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ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP: NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF POST-PANDEMIC WORKING ARRANGEMENT

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Abstract

In the seemingly new world of work after the pandemic, managers are confronted with new difficulties in managing their teams. This research aims to answer the important research question on adaptive leadership dynamics: how do leaders steer in change? Drawing on the constantly evolving nature of flexible working environments. This paper seeks to establish the various approaches used by leaders in the current work environment. The purpose of this investigation is to provide critical recommendations to the organizational decision-makers on how to manage their employees in this post-COVID-19 world. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods will be employed to interview leaders in various sectors regarding the following: (1) identifying and contacting leaders who have effectively navigated the team's post-pandemic; (2) identifying firsthand experiences and understanding of leadership strategies. The study used interviews, of which 70% were semi-structured, and the number of participants was 10. The analysis presented in this study revealed the type of leadership and their coping mechanisms, the factors that led to the activation of the coping mechanisms, and that post-pandemic, a leader's style can be altered not only for business gain but also as a positive change for the leader themselves. The change that leaders had to undergo in post-pandemic working arrangements was diverse, and changing has never been unfamiliar to changing the leadership style. Despite the fact that our studies provide significant information regarding the main area of leadership in the management climate, there are certain aspects that deserve certain considerations. The coordination of this research is based only on middle managers, which restrains the viewpoint of our study with cross-industry background. However, there is one major limitation of the study because the study was conducted at the end of the pandemic, and therefore it may not be equally relevant as any other period of time. Therefore, the leadership phenomenon can be explored from the leader's perspective alone, and this might result in ignoring crucial follower or any other stakeholder information. In this research, there was no other interview conducted to compare with the interview completed in this research to validate the respondent answers. In view of these, it would be appropriate to take a closer look at the leadership processes from different angles in order to gain a better appreciation of the phenomenon.

Keywords: *Post-pandemic, COVID-19, Hybrid Working, Remote Working, Leaders, Subordinate, Team Management, Adaptive, Leading, and Following, Confluence, Individualistic, Distributed, Shared.*

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INTRODUCTION

Businesses have always faced challenges; however, nothing compares to the events caused by COVID-19, which revolutionized organizations and businesses across all domains. This has necessitated deep change, which leaders have had to implement in very short periods and under very high levels of uncertainty, in a bid to ensure that the organizations will still operate in the long term, despite the astonishing cut in the usual level of operations. Changes in the management of post-pandemic teams will require the implementation of adaptive leadership, which has to be suitably applied to cope with the new problems and effects of COVID-19: Post-pandemic. Leadership in the environment needs to handle discrimination and injustice changes and challenges, which is central in the definition of adaptive leadership. It is critical to adaptive leadership that one embraces the understanding that different situations will call for different leadership structures. For example, while a unitary approach to leadership may be effective under normal circumstances, with changes in the environment, both psychological and technical integration approaches may be critically required to meet the needs of the team. It also explains the variation in the order of influence exerted on individuals within groups, where such influence does not tend to follow the usual formal lines. In addition, the context of the recurrence of war has more emphasis on the leadership of the so-called followership rather than traditional leadership (Lagowska, Sobral, & Furtado, 2020).

It is important that leaders help and support their team members, and at the same time, create an effective leadership structure that is inclusive and adaptable enough to meet the challenges and uncertainties posed by the situation in the aftermath of the pandemic. In changing environment of the post-pandemic period, leaders must guide and give clear direction to make smooth transformation in a company through several steps : establish a sense of urgency, form a powerful guiding coalition, create a vision, communicate the vision, empower others to act on the vision, create short-term wins, consolidate improvement and produce more change, institutionalize new approaches (Kotter, 2007). Adjustment in the leaders' construct and their zone of operations is more underscored in a remote work context. Employees need leaders who will be able to support their remote workforce effectively by providing the necessary resources and technology to work from home (Aleem, Sufyan, Ameer, & Mustak, 2023). Apart from that, leaders should also be able to quickly learn new information and constructively manage dualities, making sound and constructive decisions for all concerned, including the team and the institution. Among the leadership styles that are vital for team management in this post-COVID-19 scenario is adaptive leadership.

