learn from failures?

-How attitudes to work have changed (not at all, slightly, completely) since COVID-19?

-How would you rate the overall changes in attitudes towards work after COVID-19 on a scale of 1 to 5?

-What type of leadership is necessary for managing remote teams?

-What type of leadership inspires employees to get the job done?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

The literature review of books, articles, research papers, reports etc. will focus on business leadership over the past five years and its importance in inspiring employees to work in the post-pandemic workplace. The term 'the post-pandemic workplace' has many meanings, but in essence, it has perhaps been expressed across 2020 to describe changes and challenges that are affecting where and how people work after the coronavirus pandemic and how leaders lead their workers. This chapter is divided into five sub-sections to meet research objectives. The first sub-section starts by identifying and explaining the different ways in which leadership can be defined and interpreted; the second sub-section discusses a major trend of 'The Great Resignation' and how it relates to leadership; the third sub-section captures a reason to rethink leadership: employee dissatisfaction; the fourth sub-section, find out who is saying what about 'Rethinking leadership in a post-pandemic workplace'; and the fifth sub-section reflects on the next generation of leadership, using an example of the failed leadership of the prestigious private bank Coutts.

Overall, this chapter analyses and presents the existing work on leadership, thus providing a solid foundation for this research project and highlighting possible gaps and

challenges in the literature on leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace.

1.2 The Leadership

Leadership is a term that has many different meanings, but a common theme is that it involves guiding others towards a shared goal. However, the founder of the Virtuous leadership system, Alexander Havard (2017), defines leadership as the foundation of character. He alleged that it is impossible to be a leader without possessing strong character. There is no way to determine a leader's exact number of definitions since different sources, including dictionaries, have varying criteria and perspectives. For example, more than a year ago, a Google search yielded 28 billion results for ‘leadership’ (Bolden, Gosling and Hawkins, 2011).

According to CIPD, leadership is the art of comprehending people's motivations and using them to attain a shared objective. As an example, Derek Mackenzie, CEO of Investigo, advises leaders to foster trust, respect, and open communication. Valued and empowered employees take ownership of their work, resulting in higher engagement and productivity (Mackenzie, 2023).

Also, a lot of people have different definitions of leadership. Leadership itself will change in some ways depending on who you lead and what you teach them.

Former US President Bill Clinton (2021) defines leadership as the skill of persuading someone else to accomplish a task that you desire, simply because they are motivated to do so. He has four strategies to bring out the very best in a team (Clinton, 2021). First, encourage people who work for you to express differing opinions. Otherwise, a leader will miss out on their most creative contributions. Second, to acknowledge the contributions of others and give them credit where it is due. According to President Clinton (2021), a good leader shares credit when something positive occurs. Third, take a step back and look at the larger picture. Helping others understand how their work contributes to a bigger picture can increase their appreciation for the effort they put in. Fourth, to develop a mindset of leadership. Leaders who possess open-mindedness, optimism about human potential, and a focus on future achievements are capable of inspiring the best in their colleagues.

Similarly, Havard (2017) pointed out that “leadership is about achieving greatness by bringing out the greatness in others. Management is about getting things done. Leadership is about helping people grow”.

Psychologist Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic (2021) describes leadership as a psychological process that involves influencing a group in a way that can transform chaotic and self-centred behaviour into a successful team. This process is similar to that of a sculptor, who can turn a coarse rock into a beautiful masterpiece.

Roxane (2022) believes that improving human behaviour is crucial to effective leadership. By applying this principle, leaders can bring about changes in behaviour, procedures, and structures. This idea is also supported by Penttilä (2021) as she sees that in today's world where workforces are increasingly diverse, digital, and dispersed, leaders must possess the skills to adapt, mobilize, and motivate multiculturalism. The assumption is that good leaders can adapt to any situation and won't let their personalities hinder their performance (Penttilä, 2021).

Due to this, Bersin and Chamorro-Premuzic (2019) proposed getting leaders for what they can do, not what they have done. To choose excellent leaders, it is essential to anticipate the future rather than commend the past. Results by Bersin and Chamorro-Premuzic (2019) revealed that choosing exceptional leaders is all about anticipating the future rather than simply rewarding past achievements. It's a common challenge for any organisation to determine which individuals possess the potential to guide their teams through periods of growth, uncertainty, and change. These exceptional leaders might have a unique set of qualities that differ from those of past or present successful individuals.

Esler (2012) draws attention to the leadership paradox. On the one hand, people want leaders to be similar to themselves. On the other hand, they want a leader ‘better than us’, so that they can earn the right to lead and give purpose to employees. Why are we here? To impress workers, work for them and be passionate about their job. This view is supported by Ronald Reagan: “The excellent leader is the one who makes the people do the greatest things".

Microsoft's Satya Narayana Nadella (2021) says that to be a successful CEO, "you have to have an absolutely first-class view of where the world is going".

Some people actively seek to be leaders and achieve it through self-belief or hard work. Others have leadership thrust upon them; they are born with leaders' character. Former American Express CEO Kenneth Chenault captures this winning mindset: "If you want to lead, you have to be committed to serving" (Dewar and Keller, 2023).

Finally, studies of leadership are identified as being very important for understanding the difference between leadership and management. Research about leadership principles conducted by Egger and Macario (2012) found that managers are occupied with business operational responsibilities such as command and control. At the same time, leaders are involved in strategic undertakings, for instance, vision, mission statement, and change management. To cite Naylor, leaders are not particularly skilled at management but can win loyalty and carry others with them through their clarity of vision, generosity of spirit, and 'people skills' (Egger and Macario, 2012).

The review of the definitions of leadership in the literature highlights that politics, business, and organisations can't survive without leaders. Currently, the world is changing so rapidly that people look to them for answers—how to return to normal and motivated work?

If you find the right leader, that means the organisation will find the trust that businesses and people are looking for. To achieve that, every year, leadership development spends $50 billion globally (Parry-Slater, 2023).

2.3 The Great Resignation

Two important factors cannot be ignored when mastering leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace: employee dissatisfaction and the Great Resignation. These factors help to understand why leadership authors need to rethink leadership after the global pandemic. The Great Resignation represents workers resigning from their employees and organizations voluntarily after COVID-19 (Ng and Stanton, 2023). The term "The Great Resignation" is credited to Professor Anthony Klotz of University College London (Ng and Stanton, 2023) coined the word when he foresaw a significant resignation wave in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. The great

resignation trend indicates that people's willingness to negotiate a better deal from staff-short corporations and their frustration with working conditions, uninteresting employment, and lousy bosses have spread throughout the world (Horowitz, 2022). According to media reports, in the third quarter of 2022, there were about 365,000 resignations in the UK, while there were 442,000 resignations in the second quarter. This is the most resignations since 1997 (Horowitz, 2022).

CIPD could be another source of evidence of a great resignation in the UK (Boys, 2022).

Figure 1: Rate of job-to-job moves (Boys, 2022).

The Founder of Inclusive Culture Aisha Suleiman said that people are quitting because they don't feel like they belong at work (Westfall, 2022). That’s why she suggests businesses invest in a sense of belonging and when to expect big dividends. Furthermore, Suleiman suggests that leaders trust in the intelligence and competence of their employees, as people tend to leave due to their relationship with their leaders, rather than the organization itself (Westfall, 2022).

The other side of the coin is that the government pays people more to do nothing than to work. For example, some people receive more money in unemployment benefits than

they would in a minimum-wage job. On top of that, people do not want to labour for pitiful earnings that do not cover their basic needs. They don't want to do tasks that are bad for their bodies or their social lives (Allen, 2023).

The Great Resignation trend with big numbers across the world has demonstrated that leaders' objective should be to reimagine work itself, not only how to draw in, keep, and empower workers. Due to this, Hatfield, Pearce, and Cantrell (2021) stated that a primary priority for all leaders ought to be re-energising current employees. Furthermore, they see a chance for leaders to alter the workforce and workplace in the long run. As well as to step back and reconsider how and by whom work gets done.

Professor Armin Trost (2023) notes that, in the past, a boss played a crucial and effective leadership role in giving clear orders and a boss who knew how to answer questions and solve problems. Now everything has changed when it comes to tasks, results, and ways to reach them. Uncertainty dominates everywhere. In this case, the professor outlined that the new leadership role is the partner, the mentor, and the coach. Responsibility is increasingly given or shared.

According to Trost (2023), good leadership means that bosses become aware of their situation and, especially, what role they have. They are consistent and can communicate to those in charge why they act the way they do.

2.4 Leadership and employee dissatisfaction

As noted above, organizations must reconsider leadership due to employee dissatisfaction as well. Importantly, employee dissatisfaction may be affected even before the process of the Great Resignation. By most of the newest studies on happiness at work, it is clear that it is an essential factor for employee engagement and productivity. Harvard University professor Arthur C. Brooks said less than 20% of employees stated that they are highly satisfied with their jobs (Ignatius, 2023). According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the average rating of job satisfaction in the UK was 7.3 out of 10 in the year ending March 2021. This was an increase from 7.1 in the previous year, but still below the pre-pandemic level of 7.5 in the year ending March 2019. The ONS also found that job satisfaction was positively associated with personal well-being, such as life satisfaction, happiness, and low anxiety.

What has led to the significant decline in overall happiness over the past few years? Defining happiness in the new world of work is as challenging as gaining admission to Cambridge University. According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle, people's ultimate goal is happiness, which can only be achieved by leading a life that allows us to utilize and enhance our ability to reason, and by living by reason. Happiness is an ongoing activity that requires us to engage in activities that are virtuous, good, and long-lasting (Neel, 2013).

Brooks (2023) figured out that two factors play a significant role in their overall happiness and job satisfaction. Firstly, the happiest workers feel like they are earning their success by contributing value to their work and personal lives, and their achievements are being recognized. Secondly, they feel like they are serving others and are needed (Ignatius, 2023). As suggested by Professor Brooks (2023) one of the most important things organizations can do for recruitment and retention is to establish a system that rewards merit and individual achievements. This system should go beyond financial compensation and provide employees with a sense of personal accomplishment and satisfaction. When people feel that they are creating value for others, they are more likely to stay motivated and engaged in their work. Moreover, seeing the impact of their work on the faces of those they serve to their sense of fulfilment and purpose.

The research conducted by neuroscientists show that happy people are better workers. Also, they work harder and smarter (McKee, 2014). Research cited by Annie McKee, author of How to Be Happy at Work, shows that happy employees are more productive, creative, engaged, loyal, and resilient.

