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| Book Name: | [Business, Management and Economics: Research Progress](https://www.bookpi.org/bookstore/product/business-management-and-economics-research-progress-vol-1/) |
| Manuscript Number: | **Ms\_BPR\_3904** |
| Title of the Manuscript:  | **Promoting a shift towards a multi-pronged Adaptive Leadership style amidst the COVID-19 crisis within a supermarket setting** |
| Type of the Article | **Book chapter** |

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| PART 1: Comments |
|  | Reviewer’s comment | Author’s Feedback *(Please correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)* |
| **Please write a few sentences regarding the importance of this manuscript for the scientific community. A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.** | This manuscript provides valuable insights into leadership adaptability during crises, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study fills a significant research gap by focusing on leadership styles in smaller supermarket settings, which have often been overshadowed by studies on large corporations or public sectors. Its contribution is particularly relevant for researchers and practitioners exploring crisis management, leadership adaptation, and employee motivation. The findings on the blend of adaptive, democratic, and transformational leadership styles can inform leadership strategies for future crises, ensuring both organizational resilience and employee satisfaction. |  |
| **Is the title of the article suitable?****(If not please suggest an alternative title)** | The current title, **"Promoting a shift towards a multi-pronged Adaptive Leadership style amidst the COVID-19 crisis within a supermarket setting,"** accurately reflects the manuscript's content. However, it can be refined for better clarity and impact.**Suggested Alternative Title:**"Adopting a Blended Leadership Approach: Navigating Crisis in Supermarkets During the COVID-19 Pandemic"This alternative emphasizes the key message—leadership adaptation through a blended approach—while maintaining relevance to the study's supermarket and crisis context. |  |
| Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? Do you suggest the addition (or deletion) of some points in this section? Please write your suggestions here. | The abstract is comprehensive and effectively highlights the key aspects of the study, including the context, methodology, findings, and contributions. However, some refinements can enhance its clarity and precision:1. **Add Key Quantitative Details**:While the study is qualitative, mentioning the exact number of participants (10) and the sampling location (Pietermaritzburg) earlier in the abstract will provide readers with immediate clarity.
2. **Refine Key Findings**:The phrase *"there is no single leadership style that is sufficient for crisis management"* can be made more concise and specific. For example:
	* *"A blend of adaptive, democratic, and transformational leadership styles proved most effective in maintaining employee morale and organizational continuity during the crisis."*
3. **Clarify Practical Implications**:Add a sentence to emphasize how these findings can be applied to similar settings or other industries:
	* *"These insights can serve as a leadership framework for managing future crises in small-to-medium enterprises."*

**Revised Abstract Suggestion (Key Edits):**"The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the supermarket sector, placing immense pressure on leaders to ensure operational continuity and employee motivation. This study examines the leadership styles preferred and employed during the pandemic within supermarkets in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Using a qualitative approach, thematic analysis of interviews with 10 participants revealed a shift from pre-pandemic leadership styles—transformational, transactional, democratic, and autocratic—to a more adaptive, blended approach. Results highlighted the importance of combining adaptive, democratic, and transformational leadership to navigate challenges, foster collaboration, and maintain morale. The study concludes that no single leadership style suffices during crises; instead, a flexible, blended approach is crucial for employee engagement and organizational survival. These findings provide practical insights for leaders in SMEs to address future crises effectively." |  |
| **Is the manuscript scientifically, correct? Please write here.**  | The manuscript is **scientifically sound** and methodologically appropriate for a qualitative study. The use of thematic analysis aligns well with the study’s interpretive paradigm and phenomenological design. The findings are consistent with existing leadership theories and literature, particularly the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, and they provide practical implications for crisis management.**Strengths:**1. **Relevance**: The study addresses a timely and underexplored topic—leadership adaptation in smaller supermarkets during a global crisis.
2. **Theoretical Framework**: The application of the LMX theory strengthens the study's credibility and anchors findings in established leadership research.
3. **Comprehensive Discussion**: The findings are well-interpreted with strong connections to relevant literature, enhancing the manuscript's scholarly contribution.

**Areas for Improvement:**1. **Methodological Details**:
	* While the manuscript mentions purposive sampling, it would benefit from elaborating on participant selection criteria beyond years of experience.
	* Add a brief justification for choosing Pietermaritzburg supermarkets specifically—e.g., its relevance or significance in the retail sector.
2. **Thematic Presentation**:
	* The results are robust, but clearer subheadings under each theme (e.g., *“Resistance to Change: Emotional and Cognitive Challenges”*) could improve readability.
	* Highlighting direct links to leadership styles in the results would make the findings more cohesive.
3. **Practical Recommendations**:
	* Expand on practical implications for leaders. For example, include actionable steps or a framework for blending leadership styles during crises.
	* Consider a brief discussion on how these findings can be generalized to similar small-to-medium enterprises outside South Africa.
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| **Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestions of additional references, please mention them in the review form.****-** | The manuscript includes a substantial number of references, covering a variety of leadership theories, crisis management literature, and studies related to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the following observations and recommendations can enhance the quality and relevance of the references:**Strengths in References:**1. **Theoretical Breadth**:
	* The manuscript draws on classical and contemporary leadership theories, such as transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, servant, and adaptive leadership. The inclusion of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) as the theoretical underpinning is well-chosen and relevant to the study’s focus on leader-employee dynamics.
	* Key foundational works (e.g., Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Stogdill, 1950) demonstrate the authors' grounding in core leadership theory.
2. **Crisis-Specific Relevance**:
	* References related to leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Koh, 2020; Du Plessis & Keyter, 2020; Kaul et al., 2020) are appropriate and help contextualize the findings. This ensures that the manuscript remains aligned with current global developments and challenges.
3. **Practical and Regional Focus**:
	* The inclusion of works focused on crisis leadership and resistance to change (e.g., Andersen, 2020; Issah, 2018) supports the practical implications of the study.
	* Relevant literature on the South African retail sector (e.g., Veneto, 2013) helps localize the research and provides a grounded understanding of the study’s context.

