| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Overcoming Remote Leadership Challenges: Lessons Learned from Covid-19

Daniel Mandel Gandrita[1] ✉ **Ana Sousa Gandrita[2] and David Pascoal Rosado[3]**

[1]*Ph.D Candidate, Universidade Europeia, Lisboa, Portugal*
[2]*Teacher and CEO, ISCTE-IuL, Lisboa, Portugal*
[3]*Teacher, Academia Militar, Lisboa, Portugal*
Corresponding Author: Daniel Mandel Gandrita, **E-mail**: daniel.gandrita@gmail.com

| **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to determine how leaders are overcoming remote work and team management challenges while navigating the pandemic context that we are now facing. The relevance of this research is based on the approach to leadership theory, articulating them with the remote work and teams management theories. To formulate the research problem, we considered two analytical dimensions, remote leadership and the competencies anchored, which help to understand how nowadays leaders adapt to remote-work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. A qualitative method was applied, and interviews by questionnaire were conducted to obtain 40 responses. As teams suddenly were pushed into remote work settings, valuable opportunities have arisen to learn more about: (1) which are the most used and intuitive digital tools, (2) which are the main challenges faced by leaders, (3) what their teams expect from them when facing a crisis. The results show that remote leadership is crucial while moving forward to Society 5.0 as technology becomes more and more present in our lives (Fukuda, 2020), the existence of three dimensions that need work while promoting work-life balance, and developing the right soft skills to help teams. The main goal of this study is centered on the research of relevant leadership competencies, practices, and techniques that can contribute to overcoming the challenges that may arise in remote team settings and contribute to the body of knowledge on the subject of Covid-19. The findings point out the belief or disbelieve of remote work efficacy, the new role of managers and the continuous use of technology for the development of their daily work, and the renovation of skills to have better performance.

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has spread around the world, causing socio-economic responses, not only a health crisis but also influencing economic activities, life in society, and several changes in the work culture of organizations (Chen, 2021). The world changed with the outbreak, and business leaders began to take action and initiative in managing the challenges presented by the pandemic crisis (Mather, 2020).

Although there is not a particular timeframe for this crisis to finish, the role of organizational leaders and the impact of every decision they make is magnified. Despite the fact that the level of responsibility sometimes can be overwhelming, managers have the critical task of finding solutions to this crisis while also considering the image, the financial stability of the organization, as well as the welfare and morale of employees (Wooten & James, 2008). The unfolding events are also an opportunity for organizations to provide flexibility and create conditions to guarantee work-life balance policies not affecting employees' performance (Latha, 2020).

Harris (2020) considers that it is necessary (re)education on the organizational process revealing which leaders found themselves in arms with a situation that needs to safeguard employees' positions and migrate to a new way of working, always envisioning the continuity of their plans. In that sense, managers begin to make use of technologies to work, communicate, and offer new control possibilities to ensure the continuity of operations (Delfino, 2021). As a result, and in response to these daily uncertainties, many organizations asked their employees to start working remotely.

Remote work, also known as telecommuting or teleworking, means that a part or even a whole of work is done by an individual while working at a different location without the person directly paying attention and/or supervising (Van Zoonen, 2021). This practical solution comes with advantages to the worker, like having greater work autonomy, more flexible hours, reduced commuting, and better work-life balance. Kathleen (2021), however, underlines some disadvantages identified as social isolation, distractions, and family work conflict (Galanti, 2021). To businesses, these pros and cons are converted into challenges that leaders need to keep in mind and, at the same time, overcome.

Covid-19 also provided an opportunity to accept a huge natural experiment in this way of work. This large-scale digital transformation (e.g., Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Carroll & Conboy, 2020; Fletcher & Griffiths, 2020; Venkatesh, 2020) is testing how management can be practiced and creating new working applications for both team leaders and team members (Chamakiotis, 2021).

Given the nature of the crisis related to COVID-19 and our need to deepen and acquire knowledge (James et al., 2011) on how to overcome remote leadership in such challenging times, In this study the aim is to understand how team leaders adapted to a remote-work setting during the Covid-19 pandemic and understand what lessons they have learned during these troubled times.