The World Happiness Report 2023 published the top 10 countries with the highest levels of happiness at work (Helliwell et al., 2023). For instance, Finland remains in the top position, for the sixth year in a row. The happiness at work score is based on job satisfaction, work-life balance, autonomy, social support, and income. The report also found that happiness at work is positively correlated with life satisfaction, health, and trust. It might help leaders identify opportunities and consider the leadership approach.

This is also linked to the new concept of work, which is all about employees discovering the meaning of their work (Drebes, 2022). The term ‘new work’ was established by sociologist Frithjof Bergmann, “work that you really, really want.”

Helmold (2021) in his recent research paper found that The New Work concept is based on core values such as participation in community, freedom and independence, which were first outlined by the scientist Bergmann in the 1980s. Along with freedom and participation, New Work also encompasses elements such as self-esteem, personal development, asocial responsibility and a sense of purpose in one's profession (Helmold, 2021).

It appears that the phenomenon of Great Resignation and general dissatisfaction at work (or at the new work) are connected, but the relationship is not simple. Both issues are influenced by a range of internal and external factors that shape individuals' perceptions and reactions to their work environment (Linzer, Griffiths and Feldman, 2022).

2.5 Rethinking leadership in the post-pandemic workplace

The fast-changing times, uncertainty, great resignation, and unhappiness at work after the pandemic push organisations and leaders to reconsider leadership. The post-pandemic impact on the workplace and new challenges for leadership are explored in this section, concerning leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace.

In this context, Professor Dave Ulrich and co-author of six books Norm Smallwood (2018) identified that various leadership authors of books (Amazon had 57,936 books listed with the word ‘leadership’ in their title in 2019 (Deal, Lieberman and Meek, 2021) and articles missed that leaders need to deliver results. The argument presented is that the outcomes of leadership action are reflected in the results (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2018). For example, in the long and chequered history of Marks & Spencer, only two chief executives –Sir Richard Greenbury in 1997 and Sir Stuart Rose a decade later, have delivered annual profits of more than £1 billion.

In order to ensure the achievement of the leader in a time of crisis, the leader needs to lead themselves first. In the words of Sinek (2017), how can we expect people to lead if we don’t teach them how to do it? Case studies are widely favoured in business schools to train future leaders (Deal, Lieberman and Meek, 2021). Authors of this study found

that fiction and non-academic literature offer a perspective neglected by professional-scientific literature: the concrete, sensual, emotional, subjective, practical, and evaluative aspects of life. For instance, this includes leaders' ability to recognize the potential of individuals and teams because the unseen is valuable (Burnison, 2022). According to Harry Truman, all leaders have the habit of reading, but not all those who read become leaders (Deal, Lieberman and Meek, 2021).

However, Stuart Mackenzie (2021) highlighted that business experiencing disruptive change and it is affecting leadership insight as the capacity to see – to be able to perceive beyond the present little moment and develop a vision of a possible future. He put forward personal leadership to organisations that want to survive in this chaotic environment. It leads to leaders' clarity and creativity when change happens more quickly than businesses can adapt to it (Mackenzie, 2021). On top of that, leaders need to be bold and able to see the facts, choose perspective and then reframe options. For example, to tell an employee to be back in the office. In the past years, leaders have been buffeted with determining where and when people should work. There is some evidence to suggest that employees who work full-time in the office are more productive than those who work fully remotely. In addition, recent studies show that onboarding, starting new projects, and strengthening teams are more effective when all participants are in the same location (Rodman and Astmann, 2023).

The vast majority of articles on leadership showed that the most effective method to encourage a team is to lead by example. It refers to a leader's live demonstrations of expected performance (Eldor, 2020). This theory Lufthansa CEO Jens Ritter linked to practice when he was seen serving drinks to passengers on the way to Riyadh and Bahrain. Ritter worked as a flight attendant to better understand the difficulties the crew experiences during flights and to meet the needs of passengers (Singh, 2023). The airline’s CEO said he was amazed at how much he had learned in just a few hours. Making decisions at work will be different now that I have experienced the impact of my choices first hand. So, as a result, leading by example is most effective when done in person, at the employees' workplace, such as serving customers on the front line. On top of that, it creates value by boosting engagement, productivity, and service quality in

business (Eldor, 2020). Also, leading by example is highly effective in bringing out the best in team members (MasterClass, 2023).

The research by Dirani et al. (2020) identifies seven leadership competencies that are essential for organisational success in times of crisis and beyond. These competencies are: communicating effectively and transparently; sharing leadership responsibilities and empowering others; providing purpose for employees; ensuring that employees have the necessary technology and support; prioritizing employees' mental health; maintaining the financial viability and sustainability of the organisation; and fostering a culture of organisational resilience and adaptability.

However, since the epidemic has questioned many of the pre-pandemic norms and assumptions, some experts contend that leading with purpose is now even more crucial. The survey by Barrett Values Centre showed that leading with purpose still really matters for employees right now (Barrett, 2020).

When it comes to leading with purpose, Indian-American businesswoman and former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi (2022) is first to none. She said that the trick is not doing what everyone else is doing, but doing it before it is fashionable. Firstly, she created an organisational culture where people were encouraged to stay, secondly, focused on expanding the brand portfolio to include healthier alternatives (Nooyi, 2021). As she modestly put it: “Moving forward, the crucial question was the type of company we aimed to become” (Nooyi, 2022).

When it comes to the new world of work, Nooyi emphasizes the role of leaders in achieving equitable workplaces. Inclusiveness, according to her, is a mindset that should be instilled from the top. Former PepsiCo CEO believes that workers are the driving force behind the economy and that they all belong to families, communities, and larger contexts that should be taken into account when discussing what constitutes fair work. Her excellent advice for how the corporate world needs to evolve is not to do what everyone else is doing, but to do it before it is fashionable (Nooyi, 2021).

This view is supported by Nicki Lyons, UK chief corporate affairs and sustainability officer at Vodafone, as well. Lyons argued that purpose cannot be treated as an addition or a nice-to-have (Lyons, 2023). Every aspect of the business should embody the purpose

and its external perception. For instance, Vodafone's core purpose is to 'connect for a better future' and it has had a significant impact on the company's business.

Daniel Goleman (2023) emphasizes the critical role of purpose for the next generation of employees due to ‘young workers don’t want to do much of anything’. That's why many leaders wonder what motivates Gen Z to bring their best selves to work. According to the research consultancy Great Place to Work, Gen-Z employees benefit from trust, leader engagement, and purpose. Many younger workers feel a sense of purpose when mentored by senior leaders or given important projects that impact the company's future (Goleman, 2023). Again, if business leaders want to have Gen Z on their side with fresh perspectives, technological know-how and impassioned ideas—It is necessary to have a deeper and more detailed discussion regarding the purpose and significance of things. Goleman (2023) assured that no matter the industry, promoting the company’s purpose through respectful interactions is vital.

According to a recent global survey, it has been found that leaders must strive to establish a stronger sense of purpose for their workforce. Although it is a challenging task, the survey reveals that a significant majority of employees, around 70%, derive their sense of purpose from work. When the work feels meaningful, it leads to an improvement in their performance (Chohan and Roycroft, 2023).

“ll find the strength to drop the rope, because people are 12% more likely to report being happy with their job when they have freedom and autonomy in their work environment” (Verlinden, 2023). Research (DiGangi, 2023) suggests that leaders who empower, encourage, and coach employees have better-performing companies than those who micromanage and deliver orders. He told me, "One of the most important things I've learned about leadership is that the less I control others, the more they want to follow me". He realised that by focusing on work rather than agreements, he could effectively lead large teams of people. Thus, his willingness to stop leading—to drop the rope—helped him become a true leader (DiGangi, 2023). A leader must first control himself and trust that others will follow him. He must feel energised and inspired and believe that this will make others feel the same. That’s how emotions in relationships work.

CIPD reminds us that after the financial crisis of 2008, people started talking about ethical leadership. This means that leaders should have strong values and a clear sense of why they are doing what they do. Ethical leaders explicitly model ethical action, communicate ethical standards, and hold employees accountable through performance management. Therefore, ethical leadership is not only for senior-level leaders but also for all levels of leadership (Linda Klebe Treviño and Brown, 2014). During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, it became even more important for leaders to care about their employees and make ethical decisions (CIPD, 2023).

Adapting business to post-COVID, empathy played a crucial role as well. Some scholars and researchers (Parmar, 2021) are of the opinion that empathy is a must-have strategy for work in the years to come. It can help leaders to create a positive impact on their people and business. The lack of empathy leads to decreased innovation, engagement, and loyalty, and undermines diversity efforts. In the UK, 10% of the workforce is engaged, and 14% is actively disengaged (Verlinden, 2023). Additionally, leaders who are responsive to their team members' feedback and act on it accordingly can reap various business advantages. As Josh Bersin (2019), the author of Elevating Equity, states, such organisations have a 12-fold increase in employee engagement and retention. Moreover, they are 8.5 times more likely to satisfy and retain customers when they embrace the employee voice properly (People Management Insight, 2023).

Regarding the future of leadership development, Maynard Leigh strongly argues that the current disruption will only worsen as the rate of change quickens due to three major global trends: the green economy, societal and demographic change, and globalisation and technology.

Szot (2023), who has many years of business experience as a leader, entrepreneur and CEO, drew attention to the fact that leaders have a completely different perspective from others in the company due to their strategy-based and long-lasting observations and analyses. His coaching clients' analysis showed that leaders may have an entirely different approach towards issues and novel situations if they are more at the moment, curious like a child, and happy to learn something new. In addition, they are not

negatively affected by decisions or large investments; rather, they are negatively affected by mistakes, or issues that are so small as to be almost insignificant (Szot, 2023). Macpherson (2022) stated that business leaders everywhere are being buffeted by the global pandemic. There is no such thing as a ‘new normal’; the world has changed and will continue to change. Most CEOs reconsider changes and challenges, as well as the true value and values of their people. Visionary leaders returned to the basics: treat people as unique individuals with respect, empathy, and gratitude. Happy and healthy people are paramount in order to succeed in organisations (Macpherson, 2022).
Human beings have experienced the classic stages of shock, denial, depression, experimentation, frustration, and decision-making, and it appears that they are now moving towards the final stage of integration.

