



Leadership and COVID-19 – Changes in Leadership Styles

A study of leadership styles in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how the pandemic influenced leadership styles.

OLAV HOVSTAD
IMAN MAFI

SUPERVISOR
Dr. Kalanit Efrat

University of Agder, 2022
School of Business and Law



Preface

This master thesis is the final part of our study of International Business at Universitetet I Agder. The master thesis accounts for 30 credits. The thesis is written based on our interest in leadership, and we decided early that we wanted to study something within leadership. The Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for all of us, and study leadership in relation to the pandemic came up through conversations with Dr. Kalanit Efrat. We viewed this as an interesting topic as very little research is conducted on this specific topic.

We are grateful for the chance to study International Business at Universitetet I Agder. The study has been a great experience with many different courses and great professors.

We want to thank Dr. Efrat who has been our supervisor throughout our thesis. Dr. Efrat has helped us and guided us through the study, and her insight and knowledge have helped us a lot. Further, we want to thank the respondents in our study for their willingness to participate in a busy time. Without you, it would not have been possible to write this thesis, and you should know that it is highly appreciated.

Lastly, we want to thank our families for encouragement throughout the process and positive insight which has helped us in writing the thesis.

Grimstad, May 31st, 2022

Olav Hovstad & Iman Mafi

Executive summary:

The focus of this master thesis was to look at how transformational and transactional leaders dealt with the Covid-19 Pandemic. We are looking at how the different styles dealt with the pandemic if there were any changes in styles and how they managed to survive the pandemic. We discuss leadership theory in terms of transformational and transactional leadership, innovation, and crisis management. Theories from these themes are used as a background before going further in the study.

The research method used is causal and a qualitative approach is applied. The qualitative research approach focuses on social reality and is good for situational research such as the pandemic. We interviewed eight leaders from businesses in the southern region of Norway. The study includes participants from many different lines of business as we wanted to explore how the pandemic was handled by businesses that did well and those who struggled. The types of businesses include a restaurant, a hotel, an online store, and a bank as examples of the variety.

The results from the study make it hard to determine how the different leadership styles dealt with the pandemic as the most evidence pointed toward the respondents being transformational leaders. As we discuss through Hofstede's dimensions, the Norwegian cultural traits are more in line with those of transformational leaders than transactional leaders. Further, innovation was an important aspect for the businesses to survive, and all the businesses in the study had some sort of innovation through the pandemic. Generally, a transformational leadership style is good for innovation within the organization, and the evidence from our study supports this.

Sammendrag:

Fokuset med denne masteroppgaven var å se på hvordan transformasjonsledere og transaksjonsledere håndterte Covid-19 pandemien. Vi ser på hvordan de forskjellige stilene håndterte pandemien, om det var noen endringer i lederstiler og hvordan de kom seg gjennom pandemien. Vi diskuterer teorier rundt transformasjonsledelse og transaksjonsledelse, innovasjon og hvordan man håndterer kriser. Teoriene fra disse temaene er brukt som bakgrunn for forskningen.

Forskningen er forklarende og det er brukt kvalitativ metode. Den kvalitative måten å gjøre forskning på fokuserer på den sosiale realiteten og er fin for en situasjonell forskning slik som pandemien. Vi intervjuet åtte ledere fra bedrifter i den sørlige regionen i Norge. Forskningen inkluderer deltakere fra mange forskjellige industrier fordi vi ville se hvordan pandemien var håndtert fra industrier som gjorde det bra, og de som slet seg gjennom. De forskjellige industriene inkluderer restaurant, hotell, online butikk og bank. Dette er eksempler for å vise hvor variert utvalg som er med i oppgaven.

Resultatet fra forskningen gjør det vanskelig å si hvordan de forskjellige lederstilene håndterte pandemien ettersom mesteparten av bevisene pekte mot at intervjuobjektene var transformasjonsledere. Vi diskuterte også gjennom Hofstedes dimensjoner, og norske kulturelle egenskaper henger sammen med mange av de samme egenskapene som transformasjonsledere har. Videre, innovasjon var et viktig virkemiddel for bedrifter for å overleve, og alle bedriftene i undersøkelsen hadde en eller annen form for innovasjon gjennom pandemien. Generelt, transformasjonsledelse er bra for innovasjon i organisasjonen, og vi våre funn underbygger også dette.

Table of content:

1.	Introduction	1
1.1.	Background and Motivation	1
1.2.	Research Questions	2
1.3.	Research Design	2
1.4.	Structure	3
2.	Literature Review	4
2.1.	What is Leadership	4
2.2.	Leadership Theory	5
2.2.1.	Transactional Leadership	5
2.2.2.	Transformational Leadership	7
2.2.3.	Transactional vs. Transformational	10
2.2.4.	Hofstede's dimensions	12
2.3.	Innovation and Crisis Management	13
2.3.1.	Introduction of COVID-19	14
2.3.2.	Innovation	14
2.3.3.	Crisis Management	16
3.	Method	18
3.1.	Research Design – Choice of Method	18
3.2.	Research Setting and Participants	19
3.3.	Methods and Procedure of Data Collection	21
3.3.1.	Interview Guide	21
3.3.2.	Completion of Interviews	22
3.4.	Methods and Procedure of Data Analysis	22
3.5.	Reflection of Method	24
3.5.1.	Reliability and Validity of the Study	24
3.5.2.	Ethical Considerations	25
3.6.	Summary	26
4.	Findings	27
4.1.	Leadership Styles Respond to Covid-19 Pandemic	28
4.2.	Changes in Leadership Styles	31
4.3.	Surviving the pandemic	32
5.	Discussion	34
5.1.	How Different Leadership Styles Dealt with the Pandemic	35
5.2.	Did The Leaders Experience any Changes in Leadership Style?	37
5.3.	How Did Businesses Survive the Pandemic?	38
5.4.	Limitations and Future Research	40

6.	Conclusion	41
6.1.	Research Question 1	41
6.2.	Research Question 2	41
6.3.	Research Question 3	42
7.	References	43
8.	Appendixes	49

List of Exhibits

1. **Exhibit 1** - Transformational leadership and innovation Prasad & Junni, Figure 1, 2016 6
2. **Exhibit 2** - Transactional leadership and innovation Prasad & Junni, Figure 2, 2016 6
3. **Exhibit 3** - Comparison of transactional and transformational leadership by Bass & Avolio, 1994 10
4. **Exhibit 4** - Leading moral components of transactional and transformational leadership by Bass & Steidelmeier, 1999 11
5. **Exhibit 5** - Overview of Hofstede's dimensions by Hofstede, 2011 12
6. **Exhibit 6** - Innovation process by Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook, 2009 15
7. **Exhibit 7** - Quantitative style vs. qualitative style by Hossain, 2011 18
8. **Exhibit 8** - Overview of participants 20
9. **Exhibit 9** - Findings from interviews 27

1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background and Motivation

There are a variety of definitions used regarding leadership. One that is explained in the simplest form by Hughes, Ginnet & Curphy (1996) is that leadership is simply about the ability to influence others to achieve goals. We are all leaders of our day, and we all need to show leadership skills to be effective in our daily activities. In some way or form, we all work to influence others to reach our goals (Hughes et. al., 1996). Leadership will always be subject to change due to constant changes in the working environment, climate change, new competitors, and challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic the world has experienced in the last couple of years. This brings us to the motivation behind writing this master thesis which is going to be about how leadership changed through the first couple of months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused major work disruptions and leadership challenges as they were facing new challenges such as attempting to manage “work from home” arrangements, health and safety concerns of workers, and workforce reduction (Eichenauer, Ryan & Alanis, 2021). Leading a corporation through a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic is treacherous. As Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) explain in their article in the Harvard Business Review, leadership in a crisis can be divided into two phases. The first phase is about stabilizing the situation and buying time, also known as the emergency phase. The second phase is how you tackle the crisis and build the capacity of a corporation so the company is in a better place, also called the adaptive phase (Heifetz et. al., 2009)

The two leadership styles we are going to focus on in this study are transformational and transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is based on the theory that the leader gives out rewards for positive outcomes and punishments for negative outcomes (James & Ogbonna, 2013). Transformational leadership is a leadership theory built on leaders who inspire their followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes through stimulation and inspiration (Robbins & Coulter, 2007). These theories are helpful to understand how leaders in the business environment responded and dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking into the leaders and their leadership styles can provide valuable insight into which leadership theory corresponds well with change and crisis management.

1.2. Research Questions

Working individuals according to Eichenause et. al., (2021) fall into one of the three following groups: those who are suddenly forced to work from home, remote workers who continue to work outside their homes as essential workers, such as carpenters, and lastly those who are laid off or furloughed. This research investigates which type of leadership was better suited for a pandemic and whether leaders were forced to change their leadership style. The two leadership styles that we have included in our study are transformational leadership and transactional leadership, which brings us to our three research questions

1. How did the two different leadership styles respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. Did the leaders experience any changes in leadership style?
3. What did the leadership styles do to survive the pandemic?

Through looking at the first research question we want to explore the similarities and differences in how the pandemic was handled by transformational and transactional leaders. The second question is designed to see if the leaders changed their behavior through the pandemic, and maybe even changed leadership style or had any new perspectives. Lastly, we are looking at how the businesses survived the pandemic. The aim is to get insight into the leaders' experiences from the pandemic and if they made any adjustments. The research questions will be answered using a qualitative approach which we will discuss later.

1.3. Research Design

The thesis is written with a qualitative research approach. We conducted a total of eight semi-structured interviews where all of them have been used in gathering evidence in our findings section. The collected data was analyzed by using the Gioia method.

1.4. Structure

The structure of the thesis is presented to give the reader a better understanding of how this study is written.

Section 1 introduces the study, the background for why we chose it, a presentation of the research question, and the goal of the research. This shows an overview of the sections, and we are presenting them in a logical manner where we present a theoretical chapter, the method applied, results, and lastly a discussion and result.

Section 2 consists of the theory that is relevant to our thesis. The purpose of the theory section is to give the reader a good overview of relevant literature, research, and theories that are important for the study. Leadership and leadership theory, specifically transformational and transactional leadership is discussed as well as a review of crisis management literature.

Section 3 discusses the research method. We chose a qualitative approach for our research. We also discuss the reasoning behind the research setting, the procedure of data collection, the procedure of the data analysis as well as a reflection of the method we chose.

Section 4 reflects the findings of the study. We used the Gioia method for the analysis of the data and the model is based on that framework. The table from the results shows the 1st order concepts drawn from the interviews, the 2nd order themes, and lastly the aggregate dimensions that were the result of the analysis.

Section 5 is the discussion section of the paper. In this section, we discuss the framework presented in section four. We are discussing the results of the study and if they answered our research questions. The section is designed where there are three sections with subheadings that present the results and answers to our research questions.

Section 6 presents the conclusions drawn from the study. We will present the answers to the research questions, but also the limitations of the study and discuss recommendations for future research.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 What is Leadership

Defining what leadership is and what it means can be a challenging task as leadership has many different definitions based on who is defining it. Much like the words, love, peace, and democracy (Northouse, 2010, p. 2).

According to Northouse (2010).

“Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”

Leadership has multiple components, four of them being process, influence, groups, and common goals (Northouse, 2018, p. 43). Process talks about the connection between the leader and their followers, and how leadership is not just a one-off event, but an interactive event. Influence is probably one of the most important components for a leader, a leader must influence their followers to follow his/her lead. Groups are where leadership occurs, where the leader influences individuals to perform for the common goal of the group which brings us to the last component of Northouse's definition of leadership which is common goals. Common goals create a common purpose for the leader and their followers (Northouse, 2010, p. 3).

The two leadership styles that are being discussed in this study are going to be transactional and transformational leadership. As mentioned, transactional leadership refers to the model of leadership that implies a particular concept that is about reward and punishment based upon your performance (James & Ogbonna, 2013). If you perform in line with your leader's expectations you get rewarded with positive outcomes, such as bonuses and promotions, while if you do not perform you get punished by losing the opportunity for a job, bonus, or promotion (Bans-Akutey, 2021). On the other hand, transformational leadership is a style that describes how a leader motivates their followers by inspiring and motivating them to achieve more than what is expected from them to do; that they excel within their expectations (Bans-Akutey, 2021).

2.2. Leadership Theory

2.2.1. Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is the most traditional leadership style of the two. The focus of transactional leadership is to keep things steady rather than changing the future, and the followers are rewarded or punished based on their behavior (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). With this reward/punishment structure, you can say that the leadership is responsive to the events that occur within an organization.