This article begins by presenting the theoretical framework, which presents the concepts of leadership, teamwork, SARS-CoV-2, social distancing, and human resources management. The methodology is supported by a bibliometric analysis which helps to understand the steps made to acquire the papers regarding the subject of study. This is followed by the presentation and analysis of the results, their interpretation, comparison, and discussion, helping to answer the central question. Finally, we reflect on the conclusions and provide a set of practical implications designed to guide leaders, help team members, provide a conductor wire to human resources management, and give a contribution to other scholars regarding the theme in the research studies.

2. Theoretical Framework
2.1 Leadership and Teamwork
Leadership is generally described as an interpersonal process in which a leader influences his followers (Dansereau, 2013). This concept is usually linked to the guidance of an organization throughout its phases and the insurance of its survival (Probert, 2011). Some authors, like Waldman (2011), Bauman (2013), and Caufield (2021), stated that leadership, in its number of ramifications, continues to focus to a large extent on an internal, one-on-one relationship between leaders and followers.

It is also considered an art that depends on a more interpretative and inquiry process to decide how to act in a determined situation. Leaders must show a higher degree of commitment and elevate the status of moral empowerment and inspire in a humble, responsible, and supportive manner to inspire others to achieve a set of goals as planned.

Leadership can be divided into two categories – First, the Universal theory presents the assumptions that a leader has innate characteristics, a set of congenital and subsequently acquired attributes, and that the effectiveness depends on their behavior. The second is the Contingency theory, which assumes that there is no optimal leadership style and that different situations/circumstances require different leadership styles (Uslu, 2019).

These theories should not be confused with other organizational-level phenomena despite influencing other processes centered around other individual actors. Thus, a broader and more contemporary perspective shows that the depiction of leadership as a method of influence occurs within organizations in which the leader is only considered an integral part of the chessboard (Waldman, 2011).

As organizations worldwide continue to grow and evolve to a more knowledge-based, more virtual, more technologically sophisticated, and with more networks, the concept of leadership in teamwork also expanded in many significant ways (Chin, 2015). Contemporary organizations have started to grow their reliance on teams, surging a high interest in a more comprehensive perspective on the convergence of leadership and teamwork (Daspit et al., 2013). Teamwork is inserted within team performance and is considered a set of interrelated attitudes, cognitions, behaviors, and attitudes contributing to the dynamic process of implementation (Salas, 2008).

As a concept, the team can be defined as a group of people who work together or collectively to achieve the same purpose and goals providing outstanding service quality (Sanyal, 2018). Katzenbach and Smith (1994), in their book *The Wisdom of Team,* also add that team performance is about thrust; in their view, performance and teams are inextricably connected with the belief that there is confusion about a team and slight confusion over what helps to make teams perform well.

Mark et al. (2001) present the concept of teamwork, describing how they are doing it with each other, referring to the scope of independent and interactive behavioral processes among team members that convert team inputs (e.g., member characteristics, organizational team member function) into outcomes (team member satisfaction, team performance).

Teamwork can enable team members to have a higher level of ability, emotional security, and self-confidence to positively plan and make decisions with others. The author also adds that the absence of strategies and teamwork can lead to occupational failure, low morale, disappointment, and poor productivity threatening the organization's entity (Ibid, 2001). With recent pandemic events into consideration, Khattak (2020) characterized teamwork as a procedure of changing a group of people with several interests, expertise, and foundations into a coordinated and productive work unit.

This component (teamwork) means that employees work collectively to gain a specific vision and complete work in a better way, and accomplish company goals. In conclusion, effective collaboration supplies significant benefits to organizations facilitating the work of all the stakeholders involved. To ensure that teams are concerned with the organizational goals is necessary to have strong leadership that will contribute to the solution of the daily problems and ensures the continuity of the operations.

2.2 SARS-CoV-2

The prevention, promotion of health, and the spirit of solidarity had never been so important in people's lives as during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Coronaviruses are minute in size (65-125 nm in diameter), containing a single-stranded RNA as a nucleic material, with a size ranging from 26 to 32 kb in length (Khan, 2020). The disease name was subsequently approved as Covid-19 by the WHO (World Health Organization). Meanwhile, 2019-nCov was renamed SARS-CoV-2 by the worldwide committee on the taxonomy of viruses. On February 24th of 2020, more than 80,000 confirmed cases, including more than 2,700 deaths, were reported worldwide, affecting at least 37 countries (Yuen, 2020).