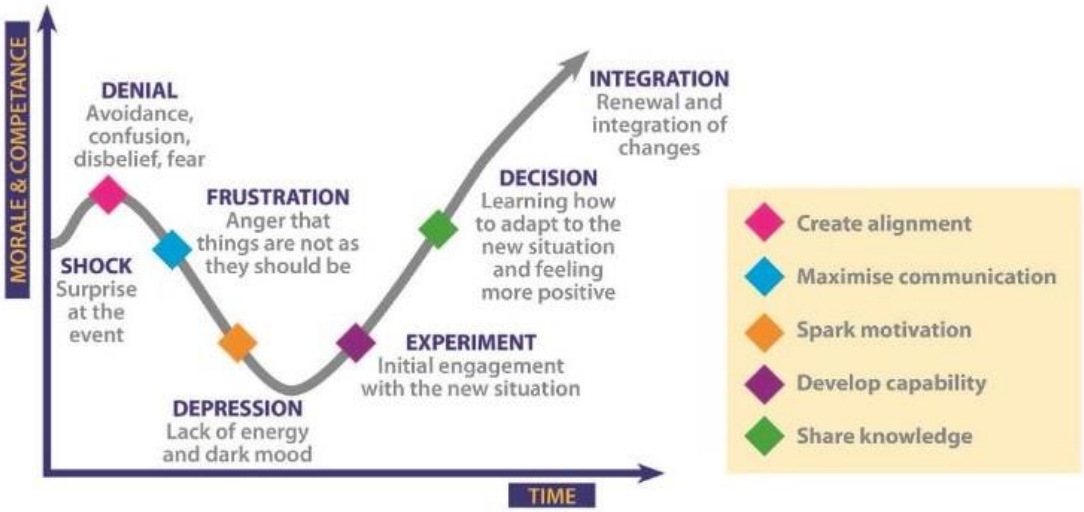

Figure 2: Classic stages of human experiences (Macpherson, 2022, p.2).
As work and business change at an increasing pace, CEO Better minds at work Elke Geraerts (2023) suggests business leaders work on resilience and focus for forming new habits and concentrating on them (Geraerts, 2023). More and more companies prioritise resilience because resilience gives to them wings. Business should not return to the previous ‘normal’. Finally, she believes that resilience, the ability to recover from adversity, determines our ability to handle crises.
According to a Harvard Business Review expert (2023), no matter how much experience leaders have, they still face unique pressures that require a human response. The business

landscape is constantly evolving, and intelligent leaders need to equip themselves to succeed in leading the anxious workforce in this new world. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, people are experiencing anxiety and depression about their future careers, resulting in long-term psychological effects (Mahmud, Talukder and Rahman, 2020). Unfortunately, leaders often lack the skills to handle mental health crises in their teams. The urgency of such training is evident. Managers today face the challenge of leading workforces that are anxious due to various stressors, such as social isolation, inflation, economic uncertainty, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and fast-paced technological changes (Bhatti and Roulet, 2023).

2.6 New Generation and Leadership

There is always hope, that the new generation produces better leaders (Esler, 2012). One clear example is the Royal family. William, the Prince of Wales, is aware of his responsibility to ensure that the Royal Family adapts to the changing times and transitions seamlessly into a new era when he becomes the monarch. The Royal family needs to continuously evolve and adapt while remaining relevant in today's world and that’s the challenge for the next generation – the elder son of King Charles III (Parliament, 2021).

As suggested by Dosik, Bhalla and Bailey (2020) leading in new ways will be necessary, as the world undergoes significant changes. This leads to the paramount question, what right is for the next generation and what can they bring to the table?

Take the prestigious private bank Coutts's leadership failure. According to the Guardian, in 2022 the company ‘refreshed values’, and “placed ‘inclusive’ right at the top of the list”. In the words of Coutts leader, “he steered Britain’s oldest private bank into the modern age”. The private bank became very innovative, for instance, banking YouTubers, e-gamers, and social influencers. This new implementation the bank presents as an important and responsive part of the modern age.

However, in 2023 Coutts boss Peter Flavel resigned after seven years because of Nigel Farage’s de-banking for political views scandal. He acknowledged that the bank had ‘fallen below’ its “high standards of personal service” and had "failed to communicate effectively" with Mr Farage.

Overall, the over three-hundred-year-old banks for wealthy clients showed a lack of leadership. When it comes to Coutts's failure, Allen (2023) agrees that younger generations seek work that is convenient for them. Sinek (2017) added that far too many of us work in settings that bring out the worst in us.

Dosik, Bhalla and Bailey (2020) suggested that leaders establish a workplace culture where it is acceptable for both individual teams and the company as a whole to experience failures and use them as learning opportunities.

Even psychologist Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic (2021) has hinted that the pandemic has significantly affected our ability to uphold our leadership ideals. In today's world, it is not enough to have leaders, businesses need better leaders. By that, he means they have nowhere to hide and cannot rely on past experience (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2021). Psychologists that it took a global pandemic for us to recognize that having intelligent, curious, humble, kind, resilient, and honest leaders is crucial for the well-being of people. In an ideal world, we would have understood this without needing a crisis to remind us. But in our world, we did. The world must have capable leaders, but this will not be possible if we keep selecting individuals based on their confidence instead of their competence, charisma instead of humility, and narcissism instead of integrity. The truth is, that incompetent leadership cannot be cured by any vaccine (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2021).

Overall, various written papers on rethinking leadership after the global pandemic suggest focusing more on relationships ((Leigh and Maynard, 2012) rather than leadership needs to deliver results (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2018). However, Ulrich and Smallwood (2018) present findings which suggest leaders take a business–based approach to leadership. Another challenge is that successful leadership is not just what has happened in the past. It's the ability to position an organization to succeed in the future (Likierman, 2011).

In summary, books, articles, and research written in the post-pandemic period made us aware that no leadership style fits all. When it comes to leadership fresh approach, different leaders may have different approaches and experiences. No matter how good it

is, any leadership program needs to be integrated into the company's framework to be effective and make people follow (Parry-Slater, 2023).

Chapter Three: Research Methods

3.1 Methodology. Data analysis. Ethical considerations

Research is a term used for an investigation aimed at uncovering new facts (Walliman, 2018). Mcneill and Chapman (2005) maintain that some research aims to describe a situation, while other research aims to identify and solve problems. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), research is about systematically collecting data and then interpreting it with the clear goal of discovering new information.

Research methods refer to the techniques used to conduct research (Walliman, 2018). One of the best-known is the Research Onion presented by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) who identifies six layers that represent different aspects of the research process, from the philosophical assumptions to the data collection and analysis methods. The metaphor of the onion encourages the researcher to go layer by layer (to work from the outside of the onion inwards) to access the data at the core of the onion from the outside.

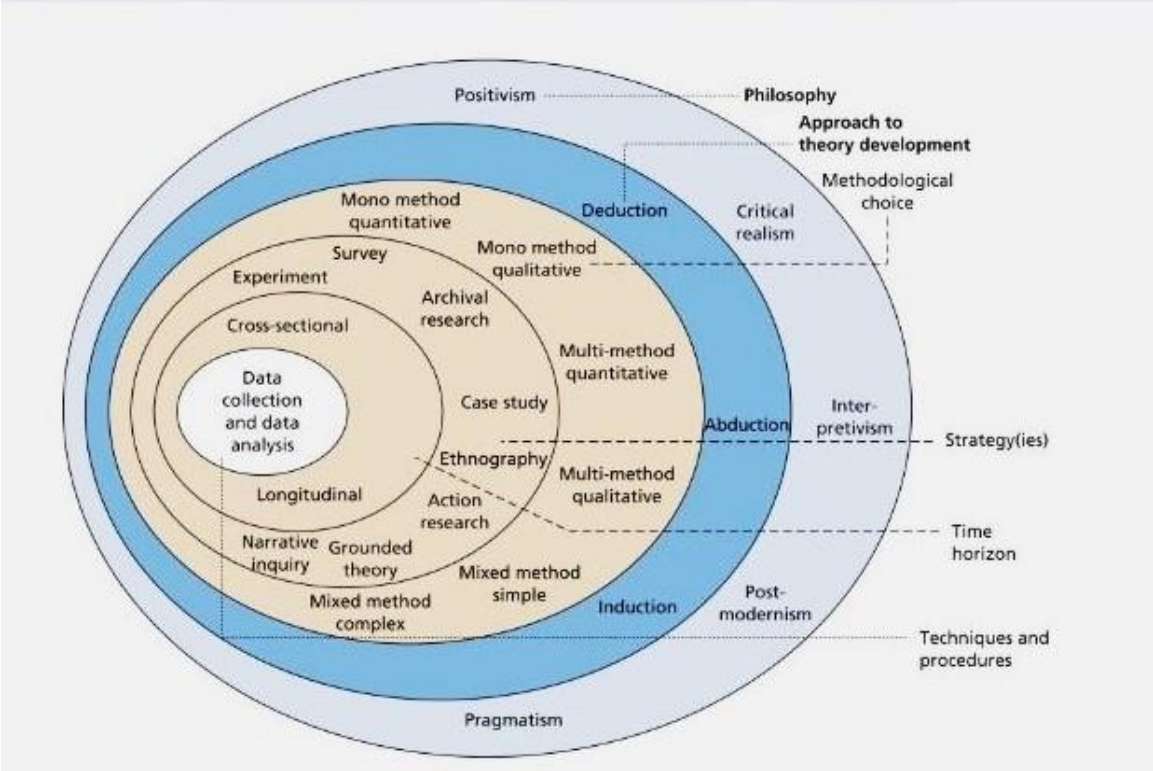

Figure 3: The Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p.124).

3.2 Research Philosophy

In an academic context, a research philosophy refers to the basic assumptions and principles that guide research and subsequently lead to new knowledge in a chosen field. It includes approaches such as positivism, interpretivism (relativism), critical theory, as well can be postmodernism (focuses on the themes of language and cultural interpretation) and pragmatism (the research question is the most crucial factor in determining the research philosophy), which influence data collection and analysis. The positivist approach to scientific investigation is based on accepting the reality of the world around us and the possibility of discovering these realities (Walliman, 2018). The study by Walliman (2018) explored interpretivism as an alternate research approach. The statement takes into account the fact that we perceive the world subjectively and this is influenced by our preconceived beliefs, values and certain attitudes.

As individuals, we cannot be neutral and impartial observers because we are inherently part of society. Finally, the third theory, known as critical theory, is based on the

principles of critical reasoning. Critical reasoning is a way of reconciling different perspectives. It acknowledges the existence of a natural order in social events and discourse, similar to the positivist approach. However, this order cannot be detected by observing the pattern of events (Walliman, 2018).