Utilizing DeRue's adaptive leadership theory, this research demonstrates the interweekday connection between leadership behaviours and the environment, namely the post-COVID-19 work settings. As outlined in DeRue's theory, leadership is the ability to change how one does things rather than having everyone do the same set of actions. In a similar vein, the study highlights the capacity of the organizational leaders

to undertake such measures as to change their parameters in the face of the exceptional situation presented by the epidemic.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this current research, the qualitative research method was employed in data collection and analysis of the findings. However, using qualitative method provides a view of people's experiences, attitudes, and practices related to research questions (Creswell, 2019). Carrying out interviews on respondents and using the qualitative research has provided the study with information that is real-life experience in the behavior of people during the era transition. The window time has moved to the post-pandemic COVID-19 era, where everyone has the same window of time with various forms of work arrangements. In doing so, this study aims to gain a richer understanding of the nature of differences in working arrangements and the factors that enable their leadership flexibility during the same time period by contrasting respondents' beliefs and experiences.

The study uses a qualitative approach to gain insight on the beliefs and emotions of the respondents concerning their choice of working arrangements in relation to team management. This research employed a total of 10 (ten) respondents, and the data was collected in March 2024. The interviewees include different professionals working in corporations with high managerial positions. Demographics of the respondent are captured in Table 1 below. All the participants were given a brief on the objective of the study, then consent to participate in the study was sought from all of them, and lastly, all the respondents were to be anonymized. As a result of the sensitive nature of the study, the respondents were coded by numbers as in R1.

The semi-structured interviews began with a general discussion of the participating managers' opinions on working arrangement preferences in team management after the COVID-19 pandemic. This allows the respondents to give their own experiences. The subsequent questions focused on specific characteristics of remote work to identify causes of the success within the surveyed population. In order to generate the data, the authors had first come up with a list of open-ended questions, but the respondents were also allowed to provide more information. Sample questions included: As a leader, how can you describe the new way of working (post-pandemic) in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic? 2) In your opinion, having worked before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and after the pandemic, what is the most effective work model? Now in the post-pandemic era, how does your team react to your working preference now given your extended knowledge about the issue? (4) How do you give feedback to your team about how they respond to you? How does your team contribute to the achievement of the best results, and how does it help to make the right decision in business? In light of all that the authors have experienced in the course of the COVID-19 lessons, what important leadership lessons can the authors take away from the COVID-19 lessons and how can the authors apply these lessons to improve

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the interview with ten respondents investigating the impact of post-pandemic COVID-19, an intriguing finding emerged during our interview analysis. Despite expectations of potential leadership voids arising amidst the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, our study surprisingly revealed a conspicuous absence of respondents exhibiting symptoms of leadership void. Through in-depth interviews with a diverse pool of participants representing various industries and organizational structures, not a single instance of leadership void was observed. This unexpected finding challenges the theory assumptions regarding the leadership navigation in times of crisis and prompts further exploration into the resilience and adaptability of leadership paradigms in contemporary work environments.

Table 2

	Categories		**Representative Quotes**
	Theoretical	**Findings**	
Individual actor leadership [CIA]	Centralized Leadership		DT2
Directive leadership [CDL]			AI1, HW1, CW1, SI1
Self-decision control [CSD]			AL1
Individualistic assumptions [CIS]			HW2, HE3
Hybrid leading [CHL]		Confluence of Centralized and Distributed Leadership	DT1, CW3
Division of labor [DDL]	Distributed Leadership		AN1, SI1, AL1
Dynamic delegation [DDD]			AN2, CW2
Shifting leadership dynamics [DSL]			HW2, EL1
Rotated leadership [DRL]			AN3, AL2
Collaborative leading [DCL]		Confluence of Distributed and Shared Leadership	AL4, AN4
Collective engagement in leadership [SCL]	Shared Leadership		HW3, CW3, SI2
Mutual reciprocity in leading and following [SMR]			EL2, AL1
Collective efficacy [SCE]			HW4, ED1
Shared followership [SSF]			HW5, AN3
Inclusive leading [SIL]		Confluence of	HE1, HE2

		Centralized and Shared Leadership
Low magnitude of leading–following interactions [VLM]	Leadership Void	
Lack of centralization [VLC]		
Diffusion of responsibility [VDR]		
Lack of reciprocal leading–following interactions [VLR]		

We also found that there was a shift in leadership methods before, during, and after the pandemic.