Covid-19 is usually spread either through physical contact with an individual (person-to-person), droplets, or, less possibly, oral transmission. In addition, researchers concluded that it is a highly transmissible virus in which it is necessary to understand its epidemiology, clinical features, transmission, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention to gain insight into the disease (Baloch, 2020).

The onset of Covid-19 symptoms to possible death is from 6 to 41 days, with an average of 14 days. This period is dependent on the patient's age, and the status of the person's immune system shorter among older patients when compared with those under the age of 70 years. The most common symptoms at the beginning of Covid-19 illness are fatigue, cough, and fever. However, other symptoms may arise, such as *"sputum production, headache, hemoptysis, diarrhea, lymphopenia, and dyspnea"* (Smith, 2020: 4).

2.3 Social Distancing and Remote Work

One of the measures to protect and prevent the spread of the disease, according to Piovani (2020) study, was the importance of social distancing to ensure protection as long as the restrictions become higher. Although there are some differences between the author and the world health organization in managing the pandemic, they have reached a common goal regarding their effectiveness in reducing the rate of mortality and contagion, along with other proposals to confront and prevent Covid-19 (Gualda, 2021).

Considered one option to control the pandemic is the use of a social distancing policy, defined by Chen (2021) as a measure administered to reduce interactions among people. This will contribute to limiting the mobility and control of the transmission rate, which will help reduce the infection rate and attenuate the costs of market instability. According to Silveira (2020), there are different types of measurement inserted in social distancing, passing through the closure of schools and universities, social distancing encouraged, mass gatherings banned, and total lockdown decreed.

Although the recommendations about social distancing are relatively new, it is tough to tell what it will be the long-term consequences. But it is known that it can lead to different kinds of health problems like anxiety, depression, and physical and psychological distress (Lwin, 2020). On the other hand, social distancing can lead to lower stress levels mitigated by technology and digitalization, in which people still talk to each other through different applications such as Skype, Zoom, and Facetime (Eriksson, 2020).

It's a myriad choice regarding online connectedness. As time passes, researchers have turned their attention to innovative working models accomplished outside spatial and temporal organizational borders through the support of communication and information technologies. One of the most used work settings nowadays is remote work; it is the usage of technologies that determines the employees' ability to do their job remotely (Pianese, 2016).

With the Covid-19 pandemic, several workers realized that it is possible to perform the same functions as they did in the office from home. This can be done without experiencing a loss of productivity; in some cases, it was registered as an increase in productivity. According to the author, this brings remote working within the admissible costs clause for many jobs, thus making better access to execute daily work tasks (Corvino, 2021).

Regarding the implementation stage, managers have a decisive role in re-designing processes and managing vital issues such as employees' loss of creativity. The authors also stress the key role of suitable technological tools and governance mechanisms for remote work effectiveness (Campell and MacDonald, 2007), (Errichiello, 2016). However, its focus should not be solely on the work tasks itself but take care of the well-being of its workers. It becomes necessary to continuously check on their worker's performance during the difficult period of Covid-19; also, workers find themselves in a position where they must demonstrate their productivity working from home and, at the same time, have the ability to adjust to pressures and requirements (Walter, 2020).

Although the literature reviews remote work as a basis, it is essential to refer to telecommuting, also known as telework, allowing employees to perform their job duties remotely, far from their central workplace, following work agreements. It becomes a choice for workers that attempt to temporarily craft a new work environment to increase personal work creativity and productivity (McCloskey et al., 2003).

Telecommuting has advantages that can be observable and practical to workers regarding flexible schedules, cost-saving, environmental impact, and a better work environment. Some challenges were discovered regarding the changes in adapting to work processes, the negotiation Carnevale, 2020; Fisher et al., 2020) between work and family, leading to a destabilized work-life balance (Caringal-Go, 2021).

2.4 Human Resource Management

The literature on human resource management often highlights the importance of aligning with the organizations' goals, providing the conditions for employees to contribute effectively to greater results (Costa, 2019). Inserted in its policies and practices, authors like Oliveira (2017), Iqbal (2018), and Demo (2019) talk about the importance of human resources management in organizational strategy, the integrated approaches, and how to develop new ways for the well-being of people in the organization.