3.3 Research approach to theory

According to some authors, research is based on theory, which strongly influences the researcher and the methods they choose. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010) pointed out the importance of considering how the researcher understands the world, what makes a study ‘good’, the differences between inductive and deductive thinking, the drawing of conclusions and their reliability.

Research design is a systematic process that aims to verify or develop a theory. When testing an existing theory, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) recommended the use of the deductive method to collect appropriate data. However, if the research project solely depends on the analysed and collected data, it requires an inductive method (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). How to approach this depends on the questions raised and the directions taken to answer them. A methodical and transparent approach is necessary for high-quality research to meet academic standards (Biggam, 2015).

3.4 Research Strategy

The research design provides a framework for collecting and analysing data and indicates appropriate research methods (Walliman, 2018). There are various research strategies including experimental, action, case study, grounded theory, ethnography, and archival research.

Conducting surveys is a widely used and effective method in business and management research to gather information on a particular issue and understand how the population thinks or behaves regarding it (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Questionnaires are a popular survey strategy (Biggam, 2015) as they enable the collection of standardized data from a large population in a cost-effective manner, facilitating easy comparisons. Most people also view surveys as authoritative and relatively easy to explain and comprehend.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) stated that the selection of a research strategy should be based on selecting an appropriate time horizon.

3.5 Research Choices

In any case, this layer is simply about deciding how many data types (qualitative or quantitative) will be used in research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). There are three options – mono, mixed, and multi-method. There are two research strategies: one uses qualitative methodology and the other uses quantitative methodology (Walliman, 2008). The difference is that the one deals with numbers and the other with words and images. Therefore, 'quantitative' is often associated with a questionnaire, while qualitative may collect data through, for example, interviews (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018).

Based on the ideas pointed out by Biggam (2015), Fisher and Thompson (2014), and Walliman (2008) asking questions is an obvious method of collecting qualitative information from people. This method of data collection is usually called a survey (Walliman, 2018). This tool is very flexible and has several benefits, such as having a structured format, being easy and convenient for respondents, and being low-cost and fast to administer to many cases across large regions. Moreover, the researcher's personal influence is eliminated, and sensitive questions can be asked with a higher likelihood of getting honest answers (Denscombe, 2019).

Many authors agree that internet questionnaires with quite short and simple-to-follow questions were the least time-consuming method of delivery. This factor, and expanded geography, with not just one but two countries, allowed to get a good response rate. The simple design, the clarity of how to answer the questions, and the fact that it only takes a few minutes encourage people to participate.

Walliman (2018) distinguishes between two types of questions:

Closed format questions – the respondent has to select from a predefined set of answers. These are easy to answer, code, and analyse statistically, as they produce quantitative data. However, they restrict the range of possible responses and may exclude some categories. To avoid this, an option such as 'other' should be added if necessary.

Open format questions – the respondent can answer in their own words and style. These allow for more expression and qualification of responses, which reduces bias. However, they also generate qualitative data that is harder to interpret and code. They also require more time and effort from the respondents.

Open-ended questions are used to obtain qualitative data. It is impossible to predict in advance what kind of data the responses will contain, so it will be difficult to accurately categorise and count them. Instead, they can provide rich data about people's attitudes and feelings. For questions to be answered accurately, double questions cannot be submitted. Questions should be short because no one wants to spend time trying to figure out what you want to ask. Questionnaires are mostly used in disciplines that deal with people. Online questionnaire surveys are particularly prone to low response rates, so at least a few precautions should always be taken to maximise returns (Fisher and Thompson, 2014). Additionally, research in business, politics, sciences, and politics often requires eliciting the feelings, opinions and reactions of large numbers of people, which is most easily accomplished through a survey (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2010).

3.6 Time Horizon

The time horizon is the future period that a decision-maker takes into account when assessing the outcomes of an action (Ebert and Piehl, 1973). The researcher needs to determine the appropriate time horizon for the project. According to Ebert and Piehl (1973), the timeframe of the research might be crucial to the final conclusions. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) pointed out that the concept of time horizon can be viewed from two different perspectives. The first perspective is called cross-sectional, which focuses on a single point in time. The second perspective is called longitudinal, which takes into account the changes that occur over time. Cross-sectional studies typically use survey methodology. In addition to quantitative methods, there is the option to use qualitative or mixed-methods research strategies. One of the primary advantages of conducting longitudinal research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019) is its ability to investigate changes and development over time.

3.7 Data Collection and Analysis

This stage of the research process involves collecting data that can help answer research questions and achieve objectives Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). Research relies on data as its raw material to conclude a particular issue. According to Walliman (2008), the researcher must try to make sense of them and relate them to research questions or problems. The data collection required for an investigation depends on the nature of the issue being examined (Walliman, 2018). Data can be categorised into primary or secondary data. Primary data collection methods consist of observation, interviews, questionnaires, and databases.

Both research methods-quantitative and qualitative are valuable. Qualitative research involves a detailed exploration of a topic, enabling quality responses. Exploring for instance, what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace. Qualitative research answers the why questions, while quantitative research answers the how questions (Biggam,2015).

Kent (2001) outlined that in quantitative survey data, there are three main components: respondents, variables, and values. The respondent is the person who is asked the survey questions and provides the answers. The respondent's answers are recorded as rows in the data matrix and become the usable returns for the survey.

On the other hand, secondary data sources include previously published books, magazines and other similar sources. Therefore, data collection is an indispensable part of the research process, and it serves as the foundation of the research (Mazhar et al., 2021). Biggam (2015) stated that it is almost impossible to collect data from the entire target population. Therefore, data is collected from a sample of the population in almost all cases. Two aspects of research that can significantly affect evaluation are non-response and measurement error, and it's important to discuss them (Chambers and Skinner, 2005).

However, Saunders' research onion (2019) has some limitations. First, the Research Onion is not a rigid model, but a model that can be flexibly adapted. For example, to use only qualitative data or a mixed method? Second, Saunders (2019) does not explain exactly how to choose the right option for each layer of the onion or how to justify your choice. Third, the Research Onion model is not a comprehensive presentation of all possible research designs and methodologies. Fourth, the research onion is based on the

Western scientific tradition and this is essential when evaluating its application in other crops.

3.8 Sampling method. Sample size. Sample type

Sampling method

Sampling refers to the method of choosing a subset of a larger population for research or analysis purposes (Biggam, 2015). Simply put, it's how the researcher will take samples and select cases for study. Sampling and selection are integral to any research approach, not just surveys (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2010). There are two main groups of sampling strategies presented by Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2010): probability and non-probability sampling. One of the most commonly used probability sampling methods is random sampling. For example, statistical agencies tend to favour probability random sampling as a method for collecting data. This approach involves selecting every individual or object in the population of interest randomly for study. However, there are also more sophisticated methods, such as systematic and stratified sampling, and more specific methods, such as cluster and stage sampling, that can be applied within a probabilistic framework.

Non-probability sampling is a type of sampling procedure that does not provide a basis for estimating the probability of an element being included in the study sample (Etikan and Bala, 2017). This article states that marketers in companies often use non-probability sampling for their research, as it gives them more assurance of getting cooperation from their respondents, especially in business sample surveys like the consumer price index.

Sample size

Designing experiments or surveys requires determining an appropriate sample size (Desu and Damaraju Raghavarao, 1990). However, the book by van de Schoot and Miočević (2020) shows that it can be challenging for researchers to collect sufficient data to test their hypotheses. This can be due to small or hard-to-reach target groups or prohibitively expensive data collection methods. Biggam (2015) argue that the size of your sample is a crucial factor in quantitative research, especially when you seek to claim that your findings are representative of a larger population. As a general rule, the larger your sample size, the more accurate your results.

Sample type

For Walliman (2018) population in research refers to the total quantity of subject matter, not people. A population can comprise various categories of entities such as objects, organizations, individuals, or occurrences. For this study, only individuals with leadership connections will be considered.

The characteristics of the population (Walliman, 2018) are as follows:

-Homogeneous. All samples share the same characteristics. The larger your sample, the higher the possibility of finding anomalous cases.

-Stratified. Divided into different layers.

Proportional stratified sampling involves dividing the population into different strata and selecting a proportional number of cases from each stratum. Grouped by type. This is about distinctive groups. If you want to compare their experiences, you need to select an equal number of cases from each group.

- The cases are categorized by location. Each location has a distinct group of cases. To compare the cases, select some representative examples from each location.

Biggam (2015) suggested selecting certain strata or groups, with the understanding that the research data and findings relate only to the selected strata or groups. He also recognised that conclusions drawn from a large sample are more convincing than conclusions drawn from a small sample.

The sampling error is the discrepancy between the sample's average value and the population's average value. This error can cause bias in the survey results, which means that the survey outcomes are skewed by some parts of the population being more or less represented than they should be (Walliman, 2018).

An article by Melnikovas (2018) concluded that the research onion is not the only method for designing a research plan. In fact, it is a general framework for the use of existing methodologies and approaches in future research. It serves as a guide for both researchers and practitioners in the field of future studies.

3.9 Data Collection Method. Questionnaire

A more detailed discussion of the research onion provides a more vivid picture of the stages through which a researcher must pass when developing an effective methodology.

As mentioned above, this helps to build knowledge and formulate the reasons for the study.

Research is a term used for an investigation aimed at uncovering new facts (Walliman, 2018). The purpose of this study is to identify business leaders who can motivate employees in the post-pandemic workplace.

Research methods refer to the techniques used to conduct research.

The study will use a qualitative approach and an online survey to collect data.

Most research methods authors simply stated that asking questions is a popular and crucial technique for getting qualitative data from individuals.

This kind of gathering data is sometimes referred to as a survey (Biggam, 2015).

Walliman (2018) emphasised the benefits of an organised format. It is simple and comfortable for respondents and cost-effective and fast to administer to many cases across large regions. Also, the researcher can ask awkward questions without personal influence, increasing the chance of receiving an honest response.

Walliman (2018) and Denscombe (2012) distinguish between two types of questions: closed and open. Closed-format questions limit respondents to a predefined set of answers. Open-format questions permit respondents to answer in their own words and style.

This survey will contain open-ended and closed-ended questions.

The main research question for this study is:

What kind of leadership inspires employees in the new world of work?

There are several sub-questions that stem from the main research question:

What should be first for leaders in the new world of work?

How have attitudes to work changed since COVID?

What type of leadership is necessary for managing remote teams?