Through transactional leadership, the members of the organization are closely monitored by their superiors so that they can act quickly if mistakes occur. The active management style helps the leaders realize the issues the employees are facing and being proactive can help the followers meet the goals and standards (Prasad & Junni, 2016).

A business situation where close control can have a positive impact on the results is in project management. The success of projects has a positive correlation with the contingent rewards that transactional leadership promotes. The leadership in projects is important for the success of what is viewed as a temporary organization, but if the goal of the project is clear, contingent rewards do not play as big of a role (Aga, 2016).

Rather than innovate, they want to maintain the status quo and how efficient the organization is within that matter (Du et al., 2013). This shows that the view on transactional leadership varies in terms of enhancing organizational innovation. However, Prasad & Junni (2016) found that organizational innovation is decreased through transactional leadership as the leaders have clear expectations from the outcome of tasks, and need to adjust in terms of the business environment they are in. Transactional leadership is more efficient for innovation in a stable business environment compared to a dynamic business environment (Prasad & Junni, 2016).

Looking at Exhibit 2 from Prasad & Junni (2016), transactional leadership fosters innovation when there is low environmental dynamism. However, Exhibit 1 shows us that transformational leadership helps foster innovation when there is high environmental

dynamism. It indicates that transformational leadership is the more efficient leadership style in a pandemic such as Covid-19. This will be discussed in later sections.

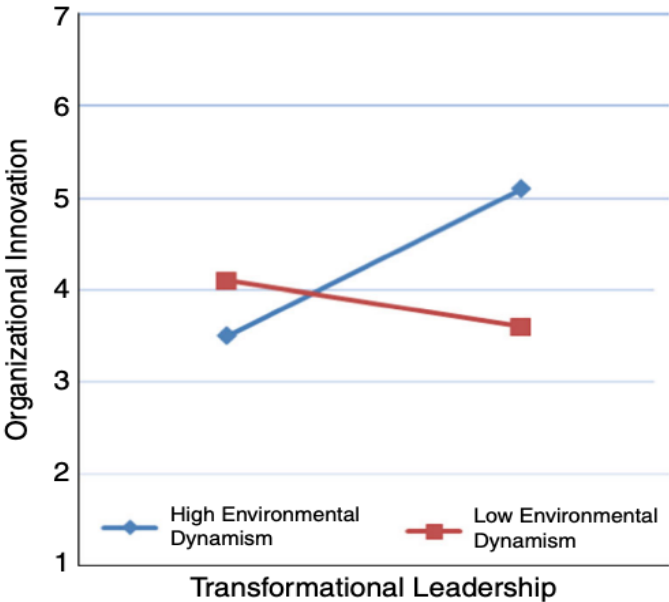


Exhibit 1: Transformational leadership and innovation (Prasad & Junni, figure 1, 2016)

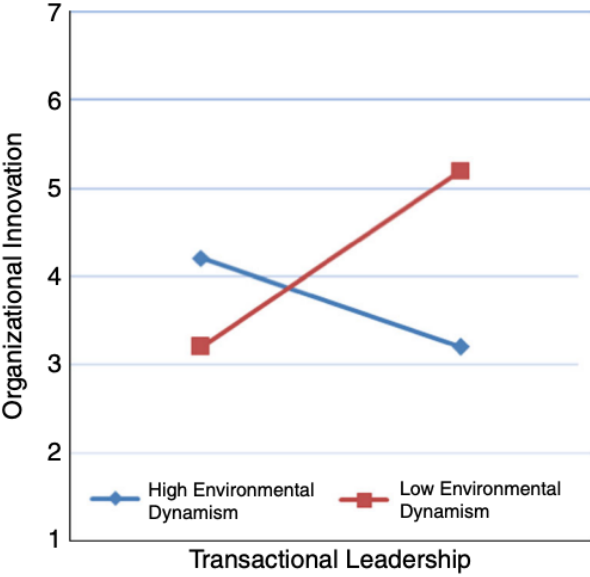


Exhibit 2: Transactional leadership and innovation (Prasad & Junni, figure 2, 2016)

2.2.2. Transformational Leadership

The term transformational leadership was first taken into use by James MacGregor Burns in a study conducted on political leaders in the U.S in 1978 (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership is based on intrinsic motivation, and positive development of followers and the leadership style offers and represents a more appealing view of leading a group compared to the more traditional transactional leadership style (Bass & Riggio, 2005, p. xi).

Transformational leadership occurs “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978 p. 20). Kuhnert (1994) describes people that use transformational leadership as people that are self-defining by having internalized strong ideas and values. Kuhnert (1994) also explains how a strong sense of purpose and direction by the leader is often looked at as a sign of great strength in their leadership.

Transformational leaders have a tendency of motivating others more than what is intended and often thought of as possible. With challenging expectations, workers often tend to achieve better results, in addition to higher performance the commitment level and the satisfaction of its followers also tend to be higher. By empowering their followers and paying great attention to their personal development, and individual needs, the leadership potential and development of the workers also increase (Bass & Riggio, 2005, p. 4). A study conducted by Zhuravleva & Poliak (2022) proves that transformational leadership has a positive impact on green growth and a direct impact on the activation of sustainable development.

There are four different factors that transformational leadership consists of, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These four factors are known as the four I’s of transformational leadership (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p. 24)

Inspirational Motivation:

Organizations will often experience turbulence in forms of competition from competitors, innovations, new products, or something else that gives the competitor a competitive advantage in the business. To be able to meet new competition and harder challenges the organization needs to remain competitive. To be competitive the leader must be enthusiastic and optimistic about the future and the possibilities that are out there for the employees. Further on the leader talks about the vision the organization has in an inspiring and motivating way to get the whole organization to believe it is possible to do what is required. Being a leader who motivates the employees will make the employee buy into the different projects and take ownership of the situation, this is important both for the organization and for the individual as it creates personal development for each individual. If you manage to be a leader that inspires and motivates your employees it will be a workplace with more satisfied and engaged employees which is important for the organization to develop (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p. 25-26).

Idealized Influence:

If the leader is going to be successful with the implementation of the vision, trust between the leader and the employee is going to be decisive. Trust is built when there is a correspondence between the values that the vision is built upon and the behavior of the leader. Important that the leader leads the way as a good example. Further, idealized influence is about the leader being driven by something more than just self-interest. For example, if the leader is willing to take risks at the expense of their job security. The leader is acting as a role model with high moral and ethical standards. This will send a message to the employees that if the leader of the organization is willing to put the company in front of their own interest, it should be easy for the employee to do the same (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p. 26). According to House (1996), idealized influence is a favorable strategy to use when trying to influence others due to its positive impact on the employees' attitude to work for the organization.

Intellectual Stimulation:

Intellectual stimulation happens when the leader manages to apply an innovative and creative attitude to the employees. The leader tries to make the employees think for themselves and take ownership in situations where they can be innovative and creative to find a more favorable solution to a problem than what the solution has been in the past. Through intellectual stimulation, critical thinking of previous practices is conducted, and new innovative methods are created. This method also brings the employees forward in a way where they get a feeling of being more valued because they are encouraged to think in an innovative fashion that is going to benefit the whole organization. This way of thinking is also important when it comes to assumptions about how the organization is built up and can be vital for the survival of the business. Assumptions could be examples of how the market works, what preferences the customers have, and what is required to achieve success (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p. 27).

Individualized Consideration:

This factor is simply about the leader's role that consists of caring about the employee and taking an active part in the development of the employee in terms of teaching and guiding them to reach their full potential. Individualized consideration is also about realizing what everyone is strong at and nurturing the strong side which will help the individual maximize their potential. Encouraging the employees that the conversation between a leader and a worker is supposed to be a dialogue and not a monologue is important for the employee so he/she can develop and become a better worker for the organization. It is important for the leader to focus on the strong sides and not the weak sides because by focusing on getting the weak sides of a worker better at best you will as a leader create a mediocre worker. By focusing on the strong side and nurturing those you will create an exceptional worker (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p. 28).

2.2.3. Transactional vs. Transformational

You could say that politicians are an example of transactional leaders, transactional leaders are leaders that lead through social exchange. According to Burns (1978), the reason for this is the example that politicians are led by a way of work involving the politicians doing something for the people, and in return, they'll get the votes. Transactional leaders offer financial rewards for productivity and deny rewards for lack of productivity, transformational leaders are not worried about financial rewards to the same degree as transactional leaders. An example of this is that transformational leaders are more worried about stimulating and inspiring their followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes, and in the same process develop their leadership qualities (Bass & Riggio, 2005, p. 3).

Transactional	Transformational
<p>Main elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operates based on its own needs and objectives - “Manipulates” people and situations - Searching for concrete signs of success 	<p>Main elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerned about values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. - Independent and self-defining.
<p>Philosophy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow my rules, and I'll give you what you wish for. 	<p>Philosophy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expresses clear long-term goals and vision. - The decisions are based on a broad overview of the situation, not just the current state of a situation.
<p>Follower philosophy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tell me what you wish, and I'll fix it for you as long as you cover my needs. 	<p>Follower philosophy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give me the independence to work towards the organization's goals and vision. - Do not ask me to violate my values, unless it is in the best interest of the group and the organization.

Exhibit 3: Comparison of transactional leadership and transformational leadership. (Bass & Avolio, 1994, referred in Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p. 29)

While you could argue that transformational leadership is just a special type of transactional leadership, there are still many differences between the two leadership styles (Bans-Aktuey & Tiimub, 2021). Transactional leadership is based upon and stresses exchanges between the follower and the leader, incentives, and management by exception, while transformational leadership stresses stimulation and motivation for the followers (Krogh et al., 2012).

Suitable environments for transactional and transformational leadership differ from each other, whereas transactional leadership is more suitable for an organization to just plan and implement what they want to do without any input from the followers just to produce the desired result. Transformational leadership is more suitable for environments where the followers are expected to be innovative and creative (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

Table 2. Leading Moral Components of Transactional and Transformational Leadership

<i>Leadership Dynamic</i>	<i>Transactional Leadership</i>
	<i>Ethical Concern</i>
Task	Whether what is being done (the end) and the means employed to do it are morally legitimate
Reward system	Whether sanctions or incentives impair effective freedom and respect conscience
Intentions	Truth telling
Trust	Promise keeping
Consequences	Egoism vs altruism—whether the legitimate moral standing and interests of all those affected are respected
Due process	Impartial process of settling conflicts and claims
	<i>Transformational Leadership</i>
Idealized influence	Whether “puffery” and egoism on part of the leader predominate and whether s/he is manipulative or not
Inspirational motivation	Whether providing for true empowerment and self-actualization of followers or not
Intellectual stimulation	Whether the leader’s program is open to dynamic transcendence and spirituality or is closed propaganda and a “line” to follow
Individualized consideration	Whether followers are treated as ends or means, whether their unique dignity and interests are respected or not.

Exhibit 4: Leading moral components of transactional and transformational leadership, Bass & Steidlmeier (1999)

Some ethical and moral components can be an issue in both transactional and transformational leadership as we can see in Exhibit 4 used in a study conducted by Bass & Steidlmeier (1999).

Ethical concerns with transactional problems could be issues such as whether the task which is being done is done in a good moral way, or whether the reward system that is set up put in a system that represents freedom and respect conscience? How is the trust and intentions between the leader and the follower, are the promises given to the follower always kept by the leader? How do you settle conflicts, are you able to remain an impartial process? (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

Ethical concerns with transformational leadership connected to idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration could according to Bass & Steidlmeier (1999) be the following: Is the leader predominant and manipulative? Managing to provide true empowerment and self-actualization? Do the followers of the leader's program get the freedom to do the task given to them, or do they have a strict line to follow? How are the followers treated, as an end or means, or are they respected in a way that gives them dignity and their ideas are respected?

2.2.4. Hofstede's dimensions

Geert Hofstede (2011) defines culture as "Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others". Culture in this context can be related to the country, and can be scored on the following dimensions:

1. *Power Distance*, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality;
2. *Uncertainty Avoidance*, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future;
3. *Individualism versus Collectivism*, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups;
4. *Masculinity versus Femininity*, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men;
5. *Long Term versus Short Term Orientation*, related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past.
6. *Indulgence versus Restraint*, related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life.

Exhibit 5: Overview of Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede, 2011)

Instead of going through all of the dimensions, we will focus on the dimensions that are most relevant for our study, power distance and masculinity vs. femininity. The scores of Norwegian culture on these two scales are relevant for the study.

First, power distance relies on the distance between people and human equality. Norwegian culture scores low on power distance, which means that there is a low distance between people of power and those with power. This is a sign of people being open-minded and democratic (Hetland & Sandal, 2003), and that leaders need to earn their trust, as it is not given to them by their positional power as it potentially would in other cultures (Lofquist & Matthiesen, 2018).