Table 3 Pandemic Time Leadership

Variant	**Pandemic Time Leadership**		
	Before	**During**	**After**
DT	Centralized Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Confluence of Centralized and Distributed Leadership
AI	Centralized Leadership	Shared Leadership	Shared Leadership
EL	Centralized Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Shared Leadership
AL	Centralized Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Confluence of Distributed and Shared Leadership
HW	Centralized Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Shared Leadership
ED	Centralized Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Shared Leadership
AN	Centralized Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Confluence of Distributed and Shared Leadership
SI	Shared Leadership	Centralized Leadership	Shared Leadership
CW	Centralized Leadership	Distributed Leadership	Confluence of Centralized and Distributed Leadership
HE	Distributed Leadership	Centralized Leadership	Confluence of Centralized and Shared Leadership

This paper aims at looking at leadership and leaders in the current pandemic and adverse events that affect organizations globally (Bundy, Pfarrer, Short, & Coombs, 2017). In order to be effective in the critical moments, the leaders use what (Morales et al., 2006) describes This is why this issue has to be discussed now and the right precautions have to be taken. So, instead of ceding to pressure or making impulsive moves, leaders should weigh on the choices and come up with some criteria that can help determine the success of the action taken. Leaders also require being prepared to

manage with the level of ambiguity, and to keep the Therefore, the tendency towards Centralized Leadership will be observed in the course of a pandemic, which is illustrated by the table 1. They also came up during the time of post-pandemic the issue of confluence between the two styles. This phenomenon of confluence finding has given rise to a hypothesis that there were situations which the leaders experienced during the pandemic that alter their leadership style almost entirely to what can be referred to as the new normal.

Centralized Leadership

In post-pandemic COVID-19, some of respondents appeared as one individual that take control of all the policy regarding working arrangements [CIA].

If you wanted to work at night, that was fine, but I would review the work in the morning. However, if we had a morning meeting with a client, you still had to commit to that. So, if the team submitted work after 8 PM, I wouldn't review it immediately. I told them not to wait for my review if they submitted late. (DT2)

From the interview with respondents, there were several cases where leaders throw one-way directions without giving space for feedback or discussion with followers [CDL]. This leadership approach emphasizing individual autonomy and decision-making.

I have 3 IT team with freelance status to help me. I asked them to stand by, and they complied. They work in a remote manner, and I expect them to provide work devices for all employees. (AI1)

We do not provide space for employees to contribute as a whole to determining company policy because we are worried that there will always be divisions in camps. (HW1)

So actually, it's easy for me to execute this because it's not a personal desire, nor the result of a group discussion. So this is a policy from the office and because we are all still employees. (CW1)

Leaders have navigated themselves to be more powerful with their self-decision and controlling the followers working arrangement [CSD]. In this leadership style, it involved individuals to have control over their own decision-making process.

Offline meetings at that time, well, that's late at night, it's impossible for us to meet late at night. But if we meet online, never mind, come on, now you can call for an hour. That's all (meeting online) for the meeting. (AL1)

From the research interviews, the authors found that leaders keep their individualistic assumptions [CIS]. In which it showed assumptions focusing on the importance of individual contributions within a team.

Because if we ask everyone, it will get complicated. In the end, unnecessary conflict will occur. (HW2)

Some individuals may express reservations about meeting in person with me. However, it is imperative to adhere to the responsibilities and directives assigned to you. (HE3)

Around August 2020, whether we liked it or not, especially when we were leading and driving changes, we were forced to remain offline. But internally, the most challenging part was during our brainstorming sessions. Because brainstorming requires sharing, what we faced with the problem, and how we fix the issue. (DT1)

Distributed Leadership

The authors discovered a significant correlation between human resource strategy and the theory put forth by DeRue. This strategy involves the allocation of tasks and responsibilities among team members as they are sorted by division of labor [DDL].

Alright, I made an agreement with them because I thought it's important to convey to them as well, because we need adaptation, and understanding, because XL's operations are now offline, if there's anyone online, coordinating will be difficult later on. (AN1)

Because I really don't want to, the job can only be handled by one person. In my opinion, this person should not be relied on. So everyone has to be able to do the same thing so that it's easy if something happens. (SI1)

The IT framework comprises two pillars: architecture, which leads R&D efforts on new technologies, and governance, managing data, processes, personnel, and technology. We collaborate with Human Capital for staff development and facilitate audits with entities like OJK, ISO, or Astra International. (AL1)

From the in-depth interview, the authors found an approach commonly used to leadership where responsibilities are assigned and adjusted based on circumstances. Known and coded by dynamic delegation [DDD].