What type of leadership inspires employees to get the job done?

The former will allow participants, who are HR specialists, business leaders, investment bankers, diplomats and lawyers to express their views and opinions in their own words. The latter will provide more standardised and quantitative data. The survey questions are designed to collect information about the leaders' styles, approaches, challenges, and new

strategies. It will be distributed to a convenience sample of the respondents in the UK and Lithuania. In terms of data analysis, the study will first describe and analyse the answers and then compare them with academic literature. Thematic analysis is suitable for this study as it can provide a detailed and comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation.

Empirical research involving human participants requires a moral code of conduct known as research ethics (Biggam, 2015).

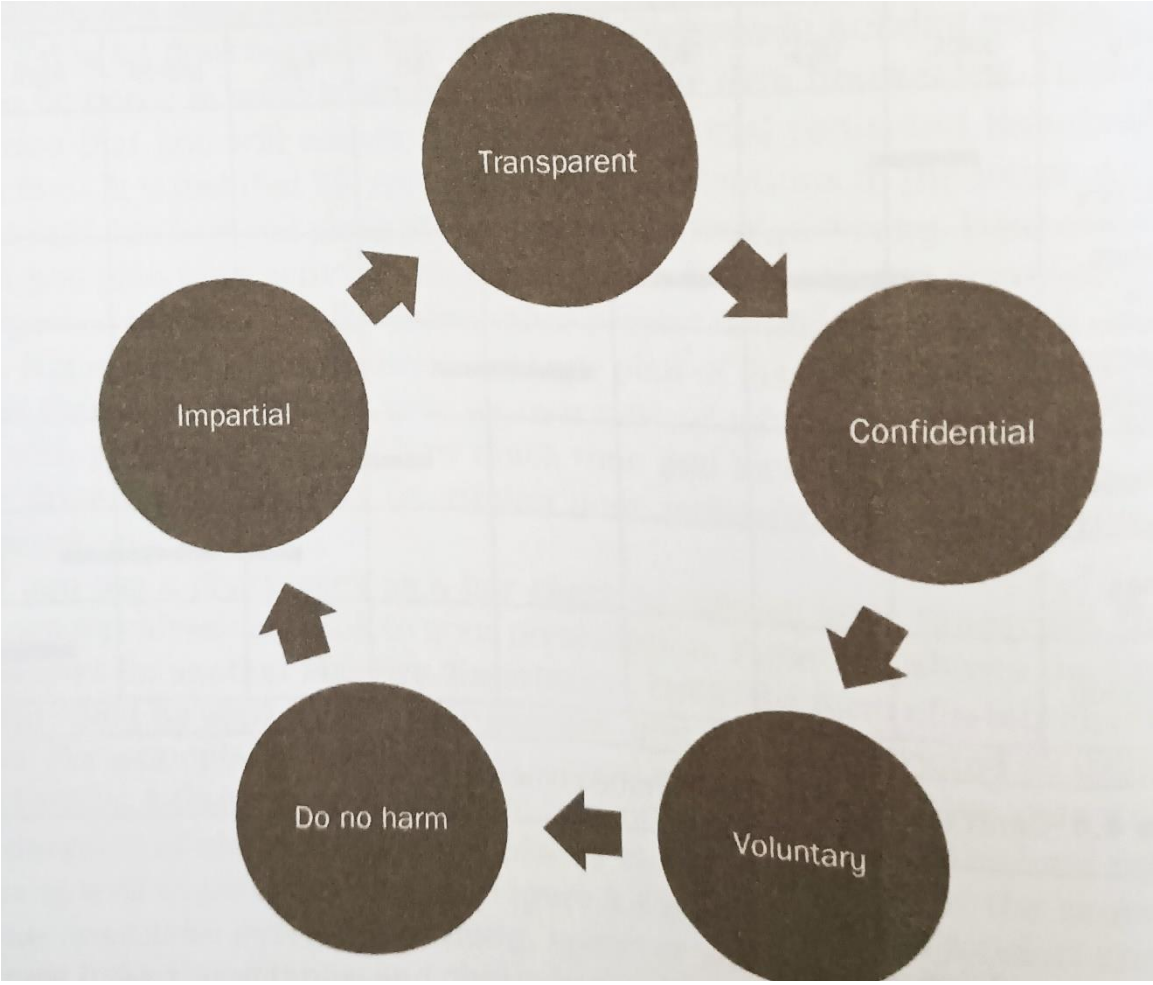

Figure 4: Core ethical research principles (Biggam, 2015, p.74).

Biggam (2015) identified that the research must comply with the following basic ethical principles:

Transparency. Research participants must be told very clearly what the purpose of the research is, how they will be involved and where the information obtained will be used.
Confidentiality and voluntary. People participating in the study are informed that their participation is voluntary and that their anonymity is protected as no personally identifiable information will be collected. In addition, the responses received will be combined with the responses of others for analysis.
Do not harm. The author of the study ensures that the work he performs does not endanger either his participants or himself.
Impartiality. The author of the study must inform about the connections with the research participants if there are such connections.
The study "Leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace" will be conducted ethically, and participant confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed. Due to this, participants will be informed about the study's goal and rights and give their informed consent.
The study will also ensure ethical conduct and trustworthiness through various strategies, such as member checking, peer debriefing, reflexivity, and informed consent.

Chapter Four: Data Description, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the collected data (Appendix A) to achieve the aim and objectives of the study and draw significant conclusions. A qualitative method and an online survey were used to collect data (Research methodology).
The results of the data analysis are presented sequentially and supported by relevant diagrams to illustrate the results and facilitate the discussion. The existing literature review supported the discussion and helped to answer the main research question and draw conclusions and recommendations.

Data collection

The data were collected from two sources: members of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in the UK and professionals in business, finance, law, and foreign affairs in Lithuania. The lead author contacted the Lithuanian professionals directly through social networks, while the CIPD included the survey in the South East London Branch newsletter and posted it on the community discussion forum on their website as well.

The geographical scope of the data collection enabled the researcher to obtain more responses and to reach out to respondents who were relevant to the study. The respondents were top managers, leaders, and HR professionals who faced the question of what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace daily.

Due to data sensitivity and data protection issues, the questionnaire did not ask for the age, gender, or education of the respondents. Moreover, the research participants were included in the study by the laws and regulations that guaranteed their right to privacy. The individuals selected for the survey were those who were directly involved in leadership, either as leaders themselves or as those who worked with leaders, such as HR professionals or employees of the organisation.

Out of the more than 50 people who were invited to take part in the survey (Appendix A), 47 responded, which was more than 90%. 26% of the responses came from the UK. It can be inferred that the high response rate was due to the fact that the main research question addressed a specific problem that leaders and organisations had faced in the post-pandemic world.

Qualitative data analysis

The Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis, a method that groups or codes responses based on themes that emerge from the data or the research questions. As Biggam (2015) notes, the content analysis includes the main results, such as the participants' responses to the questions. The study used a descriptive survey with six questions that reflected the main research problem and objectives. The questions were designed to be as specific as possible and to address all aspects of the problem. Biggam (2015) suggests that qualitative researchers are more interested in understanding how people perceive the world, rather than in finding statistical explanations. They seek

insights into the phenomena they study. This is the core of the empirical aspect of this study: understanding what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace.

The data were analysed using both conventional and computerised methods. The open-ended questions were analysed using a traditional text analysis method (i.e. manually) for two reasons. First, the number of responses was manageable. Second, this was the best way to capture some of the nuances and subtleties of the responses.

Questionnaire analysis

Question 1

What kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace?

Graph chart

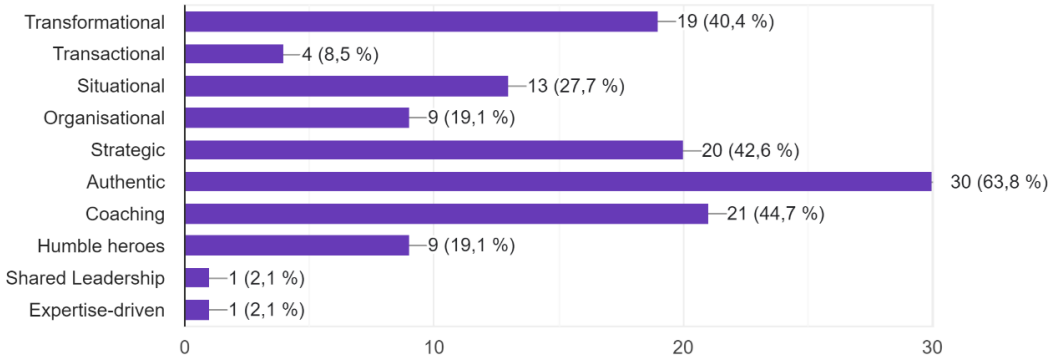

Figure 5: Leadership styles that inspire employees in the post-pandemic workplace

Results: The graph represented in Figure 5 shows the responses gathered for the first question. More than half of the respondents said "authentic", and close to half of respondents replied that "coaching". Those who chose "strategic" leadership (42.6 per cent) were a very small margin compared to "coaching" (44.7 per cent). Quite a large number of respondents (just over forty per cent) chose "transformational". Almost a third (27.7 per cent) of respondents voted for "situational" leadership. Less than a fifth of respondents were for "organisational" and "humble hero" leaders. Finally, only four of

forty-seven respondents replied to "transactional" leadership. In addition, two respondents chose "your options" and expanded the list to include shared leadership and experience-oriented managers.

The survey respondents were also asked to describe in their own words the type of leadership they chose. This question was answered by all participants because it was presented as a required survey question that participants had to answer to move on to the next question.

Appendix B provides the theoretical definitions of leadership mentioned in the first question. In the next section, they will be compared with the answers given by the respondents.

Question 2

What should be first for leaders in the post-pandemic workplace?