Secondly, masculinity vs. femininity is related to emotional states. Femininity is not related to gender, but characteristics such as inclusive, trusting, and democratic (Lofquist & Matthiesen, 2018), whereas masculinity focuses on differences between the strong and weak, and caring about your surroundings is not important (Hofstede, 2011).

2.3. Innovation and Crisis Management

The reason we are looking into leadership styles is to see how leaders responded to the Covid-19 pandemic, which was seen as a crisis by many. Through this, we have also reviewed the literature on how businesses dealt with crises in the past. Throughout history, there have been many financial crises that have impacted people's economies and the way people live. The great depression in the 1930s, the international debt crisis in the 1980s and the global economic recession around 2007 to mention a few (Bondarenko, n.d.).

Crises stem from events and circumstances that are unpredictable and unexpected. The crises often require quick responses from the company, and the companies should be always prepared for crises (Celik, Akgemci & Akyazi, 2016).

2.3.1. Introduction of Covid-19

Coronavirus (COVID-19) was discovered in Wuhan, China. Through 2020 and 2021 it has spread across the world and by January 25, 2022, there have been approximately 355 million cases and 5.6 million casualties worldwide (WHO, 2022). This has led to financial and logistical trouble for many organizations, and some corporations are dependent on state interventions and loans to get through the pandemic (Fitriasari, 2020).

Throughout the pandemic in Norway, there have been long periods where there have been requirements to work from home and to run meetings online. Restaurants, bars, gyms, and indoor sporting facilities were forced to close. This shows some of the impacts that the pandemic had on the economy and businesses in Norway. The banks were willing to loan businesses money as the government was the security for many of these loans. “Statsgarantert lån”. On top of that, the government refunded businesses that had a decline in income above 30% because of the pandemic. These examples show how the government helped businesses get through the pandemic, but how does a business survive a crisis?

2.3.2. Innovation

Innovation is “a new product or process that differs significantly from the unit’s previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process)” (Oslo Manual, 2018, p. 32). This is a definition that was used in courses at UIA.

However, innovation is viewed as a broad term by many. An innovation can range from a new idea to a new invention and can be seen as innovation as long as it is new to the followers. Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook (2009) have tried to put the themes of innovation together into a universal definition.



Exhibit 6: Innovation process (Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook, Figure 1, 2009)

As we can see in Exhibit 6, the figure describes what they view as the six attributes of innovation. These are the different attributes that different researchers came up with throughout the years and put in a system for clarification. Baregheh et al. (2009) argue that innovation is a “multistage process”, where innovation is not a single act but it is a process where the outcome is an improvement of new processes, services, or products. Schumpeter (1934) described innovation as “the creation of new possibilities for additional value-added, taking into account not only the typical product/process innovation of manufacturing but also market, organizational, and resource input innovation”.

Alrowwad et. al. (2020) examined how transactional and transformational leadership affects innovation and the results of the study implicated that both transformational and transactional leadership support innovation by setting short- and long-term objectives for the organization. What differs is that the two different styles of leadership promote innovation in two different business environments. Transactional leadership is successful in promoting innovation in a stable business environment where the objectives and activities conducted are stable. Transformational leadership is better suited for innovation in a dynamic workplace environment, as it drives the followers to be flexible and to think differently (Alrowwad et. al., 2020).

In a study conducted by Zuraik & Kelly (2019) where the purpose of the study was to examine and investigate the relationship between the CEO who had transformational leadership and innovation through exploration and exploitation. Findings show that transformational leadership has a positive effect on organizational innovation (Zuraik & Kelly, 2019). Results in a study conducted by Afsar & Umrani (2019) also support that transformational leadership has a positive impact on innovative work behavior.

“Prioritizing innovation today is the key to unlocking post-crisis growth” (Am et. al., 2020).

A survey conducted by Am et. al. (2020) shows us that many companies are down prioritizing innovation to concentrate on the known opportunities, saving capital, and minimizing risks. In the study, they come up with four urgent actions that need to take place in a crisis situation.

1. Adapting the core to meet shifting customer needs
2. Being able to quickly identify and address new business opportunities
3. Reevaluating the portfolio to make sure you allocate resources appropriately
4. Building a foundation for the post-crisis period to remain competitive.

(Am et. al, 2020).

2.3.3. Crisis Management

Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) suggest that when you are in the middle of a financial crisis, the leadership needs to be an adaptive style where you hit the reset button of the company to adapt to the future. By hitting the reset button the firm takes another direction to survive the crisis.

When there is an economic crisis, there is a need for innovation. The businesses that innovate and renew themselves hold a competitive advantage over the businesses that do not (Naidoo, 2010). Azoulay & Jones (2020) propose that investments in innovation will reduce or help us avoid making the choice between public health or the economy. As innovation and thinking differently play a large role in getting through a financial crisis, we need to look at what kind of leadership that fosters innovation.

Leadership can impact the creativity and innovation of the employees by placing them in the right context (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). In a stable business environment, a transactional leadership style can help foster innovation with clear goals and expectations and a transformational leadership style is more efficient in a dynamic business environment (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Exhibits 1 and 2 show those illustrations in terms of the business environment. This means that the leaders need to be aware of their leadership style to best perform in crises.

Crisis management is about the whole specter of activities that is applied in a situation in a systematic and planned way to be able to eliminate the situation and get out of the current state that is defined as a crisis (Fener and Cevik, 2015). Crisis management makes you able to systematically create a step-by-step decision-making process where you divide the crisis into three phases.

Phase 1 - Pre-crisis phase: This phase is about being able to prevent a crisis from happening, being able to be prepared to minimize the risk of damage, and being in the best possible condition to prevent a crisis (Coombs and Laufer, 2018).

Phase 2 - Crisis phase: This phase is where the crisis is predicted and you as a leader need to take the necessary actions needed to survive the crisis and avoid it (Bayazit et. al., 2003).

Phase 3 - Post-crisis phase: This phase starts after the state of the crisis is over and the leader begins the post-crisis process. This is where the leader is supposed to be able to adapt to the business and come up with the appropriate solutions to be competitive in the new environment (Bayazit et. al., 2003). This phase is also the phase that is according to Coombs and Laufer (2018) the phase that needs the most research as there is not much research that takes into consideration this last and important phase of a crisis.

Another important subject to take into consideration during a crisis is the motivation of the employees. "Motivation is the process that explains an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal (Robbins et al., 2009). Employee motivation should not be ignored in crisis situations as it has significant implications on both the structural organization of work as well as the human element of work. Workers during crises face challenging and demanding situations that will need special consideration, which a normal situation wouldn't demand (Asoba, 2021).

3.0. Method

Business research is “a systematic and organized effort to investigate a specific problem encountered in the work setting, which needs a solution” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019, p.2). The end goal of the research is to find a solution, and business research is an “organized, systematic, data-based, critical, objective inquiry or investigation into a specific problem” (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019, p.2). As a part of the research, method is important as it works as a link between theory and the material. However, it is not static and builds a bridge between the theoretical and the practical (Cavallin, 2006).

This part of the paper follows our decisions in terms of reaching the conclusions that we did, and how we chose to conduct our research. The method will help us to answer our research question. The methodology section will consist of the logic of the methodology, the research setting and participants, data collection, and the analysis of the data.

3.1. Research Design – Choice of Method

As we worked towards our specific research questions, we had to figure out what research design would be the preferred option. As you can see in Exhibit 7 from Hossain (2011), qualitative research focuses more on social reality and is situational. The quantitative approach could be seen as inefficient to research relations between managers and employees, which is a central and complex part of leadership (Conger, 1998).

Table 1: Quantitative Style versus Qualitative Style

QUANTITATIVE STYLE	QUALITATIVE STYLE
Measure objective facts	Construct social reality, cultural meaning
Focus on variables	Focus on interactive processes, events
Reliability is key	Authenticity is key
Value free	Values are present and explicit
Independent of context	Situationally constrained
Many cases, subjects	Few cases, subjects
Statistical analysis	Thematic analysis
Researcher is detached	Researcher is involved

Exhibit 7: Quantitative style versus qualitative style (Hossain, p. 147, 2011).

With this in mind, the questions were formatted in an open-ended way where the focus was to allow the leaders to talk about the changes that were made through the pandemic, and if they changed themselves as leaders. These types of questions would be hard to incorporate into quantitative questions.

We recognize that qualitative data can be harder to analyze than quantitative data. There are not a set of rules and guidelines in the same way for qualitative research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019, p.307). As will be discussed further in the data analysis section – qualitative data are data in the form of words, where an analysis is necessary before starting to read the data. The three important steps according to Sekaran & Bougie (2019, p.322) are data reduction, data display, and drawing of conclusions. These will be further explained in section 4.4. Methods and procedure of data analysis.

Qualitative research is usually called inductive research. Through inductive research, the researchers work from the “bottom-up” and use the participants to gather information and use the theory to connect the dots based on the information received from the participants (Sofierman, 2010). In comparison, deductive research is typically more quantitative research where the researchers have an assumption of the result of the study and the questions are asked that way with a set of alternatives for every question (Sofierman, 2010). With our research question, inductive research was the more appropriate approach.

3.2. Research Setting and Participants

When choosing the participants in a qualitative study, you choose participants that can help you in answering the research question and that would help you to receive an enhanced understanding of the research question (Sargeant, 2012). This suggests that we had to choose our participants carefully to have the tools to provide some results from the study.

The participants, who will remain anonymous through the study, were chosen based on their background and position in their company. We have chosen eight leaders, some of these leaders are CEOs and some of them are divisional managers. The different industries where we have conducted interviews include banking, energy, restaurant industry, hotel industry, and online retailers.

To answer the research question of whether leadership styles have changed through the Covid-19 pandemic, we wanted to have a broad view of different industries. The thought process was to look at industries where businesses were doing well throughout the pandemic, and compare these to the businesses that were struggling, and if the leadership changed in these organizations with the starting point in transactional and transformational leadership.

We believed that it was most relevant to look at many different industries to find participants that can help us with a broader understanding based on the research question. If we go with a narrow perspective, we believe that there can be biases or similarities in answers that could be very industry-specific, which was not the goal of the study. Rather we went with a broader view of industries that diversify the study to be able to answer the research question better. All but a couple of the businesses we reached out to were interested in participating in the study.

In order to keep the respondents anonymous, they will be referred to as interviewee #1, interviewee #2, and so on. In Exhibit 8, we have listed the position of the respondent, the company type, and the size of the company. SME stands for Small and Medium-sized enterprises.

Interviewee	Position	Employment	Size of company
1	Regional leader	Private Sector	SME
2	CEO	Private Sector	SME
3	CEO	Private Sector	SME
4	Owner	Private Sector	SME
5	CEO	Private Sector	SME
6	CEO	Private Sector	SME
7	Assistant CEO	Private Sector	SME
8	CEO	Private Sector	SME

Exhibit 8 (Overview of participants)

3.3. Methods and Procedure of Data Collection

The data that we collected throughout the study is primary data as it is collected from original sources and is specified for this study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019, p.126). The use of primary data is important in qualitative studies as these answers are based on our questions and our question guide. The quotes in the findings section are translated from Norwegian to English. Throughout this section, we will provide reasoning for the questions in the question guide as well as the completion of the interviews.

3.3.1. Interview Guide

We spent a lot of time together with our supervisor to make and revise the question guide. To develop good questions for a study guide, they need to be revisited many times to focus the questions. The first attempts to make questions are usually broad and do not have the same context compared to revised questions that have been worked with (Agee, 2009). An important aspect of writing good questions for qualitative research is to continuously rewrite them and share them with others (Agee, 2009), as was our focus with rewriting the questions with input from our supervisor Dr. Efrat.

Our goal with the question guide was to have different sections of questions where there was a clear build-up to receive the most amount of information from the respondents. The first part was organized to place the respondents into a category of either transformational or transactional leaders, without pointing them in any direction or the use of those terms. This was done so we did not push the answers in a certain direction, and rather had open questions. Next, we focused on the pandemic and how it affected the specific business before narrowing it down to how it affected the leader and if there were changes in behavior and leadership style as a cause of this. Lastly, we focused on the review part and the ability to self-evaluate after the pandemic.

The interview guide was written and finalized in English, as it is the language in which we have decided to write our thesis and the language used to communicate with our advisor. However, all our participants have Norwegian as their main language and therefore the interview guide was translated to Norwegian for simplicity in the interviews. Both interview guides are available as Appendix 1 and 2.