I'm not a micro-manager. Fortunately, my team members are halfway there, so they don't need to be guided anymore. I just provide guidance to them. As a result, they deliver more than 100 percent. This helps me when proposing to the Board of Directors. (AN2)

Because they are the ones who know how effective my team works, they will know best. So I just say, okay guys, actually I am L2, and those under me are L3, so I say like this guys, L3 4x1 Specialist L3 can decide. (CW2)

Distributed leadership is a process whereby different people take turns to lead or assume the leadership role at particular times, in particular tasks or projects. Leadership is shared within the team and depends on the information the team members have, the experience they have, the time they have, and the work to be done, respectively. This technique assists in flexibility; it also assists everyone in the team to have a chance to lead the team, as well as avoiding the team leader overworking. [DSL].

We try to balance and find a win-win solution. OK, from the point of view of this division, it can be like this, the other can't, well, in the end we have to be able to find the middle point. We have to sense not only from the business side but also from the employee side and client side so that all these needs can be captured. (HW2)

But if it's online, I tend to delegate to trusted individuals. Those who respond quickly, whose work is already mature—I don't have time to go back and forth revising

their work, whether it's online or via one-on-one calls, for me, it's wasting my time. So, the challenge for me is to ensure competency distribution and fairness levels. (EL1)

As a leader, during the pandemic, I've changed my approach significantly. Before the pandemic, it was more about assigning tasks and then waiting for progress reports, and so on (White, 2015). But during the pandemic, every day I had to make time to touch base on the team's progress. Regardless of the progress, we had to touch base because if there was any misunderstanding, I could explain it again. (DT2)

In the in-depth interview, the authors found a situation involving a structured and predefined rotation of leadership positions among team members over a specified period. Individual members of the team have designated leadership roles like team leader or project manager at intervals of some time, then another member takes over. This approach is to provide leadership experience to more than one team member; to provide equity in leadership; and to foster teamwork and idea sharing. In short, shifting leadership involves more flexible and situational distribution of leadership responsibilities, while rotated leadership follows a structured rotation plan for formal leadership roles [DRL].

So, it's project-based, which strengthens their sense of ownership. As a result, they can contribute a lot, and I'm greatly assisted. They receive knowledge sharing from me, but they determine the process by themselves. (AN3)

I regularly provide opportunities for members of my team to take leadership roles in diverse projects and actively participate in our company's innovation awards program. (AL2)

Shared Leadership

There was a phenomenon where the authors found from an in-depth interview that active participation of all team members in leadership activities and decision-making. The code used for this was collective engagement in leadership [SCL] (Rothmann & Baumann, 2014).

We make decisions from the local level of local country management, usually from several department heads we gather together, we call it a management meeting, so there we make decisions for policy. (HW3)

But if I try, if there's an order from the office, we can still discuss it later, but discussing it does not mean violating the office's order. (CW3)

Matrix work entails that I do not directly supervise my subordinates, allowing them to report directly to my superior. This structure offers considerable flexibility and efficiency. (AN1)

Leaders as the respondents on this research showed a balanced exchange of leadership roles and responsibilities among team members. In this matter, the authors relate the concept to a code named mutual reciprocity in leading and following [SMR].

I communicate with the team, creating an environment where they feel heard, not just having a hearing session. I embrace them, gather information, what can we do,

what's currently happening, then what do you actually want, where's the gap, and what are the solutions? (EL2)

All meetings pertaining to project development discussions must be coordinated with the relevant business units, necessitating meetings with the user at the Head Office. Conversely, the user occasionally visits our premises to oversee the project's testing phase. These processes are done repeatedly back and forth until the projects complete. (AL3)

There were times where the respondents showed team's assertiveness in sharing their belief in their ability to achieve goals and perform tasks effectively [SCE].

We take the decision from each function managers level, where these managers are the representative of each team members. (HW4)

The leadership challenge is building capability within the team or developing the team. Because here, it's a knowledge-intensive based company. So, especially for new recruits, those fresh graduates, we have to provide them with the necessary knowledge from whatever we've worked on before. (DE1)

In the condition of making a decision and distribute the task, respondents give a collaborative approach to following leadership, where team members support each other [SSF].