Graph chart

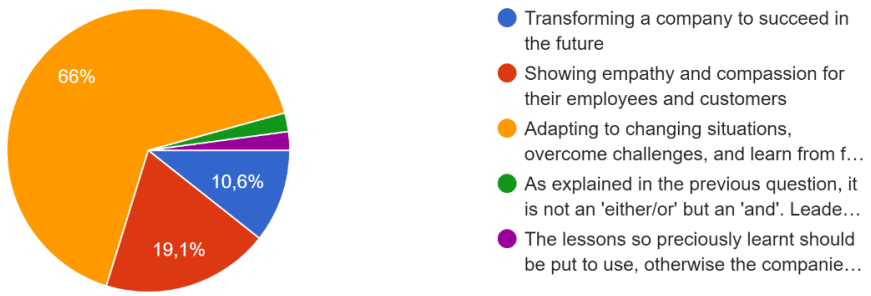

Figure 6: First job for leaders after the pandemic

Results: Figure 6 represents the answers to the second question. Most respondents (66%) chose the answer "adapt to changing situations, overcome challenges and learn from failures". Nearly a fifth (19.1 per cent) believe leaders need to "show empathy and compassion for their employees and customers". Just under 10 per cent of respondents believed that leaders need to focus on "how to transform the company for future success." Two of the 47 participants provided self-generated responses. One respondent suggested that: “The lessons learned so dearly should be used or companies will be left vulnerable

in the next crisis". Another participant believed that "Leaders must be both compassionate, adaptive and transformational".

Question 3

How employee's attitudes to work have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic?

Graph chart

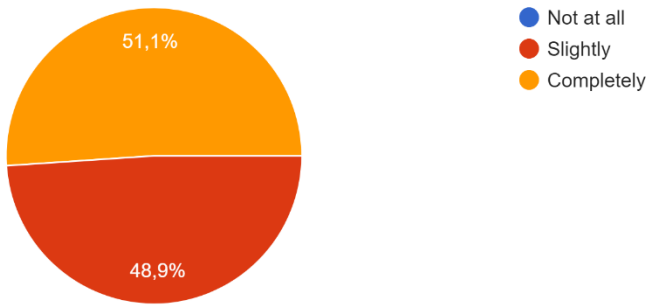

Figure 7: Change in employees' attitudes to work after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results: The third question provides an analytical answer about the change in employees' attitudes to work after the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey found that the majority of UK and Lithuanian respondents (51.1%) now agree that workers' attitudes to work have "completely changed" since COVID-19. A relatively large proportion (48.9%) of people also believe that only 'a little'; however, none of the respondents chose the answer 'not at all'.

Furthermore, the survey participants additionally explained why they chose one or another option (not at all, a little, or completely) and how it had an impact on leadership itself. According to the answers given, the respondents can be divided into two groups: some were very laconic, for example, "More attention to life vs work", and others answered the question in detail. For example, "Trust must now be an even more important foundation of work culture, and both employees and leaders must adapt to it even more strongly". In both cases, the responses provided were useful and relevant to the study.

Question 4

How would you rate the overall changes in attitudes towards work after COVID-19 on a scale of 1 to 5?

Graph chart

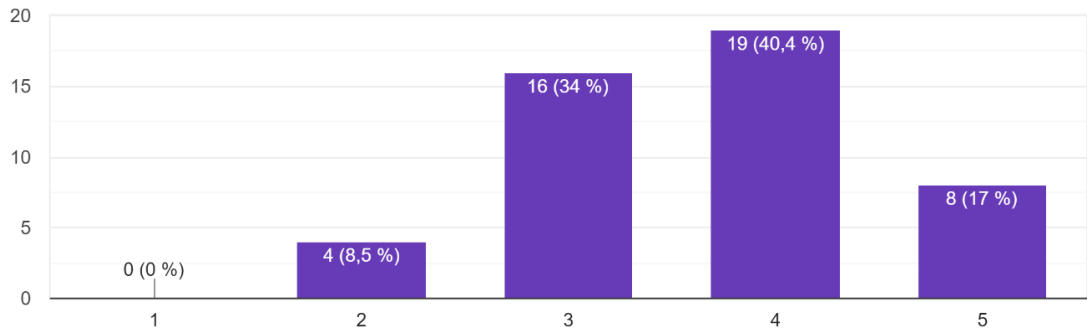

Figure 8: Work after COVID-19.

Results: Figure 8 shows responses to the fourth question, which asked participants to rate general changes in attitudes to work after COVID-19 using a 5-point Likert scale. Response options were ranked in descending order of very low, low, medium, high, and very high. Likert scale is a popular tool for measuring attitudes, images and opinions (Wu, 2007); Likert data are treated here as ordinal, assuming unequal intervals between responses.

The survey found that 44.4% of respondents believe that attitudes to work have changed a lot since the pandemic, while only 8.5% say it has changed only a little. However, 17% of participants (8 out of 47) described the changes as "very large" and 34% rated them as "moderate". The strength of the respondents' feelings supports the assumption that the pandemic has changed the way employees view work, which provides a strong basis for rethinking the topic of leadership.

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarise the responses collected.

<u>Question 5</u>

What type of leadership is necessary for managing remote teams? Please mention one type of leadership and explain it.

Results: Respondents had to answer question 5 themselves, freely choosing the content and style. Most of them indicated that transformational leadership is needed to manage remote teams. According to their choice, adaptive and organizational leadership, situational, authentic and technologically advanced leadership follow. The rest mentioned trusting, strategic, general, virtual, enabling, transactional, inclusive and autocratic leadership.

Some answers indicate that this question was quite difficult for the respondents and took more time. In light of this, several responses were very laconic, such as “trust – without trust, it cannot work”, “technologically advanced”, “organized and accessible to people”, “I don't know. I don't believe in telecommuting, and I have little experience...", "I don't know what you're looking for here, but I see answers to previous questions" etc.

All participants answered the question, but given that it was self-administered, it was not easy to accurately categorize the responses. Some respondents mentioned leadership qualities but did not name them or were not sure about the type of leadership. For example, "Persistent, methodical, engaging", "Immense patience and kindness", "Determination to use psychological pressure if necessary", "Strong communication skills - regular communication with teams", "Explaining the reasons for the task" etc. Respondents looked at leadership from a variety of perspectives, including business strategy and employee behaviour.

<u>Question 6</u>

What type of leadership inspires employees to get the job done? Please mention one type of leadership and explain it.

Results: The last question of the questionnaire was open-ended, meaning that respondents had to provide their answers. This allowed to the researcher get more information, in some cases even very interesting details. For example, one respondent stated that there is no single leadership style. Skilled managers themselves can apply different tools in different situations. Before that, of course, after analysing the situation well. For leaders to make a real impact, they must think politically and have the courage to act. The more tools they have, the better they will be able to influence their audience.

Another respondent said that different workers are inspired by different things and styles. However, most people value transparent, empathetic, emotionally aware, inclusive and competent leaders who demonstrate integrity.

Some respondents did not answer this question directly but instead provided descriptions of the leadership that inspires them. For example, one respondent said that this is a type of leadership where a person feels a sense of meaning at work. Another respondent mentioned a leader who takes the hardest part of the task and gets it done. Another respondent emphasized the importance of explaining the reasons for the task, while another mentioned the result orientation and approach to work.

This paragraph provides a brief description of the primary data that reflects respondents' views on the topic of leadership in the post-pandemic workplace. The primary data revealed an interesting aspect: even though the respondents from two different countries took part in the survey, their views on the post-pandemic business situation are very similar. This similarity can be attributed to the fact that the Lithuanian respondents' business geography extends beyond their country, including the United Kingdom.

4.2 Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study in relation to the research questions and the literature review. The study aimed to explore the type of leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic work environment, and the reasons why leaders need to adopt a new approach to engage with their workforce. The study also identified some gaps and contradictions in the existing literature on leadership. The findings are based on the views of 47 questionnaire respondents who were involved in leadership roles. They are assessed against the objectives and purpose of the study and contrasted with the relevant literature on leadership. This chapter allows the researcher to examine the findings in depth and consider their implications for both theory and practice.

Summary of key findings

The key findings of the study are:

- The study showed that authentic leadership, which prioritizes human values and relationships, motivates employees in the post-pandemic workplace.
- Adapting to new situations, surmounting challenges, and learning from failures are the key priorities for leaders in the post-pandemic workplace, as they face extreme hardships due to COVID-19, the study indicated.
- The study further showed that COVID-19 has transformed the British labour market and the work attitudes of employees, requiring leaders to adapt more than ever before to the new realities of work.
- Additionally, the study indicated that transformational leadership is essential for effective remote team management in the post-pandemic workplace.
- Lastly, the study demonstrated that authentic leaders have the ability to influence employees to complete their work and to succeed in the post-pandemic workplace.

Discussion

Authentic leadership is especially inspiring in the post-pandemic workplace

The first question investigated what type of leadership motivates employees in the post-pandemic workplace. The majority (64%) of the interviewees agreed that authentic leadership was the most inspiring. They were able to elaborate on the characteristics of authentic leadership and give examples from their own experience. Some of the features of authentic leadership identified by the literature review matched those reported by the questionnaire respondents. For instance, some of the respondents mentioned the following aspects of authentic leadership in their answers:

…Authentic leadership is important for strong employee engagement…;

…For me, authenticity is key as this builds trust. It is straightforward to see through behaviours such as ‘lip service’…;

…Authenticity has become a value, a leader can respond to change and gently but decisively reorganise the team and goals…;

One of the participants also added that,

…Authentic leadership is a growing trend as it is an alternative to leaders who emphasise profit and share price over people and ethics…;

Similarly, other participants said,

…You need to remain authentic, and available to share the experience but continue to actively engage in business-making…;

…Leadership needs to be authentic clear timely and more democratic as possible…

This implies that the employees' preference for leadership that puts people first is consistent with the literature, which emphasizes the importance of leaders expressing their authenticity to motivate employees to excel in their work (Ahmed, 2023; Egger and Macario, 2012; Leigh and Maynard, 2012). The literature suggests that authentic leaders use their self-awareness to connect with followers, create positive organizational cultures, and balance realism and idealism in their decisions. This style of leadership is also known as 'leading from behind' (Egger and Macario, 2012). However, unlike this study, the literature does not rank authentic leadership as the most crucial (Nooyi, 2022; Ulrich and Smallwood, 2018) in the post-pandemic workplace.

The main question of this study was what type of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace. The answer may lie in the psychological needs of the employees, who seek a leader who values people above all else, and who can foster a sense of belonging and comfort in the workplace. The research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic (which caused economic and political instability) has increased the importance of two aspects of leadership: first, being authentic and true to oneself (Leigh and Maynard, 2012), and second, showing empathy and compassion to the employees (CIPD, 2023).