The goal of the interview guide was to figure out the leadership style of the respondents before the pandemic, and then to see if anything had changed. The question guide is divided into three different sections; Section one where we want to uncover the leadership style, section two where we are looking for changes through the pandemic, and section three where the respondents reflect on their experiences.

3.3.2. Completion of Interviews

We decided to conduct semi-structured interviews. This gives the interviewer some flexibility to structure the interview differently and ask the questions in a different order based on the answers of the respondent. It is a widely used phenomenon by researchers and gives a better flow to the interview (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019, p.119).

The interviews were conducted at the offices of the participants in the study. The offices and environment can give you a feel for the environment at the workplace and the leadership style of the participants, and therefore it was natural to do the meetings this way. It seemed natural for the participants as well as they seemed to want human interaction rather than online meetings as they have had for the last two years. Some also believed that it would make for a better study as their body language was important to help them express their answers.

The duration of the interviews varied from respondent to respondent but lasted between 30-50 minutes. The interview guide and the questions lasted for about 20 minutes, but the extra time came from small talks, coffee, and an introduction to the study. Some participants had certain interests, which then became more of the topic in certain interviews as they were done in conversation form. However, we still managed to include all of the themes in the interview guide through navigating back and forth.

3.4. Methods and Procedure of Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed to analyze the material. Transcription is not a perfect method as it can be influenced by “cultural characteristics related to an

institutional environment, academic environment and the background of the researcher who conducts the transcription process” (Nascimento & Steinbruch, 2019).

According to Oliver, Serovich & Mason (2005), there are two types of transcription, naturalized transcription, and denaturalized transcription. Naturalized transcription is when the conversation is transcribed in the most amount of detail possible. It tries to represent how the person was talking, including breaks, etc. Denaturalized transcription on the other side is a more standardized way of transcribing where you exclude the noise, so you have cleaner data to use in the analysis phase.

In our transcription of the interviews, there was a mix of naturalized and denaturalized transcription. In our study, many of the respondents have a distinct dialect and used expressions that are natural to denaturalize. However, as we are both from the region and familiar with expressions and slang, we feel that the context is protected through our understanding and denaturalization of such data.

The reason we did it as a combination of naturalized and denaturalized transcription was to simplify the data set for the rest of the analysis. Coding is like breaking the data down before putting it back together as something meaningful (Elliot, 2018). Next, Elliot (2018) discusses whether all the data should be coded, and it is argued that coding is a method used to reduce the data set and make sense of it, instead of coding all data. This is also how we have gone about our data from the interviews.

In the data analysis, we transferred the data into an excel file where we included the main points from the interviews and put them in order. On the Y-axis, we had the questions in order, and on the X-axis, we had the different businesses. Then we put the answers to the questions in the columns so the answers to the same questions were in one row. This way it was easier to analyze the data and have a good overview of what the respondents answered to every question, and easier to compare them. Both of us went through the data and cooperated on finding the main points from the interviews. At times we also went back to the original data for direct quotes.

When we had a good overview of the answers, we used the “Gioia method” to structure the data. First, the data is organized into 1st order categories with the first impressions from the

interviews. Secondly, it was ordered into 2nd order themes which are more theoretical and focus on concepts. Lastly, we saw if we could connect the 2nd order themes into aggregate dimensions (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013).

3.5. Reflection of Method

In this section, we will reflect on the method for our study and will discuss its reliability, validity, and ethics, as well as give background information about us as researchers.

3.5.1. Reliability and Validity of the Study

The data and conclusions that you draw from qualitative research need to be reliable, valid, and plausible (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019, p. 318). According to Sekaran & Bougie (2019, p.318) validity depends on two things in a qualitative study and if the research results “(1) accurately represent the collected data (internal validity) and (2) can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (external validity).” Reliability on the other hand refers to category reliability is about classifying the data into categories that are justifiable. It also includes interjudge reliability which refers to the consistency of the coders to code the data.

The data that we collected comes from medium to large businesses in the southern region of Norway and is aimed to detect whether there were any changes in leadership styles through the Covid-19 pandemic. The method was chosen based on our research question and a qualitative method was the most appropriate fit. We believe the validity question is fulfilled as the results (section five) represents the data, and it can also be transferred to other settings outside the researched companies and be further researched. However, it is also hard to know if the data is valid as it is nearly impossible to recreate the interviews.

Next, in terms of reliability, we coded the data together. With this, you have two different perspectives that can look at the data and the chance of discovering prospective mistakes doubles. We went through the data several times to detect and prevent mistakes to make the study reliable.

3.5.2. Ethical Considerations

According to DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree (2006), there are four ethical issues that need to be taken into consideration during the interview process – (1) the risk of unanticipated harm, (2) taking care of the information provided by the interviewee, (3) inform about the nature of the study and (4) reduce the risk of exploiting the interviewee.

Unanticipated harm could include stories or such that would cause the interviewee harm that is very hard to foresee which can cause stress or psychological complications. In our interviews, the questions surrounded leadership styles and the leaders' views on themselves, and we did not encounter any unanticipated harm. The interviewees were informed about the study, and all approved of the interviews. Many of the respondents also told us to reach out again if something in the interview was unclear.

Secondly, the information provided by the interviewee has been secured thoroughly and password protected. We informed the interviewees about the recordings and that they would be deleted after the transcriptions. With this, we have secured and taken care of the information provided as well as informed the interviewees how we were going to take care of the information.

Third, at the beginning of the interviews, we introduced the study to all the participants. We led them through how we came up with the research question and why they would be a good fit for the study. We mentioned how many others were going to be in the study but did not present the other participants as they are confidential.

Lastly, the interviewees have not been “exploited” for our gain. The interviewees knew that the study was voluntary and wanted to participate. However, all the participants received a small gift as a thank you for their contribution to the study.

3.6. Summary

As discussed, we chose to use a qualitative method for our research to investigate how the Covid-19 pandemic affected leadership and if there were any changes. We chose 8 participants from medium to large businesses in the southern region of Norway, as we felt they were representative for a study like this as the effect of the pandemic was similar to most areas in Norway. The interviews that were completed are seen as semi-structured interviews where we followed the guide, but also allowed the participants to talk freely and followed up with the questions from the guide based on the answers. Further, we have done ethical consideration and tried to protect the validity and reliability of the study to the best of our knowledge. We believe that we found the best method for our study, and the results of the study will be discussed in the next section.

4.0 Findings:

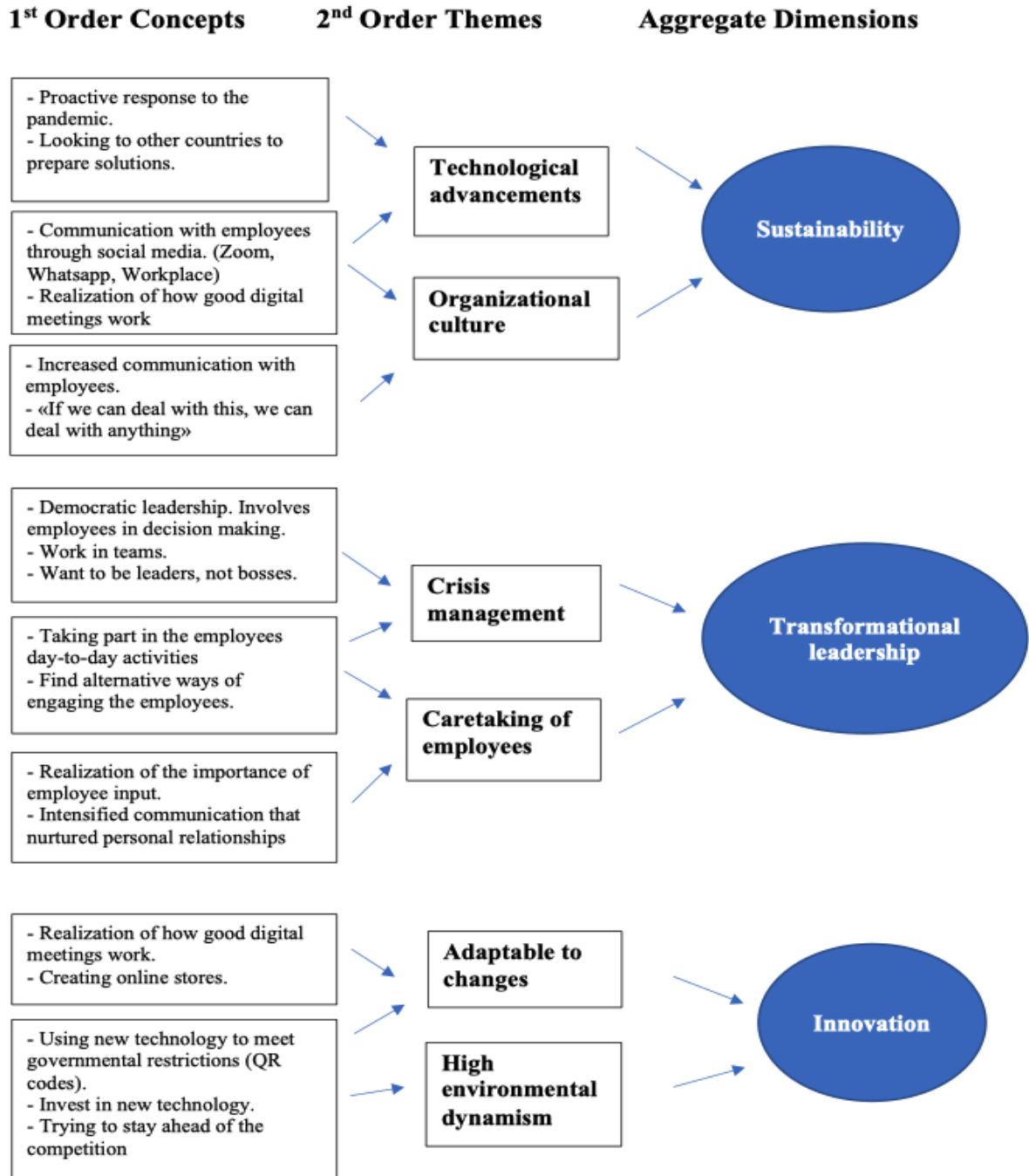


Exhibit 9 (Findings from interviews)

4.1. Leadership Styles Respond to Covid-19 Pandemic

Starting with the first aggregate dimension, we concluded that sustainability was the dimension that fits best. The reason for this is that the majority of the respondents talked about sustainability as an important factor when they were reflecting on the pandemic, and how they use technological tools for communication rather than having in-person meetings. Sustainability was not discussed in the paper previously, and we will not go further into it other than it is important to note that it turned out to be an important subject in the majority of the interviews. This means that even though we did not look for sustainability and responsibility surrounding it, we cannot avoid it in our model as it was an important aspect of the answers.

Organizational culture and technological advancements were the overall themes we found when asking about communication with the employees and communication if there had been lay-offs. Many of the respondents said that they had to make investments in computers, as well as teach their employees how to use different tools. Some also said that they realized that these investments should have been done earlier but made them exit the pandemic better prepared for the future.

Further in this section, we will present evidence for how the leaders in the study handled the pandemic, and tie it to leadership styles in the discussion section. First, we will look at the responses to when the pandemic came in March 2020. The respondents were concerned for their employees, and the focus for many was their health.

“We took care of those who needed it the most, and tried to focus on the people that we knew were struggling”

Interviewee #2

“In our industry everything stopped. No one wanted us to work because of the risk of being infected. The first three-four months everything stopped.”

Interviewee #6

Further, we asked the interviewees whether they were proactive or reactive to the pandemic. The responses from interviewees #4 and #5 fit well with our overall impression of a proactive approach.

“We are always trying to be ahead, which is among our strengths, and our competition is always trying to follow us. We had the guts to stock up when our competitors hesitated.”

Interviewee #4

“We were proactive, and communication is very important to us. We focused more on meetings than usual through teams, information through “workplace” and tried to be active and keep a close dialogue with our employees.”

Interviewee #5

Next, we were looking at the communication and motivation given to the employees through the pandemic. The work environment of interviewee #8 is hands-on work, and he motivated the employees by being with them.

“I chose to work from the office, and not from home. When I was at the office every day, I also went out to work on hands-on tasks together with the employees. If I just stayed at home, it would be hard to encourage my employees to work with the tasks which need to be handled in person. The signals that I am sending my employees by helping them is important, and I believe it encouraged them throughout the pandemic”.

Interviewee #8

Interviewee #5 had a similar approach but showed it through being present for the organization through online meetings.

“Everybody here sits in open landscape offices, including me. When I sit in an open landscape, I am very available to the employees. Even through Covid I was available to the different parts of the organization, because I want it to be easy for the employees to encounter with me.”