The speed at which Covid-19 spread out took several governments by surprise, with the negative outcome that most of them couldn't respond or mobilize the capacity to give answers to the problem faced. Consequently, many countries issued a mandatory *"stay-at-home",* banning all but essential economic and social activity outside the household (Butterick, 2021: 4). The impact in the workplace results in social distancing, remote work, increased unemployment, and short-time working schemes or furloughed with state support (ibid, 2021).

Human resources management needed to (re)organize its activities and founding itself with an enormous task that can lead to challenges and opportunities. In that sense, one of the first actions was the gathering of relevant information that would contribute to going through the crisis efficiently and effectively, sustaining the company's business, and being able to support their employees (Hamouche, 2021).

First, the human resources management assignments during the compulsory lockdown are to overcome and avoid insecurity of all labor mass creating forms of communication throughout the connection of remote work, and second, although organizations are passing a difficult situation, it becomes visible that the key to success is to win the trust and confidence of all retail employees by using the appropriate communication tools (Mohammed, 2020).

Although these changes are a relevant factor to surpassing and growing these pandemic times, human resources management needs to reinforce its commitment to the organization resulting in higher loyalty from the employees and a higher return for the organization (Santos, 2015). Adding to the ability of human resources management to change and adapt to these undesirable conditions, remote work brings several digital instruments that help implement new forms of labor, assisting workers in operating outside their organizations and reconfiguration of work performance (Donelly, 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1 Literature Review

This paper used a qualitative approach based on interviews by questionnaires. The method used was the inductive research approach which moves from specific research findings. The data collection was carried out bearing in mind the research purpose of investigating how leaders overcome remote work and team management's challenges while navigating the pandemic context that we are now facing.

A nonprobability sampling, more specifically, purposive sampling, and the members were selected according to the purpose of the study. Using a bibliometric methodology will help understand the steps made to gather data and the relevance of the study.

3.2 Sample Characterization

Our questionnaire sample covered 40 individuals, 67% are from Portugal, and the remaining 33% are from other European countries. The current job level with the higher percentage is people's manager, director, or above with 67%, and at an individual level, 33%. The sectors that weigh the most are Business and Professional, with 21%, and other sectors have 19%.

Regarding the size of the organization, fifteen-five individuals have 1-500 employees with 38%, four individuals have 501-1000 employees with 10%, one individual has 1.001-5.000 employees with 3%, ten individuals have 5.001-10.000 employees with 26%, and nine individuals have more than 10.001 employees with 23%.
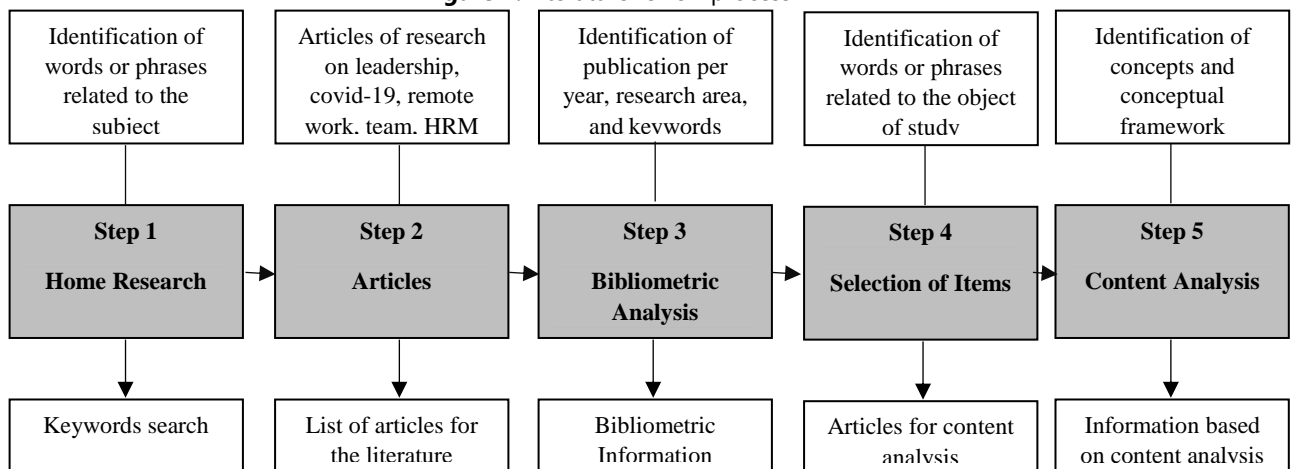
The most significant percentage regarding gender was answered by 24 men representing 60%, and 16 women constituting 40% of the results. For last, the ages between 16-24 years old have one answer registering 3%. Ages between 25-35 years old have seven answers with 18%, and between 36-45 years old have written sixteen responses with a percentage of 40%. Lastly, more than 46 years old have sixteen answers, with 40%. Also, the participants were recruited based on their experience and expertise.