We create agents of change whose vision is close to other teams, so this is to help us convey the message. Because if management is the only one talking, then the response will definitely be considered as management speaking well. (HW5)

Because everyone doesn't have the same tolerance, and if one person is online and another offline, it becomes difficult. It's better if everyone is offline … So, it's gradual and since everyone hasn't been vaccinated, I gave the option to my team. So, it's okay if you don't come to the office, but you know the consequences, your wages will be deducted. (AN3)

Confluence Model of Leadership

This study has given birth to the confluence model in leadership when organisations are faced with unprecedented challenges of post COVID-19 pandemic. As hybrid leading, collaborative leading, and inclusive leading as the authors define it in this concept. The researchers identified that a leader's approach in a crisis that entails aspects of centralised and distributed leadership can be referred to as 'hybrid leading' [CHL].

We are more flexible with online meetings now, but we still maintain them. We are more selective about the type of meetings, such as focusing on progress reports. Since we consult weekly, we need to provide progress updates to our clients. (DT1)

However, people have different personalities. Some are fully aware that working from home means actually working. They have the self-awareness and responsibility to work diligently, even without supervision. (CW3)

The second finding on most of the respondents is that we found the combination of style on centralized and shared (Sunderman, Headrick, & McCain, 2020).

Collaborative leading [DCL] embodies the synthesis of distributed and shared leadership principles, placing emphasis on fostering collaboration, teamwork, and collective decision-making.

Our department responsibility includes managing data, processes, people, and also technology. However, the technology aspect has been separated and moved to the development division because we handle application testers, which were previously under governance. For people quality, we collaborate with the Human Capital (HC) team. (AL4)

So it's very flexible. As a Leader, I need to work with everyone. Currently there are 6 coordinators under my supervision and they have the responsibility to report directly to me. Because they don't have any officers, they can utilize other team members to work and report for them, because we have this matrix-based organization structure. (AN4)

The third finding is the inclusive leading [SIL] style which, on the other hand, represents the amalgamation of centralized and shared leadership components, advocating for inclusivity, empowerment, and diverse perspectives within the leadership structure.

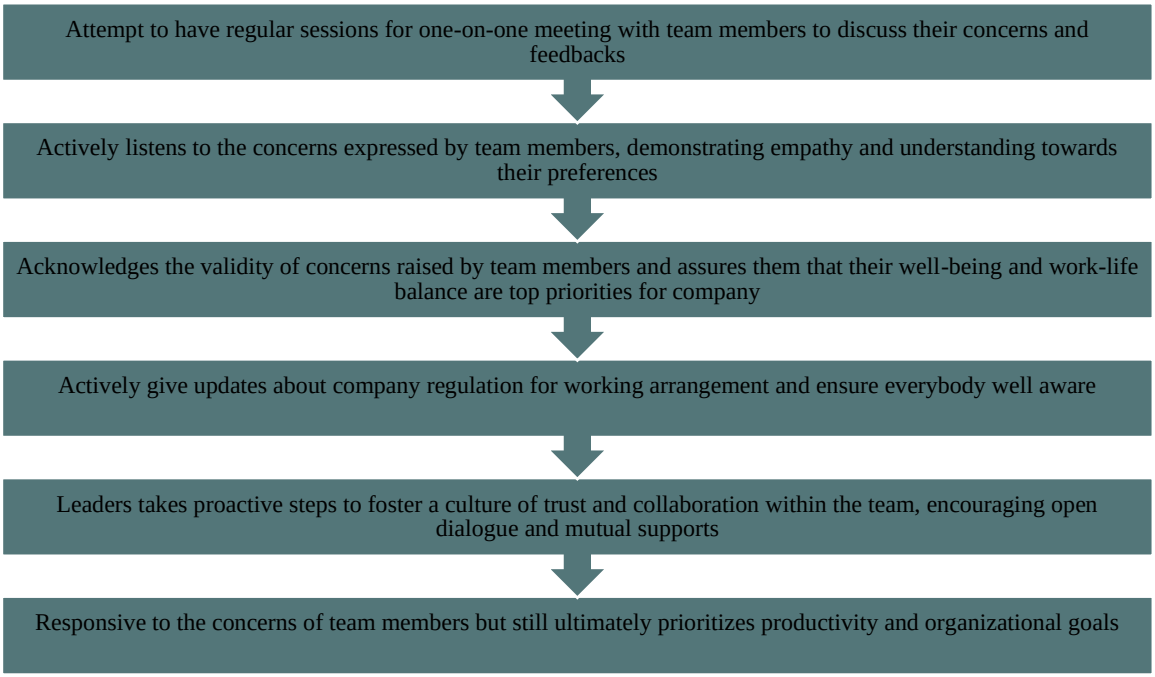
I have provided them with instructions outlining their tasks, deadlines, and other pertinent details. Additionally, I prefer to focus on substantive discussions rather than engaging in small talk. Once a task is completed on its designated date, I review its completion and duration. Should it surpass the allocated time frame, I will request an explanation along with a recalculation of the time frame. (HE1)