Interviewee #5

This is linked with the second aggregate dimension which is transformational leadership. When the respondents were asked whether they viewed themselves as democratic or authoritarian leaders, all of them said that they were democratic. Most of the leaders realized the importance of the employees, and some of the respondents even said that they were taking a larger part in the days of the employees when they were working from home compared to when they were at the office. Our impression from the interviews is that the leaders had a closer relationship with the employees and that they also grew better relationships outside of the workplace. Because of the nature of a pandemic, health is obviously an important factor and therefore took place in many of the personal conversations between the respondents and their employees, which again lead to better personal relationships with an emphasis on taking care of the employees.

Interviewee #1 on the other hand used competitions to motivate the employees:

“We have internal competitions, mostly for fun. We believe in setting targets, and most of our employees are motivated by that. At the end of the month, all of the employees present their contribution as a part of the internal competition.”

Interviewee #1

Lastly, a part of responding to the pandemic is what you did throughout the pandemic, and finding a way through it. Interviewee #3 used the pandemic to come up with a new concept, and interviewee #1 used it to become closer with the employees.

“We have had the time to be innovative, and we came up with a new concept for the business. We saw the pandemic as a place where we could foster innovation and had the time and opportunity to work with new concepts”.

Interviewee #3

“The pandemic has given me new perspectives in a way where I see the importance of the employees and the day-to-day contact with the employees and show that we care about them”.

Interviewee #1

4.2. Changes in Leadership Styles

To find indications of whether the leaders in this study experienced any changes in terms of leadership style we asked questions that would make the interviewees reflect on how their perspectives changed during the pandemic.

When the leaders were asked if the pandemic had given them new perspectives, three of the interviewees answered that included a new perspective on digital meetings and a shift towards a more sustainable environment.

“It is less travel and more focus on the green movement”

Interviewee #1

“I have always been a fan of digital meetings. We think it has been way too much waste for the environment with short meetings. Meetings in Oslo and around the world. It is really good that we now have more digital meetings. For the world and the environment”

Interviewee #4

“We were very critical of meetings through Teams in the beginning as it cannot be compared to traditional face-to-face meetings, but it has worked well and been implemented as a part of our day-to-day activities. It is probably going to be there in the future as well, as we no longer need to travel around Norway and Europe which is good in many ways, such as for the environment and costs associated with the travel”

Interviewee #7

The personal connection between the leader and the follower is an important topic in our study that helps us identify the leadership style. As seen below in the quotes taken from our interviews we see that multiple leaders have changed in terms of understanding the importance of good communication and a great leader-to-follower relationship.

“I see the importance of personal contact with the employees. In-person meetings are preferable for more important tasks where you can see the whole person and their passion”

Interviewee #1

“We intensified the communication because when we were out of the office, we couldn’t take the informal coffee talk. We also sent out surveys to our employees on how they dealt with the pandemic to get a better understanding. Sharing information was very important”

Interviewee #5

“I realized how important employees look at the one-on-one conversation. The personal relationship with the leader was more important than what I thought”

Interviewee #6

The descriptions given in the interviews are quite similar to each other where mostly everyone has got a better understanding of how demanding it can be for a worker in a crisis. Interviewee #5 answered the following when explaining the perception of how demanding the period has been for them.

“Yes, it has. It has been a demanding period to be both a leader and a follower, but it has also been challenging in a way that has challenged us to overcome obstacles that we didn't believe were possible to overcome just a couple of years ago. The followers have been adaptable to changes and done a very good job. If we can deal with this, we can deal with anything”

4.3. Surviving the Pandemic

To find evidence of how the businesses survived the pandemic we had to ask our interviewees some questions about what they did and how they did it. This would help us indicate whether the businesses were open to changes and would invest in new solutions.

When we asked interviewee #2 the question on whether they have become more innovative we got the following answer that indicates changes and the ability to adapt to change to survive a crisis.

“There have been some new innovations that really helped us. You can now scan the menu on the phone, order online, and pay online. This saves us time and money when you can order food directly there. It was a demand from the government when opening up during covid, and now there is acceptance for it, and the customers will continue to use it.”

Interviewee #2

Similarly to interviewee #2, does interviewee #4 explain that they now invest more in technology than before and have bigger investments in-house.

“We always need to be innovative, and we invest a lot more in technology than before, and bigger investments to build the human capital we have in-house”

Interviewee #4

The third aggregate dimension is innovation. Many of the businesses had to change or adjust in order to stay competitive, where innovation was the end result of that. As you can see in the model and the 1st order concepts that are linked towards the aggregate dimension, there is a lot of evidence for innovation. Investment in new technology, the creation of online stores, and technological advancements from governmental restrictions are all innovations that helped them through the pandemic and have enhanced the quality of their business after the pandemic.

Interviewee #4 is the owner of a company that has a big market share of the industry they are within, they are as the owner says dependent on always being innovative to stay ahead of the competition.

“The lead we got now forces us to always do better than our competition. If the competition gets 10% better every year, we need to get 15% better. We can let the competition eat us up staying where we are today”

With a pandemic and governmental restrictions, the way of living changed for many people as they no longer were able to do what they wanted when they wanted due to the risk of getting infected. Therefore, we wanted to ask interviewees if they had come up with anything specific

to counter the restrictions that would make their business survive the pandemic. Interviewee #7 answered the following.

“People are getting more and more digital, so we have employed more workers and established an online store which was something new for us.”

Interviewee #7.

Similarly to interviewee #7 did interviewee #6 experience restrictions that would make it difficult for them to conduct their work as they were supposed to as they were no longer allowed to do so by governmental restrictions. Therefore, when asked about how they managed to survive the pandemic in a way that both kept employee motivation high and still had the opportunity to earn money he answered the following.

“We had to do different activities as we weren’t allowed to conduct our sport, therefore we came up with a football tennis tournament against one of our competitors that were within the governmental restrictions. This gave us the opportunity to compete and also an alternative way of income for as we could sell the streaming rights to broadcasters”

Interviewee #6

5.0 Discussion

The aim of our study was to get insight into the leaders’ experiences from the pandemic and see what kind of adjustments were made during a crisis. Our contribution will be to give the readers a better understanding of how Norwegian leaders acted and adjusted during the pandemic.

As a reminder, our research questions are:

- How did the two different leadership styles respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Did the leaders experience any changes in leadership style?
- What did the leadership styles do to survive the pandemic?

5.1 How Different Leadership Styles Dealt with the Pandemic

In this section, we will take a look at how the different leadership styles handled the pandemic. As previously discussed, we cannot say for certain the leadership style of all the respondents, but most of them have very clear tendencies towards a transformational leadership style. First, we needed to determine the leadership style of the respondents to place them into one of the two categories. Most of the respondents showed traits of a transformational leadership style. This is similar to the findings of Hetland and Sandal (2003) as they found that Norwegian leaders, in general, possess transformational leadership traits.

Linking this back to Hofstede's dimensions, Norwegian scores on masculinity are low and high on femininity. Feminine values are not related to gender but can be related to a leadership style where the leaders are "democratic processes, equality, inclusion, task ownership, and delegation of responsibilities" (Lofquist and Matthiesen, 2018). Further, Norway also scores low on power distance. This implies that the managers are open-minded and democratic which are traits of a transformational leader (Hetland & Sandal, 2003). As well as managers being open-minded and democratic, the Norwegian culture puts pressure on the leaders as they cannot rely on their positional power in order to direct others, and their trust has to be earned (Lofquist & Matthiesen, 2018). Our findings contribute to this research as our findings are similar. All of the respondents viewed themselves as democratic leaders and gave the employees a lot of freedom, and these are viewed as transformational leadership traits (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Transformational Leadership

The findings in terms of how transformational leaders dealt with the pandemic can be categorized through the four I's of transformational leadership – individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p.24). When the pandemic hit, these factors were important to deal with the pandemic in a good way and reflect how the respondents dealt with the pandemic. Many of the respondents elaborated on the importance of taking care of their employees through the pandemic, especially when it hit.

Individualized consideration is much about communication between the worker and the leader, as it should be a dialogue and not a monologue (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p.28). In section 4.1. we saw how the leadership styles responded to the pandemic, and as discussed previously, there was evidence of transformational leadership. Interviewee #2 showed individualized consideration as the employees were treated differently, and some employees needed more caring than others.

Next, the respondents also handled the pandemic through intellectual stimulation. The aim of innovation is to succeed, differentiate and compete (Baregheh et al., 2009), and intellectual stimulation can be a step in order to succeed with that. Innovation was one of the aggregate dimensions in our findings as the respondents were innovative in getting through the pandemic.

Next, idealized influence is about whether the leader is driven by more than self-interest (Glasø & Thomson, 2013, p.28). We had the impression that many of the leaders put the company and the employees first when it came to decisions throughout the pandemic. Instead of worrying about themselves, they had a lot of focus on the employees and the company's future. If we relate this to the model in section 4.0 (Exhibit 9), you can see that this type of leadership is linked to the caretaking of employees and crisis management, which again links to transformational leadership. This type of strategy where you engage with the employees, it improves their attitude towards the organization where they are willing to work harder (House, 1996).

Further, inspirational motivation is concerned with motivating the employees. Engaging and inspiring to believe in the organization is important in a dynamic environment as engaged employees will help the organization to remain competitive (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p.25). As you can see in our findings, the interviewees motivated their employees in different ways. There were examples of internal competitions that will help them reach their goal, some enhanced their communication through the pandemic by being available more than usual and some took part in the hands-on work of the employees.

Our findings correspond well with Glasø & Thompson (2013) research on transformational leadership. The four I's of transformational leadership are supported by our findings as key factors of transformational leadership. Our research shows that being aware of your

leadership style can help in getting through a crisis as you will inspire, stimulate, influence, and help your followers to develop.

We found that Norwegian leaders with a transformational leadership style respond to crises by caring about the employees and being proactive in general. This was an effective way to get through the pandemic and is supported as leaders need to consider appropriate measures that will help the business survive the crisis (Bayazit et al., 2003), and help the employees as they need special consideration in crisis situations (Asoba, 2021).

Transactional Leadership

Based on the interviews we cannot conclude nor have a strong indication that any of the respondents have a transactional leadership style. For this reason, we cannot make any assumptions or have any evidence for how the pandemic was handled by transactional leaders.

5.2. Did the Leaders Experience any Changes in Leadership Style?

The findings in correlation to the question of whether the leaders experienced any changes in their leadership style reveal that the leaders have gone through some changes in terms of getting new perspectives on how things work in a crisis.

1. Digital meetings → sustainable environment
2. Personal relations

First, we can see how beneficial the leaders experience digital meetings to be. Digital meetings have now created a new work environment that many of the leaders we interviewed now like. As they explained when asked about the digital meetings, many have gone from disliking them to liking them. Reasons for this are that digital meetings are less time-consuming, and it also results in less traveling which is good for the environment. This makes the leaders feel that they are taking part in helping the world towards a more sustainable environment, which corresponds well with the theory presented in the literature

review from Zhuravleva & Poliak (2022) that transformational leaders have a positive and direct impact on the activation of sustainability and green growth.

What we have experienced in this study which gives us a clear indication of a change in leadership style towards a more dominant transformational leadership style is the emphasis many leaders have had on personal relations with their employees during this crisis. As Bayazit et. al. (2003) indicates in their study about crisis management, during phase two which is the crisis phase you as a leader must be able to take the necessary actions needed to survive the crisis. The leaders of the companies we have interviewed are all dependent on their followers and therefore, being able to take care of them during a crisis is going to be crucial. Individualized consideration is the leader's role to consistently care about the employee so that his/her need is fulfilled for the employee to be able to maximize their potential (Glasø & Thompson, 2013, p. 28). According to the analysis of the interviews, we have conducted, we can see a change in leadership where the leaders are getting more aware of how important the personal relationships are for the employees, and therefore, we can see a shift in leaders where they put greater concerns in the personal relationships they have with their employees.

Lastly, one of the interviewees explained how demanding the COVID-19 pandemic has been for both the leaders and the followers but has given them the belief and motivation of being able to solve what was looked at as unsolvable. This gives further evidence that we can see the leaders move towards a more transformational leadership as Bass and Riggio (2005, p.4) explained by giving their followers empowerment and motivation to be able to solve challenging tasks in a challenging and demanding working environment.

5.3. How Did Businesses Survive the Pandemic?

During the pandemic many industries got some demanding challenges, one of them was the restaurant industry. Restaurants were under strict laws regarding how they could serve and how many they could serve. So, restaurants and hotels had to adapt to this situation to survive. Using new technology to meet governmental restrictions to be able to adapt to a high environmental dynamism that leads to innovation as Exhibit 9 in section five implies was going to be key for restaurants and hotels to do to survive.