3.3 Data Analysis Process

The literature review was selected throughout the reading of abstracts with keywords similar to this study, removing all the articles non-related to the subject. These words were added and selected in the *Web of Science* (WoS) database providing a list of high-quality peer-review articles used in the theoretical framework.

To begin our research, the keywords used in the *Web of Science* to work on the literature are "Leadership" OR "Teamwork" AND "Covid 19" OR "Social Distancing" OR "Remote work" AND "Human Resources Management" OR "Team Management" giving a total of 255.568 articles published. Refining the results by the categories of management, business, communications, and telecommunications gave 40.029 results.

Figure 1: Literature review process

Identification of words or phrases related to the subject	Articles of research on leadership, covid-19, remote work. team. HRM	Identification of publication per year, research area, and keywords	Identification of words or phrases related to the object of study	Identification of concepts and conceptual framework
Step 1 **Home Research**	**Step 2** **Articles**	**Step 3** **Bibliometric Analysis**	**Step 4** **Selection of Items**	**Step 5** **Content Analysis**
Keywords search	List of articles for the literature	Bibliometric Information	Articles for content analysis	Information based on content analysis

Source: Own elaboration

While refining for publication years, considering 2019 to 2022, the total found was 11.986 articles. Afterward, the search was restrained by the document types to articles giving 10.370 results. Filtered by publication titles, we could determine four journals relevant to this study, refining a total of 2.416 articles.

Table1: Journals and Number of articles

Journals	No of Articles
Asia Pacific Business Review	27
Asia Pacific Journal of Management	37
Leadership Organization Development	217
Leadership Quarterly	110
Leadership	131
Journal of Leadership Studies	247
Nonprofit Leadership Management	116
Journal of Business Research	175
Journal of Leadership Organizational Studies	103
International Journal of Organizational Leadership	65
International Journal of Human Resource Management	102
Organization	22
Journal of Management Development	69
Human Relations	74
Management Decision	71
Academy of Management Journal	41
Management Research Review	78
Human Resource Management	36
Journal of Management	52
Journal of Management Organization	53
Human Resource Development International	42
European Management Journal	34
Business Horizons	33
Human Resource Development Quarterly	40
Strategic Management Journal	25
Team Performance	25
Employee Relations	42
Human Resource Management Review	26
Journal of Change Management	35
Harvard Business Review	21
British Journal of Management	22
Journal of Management Studies	34
Human Resource Management Journal	26
Academy of Management Review	17
Business Strategy and the Environment	32
Pacific Business Review	23
International Journal of Business Society	13
Journal of Small Businesses and Enterprise Development	15
Journal of Knowledge Management	78
California Management Review	15
European Business Review	18
South Asian Journal of Business Studies	15
Management Science	21
Journal of Strategy and Management	21
International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	14
45 Journals	2.416 results

After applying data cleaning filters, we exclude the non-relevant articles to maintain those that support our argument, construct the literature review, discussion of results, conclusion with the application of this filter, and addition of the exclusion criteria; we've reached a final sample of 193 papers.

3.4 Inclusion criteria
To carry out this study, we have considered peer-reviewed journals/articles as a thrust source of knowledge, maintaining out of our scope thesis, blogs, book chapters, and editorial notes were excluded from this study. The relevant publications and work

related to this work correspond to the initial *Web of Science* criteria regarding leadership, Covid-19, remote work, human resources management, and social distancing. Also, the primary language used is English.