I oversee a workforce of 200 individuals, and it is imperative for me to consistently demonstrate my presence alongside those who are working under different arrangements, whether it be remote or on-site. I make it a priority to be readily available and supportive of their needs. (HE2)

These evolving concepts highlight the importance of leaders adopting flexibility, innovation, and inclusivity as they navigate the intricate dynamics of modern organizations.

Defense Mechanism: Portraying as The Company's Policy Supporter

From the challenges that all of the respondents have experienced in the post-pandemic COVID-19, the authors discovered that all of the respoinvolvesndents have adopted a particular defence mechanism to all the pressure from the leading role. In the course of the verbatims of interview, the authors discovered that leadership is as much a function of perception as it is of action when leaders master the art of conveying one image while holding another (Northouse, 2021). In this way, the authors look at the fascinating landscape where leaders can share the values of diversity and welcoming practices, while having other motivations that are hidden. Findings about this can be seen as figure below:



The character of a leader who looks quite open to all people but, in fact, has different preferences, can be connected with Sigm Reaction formation is a defence mechanism that is used by an individual to replace the thoughts, feelings, or behaviours that are viewed as threatening or undesirable with their very opposite. Concerning the leader's attitude, they may hold tacit or stated beliefs that are adverse to diversity, and while avoiding these attitudes, they may simply disguise themselves as the diversity supporters (Harris & Jones, 2020). For instance, the leader may hold ethnic bias against some ethnic groups and yet fully support diversity policies and also support diversity. This is in order to mask the latent or actual bias that one may possess and in so doing prevent the repercussions of featuring the conflict within the self.

The leader may also get validation of the social approval from others, which also strengthens the defence mechanism, while presenting themselves as inclusive and welcoming of the diversity. But, when organizations plan to enhance the diversity and inclusion policies, some of the employees hold unconscious preferences and biases that determine the way they work and make decisions. Leadership activities that involve guiding followers through change, which may involve a change in perspective or addressing difficult, and often non-technical, issues. He points out that leaders have to design contexts that enable followers to own and engage in solving adaptive challenges (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

Applying the concept of reaction formation to this process, it becomes much simpler to define the behavior of individuals and the mechanisms that govern relations and power. This paper highlights the importance of organizations fighting their internal biases to embrace the inclusion of diverse populations.

Evolving Leadership for Business and Personal Growth

This formed the basis of the research since a majority of the respondents argued that technology literacy has been the only way of coping with the change. This paper aims at exploring the importance of technology literacy in the current post COVID-19 world. Since people and companies are yet to change how they go about their business, technology literacy becomes very vital in helping people to deal with the challenges and grasp opportunities that are associated with technology. Everyone learnt the hard way that COVID-19 made technology adoption go mainstream in many ways, including remote work, virtual meetings, online classes, and telemedicine, among others, which means that people need to be prepared for the new world of work. Hence, it could be argued that people should be ready for technology literacy, which is also one of the factors that are leading towards change management in view of environmental change.

Besides, technology literacy is a powerful instrument that not only eases the gap but also creates new ways for individuals' success. The current COVID-19 pandemic has actually worsened the inequalities and disparities in education, health, and employment, yet technology literacy is the only way through which the vulnerable groups can manage to escape this cycle. Technological literacy offers a means by which individuals can gain information, get in touch with others, and engage in the economic systems of the new economy in a way that can be liberating and can give people the power to determine This paper unveils that technology literacy investment does not only provide a timely solution to the current pandemic-related world but also sparks a positive transformation in society.