Given the answer from interviewee #2 presented in section 4.3 explaining how they survived the business; we can see evidence that technology and innovations were going to be important for them to be able to survive the pandemic. That answer from the restaurant owner shows how they have been able to adapt to a situation for them to survive the pandemic. This falls under Schumpeter's (1934) definition of innovation where innovation is about the possibility to create something new and additional value-added. Restaurants were forced to do something like this to meet governmental restrictions, but by creating QR codes they realized how it is beneficial for the restaurant as well as it makes them save time and money as they make the process of ordering more efficient, therefore they still use it today after the governmental restrictions are no longer there. The use of QR codes takes the restaurant through the innovation process shown in Exhibit 6 (Baragheh et. al., 2009) where the restaurant had to go through all of the stages to come up with a solution that put them in a position to be successful.

Exhibit 9 shows that to be able to come up with an innovation you need to be adaptable to changes and have the ability to survive a high environmental dynamism. To do so, investing in new technology to stay ahead of the competition is going to be important. Am et al. (2020) said in their study that "prioritizing innovation today is the key to unlocking post-crisis growth, therefore, you could argue that the company of interviewee #4 is doing so to stay ahead by investing a lot more in technology than what they had done before as explained in section 4.3.

Am et. al. (2020) suggests in their study and explained in section 2.3.2 that four urgent actions need to take place in a crisis. Step one and step two are adapting the core to meet shifting customer needs, and the ability to quickly identify and address new business opportunities. This aligns well with the findings in Exhibit 9.

Interviewee #6 explained how they had to come up with alternative ways of motivating their employees and at the same time increase their opportunities of selling a product that would give them financial compensation. By coming up with an activity like a football-tennis tournament the organization managed to keep the employees' motivation high as they were facing a challenging and demanding situation. This corresponds well with what Asoba (2021)

explained in his/her study when discussing how employees need special consideration in a time of crisis.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research

The study we have conducted does have some limitations. Because of Norwegian culture with a dominance of transformational leaders, we were not able to find how the different leadership styles dealt with the pandemic and find the differences between them. We did not know the leadership style of our respondents ahead of the study and were not able to categorize any of the respondents as having a transactional leadership style.

For future research, we recommend looking deeper into transactional leadership and how transactional leaders dealt with the pandemic. It would also be interesting to research how different leadership styles in different countries dealt with the pandemic to broaden the horizon of the study. This will make the study more general to the leadership style when you can see it from different countries, as the restrictions and regulations were different from country to country. We also recommend looking into the area where there also is room for research, the post-crisis phase (Coombs & Laufer, 2018). What we can see in the interviews conducted is that this reciprocates in five out of eight companies. Although our sample size is small, we can see that the majority of the companies want to look forward and not go through a thorough analysis of how they handled the crisis.

6.0. Conclusion

6.1. Research Question 1

How did the two different leadership styles respond to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Going into the study we assumed that we would find evidence for both leadership styles and that we were able to categorize them. However, we could not find any evidence that supported a transactional leadership style among our respondents and cannot provide evidence for how transactional leaders handled the pandemic. This was also shown through the discussion regarding Hofstede's dimensions.

Further, the transformational leaders within the study had a proactive approach to the pandemic in terms of the business, but also through taking care of their employees. In addition to proactivity and caretaking of the employees, the respondents demonstrated the four pillars of transformational leadership through individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation throughout the pandemic (Glasø & Thompson, p. 28, 2013). As you can see from Exhibit 9, the caretaking of employees and crisis management through the pandemic had an underlying theme of transformational leadership. Our study supports that a transformational leadership style is an effective style through a crisis situation as shown by the handling of the pandemic.

6.2. Research Question 2

Did the leaders experience any changes in leadership style?

Through our qualitative study, we can see that the leadership experienced some changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. As discussed in section 5.2 and shown in section 4.2 the leaders started to see how important personal relationships are, which makes them shift and emphasize an even stronger form of transformational leadership than what they were aware of before the pandemic started, which corresponds well with the definitions of how a transformational leader act according to Glasø and Thompson (2013). We also saw the leaders change some of their assumptions about digital meetings, where now they experience that digital meeting can be used to be more efficient and as a result, the world is also moving

towards a more sustainable environment. This aligns well with what Zhuravleva & Poliak (2022) proved in their study that transformational leaders have a positive impact on sustainability and green growth.

6.3. Research Question 3

What did the leadership styles do to survive the pandemic?

To summarize this research question, we would like to start with which leadership style is more suited for innovation in a dynamic workplace environment, which is according to Alrowwad et. al. (2020) transformational leadership as it drives its followers to be flexible and to think differently. We can through our study see evidence of this as discussed in section 5.3 where the companies included in this study were looking for innovations to survive. Every interviewee showed evidence of how the company was innovative in some way or form to remain competitive. Some came up with the use of QR codes, some came up with online stores, and some started to invest more in technology. All these are signs of innovations, and we see evidence that for the companies to survive, the leadership of the companies was looking for innovations. These innovations align well with what Prasad & Junni (2016) explained in their study that transformational leadership fosters innovation when there is high environmental dynamism.

7.0. References

- Aga, D. A. (2016). Transactional leadership and project success: the moderating role of goal clarity. *Procedia Computer Science*, 100, 517-525.
- Agee, J. (2009). Developing qualitative research questions: A reflective process. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 22(4), 431-447.
- Alkharabsheh, A., Ahmad, Z. A., & Kharabsheh, A. (2014). Characteristics of crisis and decision making styles: The mediating role of leadership styles. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, 129, 282-288.
- Alrowwad, A. A., & Abualoush, S. H. (2020). Innovation and intellectual capital as intermediary variables among transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and organizational performance. *Journal of Management Development*.
- Am, J. B., Furstenthal, L., Jorge, F., & Roth, E. (2020). Innovation in a crisis: Why it is more critical than ever. *McKinsey & Company*.
- Asoba, N, S. (2021). Employee Motivation in Crisis Situations: The Case of A Selected Organization in the Food and Retail Sector in Cape Town. *Academy of Entrepreneurship Journal*, Vol: 27, Issue: 2. Retrieved from <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/employee-motivation-in-crisis-situations-the-case-of-a-selected-organization-in-the-food-and-retail-sector-in-cape-town-10663.html>
- Azoulay, P., & Jones, B. (2020). Beat COVID-19 through innovation. *Science*, 368(6491), 553-553.
- Bans-Akutey, A., Tiimub, B.M. (2021). Assessing Transactional and Transformational Leadership on Workgroup Behaviour. *Academia Letters*, Article 3044. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3044>.
- Baregheh, A., Rowley, J., & Sambrook, S. (2009). Towards a multidisciplinary definition of innovation. *Management decision*.
- Bass, B. M. & Avolio, B. J. (1994). Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc

- Bass, B. M., & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). Ethics, Character, and Authentic Transformational Leadership Behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 10, 181-217.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(99\)00016-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00016-8)
- Bass, B.M., & Riggio, R.E. (2005). *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410617095>
- Bayazit, Z.D., Cengel O., Tepe F.F., (2003). "Crisis Management in Organizations and a Case Study". 11th National Management and Organization Congress Leaflet of Notices. Afyon.p.366-377.
- Bilal Afsar Yuosre F. Badir Bilal Bin Saeed , (2014),"Transformational leadership and innovative work behavior", *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, Vol. 114 Iss 8 pp. 1270 - 1300
- Bondarenko, P. (N.d.). *5 of the World's Most Devastating Financial Crises. Encyclopedia Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/list/5-of-the-worlds-most-devastating-financial-crises>
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Cavallin, C. (2006). Forholdet mellom teori og metode. The relationship between theory and method", in Kraft, SE and Natvig, RJ (eds.), *Metode i religionsvitenskap [Method in religious studies]*, Pax, Oslo, 14-28.
- Celik, A., Akgemci, T., & Akyazi, T. E. (2016). A comparison between the styles of transformational leaders and authentic leaders in crisis management. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 183-196.
- Conger, A. J. (1998). Qualitative research as the cornerstone methodology for understanding leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9(1), 107-121.
- Coronaviruset: Status I verden*. VG Nett. (n.d.). Retrieved January 26, 2022, from https://www.vg.no/spesial/corona/verden/?utm_source=coronav-new-front&utm_content=world

- DiCicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical education*, 40(4), 314-321.
- Du, S., Swaen, V., Lindgreen, A., & Sen, S. (2013). The roles of leadership styles in corporate social responsibility. *Journal of business ethics*, 114(1), 155-169.
- Eichenauer, C. J., Ryan, A. M., & Alanis, J. M. (2021). Leadership During Crisis: An Examination of Supervisory Leadership Behavior and Gender During COVID-19. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15480518211010761>
- Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the coding process in qualitative data analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(11), 2850-2861.
- Fener, T., Cevik, T. (2015). Leadership in Crisis Management: Separation of Leadership and Executive Concepts. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, Volume 26, Pages 695-701.
DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(15\)00817-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(15)00817-5)
- Fitriasari, F. (2020). How do Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) survive the COVID-19 outbreak?. *Jurnal Inovasi Ekonomi*, 5(02).
- Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L. (2002). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 36(6), 717-732.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational research methods*, 16(1), 15-31.
- Glasø, L. & Thompson, G. (2013). *Transformasjonsledelse*. Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.

- Gross, R. (2016). Towards an understanding of the relationship between leadership styles and strategic thinking: A small and medium enterprise perspective. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 8(2), 22-39.
- Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). Leadership in a (permanent) crisis. *Harvard business review*, 87(7/8), 62-69.
- Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). Leadership in a (permanent) crisis. *Harvard business review*, 87(7/8), 62-69.
- Hetland, H., & Sandal, G. (2003). Transformational leadership in Norway: Outcomes and personality correlates. *European Journal of work and organizational Psychology*, 12(2), 147-170.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online readings in psychology and culture*, 2(1), 2307-0919.
- Hossain, D. M. (2011). Qualitative research process. *Postmodern Openings*, 2(7), 143-156.
- House, R. J. (1996). Path-goal theory of leadership: Lessons, legacy, and a reformulated theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 7, 323 – 352.
- Hughes, R., Ginnett, R. C., & Curphy, G. J. (1996). *Leadership*. Chicago, Irwin.
- Jaiswal, N. K., & Dhar, R. L. (2015). Transformational leadership, innovation climate, creative self-efficacy and employee creativity: A multilevel study. *International journal of hospitality management*, 51, 30-41.
- Krogh, V. G., Nonaka, I. & Rechsteiner, L. (2012). Leadership in Organizational Knowledge Creation: A Review and Framework. *Journal of Management Studies*, 49 (1), 240-277. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00978>.

Kuhnert, K. W. (1994): Developing people through delegation. In B. M. Bass & B.J. Avolio (Eds.), *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*, pp. 10-25, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 181–217

Lofquist, E. A., & Matthiesen, S. B. (2018). Viking leadership: How Norwegian transformational leadership style effects creativity and change through organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 18(3), 309-325.

Naidoo, V. (2010). Firm survival through a crisis: The influence of market orientation, marketing innovation and business strategy. *Industrial marketing management*, 39(8), 1311-1320.

Nascimento, L. D. S., & Steinbruch, F. K. (2019). “The interviews were transcribed”, but how? Reflections on management research. *RAUSP Management Journal*, 54, 413-429.

Northouse, Peter G., (2010) "Leadership: Theory and Practice"

Northouse, P. G. (2018). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (8th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Odumeru, J. A., & Ogbonna, I. G. (2013). Transformational vs. transactional leadership theories: Evidence in literature. *International review of management and business research*, 2(2), 355.

Oliver, D. G., Serovich, J. M., & Mason, T. L. (2005). Constraints and opportunities with interview transcription: Towards reflection in qualitative research. *Social forces*, 84(2), 1273-1289.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, & Statistical Office of the European Communities. (2018). *Oslo Manual 2018: Guidelines for collecting, reporting and using data on innovation*. OECD publishing.