3.5 Exclusion criteria
Research publications were exposed according to the inclusion criteria. However, in the exclusion criteria, we have ruled out the articles that do not contribute directly to this study or our research question. More specifically, we have ruled out the following:

- *Ex1* Articles focused on business models.
- *Ex2* Articles about medical or software development process.
- Articles with related subjects like military, ethics, philosophy, medicine, or education.
- Articles focus on processing modeling guidelines

3.6 Keywords/ Cartographic Analysis
A keyword analysis (Fig. 2) was conducted to conceptualize the dynamics and evolution of bibliometric studies in leadership (Waltman, 2010). To have a significant analysis, all the data was inserted in VOSViewer through an RSI file with the following parameters: (1) co-occurrence was added to the type of analysis, (2) full counting, and (3) keywords as a unit of analysis to elaborate the network. Filtered a minimum threshold of 5 occurrences, 337 keywords which 9 meet the threshold giving the following keywords as a result: Performance (11), Covid-19 (19), Leadership (14), transformational leadership (7), management (9), mediating role (7), innovation (5), thrust (5), and work (5).

Figure 2: Keywords analysis
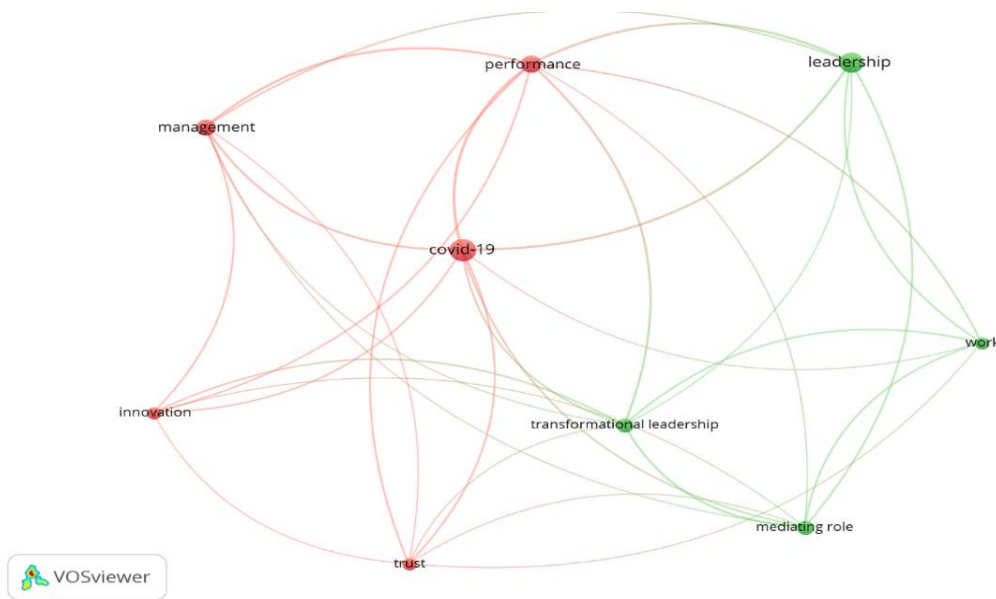
Source:
VosViewer software 1.6.67

3.7 Metadata Analysis
Table 3 shows the six articles related to the chosen keywords with the number of citations and references. The first article is connected to Covid-19, a subject that has dominated and created controversy all over the world and a theme of interest in all scientific areas. In 2021, the construct teamwork had more relevance due to the context that we face; the high number of citations has increased since Covid-19 and gained more importance in literature. Due to the pandemic context, the world team and team performance gained momentum and significant importance in the organizational community; in that sense, the number of citations reveals that it is a meaningful subject and needs to be constantly deepened to understand the present and contribute to the future.

Although the number of citations in leadership is few, this construct has a significant role in how organizations behave, what it is possible to do with their teams, and human resources management relations. Lastly, according to Gandrita and Rosado (2019), one of the essential areas in organizations is human resources management which is the key element that provides continuous support to the remaining areas to grow, develop, and be the focus of study in all scientific areas.