In fact, the survey revealed that organizations require soft power leadership (authentic (64%) and coaching (45%)) to treat employees as people, not human capital. However, some studies suggest that leaders must also focus on results, which depend on their actions (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2018). This raises the question of whether authentic leadership conflicts with results-oriented leadership. Further research is needed to explore this issue. Moreover, 43 per cent of respondents preferred the 'strategic' option, which means that, for example,

…strategic leadership includes the ability to foresee, plan and execute initiatives that are in line with the organization's long-term goals…

…this enables effective decision-making, fosters adaptability in a dynamic environment, and guides the company's overall direction towards sustainable success…

While 40 per cent of respondents prefer "transformational" leadership, they say that:

…transformational leadership relies heavily on joint effort and action, equal organizational hierarchy and commonality, mutual understanding and reciprocity. This cannot be achieved without humility and authenticity. As the changing environment offers many learning opportunities, sharing lessons learned/what works empowers employees to commit and contribute more….

Leadership is challenging in these uncertain and dynamic times. Post-pandemic organizations are trying to combine different leadership styles (authentic, nurturing, strategic and transformational). The data and the literature suggest that leaders need a new approach to engage employees in the new work environment. Authentic leadership is especially inspiring in the post-pandemic workplace.

Adapting more than ever before to the changing demands of the post-pandemic workplace

Question two asks what leaders should prioritize in the post-pandemic workplace. The responses show that two-thirds (66 per cent) of participants think that leaders should

…adapt to changing situations, overcome challenges, and learn from failures….

Only 19 per cent of respondents consider it important for leaders to…show empathy and compassion for their employees and customers….

The survey data support the Literature Review's conclusion that adaptation and people are key for post-COVID-19 success. Stuart Mackenzie (2021) also stresses the need for business adaptation, as changes occur faster than companies can cope with. The participants' views align with Microsoft's Satya Narayana Nadella (2021), who believes that a successful CEO "you have to have a first-class view of where the world is going". This implies that leaders should not only be ready for the future but also shape it.

COVID-19 has entirely changed employee's attitudes to work

Question three examines how employees' attitudes to work have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The results show that more than half (51.1 per cent) of respondents agree that their attitudes have changed 'completely' since COVID-19. This analysis supports Professor Armin Trost's (2023) theory that the role of the boss has shifted from giving clear orders and solving problems to facilitating tasks, results, and ways to achieve them. Previous studies have also emphasized the role of empathy in helping businesses adapt after COVID. Some scholars and researchers (Parmar, 2021) argue that empathy is a vital work strategy for the future. It can help managers create a positive impact on their people and business. Lack of empathy reduces innovation, engagement, and loyalty and hinders diversity efforts. Moreover, the study shows the connection between the data and the debates that emerged in the business management literature after the coronavirus about employee dissatisfaction and the Great Resignation. The literature indicates that the UK had the highest number of resignations since 1997 in 2022 (Horowitz, 2022). Aisha Suleiman, founder of Inclusive Culture, said that people quit because they do not feel they belong in their jobs (Westfall, 2022). Another important fact mentioned in the professional literature is employee dissatisfaction. The latest research on happiness at work shows that it is a key factor in employee engagement and productivity. However, Harvard University professor Arthur C. Brooks has noted that only less than 20% of employees are very satisfied with their jobs.

The literature and the answer to this question demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the British labour market, organizations, leaders, and employees. In conclusion, leaders and HR professionals should collaborate to make a positive difference for workers and businesses.

The impact of COVID-19 on employees and leaders

The author of this study also asked those who answered the third question to explain their choice and how it affected leadership. Based on the data obtained, certain trends emerged. First, most respondents supported hybrid or remote work and flexibility in organizations. In particular, they indicated that:

…People want a hybrid working and much more autonomy…

…My team works from home with no regrets and no excuses. No problems with KPIs though…

…I see that some of them say that they would change jobs for the option to work full or part-time from a flexible (non-office) location…

…More flexibility, less supervision, but more responsibility…

…Knowledge workers do not see the benefit of coming to the office every day, commuting and interacting…

Therefore, leaders should consider these results when considering how to attract and retain employees. Research cited by Annie McKee (2014), author of How to Be Happy at Work, shows that happy employees are more productive, creative, engaged, loyal, and resilient.

The results also show that leadership is facing an employee engagement problem at the moment. People felt that they cared more about having a work-life balance and flexibility to work from home. They also expressed that work was less important and that they preferred a work-life balance that allowed them to have a fulfilling personal life.

One participant admitted that,

…a significant number of employees who work mostly from home are too difficult to reach, connect with and keep motivated. Especially with newcomers who are looking for flexibility. Another question is millennials and how to work with them, as they are now entering the workforce, the share of remote workers continues to expand…

Interestingly, another participant noted:

…My colleagues in the UK tend to react unproductively to change. They develop expectations of permanency, such as the expectation of working from home permanently. On the other hand, the German government found more innovative ways to bring the workforce back to a sense of normalcy after the crisis. They achieved this without facing pushback from workers and without losing high-performing staff in large numbers during the worst of the crisis…

Moreover, the survey participants additionally explain how the changed nature of work also changes leadership itself. One of the participants further added that:

…It impacts leadership in terms of their behaviour - people will not accept or trust leadership decisions without believing rationale, and they demand humanity and compassion. Leaders also need to be prepared to be responsive to changing organisational context, and more mindful of employee aspirations if they want to engage and retain…

For instance, one of the respondents alleged:

…Supporting employees through difficult times has become a crucial aspect of effective leadership. Leaders must be flexible in their approaches, accommodating various work styles and preferences…

Agreeing with this participant, another participant similarly said,

…It changed slightly, because, during the pandemic leaders had to swiftly adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, making quick decisions and adjusting strategies to address unforeseen challenges. With the widespread adoption of remote work, leaders had to develop new skills to manage and motivate teams virtually. Communication and collaboration strategies shifted to accommodate the remote work environment...

This section emphasises the importance of revisiting leadership today (it is highlighted in the Literature Review sections titled 'The Great Resignation' and 'Employee Dissatisfaction' as well). The survey findings and literature review might suggest that monotonous work, unsatisfactory working conditions, and poor leadership are prevalent issues worldwide (Horowitz, 2022). Therefore, organizations must address these issues and create more engaging, satisfying, and supportive post-pandemic work environments for their employees.

The way that people view their jobs has drastically changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Question four investigates how attitudes towards work have changed after COVID-19. The results indicate that almost half of the respondents agree that their attitudes have changed significantly since the pandemic. This observation corroborates Macpherson's (2022) assertion that "organizations everywhere are being buffeted by the global pandemic. There is no such thing as a 'new normal'; the world has changed and will continue to change. Most CEOs reconsider changes and challenges, as well as the true

value and values of their people". The respondents' ratings on the Likert scale provide strong support for the trends discussed in the Literature review. They are well captured by the respondents' statements,

…The realisation has come that stability is a myth. And only the determined and flexible will survive...

The data imply that organizations, managers and employees should not disregard this evidence.

Transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in remote team management

The fifth question delves into the leadership style required for managing remote teams. Participants have consistently concluded that transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in achieving successful outcomes. According to Newton, Pepper and Soane (2023), transformational leadership involves leaders actively engaging with team members and positively influencing them. Leaders achieve this by paying attention to the needs of others, motivating them, and providing an ethical framework for decision-making. Through this process, transformational leaders are capable of creating positive change within individuals and organizations.

Transformational leadership was described similarly by participants, with details from their own work experience:

…In a remote work environment, where physical distance can create challenges in team cohesion and motivation, transformational leadership can bridge the gap by inspiring, motivating, and empowering remote team members to achieve both individual and collective success…

…Transformational leaders pay attention to the individual needs and strengths of team members. In a remote setting, understanding each team member's unique circumstances and providing tailored support is essential for maintaining engagement and well-being…

…Transformational. Remote work changed not only the tools of communication but also perceptions and attitudes…

…Transformational - managers need to improve their skills to be able to manage staff in hybrid settings and trust they will do the work. If they feel trusted and motivated then you'll have engaged and productive staff…

The first and fifth questions both focus on post-pandemic leadership, but, intriguingly, the respondents preferred authentic leadership in the first case, while transformational leadership was favoured in the second. This suggests that managing remote teams require a different type of leadership. However, when it comes to the first question, representatives from organizations often mention authentic and transformational leadership together, as they believe that both are necessary for effective post-pandemic leadership.

For instance, one respondent posited that,

…Authentic leadership is important for strong employee engagement, and transformation is becoming increasingly important as so many organisations compete for customers or new business that the need to transform services or ways of working is essential to success…

Another respondent affirmed that,

…For me, authenticity is key as this builds trust. Also transformational leadership - leaders who see the bigger picture and involve their people… …These are truly transformational times and the leaders must change rapidly. On the other hand, authenticity is a virtue….

The existing research on leadership for remote teams lacks a singular, definitive answer. The literature grapples with various theoretical perspectives, leaving us without a universally accepted leadership model specifically tailored for remote work. However, several key insights emerge from recent studies. In the words of Sinek (2017), leaders also need leadership training to ensure that they can lead after a global pandemic. Burnison (2022) highlights the importance of recognizing employees' hidden potential "because the unseen is valuable". Drawing from the study by Dirani et al. (2020), effective remote leaders exhibit the following traits: providing clear roles and purpose; sharing leadership responsibilities; effective communication; ensuring seamless access to technology; prioritizing employee emotional well-being; maintaining organizational financial health and fostering organizational resilience.

Authentic leaders inspire employees to get the job done

The aim of question six was to explore which type of leadership motivates employees to complete tasks effectively.

A higher percentage of responders agree that authentic leaders inspire employees to get the job done. They defined authentic leadership from a more personal point of view, based on their own experiences and values:

…Authentic leadership, as there is an expectation on role modelling the expected values and behaviours that all employees should demonstrate. This will inspire employees to do their jobs to the best of their ability…

One of the responders indicated that:

…Authentic. A team must believe in their managers…

Another participant further added that,

…Authentic leadership helps to build trust, and leaders are more inspirational if they are trusted. This way, even if unpopular decisions are made, the way they communicate, show values and build faith and trust, people are more likely to get behind them…

In addition, another participant's response about leadership continued an earlier response when he said:

…Authentic. Such leaders inspire teams by their example and convince others to work at their capacity…

One of the main findings of this study is that the respondents have shown a preference for authentic leadership in this survey: they believe that people want to work with authentic leaders after the global pandemic.

This finding supports Humphrey's (2014) theoretical definition: an authentic leader is someone who has achieved a high degree of authenticity, possesses a clear understanding of their identity, beliefs, and values, and acts according to these principles. Additionally, they communicate openly and transparently with others.