- Prasad, B., & Junni, P. (2016). CEO transformational and transactional leadership and organizational innovation: The moderating role of environmental dynamism. *Management Decision*.
- Richards, D. & Engle, S. (1986). After the vision: Suggestions to corporate visionaries and vision champions. In J. D. Adams (Ed.), (p. 199-215). Alexandria: Miles River Press
- Robbins, S. P. and Coulter, M. (2007) *Management* (9th ed.). London: Prentice- Hall
- Robbins, S.P., Judge, T.A., Odendaal, A., & Roodt, G. (2009). *Organisational behaviour; Global and Southern African Perspectives*. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.
- Sargeant, J. (2012). Qualitative research part II: Participants, analysis, and quality assurance. *Journal of graduate medical education*, 4(1), 1-3.
- Schumpeter, J.A. (1934), *The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Sekaran U., & Bougie R. (2019). *Research Methods For Business: A Skill Building Approach, Enhanced eText*. [VitalSource Bookshelf]. Retrieved from <https://bookshelf.vitalsource.com/#/books/9781119561248/>
- Soiferman, L. K. (2010). Compare and Contrast Inductive and Deductive Research Approaches. Online Submission.
- Zuraik, A., & Kelly, L. (2018). The role of CEO transformational leadership and innovation climate in exploration and exploitation. *European Journal of Innovation Management*.
- Zhuravleva, N. A., & Poliak, M. (2022). Green Transformational Leadership and Green Growth. In *Leadership-New Insights*. IntechOpen

Appendixes:

Appendix 1 - Question Guide in Norwegian

Finne ut av lederstil:

1. Hvordan vil du beskrive deg selv som leder? "Autoritær" eller "Demokratisk"
2. Gis det insentiver (positive/negative) basert på hvordan man presterer - bonusordninger, arbeidsoppgaver, osv.
3. Vil du si at du/dere kontrollerer de ansatte i stor grad? Eller har de stor frihet til å utføre oppgavene alene eller med et lag?
4. Bruker du tid utenfor arbeidsplassen på medarbeidere - eller bruker tid på hvordan de har det utenfor kontoret? Hvordan blir du kjent med de ansatte?
 - Sosiale samlinger
 - Team building
5. Har dere kjerneverdier/corner stones hos dere?
 - Blir disse snakket om?
 - Har dere eventuelt noen øvelser rundt dette?

Endringer gjennom Covid:

1. Hvordan responderte dere med en gang Covid-19 kom til landet?
 - Hvordan følte du dere håndterte situasjonen?
2. Vil dere si at dere var proaktive eller reaktive til pandemien? Så dere hva andre gjorde, eller reagerte dere først?
3. Hvordan har Covid påvirket kommunikasjonen med de ansatte? Har den økt eller har den blitt mindre? M.t.p zoom møter og hjemmekontor.
 - Mer eller mindre kontakt?
4. Hvilke virkemidler brukte dere for å holde kontakt med de ansatte?
 - Telefon, zoom, gruppechatter (?)
5. Hadde dere permitteringer i perioden? I så fall, hvordan holdt dere kontakt med de som ble permittert?

Erfaringer:

1. Når man ser tilbake på pandemien, og spesielt starten, er det noe du/dere ville gjort annerledes?
2. Har pandemien gitt deg nye perspektiver som leder? Hva har endret seg?
3. Har dere analysert hvordan dere håndterte pandemien? Hva lærte dere?
4. Har dere blitt mer innovative i måten dere tenker på?

Appendix 2 - Question Guide in English

Leadership style:

1. How would you describe yourself as a leader? “Authoritarian” or “Democratic” leader?
2. Is the leadership concerned with positive/negative incentives based on your performance? Do you get specific rewards if you do well, and are these clear before the task begins?
3. Would you say that you control the employees to a large degree? Or do they have a lot of freedom to do their tasks?
4. Do you spend time outside of the workplace with the employees, or spend time on how they are doing outside of the office? How do you get to know them?
 - Social gatherings
 - Teambuilding
5. Do you have any cornerstones?
 - Are these talked about?
 - Do you have exercises around them?

Changes through Covid:

1. How did you respond when Covid-19 came to the country?
 - How do you feel that you handled the situation?
2. Would you say that you were proactive or reactive to the pandemic? Did you see what others did, or did you react first?
3. How did Covid affect the communication with the employees? More or less than before, with zoom and home office in mind?
4. What tools did you use to stay in touch with the employees?
 - Phone calls, zoom, group chats
5. Did you have layoffs during this period? If so, how did you stay in touch with them?

Experiences made:

1. Looking back at the pandemic, especially the beginning, is there anything that you would have done differently?
2. Has the pandemic given you any new perspectives as a leader? What has changed?
3. Have you analyzed how you handled the pandemic? What did you learn?
4. Have you become more innovative in the way you are thinking?

Appendix 3 - Discussion Paper Olav Hovstad (with references)

Discussion Paper – Responsibility – Olav Hovstad

A study of leadership styles in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, and how the pandemic influenced leadership styles

My/our master thesis is concerned with leadership styles, and the effect that Covid-19 has had on them. The two leadership styles discussed in the thesis are transformational and transactional leadership. We are looking at how the different leadership styles dealt with the pandemic, and if the pandemic changed the leaders and their perspectives in any way.

We interviewed eight leaders from different businesses in the southern region of Norway (qualitative analysis) as the basis for our analysis of leadership styles. The respondents are anonymous to protect the privacy of the person and the organization they are a part of. Covid-19 had a large impact on businesses all over Norway, but we decided to focus on businesses in the same area. Some of them did well through the pandemic, while others struggled, as we wanted to see it from several perspectives. The Covid-19 pandemic caused millions of casualties worldwide and there were a lot of restrictions to keep the virus from spreading, and how they handled this was the main part of our thesis.

The main point from our thesis was that most of our respondents were transformational leaders. This is the same as Hetland and Sandal (2003) found, where most Norwegian leaders possess transformational leadership traits because of our cultural dimensions (Lofquist and Matthiesen, 2018). Transformational leadership is “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978 p. 20). Transformational leadership is concerned with ethics and standards, and it also protects the values of the followers (Glasø & Thompson, p.29, 2013). Transformational leadership was an important part of our thesis, and with the theory discussed this far, it further relates to responsibility.

The other leadership style in our study is transactional leadership. With transactional leadership, the focus of the leader is to reward and punish the followers based on their

performance. Another focus is to keep things stable rather than bringing change (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). However, we did not find any evidence that the leaders in our study were transactional leaders, and for that reason it will not be elaborated on in terms of responsibility in this paper.

Moving on, responsibility is a broad term and can be understood in different ways. I have decided to look at responsibility mostly in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is a broad term and defined by many. Dahlsrud (2008) took a closer look at the different definitions, where 37 of them were analyzed. From his research I will use the definition with the highest frequency count. However, this does not mean that it is the “right” definition of CSR, but a definition that is used by many. Therefore, CSR is “A concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Commission of The European Communities, 2002).

In the light of our master thesis, responsibility and CSR are similar. Looking at the definition of CSR, companies should integrate social and environmental issues into their operations and consider all stakeholders. As our thesis focuses on leadership styles and the pandemic, I will discuss the concept of responsibility in relation to the pandemic concerning what I see as the most important stakeholders – employees, the nearby community, and Norwegian citizens.

First, the most important stakeholder for the companies are their employees. The companies have a responsibility to the employees in many ways. However, some of these responsibilities such as paying salaries on time, giving the legal vacation time, and so on will not be discussed. In terms of the pandemic, the companies and leaders had a responsibility for the safety of the employees. The health and wellbeing of employees is important throughout a pandemic. Almost all the companies we interviewed had the employees working from home right after the pandemic hit. There were a couple of cases where the employees had to keep doing their hands on work. In those instances, the companies have a responsibility to provide the workers with the best and safest possible work environment to avoid contamination in the workplace.

Next, the companies had a responsibility for the nearby community. We all had restrictions on our social lives to reduce contamination. This is the responsibility the companies in our study also had. There were both national and local restrictions, and it was important to follow these. The evidence that we found in our survey was that the companies followed the restrictions and did the best they could to the spread of the virus.

Lastly, the Norwegian citizens are the last stakeholder I view as relevant in terms of the pandemic and behaving responsibly. The governmental restrictions were very strict, and some of the businesses within our study were forced to close or put under heavy restrictions. In that sense the government was responsible, but the companies also had to follow the rules.

The discussion on the different stakeholders is important for the businesses to realize. There are ethical challenges concerned with a pandemic as you want to survive as a business, but at the same time need to continuously consider the impact of your decisions on the stakeholders. The respondents in our study spoke about the importance of health and safety, and by proving to the employees that they valued them, some saw an increase in work ethic and loyalty to the business.

Our take from the interviews was that people were afraid of the pandemic and cared for their employees and their families. Behaving responsibly and following the rules became a norm, and they did not try to push the rules. An aspect of obeying the rules that it would be ethically wrong to cross the line. Within our group of respondents, many of them were under pressure to stay within the right number of people and so on. If they were to go against the rules it would not only increase the risk of contamination, but it would also give them an unfair competitive advantage.

Moving on, an issue that is often spoken about when it comes to responsibility and CSR is environmental issues. Our qualitative analysis was built around detecting leadership styles and how they handled the pandemic. Most of the respondents commented on the importance of the environment and that we take the issue seriously, and that the pandemic gave them a different view as to how to run a business. The main aspect that was talked about was the realization of how good online meetings work, and that they will continue with those in the

future. Online meetings reduce travel within the company which again is good for the environment.

Linking this to our thesis, if you look at Exhibit 9, one of the aggregate dimensions was sustainability. Even though sustainability was not a part of our thesis, it was a theme that came up throughout the interviews and the focus on sustainability increased through the pandemic. The technological advancements that were made, together with a change in organizational culture led to a more sustainable way of thinking. Respondent #1 from our study also said that they will continue to hold online meetings as a norm, and at the same time encourage their business partners and customers to do the same thing.

Having linked the Covid-19 aspect of our thesis to responsibility, I will now move to looking at how transformational leadership is linked to responsibility, together with crisis management and innovation. As mentioned, there will be a focus on transformational leadership and responsibility because we found the most evidence of transformational leaders in our study.

Groves (2014) found that transformational leadership and leadership qualities help the followers to believe in a strong relationship between organizational effectiveness and social responsibility. The relationship between transformational leaders and stakeholder values was strong, but the relationship with shareholder values was negative (Groves, 2014). This is an indication that shareholders value return on investments instead of looking at the benefits for multiple stakeholders. Further, transformational leadership does not only have a strong relationship on stakeholder values, it also positively affects sustainable performance by the subordinates (Jiang, Zhao & Ni, 2017). The reasoning behind transformational leadership having a positive impact on sustainable performance is because of their relationships with the workers which fosters a sense of collectivism that makes the subordinates go further for the organization and it benefits the organizational development (Jiang et al., 2017).

The literature indicates that transformational leadership positively influences sustainable practices. What we saw from our study was that many of the respondents openly spoke about sustainability even though they were not asked about it specifically. This is a further indication that transformational leaders are concerned with the environment, and as I talked

about, they also used the technological advancements through the pandemic to influence business partners and customers to do the same (Interviewee #1).

As discussed, transformational leadership is concerned with ethics and standards, which again are aspects of CSR. In the next part I will move from transformational leadership to crisis management and innovation. Transformational leadership fosters innovation when there is high environmental dynamism, such as in a pandemic (Prasad & Junni, 2016). A pandemic is an unstable environment and businesses need to handle it accordingly to survive and come out stronger.

The next part of our thesis is on crisis management. Within crisis management, innovation is an important aspect to survive a crisis financially. Innovation is “a new product or process that differs significantly from the unit’s previous products or processes and that has been made available to potential users (product) or brought into use by the unit (process)” (Oslo Manual, 2018, p. 32). I would argue that innovation is a part of being responsible. The companies within our study had a focus on innovation to get through the pandemic and further I will discuss how it relates to responsibility.

Through a crisis, businesses need to innovate and renew themselves to stay ahead of the competition (Naidoo, 2010). The nature of innovations are new, improved, or different products/services/processes (Baregheh, Rowley & Sambrook, 2009). As innovations are used for improvement, they are also making products or processes more efficient. In my opinion, businesses behave responsibly in many cases through improving. Our study showed that there was a focus on innovations, especially technical in order to survive the pandemic. These technical innovations and improvements have made them more sustainable. Another argument for why being innovative is being responsible is the way that the world is developing. New inventions are always coming, and the world needs new inventions to become more sustainable. The nature of capitalism is that there is an open market, and that people will do what they can to bring the best inventions to the market. An example of a market where there is a lot of innovation, and where the competition is pushing for more sustainability is the automobile industry. As electrical cars entered the market, the large brands such as BMW, Mercedes and so on have had to innovate and produce quality electrical automobiles to remain competitive. The trend is that more and more people are investing in electrical cars, and this is an example of how innovations are a part of being responsible.