Based on the technology literacy, the current research based on the post-COVID-19 changes has pointed out that working arrangements have undergone a drastic change in terms of individual perceptions and preferences (Rothmann & Baumann, 2014). When the pandemic came and companies shifted to work and alternative schedules, many employees remained open to the new arrangements as part of their working arrangements. Wolters Kluwer now looks at hybrid, remote, and onsite working as a more permanent solution and not just necessary because of the pandemic. Also, there has been the recognition of the fact that these flexible working arrangements are important in the non-financial compensations and benefits since the employees are likely to consider it as important when choosing between two jobs. Study shows that psychological meaningfulness and availability as well as work-life balance accounted for the engagement of an employee). This shift is consistent with the shifts observed in the labour market and shows that organization must modify their work procedures.

As the authors also found in this research about confluence phenomenon, leadership style can be adjusted based on situation. This confluence has rising hypothetically due to the contingency plan to overcome the situation. It means that the leadership behavior of a leader is as effective as the context in which a leader operates. This theory also underpins the contingency approach arguing that there is no one right way to lead, but a This theory supports two major propositions of the study: the flexibility of the leadership and the relevance of leadership behavior in the context

(Fiedler, F. E. (1967)). In addition, the degree of change that has been made towards the implementation of flexible working arrangements as a standard workers' choice is a shift in paradigm in the management of talents and for employees' engagement. This has put pressure on any organization that is in a position to offer remote work and flexibility on working hours to rethink their strategies in recruitment, retention, and talent management (Marquardt, 2014). Strategies that are characterized by flexibility, self-organizing, and work-life balance are more likely to make organizations attract more employees and retain them in the future, thus increasing their commitment. Also, by implementing flexible working arrangements as part of the non-financial compensation and benefit strategy, organizations will be in a position to increase their competitiveness in the market place in order to attract and retain high-performance employees. As the authors continue to work in the post-pandemic world, the research evidence points to the need to build further on flexibility and innovation to shape the future of work in a more integrated and inclusive manner.

In this work, we explored the leadership processes during the post-COVID-19 world using the theory of adaptive leadership by DeRue. The research question that guided this study was to examine how leaders are able to manage teams in times of shifts that have been occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. After careful analysis of the data collected, we were able to identify a new type of confluence leadership, which we defined as the combination of hybrid leading, collaborative leading, and inclusive leading (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). As such, to achieve our research objectives, we grounded the authors' study in DeRue's adaptive leadership theory to explain how leaders navigate and alter their approaches in the post-pandemic context.

This paper adds to the current literature on leadership by offering findings that are specific to how leaders are navigating the challenges presented by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis (Lakomski & Evers, 2020). With the integration of DeRue's theory of adaptive leadership into the findings of this study, the authors seek to provide a theoretical framework of how leaders are able to move away from the conventional concepts of leadership. In this case, this work contributes not only to the understanding of adaptive leadership as a mechanism for change but also to the importance of flexibility as a response to the challenges of post-pandemic management of teams.

Drawing from an in-depth interview with ten respondents and using the code to make the analysis easier to present, the authors present a figure reflecting how the leaders are moving from one true type of leadership into the intersection of other types.

Table 3 Drawing from an in-depth interview with ten respondents

	Coding	**Centralized**	**Distributed**	**Shared**	**oid**
Centralized	Individual actor leadership			HE	
	Directive leadership	AI, HW, SI, CW			
	Self-decision control	HE		HE	
	Individualistic	AI, HW, SI,	DT	HE	

	Coding	Centralized	Distributed	Shared	oid
	assumptions	EL			
Distributed	Division of labor		SI, DT, EL	AL	
	Dynamic delegation		AN, DT, EL, CW		
	Shifting leadership dynamics		EL , DT		
	Rotated leadership			AL	
Shared	Collective engagement in leadership		AN	HW, CW	
	Mutual reciprocity in leading and following		AL	DT	
	Collective efficacy		AN	HW, SI, DT	
	Shared followership			HW, DT	
Void	Low magnitude of leading–following interactions				
	Lack of centralization				
	Diffusion of responsibility				
	Lack of reciprocal leading–following interactions				

Emerging New Concept of Leadership in Work Arrangement

This research has established the existence of a new leadership model and a new type of confluence leadership. This new concept that we propose to call 'hybrid leading' reflects elements of centralized and distributed leadership systems. Hybrid leadership is the middle ground between centralized and decentralized leadership and best fits the challenges that are characteristic of the post-pandemic world. Furthermore, our findings illuminate two complementary manifestations of this hybridized leadership model: There are two forms of leadership which include collaborative leading and inclusive leading. Shared and distributed leadership is the kind of leadership that belongs to the team; coordination and consensus leadership (Freud, 2018). On the other hand, the idea of the inclusive leadership is derived from centralised and shared leadership, where leadership is integrated, enabled, and diverse. All the above concepts suggest that if leaders are to lead organizations effectively in the current environment, they have to be prepared to embrace flexibility, innovation, and integration.