**Gaps and Areas for Improvement:**While the references are robust, certain improvements can make the manuscript stronger:1. **Recency of References**:
	* Some foundational references, such as Tannenbaum et al. (1961) and Stogdill (1950), although relevant, are quite dated. While it is acceptable to include classical theories, the manuscript would benefit from integrating more recent studies (post-2018) that explore leadership adaptability, particularly in the context of crises or retail sectors.
	* For instance, works on post-COVID leadership trends, digital transformation, or small-to-medium enterprise (SME) resilience could provide additional contemporary insights.

**Recommendation**: Incorporate more recent references (e.g., 2022–2024) from scholarly journals focusing on leadership adaptation, crisis management, and employee motivation during global disruptions. Examples might include studies from journals like *Leadership Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Research*, or *International Journal of Crisis Management*.1. **Diversity in Sources**:
	* The current references rely heavily on leadership frameworks and crisis management literature but lack representation from interdisciplinary sources. Including research from behavioral psychology, human resource management, and SME resilience studies would enrich the manuscript’s scope.

**Recommendation**: Consider adding studies that explore employee psychological responses to crisis situations and leadership interventions. Behavioral studies on employee morale, motivation, and stress management during crises can strengthen the discussion on resistance to change and employee leadership preferences.1. **Regional Balance**:
	* While the focus on South Africa is appropriate, including references from similar retail sectors in other developing countries (e.g., India, Brazil, Southeast Asia) could enhance the generalizability of the findings. This comparative perspective can also help global readers relate to the study’s implications.

**Recommendation**: Integrate regional studies or case analyses on crisis leadership and retail management from developing economies to create a more globally relevant discussion.1. **Citation Accuracy and Formatting**:
	* While the reference list is comprehensive, careful proofreading is needed to address minor inconsistencies in formatting (e.g., spacing, capitalization, and DOI links). Proper APA compliance must be ensured throughout the reference section.
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| Is the language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications? | The language quality of the manuscript is generally **suitable** for scholarly communication, with a clear and organized structure. However, a few refinements can elevate the overall academic tone and readability to meet the highest scholarly standards:**Strengths in Language Quality:**1. **Clarity and Structure**:
	* The manuscript is well-structured, with a logical flow from the introduction to the conclusion.
	* The thematic organization of the results section is clear and easy to follow, ensuring the reader understands how the findings relate to leadership styles and employee experiences.
2. **Technical Precision**:
	* Key leadership terminologies (e.g., adaptive, democratic, and transformational leadership) are used accurately and consistently throughout the paper.
	* Concepts from the literature (e.g., LMX Theory, resistance to change, crisis management) are well-integrated into the discussion, demonstrating a sound understanding of leadership frameworks.
3. **Balanced Academic Tone**:
	* The authors maintain a formal and objective tone, appropriate for scholarly work. The use of direct quotes from participants enriches the qualitative analysis while ensuring the manuscript remains grounded in empirical evidence.

**Areas for Improvement in Language Quality:**1. **Refinement of Sentence Structure**:
	* Some sentences are overly long and complex, which may hinder readability. Breaking these sentences into shorter, more concise ones will improve clarity and engagement.
		+ **Example**:Original: *"The results suggests that employees felt overwhelmed by the uncertainty, safety concerns, and job roles and insecurity during the initial phase of the crisis."*Revised: *"The results suggest that employees initially felt overwhelmed due to uncertainty, safety concerns, and job insecurity caused by the crisis."*
2. **Grammar and Word Choice**:
	* Minor grammatical errors and inconsistencies in verb tense (e.g., *“results suggests”* should be *“results suggest”*) appear occasionally.
	* Redundancies can also be eliminated to make sentences more impactful. For example:
		+ *“Participants noted challenges with implementing and enforcing social distancing and PPE use.”* → *“Participants noted challenges enforcing social distancing and PPE use.”*
3. **Enhanced Academic Vocabulary**:
	* To align the manuscript with top-tier scholarly communication standards, the authors can incorporate more advanced academic vocabulary and transitions.
		+ **Examples**:
			- Instead of *“The crisis made leaders change,”* use *“The crisis necessitated leadership adaptation.”*
			- Instead of *“Leaders had to quickly adjust,”* use *“Leaders were compelled to rapidly recalibrate their strategies.”*
4. **Consistency in Terminology**:
	* The manuscript should consistently use terms like *COVID-19 pandemic* or *the pandemic* to avoid repetition and ensure academic uniformity. Terms like *new normal* should be used cautiously, as they may sound more colloquial unless framed appropriately.
5. **Professional Proofreading**:
	* To achieve polished scholarly language, the manuscript would benefit from a final round of professional proofreading to ensure grammatical accuracy, punctuation consistency, and sentence fluency.
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| Optional/General comments | This manuscript is a strong, well-organized qualitative study that addresses an important gap in crisis leadership research within smaller supermarket settings. It demonstrates clear relevance to both academia and practice. By incorporating the suggested refinements—such as improving the problem statement, integrating recent interdisciplinary references, enhancing visual presentation, and providing actionable recommendations—the manuscript will be further elevated to meet the highest scholarly standards.The study’s emphasis on a **blended leadership approach** during crises serves as a critical contribution to leadership theory and offers practical solutions for SME leaders navigating future disruptions. |  |

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| **PART 2:**  |
|  | **Reviewer’s comment** | **Author’s comment *(if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)*** |
| **Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?**  | ***(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)*** |  |

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| **Reviewer Details:** |
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