However, other responses cannot be ignored, such as a lead-by-example approach:

…The decisiveness of the leader. Lead by example…

…Altruism and dedication. Lead by example…

…But leading by example/expertise-driven leadership can help more junior employees…

This data creates a direct link between theory and empirical findings. The post-pandemic literature clearly presents that the most effective way to encourage a team is to lead by example. This approach works best when done in person, at the employees' workplace, such as serving customers on the front line. Not only does it enhance engagement, productivity, and service quality in business but also creates value (Eldor, 2020).

The respondents also included the transformational style as a preferred leadership approach:

…Transformational leadership. Change the system/company/unit by bonding with co-workers to create a shared vision…

…Transformational that enables creativity, and thinking outside the normal underpinned with flexibility, trust and inclusiveness…

The participants' views on what kind of leadership they prefer are consistent with the concept of transformational leadership, which involves a rapid adaptation of organizations to changing conditions. Due to this, Bersin and Chamorro-Premuzic (2019) proposed getting leaders for what they can do, not what they have done. To choose excellent leaders, it is essential to anticipate the future rather than commend the past.

Some such respondents emphasized the coaching style:

…Coaching/Transformational. Coaching enables employees to feel empowered & developed…

…Coaching when a leader spends time to explain and support in challenging or complex situations…

…Coaching. They feel supported….

A similar view can be found in previous studies. Research (DiGangi, 2023) suggests that leaders who empower, encourage, and coach employees have better-performing companies than those who micromanage and deliver orders.

However, the word 'purpose' was only mentioned twice in this study:

…When your direct manager has a clear vision and purpose for what he/company wants to achieve, it is much easier to plan and communicate the way to it. Thus, structure, strategy, and clear communication are the keys to nowadays employees…

… Values-driven leadership. Gives people a common purpose…, unlike previous articles and studies that heavily focused on leading by purpose. The prevailing view in the academic literature is that leading with purpose is now even more crucial. This view is supported by Nicki Lyons (2023), UK chief corporate affairs and sustainability officer at Vodafone. He argued that purpose cannot be treated as an addition or a nice-to-have. Every aspect of the business should embody purpose and its external perception. For instance, Vodafone's core purpose is to 'connect for a better future' and it has had a significant impact on the company's business. Indra Nooyi (2022), the former CEO of PepsiCo, led the company's transformation with her strategy of Performance with Purpose. This strategy sought to produce healthier products, reduce the environmental impact, and support the associates and communities.

The fact that there are so few mentions of leadership with purpose among the many answers shows that the questions were answered by people who already have a lot of work experience. This conclusion is supported by the fact that, after the pandemic, the leadership literature reported that leadership with purpose is very important for young workers. "Many younger workers feel a sense of purpose as well when mentored by senior leaders or given important projects that impact the company's future" (Goleman, 2023).

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

The current research aimed to identify what type of leadership style could keep everyone on track in the post-pandemic workplace. The main question for this research was: what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace?

The study used a qualitative method and an online survey to collect data. The survey consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions. This allowed the participants to express their views and opinions in their own words.

From the research findings presented in this paper, it is clear that the main study goals (aim and objectives) were achieved and implemented. In fact, the study found that authentic leadership serves as the first inspiration for employees in the post-pandemic

workplace. Second, transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in managing remote teams. It was also found that adapting to changing situations and overcoming challenges more than ever should be the first priority for leaders in the post-pandemic workplace. In addition, employees' attitudes towards work have been entirely changed by COVID-19. All the answers indicated that people value leadership where leaders put humanity (people versus workers) at the heart of organizational life. Based on the survey responses collected, the findings show that the British labour market and the performance of a leader are deeply and permanently damaged by the global pandemic. Therefore, rethinking leadership could serve as a basis for an answer to what inspires employees to get the job done. The results presented in this study suggest that it is dangerous to ignore poor leadership. Leaders who inspire employees to learn, adapt, and do more during turbulent times increase their chances of success in the future (Parry-Slater, 2023). After conducting this study and analysing the results, the following recommendations have been drawn:

- This study suggests that the post-pandemic workplace lacks clarity regarding the leadership style: whether there should be more human leaders (putting employees first) or focus more on achieving business results (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2018). This may be an interesting topic for future research.
- To delve deeper into the drivers and challenges brought about by the post-COVID world, it is important to conduct further research on employees who work remotely: this study indicates that employees are highly interested in having the option to work remotely, but earlier literature (Rodman and Astmann, 2023, Mackenzie, 2021) suggests that employees who work remotely may not be as productive as they would be in the office. Therefore, additional research is necessary to better understand the benefits and limitations of employees who work remotely.
- To strengthen and maintain the motivation of the new generation, organizations should find out what influence leadership with a purpose has on young people: this study suggests that this is a crucial role of purpose for the next generation, yet in the research conducted, such leadership was only mentioned a few times. Therefore, more studies are needed to explore this topic in depth.

- This study suggests that authentic leadership is a key inspiration for employees in the post-pandemic workplace and that transformational leadership plays a key role in managing remote teams, so an analysis could be conducted on how authentic and transformational leadership post-COVID has changed from its pre-COVID form.

This study identifies the shortcomings of the previous research in this area, specifically, the study can contribute to providing valuable insights for companies to select an ideal leader who can transform the business and inspire people to work in the post-pandemic workplace. From a business point of view, organizations should prioritize building teams that are adaptable to change. This will be key to effective leadership in the years to come.

5.2 Limitations and Future Studies

This study has some limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the study is based on a sample of HR professionals working in various businesses in the UK and business, finance, legal and foreign affairs professionals in Lithuania. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other types of leadership, such as politicians. Second, this study covers a very specific time period—the last five years—that specifically relates to pre-COVID and post-pandemic workplaces. Due to this very specific period, there is a limited amount of academic literature and books related to post-pandemic workplace leadership. Some leadership gurus have tried to develop new leadership ideas through research, but it is clear that new strategies need more time to develop. Third, the study uses an online survey as the only method of data collection, which may affect the depth and richness of the data. Open-ended survey questions can offer more flexibility and a wider range of responses, but they also present challenges in analysing and interpreting data. Fourth, the study uses thematic analysis as a method of data analysis, which is a flexible and accessible method, but also subjective and dependent on the skills and judgments of the researcher.

Although this research is limited in scope and geography, it is important in that it addresses a practical problem, includes existing leaders and employees, and can make valid assumptions about what kind of leadership a business needs make employees to feel connected, fit in, and belong to the organization.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Research survey questionnaire and response rate

Questionnaire

Disclaimer

Dear Participants

Before you proceed to take part in this research survey, I kindly request you to read the following information:

Leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace.

Purpose of the Survey: This survey is being conducted as part of a dissertation project by Violeta Rachleviciene at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London. **The aim of this survey is to investigate what kind of leadership inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace.** The information collected will solely be utilized for academic and research purposes. Any data collected will not be shared or utilized for any other purposes without your explicit consent.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Your participation is voluntary and your anonymity is protected as no personally identifiable information will be collected. Your responses will be combined with those of others for analysis.

Data Security: All data collected will be securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel. Once the study is completed, all data will be deleted to maintain confidentiality.

Third-Party Apps: Your responses will be used solely for academic research purposes and will not be shared with any third-party organizations or individuals.

Time Required: The estimated time to complete the survey is approximately 5 minutes.

By proceeding with this survey, you indicate your agreement and understanding of the above information. Your valuable participation will contribute to the comprehension of leadership in the post-pandemic workplace.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

* Indicates required question

Leadership that inspires employees in the post-pandemic workplace

1. 1. What leadership style or styles inspire employees in the post-pandemic workplace? *

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Transformational
- [ ] Transactional
- [ ] Situational
- [ ] Organisational
- [ ] Strategic
- [ ] Authentic
- [ ] Coaching
- [ ] Humble heroes
- [ ] Other: _____

2. Please briefly explain what you mean by your previous answer *

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. 2. What should be the first priority for leaders in the post-pandemic workplace? *

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Transforming a company to succeed in the future
- ( ) Showing empathy and compassion for their employees and customers
- ( ) Adapting to changing situations, overcome challenges, and learn from failures
- ( ) Other: _____

4. 3. How employee's attitudes to work have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic? *

Mark only one oval.

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Completely

5. Please explain your choice and how it impacts leadership *

6. 4. How would you rate the overall changes in attitudes towards work after the COVID-19 on a scale of 1 to 5? *

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. 5. What type of leadership is necessary for managing remote teams? Please mention one type of leadership and explain it. *

8. 6. What type of leadership inspires employees to get the job done? Please mention one type of leadership and explain it. *

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Appendix B: List of leadership definitions from academic literature that were used in the survey

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a process that involves leaders actively engaging with others and positively influencing them. This is achieved by paying attention to the needs of others, motivating them, and providing an ethical framework for decision-making. Through this process, transformational leaders are capable of creating positive change within individuals and organizations (Newton, Pepper and Soane, 2023).

Transactional leadership. Transactional leadership, as the name suggests, is driven by an incentive structure. Employees receive a salary or other high-value rewards when they achieve their goals. On the other hand, failure results in a reprimand. This style of management is often used in large companies. Because transactional leadership is norm-driven, it is not suitable for an environment that values creativity (Coyne, 2022).

According to Egger and Macario (2012), successful leaders should be able to use multiple leadership styles and adapt their approach to suit a specific situation. This is known as **situational leadership.**

Organisational leadership. Coyne (2022) argues that there is no magic approach to leadership. Leaders with experience and education may mix and match techniques until they find the perfect blend for their organisation's goals and personality.

Strategic leadership. When leaders apply their strategic vision and innovative problem-solving abilities to support team members and an organisation in achieving long-term objectives, they are demonstrating strategic leadership (Reynolds, 2022).

Authentic leadership. These are leaders who put integrity first. They must also be accountable for their actions and decisions, which are based on principles rather than short-term success. This style of leadership creates a healthy working environment and improves team performance (Gavin, 2019).

Coaching leadership. Managers of the twenty-first century just do not have all the answers, and they never will. Companies are shifting from traditional command and control methods to a completely different one to deal with this new reality. In this model, managers offer support and guidance instead of giving orders, and staff members learn how to adapt to a constantly changing environment in a way that sparks new enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication (Ibarra and Scoular, 2019).

Humble heroes. Serving leaders have the courage, humility and foresight to recognise that they can learn from those below them. They actively seek the views and contributions of the staff they support. Servant leaders create a learning culture and an environment that inspires people to reach their full potential (Cable, 2018).