Further study could be useful in exploring how the new leadership models are associated with rates of employee turnover post-COVID-19. A consideration of how hybrid leading, collaborative leading, and inclusive leading can be used in relation to employee turnover will therefore help to determine how leadership practices can be

used to support talent management and organisational sustainability. Research comparing turnover rates among organizations that have introduced these new leadership models with those

Furthermore, gaining insight into the intervening processes that act as bridges between these leadership styles and turnover intentions and actual turnover behavior has the potential of enhancing our understanding of the effects of the two leadership styles on organizational outcomes. Possible moderators include employee engagement, job satisfaction, perception of organizational support, and psychological motivation, which should be tested in future research (Morales et al., 2006). Additionally, exploring the moderating role of contextual variables, such as industry type, organizational size, and cultural factors, can provide nuanced insights into the boundary conditions Looking into the influencing role of contextual factors like industry type, organizational size, and cultural factors can also give us more detailed information about the situations in which hybrid, collaborative, and inclusive leadership styles work best at reducing turnover. Exploring the notion of which hybrid, collaborative, and inclusive leadership styles are most effective at reducing turnover. Thus, the answers to these research questions will help scholars to develop guidelines on how to prevent turnover and strengthen organizational performance in the post COVID-19 environment.

Therefore, future research may examine how hybrid leading, collaborative leading, and inclusive leading effect organizational performance, innovation, and involvement of employees. In doing so, scholars may gain insights regarding the processes and dynamics of these models of leadership to help leaders maximize the benefits of combining central, decentralized, as In addition, there is another interesting avenue of research to explore how technology and digital platforms are used to enact hybrid, collaborative, and inclusive leadership in virtual or remote work environments. Thus, future research in these areas may have a potential to strengthen and enlarge the theoretical base, enhance leadership development programs, and enhance organizational effectiveness in the current dynamic and global environment

CONCLUSSION

Therefore, this research provides a compelling story of what leaders have done and how they have enacted COVID-19 and its impacts on organisations through the lens of adaptive leadership. In light of the adaptive leadership theory by DeRue, our results depict the dynamic nature of leadership actions and environment—especially work arrangements in a pandemic. We have now identified a new kind of leadership practice that can be best described as hybrid, collaborative, and inclusive leadership. This hybrid approach represents a change from the conventional leadership paradigm that was centred on anticipatory responses to uncertainty. As the author also quoted from the book of Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard about situational leadership may still be relevant: “There is no single ‘best’ style of leadership. The most effective leaders are those who can change their style to meet the needs of their followers and the demands of the situation."

The quote above has reiterated the need for flexibility and adaptive-ability in leadership rather than to stick with the fixed method. By elaborating more on this, the authors conclude that adaptive leadership in the midst of changing eras, specifically pandemics, has gone hand in hand to prove that leadership in many practices has a back and forth correlation both from the individual leader contingency plan and its circumstances readiness.

Moreover, our study highlights the leading actors' significance in building organizational capacity and effectiveness in the post-COVID-19 era. The case can therefore be made that by changing their leadership styles to suit the new environment, leaders can effectively manage the complexities of the post-pandemic team environment. Hybrid, collaborative, and inclusive leadership is a new era in leadership concept and practice that shows the transformation from the autocratic system of leadership. This progression thus shows the potential of adaptive leadership, where leaders should know about adaptability and innovation in leadership. It is also essential for leaders to make sure their employees feel valued, by communicating regularly, giving personalized authentic appreciation, and doing meaningful actions to them. This research contributes to the leadership literature and theory by elaborating on the ways that leaders can adapt during the crisis. Through such an explication of the linkage between leadership behaviours and the contextual factors experienced by followers, we establish how leaders may gain insight into managing ambiguity and this paper recommends that organizations work to build the capacity for adaptability and resilience within the organization so that leaders have the skills and mindset needed to thrive in an unpredictable and turbulent world. During the post-pandemic COVID-19, the concept of leadership void did not appear in all respondents' answers, even though they had to portray themselves differently than in the normal situation.

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