In conclusion, our study of leadership styles and the impact of Covid-19 have strong links to the term responsibility. There were ethical challenges related to how to deal with the pandemic, where they had to consider different stakeholders. The companies and leaders were responsible for the health and wellbeing of their employees, and many respondents viewed that as their number one priority throughout the pandemic. The pandemic also led to technological advancements where many companies can reduce their ecological footprint, which in the long run will help us become more sustainable. We are all responsible for our actions, and CSR and responsible thinking will help us reach sustainability goals together.

References:

- Baregheh, A., Rowley, J., & Sambrook, S. (2009). Towards a multidisciplinary definition of innovation. *Management decision*.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Commission Of The European Communities. (2002, July 2). Communication from the Commission concerning corporate social ... - eur-lex. Retrieved May 20, 2022, from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2002:0347:FIN:EN:PDF>
- Dahlsrud, A. (2008). How corporate social responsibility is defined: an analysis of 37 definitions. *Corporate social responsibility and environmental management*, 15(1), 1-13.
- Glasø, L. & Thompson, G. (2013). *Transformasjonsledelse*. Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.
- Groves, K. S. (2014). Examining leader–follower congruence of social responsibility values in transformational leadership. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 21(3), 227-243.
- Hetland, H., & Sandal, G. (2003). Transformational leadership in Norway: Outcomes and personality correlates. *European Journal of work and organizational Psychology*, 12(2), 147-170.
- Jiang, W., Zhao, X., & Ni, J. (2017). The impact of transformational leadership on employee sustainable performance: The mediating role of organizational citizenship behavior. *Sustainability*, 9(9), 1567.

- Lofquist, E. A., & Matthiesen, S. B. (2018). Viking leadership: How Norwegian transformational leadership style effects creativity and change through organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 18(3), 309-325.
- Naidoo, V. (2010). Firm survival through a crisis: The influence of market orientation, marketing innovation and business strategy. *Industrial marketing management*, 39(8), 1311-1320.
- Odumeru, J. A., & Ogbonna, I. G. (2013). Transformational vs. transactional leadership theories: Evidence in literature. *International review of management and business research*, 2(2), 355.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, & Statistical Office of the European Communities. (2018). *Oslo Manual 2018: Guidelines for collecting, reporting and using data on innovation*. OECD publishing.
- Prasad, B., & Junni, P. (2016). CEO transformational and transactional leadership and organizational innovation: The moderating role of environmental dynamism. *Management Decision*.

Appendix 4 - Discussion Paper Iman Mafi (with references)

Discussion Paper – International – Iman Mafi

A study of leadership styles in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, and how the pandemic influenced leadership styles

Introduction to our Thesis

Our Master thesis is a study that we have worked on from the beginning of this semester where we have looked at leadership styles. The two leadership styles we have had our main focus on are transformational and transactional leadership styles. What we have tried to investigate and study these last couple of months has been how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the different leadership styles and can we see if the pandemic has caused any types of changes in the leaders based on which style they have.

The transactional leadership style is a leadership style that is based on reward and punishment. If you do something good you get rewarded with a good incentive, and if you do something bad you lose the opportunity of a good incentive and most probably will get a punishment (Bans-Akutey, 2021). Transformational leadership style is a style that is based on the intrinsic motivation and the development of its followers (Bass & Riggio, 2005, p. xi). The leadership style is based upon the four I's. Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, are all about how you as a leader is supposed to act towards your follower to get the best out of him/her (Glasø & Thompson, 2013). The two leadership styles also differ in which type of environment they thrive in the most. The transactional leadership style is better suited for a stable business environment where the objectives and activities are stable, while transformational leadership is better suited in a dynamic workplace environment (Alrowwad et. al., 2020).

To be able to figure out which type of leadership style the leaders had we had to conduct a qualitative interview with each leader. We managed to get hold of eight different leaders in all small-medium enterprises in Norway across different industries to be able to get a good picture and understanding of how the different leaders reacted and could we draw any lines on how they reacted/changed during the pandemic based upon their leadership style. After

conducting all of our interviews and finished analyzing them we saw very few signs of transactional leadership and very many signs of transformational leadership which corresponds well with what Hetland & Sandal (2003) found in their study that most Norwegian leaders possess transformational leadership because of the Norwegian culture and its values (Lofquist & Matthiesen, 2018).

International Trends and Forces

To be able to discuss how our thesis can relate to international trends and forces I’m going to use two of the main subjects that are central forces in international trends and have been subjects in almost every course I’ve taken in this master program. UN's 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the Environmental, social, and governance (ESG).

First, let me introduce what the 17 SDGs are and the history of them. In 2015 all United Nations members adopted a plan that is an urgent call for change that will aim to reach peace and prosperity for people and the planet. Not just for today and our generation, but also for the future generations (United Nations, n.d.). The 17 goals are there to put both developed and developing countries in a partnership to be able to recognize the problems the world is facing and put together a strong united team to solve these problems. The goals that are put in place are goals that recognize problems such as ending poverty, improved health and education, economic growth, reduce inequality while simultaneously managing to tackle climate change and preserve our forests and ocean. (United Nations, n.d.).



Exhibit 1: The Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d).

Lastly, let me introduce what ESG is and what it stands for. (E) stands for environmental which is a factor that takes into consideration a company’s impact on the natural ecosystem. Including variables such as emissions, use of natural resources, pollution, waste, and innovation efforts (Matos, 2020). (S) stands for social which is the factor that takes into consideration the company’s relation with its customers, society, and workforce (Matos, 2020). The (G) stands for governance is a factor that takes into consideration that there is a system that is put in place for the leaders to always take care of the interest of the shareholders in the company (Matos, 2020). In Exhibit 2 by Matos (2020) we can see the main issues in ESG highlighted.

Environmental	Social	Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change and carbon emissions • Natural resource use and energy and water management • Pollution and waste • Ecodesign and innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce health and safety, diversity, and training • Customer and product responsibility • Community relations and charitable activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shareholder rights • Composition of boards of directors (independence and diversity) • Management compensation policy • Fraud and bribery

Exhibit 2: Main ESG Issues, (Matos, 2020).

For many, the development and environmental problems that are connected to the SDGs are looked at as problems that the governments need to take care of, but we can see in recent years that also the world of business is increasingly playing a role in reaching the SDGs (Sætra, 2021).

How does our thesis relate to ESG and the SDGs?

According to Zhuravleva & Poliak (2022), we can see that transformational leadership is emerging as a response to changes we can see in society today. Zhuravleva & Poliak (2022) investigated in their study what kind of impact transformational leadership had on green

growth and what we can see in their conclusion is that they find evidence that confirms the hypothesis that transformational leadership has a direct impact on the activation of sustainable development and green growth.

Environmental

In our thesis we interviewed eight different leaders in different companies across different industries to get a good understanding of how the different leaders in the different industries reacted to the pandemic. What we saw in our study was that every leader had signs of transformational leadership and as mentioned in the introduction this corresponded well with what Lofquist & Matthiesen (2018) found in their study. Three of the leaders who had the strong signs of transformational leaders answered the following in questions when asked if the pandemic had given them new perspectives.

“It is less travel and more focus on the green movement”

Interviewee #1

“I have always been a fan of digital meetings. We think it has been way too much waste for the environment with short meetings. Meetings in Oslo and around the world. It is really good that we now have more digital meetings. For the world and the environment”

Interviewee #4

“Digital meetings are probably going to be there in the future as well, as we no longer need to travel around Norway and Europe which is good in many ways, such as for the environment and costs associated with the travel”

Interviewee #7

These quotes were presented in the findings sections of our study, and we can see how the leaders have changed their perception of digital meetings. Burns, (1978) explained that transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons are able to raise one another to higher level of morality and motivation. The green movement is much about having the right morals in life, it's about maintaining a sustainable environment that our future generations can also experience. What we see is that the changes in perception the leaders we've interviewed have experienced show that the pandemic has played a part in how they can help towards a

more sustainable environment by not traveling to every meeting, some of them are unnecessary to travel to and can be done online.

Social

Matos (2020) explained in his study that the social dimension is about taking care of its customers, society, and workforce. What we can see through our study is that most of the leaders are doing a great job taking care of those factors. The leaders we interviewed who were conducting business in the business to customer segment we could see how important their customers were to them. The leaders were concerned about how they could manage to give the customers the best possible experience although there were governmental restrictions on how you should behave in stores/restaurants. As mentioned in our thesis in section 4.3 we can see in our findings how the companies came up with different solutions to take care of their customers.

“People are getting more and more digital, so we have employed more workers and established an online store which was something new for us.”

Interviewee #7

“There have been some new innovations that really helped us. You can now scan the menu on the phone, order online, and pay online. This saves us time and money when you can order food directly there. It was a demand from the government when opening up during covid, and now there is acceptance for it, and the customers will continue to use it.”

Interviewee #2

One of the companies started an online store, and some of the other companies started to use QR-codes for ordering food and drinks. These are all signs of leaders that take social responsibility to take care of their customers, their workforce, and lastly the society as a whole.

Governance

Governance is as earlier mentioned about how the company is led taking into consideration the rights and wishes of all the shareholders. What we saw in our study was that most of the leaders were transformational leaders rather than transactional leaders. The transformational

leadership style emphasizes dimensions such as emotions, values, teamwork, and achievement of organizational goals (Hongdao et. al., 2019). So, for a leader to be able to meet emotions, values, teamwork, and achieve organizational goals he or she has to be aligned with shareholder values.

What we see in our study to be able to draw lines between our interviewees and the international trend ESG is that most of our interviewees are looking at these dimensions in order to be successful. In many of our interviews teamwork was crucial for them and some of the leaders were even working in an open landscape environment so they would be looked as a team rather than individuals working in their own offices.

“Everybody here sits in open landscape offices, including me. When I sit in an open landscape, I am very available to the employees. Even through Covid, I was available to the different parts of the organization, because I want it to be easy for the employees to encounter with me.”

Interviewee #5

“I chose to work from the office, and not from home. When I was at the office every day, I also went out to work on hands-on tasks together with the employees. If I just stayed at home, it would be hard to encourage my employees to work with the tasks which need to be handled in person. The signals that I am sending my employees by helping them is important, and I believe it encouraged them throughout the pandemic”.

Interviewee #8

Looking at Exhibit 9 in our thesis we can see by using the Gioia method (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton) to help us analyze our qualitative data from the interviews we can see that some of the 2nd order themes were organizational culture, crisis management, caretaking of employees which all are important factors of governance in its own way. Our aggregate dimensions were sustainability, transformational leadership, and innovation where transformational leadership is the one dimension that most certainly falls under the governance dimension as mentioned above.

In conclusion, we could argue that our contribution to the literature is that Norwegian leaders tend to have a transformational leadership style due to the cultural aspects of the country (Hetland & Sandal, 2003). In our thesis and in this discussion paper we see evidence of how the leaders have conducted in a way that supports the international trend of getting to a more ESG-friendly business environment which will help us reach the 17 SDGs put in place by the UN. Very much so because the leaders in this study were all more or less transformational leaders and had very few signs of transactional leadership. What would be interesting to see in further research would be to be able to interview transactional leaders and see how their companies correspond and link to ESG and if they also help the world towards reaching the 17 SDGs.

References:

- Alrowwad, A. A., & Abualoush, S. H. (2020). Innovation and intellectual capital as intermediary variables among transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and organizational performance. *Journal of Management Development*.
- Bans-Akutey, A., Tiimub, B.M. (2021). Assessing Transactional and Transformational Leadership on Workgroup Behaviour. *Academia Letters*, Article 3044.
<https://doi.org/10.20935/AL3044>.
- Bass, B.M., & Riggio, R.E. (2005). *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410617095>
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational research methods*, 16(1), 15-31.
- Glasø, L. & Thompson, G. (2013). *Transformasjonsledelse*. Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk.
- Hetland, H., & Sandal, G. (2003). Transformational leadership in Norway: Outcomes and personality correlates. *European Journal of work and organizational Psychology*, 12(2), 147-170
- Hongdao, Q., Bibi, S., Khan, A., Ardito, L., & Nurunnabi, M. (2019). Does what goes around really comes around? The mediating effect of CSR on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee's job performance in law firms. *Sustainability*, 11(12), 3366.
- Lofquist, E. A., & Matthiesen, S. B. (2018). Viking leadership: How Norwegian transformational leadership style effects creativity and change through organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 18(3), 309-325.

Matos, P. (2020). ESG and responsible institutional investing around the world: A critical review.

Sætra, H. S. (2021). A Framework for Evaluating and Disclosing the ESG Related Impacts of AI with the SDGs. *Sustainability*, 13(15), 8503.

United Nations (n.d.) The 17 goals. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Zhuravleva, N. A., & Poliak, M. (2022). Green Transformational Leadership and Green Growth. In *Leadership-New Insights*. IntechOpen.