Table 2: Articles with over 40 citations

Article Title	Author	Journal title	Year of publication, (vol, no.: pp)	Total citations under WoS	Ref.
Covid-19 infection: Origin Transmission, and Characteristics of Human Coronaviruses	Shereen, M., Khan, S 2020	*Journal of Advanced Research*.	2020, 24, pp. 91-98	1.100	84
On Teams, Teamwork, and Team Performance: Discoveries and Developments.	Salas, E., Cooke, N.	*The Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*	*2008, 50(3), pp. 540-547*	715	63
Leadership and the Three Faces of Integrity.	Bauman, C.	*The Leadership Quarterly*	2013, 24(3), pp. 414-426	57	57
Leadership Development: Crisis, Opportunities, and the Leadership Concept.	Probert, J., James, T.	*Sage Journals*	2011, 7(2), pp. 137-150	32	58
What Makes Leadership, Leadership? Using Self-Expansion Theory to Integrate Traditional and Contemporary Approaches.	Dansereau, F., Seitz, R., Yammarino, J.	*The Leadership Quarterly*	2013, 24(6), pp.798-821	43	135
Work engagement: Individual and Situational Antecedents and its Relationship with turnover intention	Oliveira, L., Rocha, J.	*Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios*	2017, 19(65), pp. 415-431	9	46

4. Framework Analysis

4.1 Covid-19 Impact on Team's Dynamics and Operations

According to the literature review, Covid-19 is a transmissible virus that all ages can contract the illness because it can be transferred through large droplets resulting from sneezing and coughing of a symptomatic or asymptomatic individual (Smith, 2020). This virus has affected teamwork and team performance regarding their interrelated attitudes, cognitions, behaviors, and attitudes contributing to the dynamic process of performance (Sanyal, 2018).

A team is defined as a group of individuals who work interdependently to achieve the same goals providing the best outcome possible; however, with recent events, teamwork needs to specify the vision and work differently to accomplish company goals (Khattak, 2020). In the questionnaires, it was agreed to the idea that Covid-19 had a big impact on the team's dynamics and on how teams operate, as it impacted basic communication processes and work procedures as well as represented a constraint to teamwork due to the lack of physical proximity and other social interactions.

Table 3: Main challenges for teams in a remote-work setting while navigating the pandemic context

Main Challenges	Teams and leader's perspective
Communication	[1] "Bad communication" or *"No communication"* is often the main cause of chaos and heartburn in a team [2] Leaders struggle to keep up with every team member and to provide continuous feedback [3] Difficulties in sharing info and getting the desired result when explaining something remotely
Disengagement	[1] Keeping people aligned, motivated, and engaged is a true challenge [2] Less productivity [3] Lack of social interaction
Work-life balance	[1] It is hard to disconnect at the end of the workday [2] Working from home often results in a fusion of work and private life [3] Battling a new set of "distractions" (children, pets, etc.)

While moving into a full remote-work environment, our participants identified the easiest and hardest thing to adapt to both at an individual and collective; at an individual level, the hardest thing was focusing on tasks, and the easiest one was time management, at a collective level the hardest thing was communication, and the easiest thing was work planning.

4.2 People and Organizations Embrace Remote-Work as the New Normal

In the last decade, researchers paid attention to innovative working models. One of the most used labor settings is remote work, determined as the ability of employees to do their job remotely (Pianese, 2016). This tool (remote work) helps several workers to realize their tasks with greater autonomy, more flexible hours, reduced commuting, and better work-life balance Kathleen (2021). In this format, there is the possibility to function in the office from home without experiencing a loss of productivity, reducing costs and making better access to execute daily work tasks (Corvino, 2021).

In the questionnaires that were developed, some participants argued that people were ready to embrace remote work as the new normal, but most of them expressed that only a few were, in fact, ready or not ready at all. Although was necessary the use of social distancing considered a measure that can be taken to limit the spread of infectious disease between people (Kelso et al., 2009), throughout the questionnaires, it was possible to understand that some of those individual-level contributors were ready while others believe that they are not ready to work remotely.

Table 4: The top 3 digital tools that were revealed to be the most useful and intuitive while remote working

Digital tools for remote work	Importance and practical application
Zoom	[1] Turned out to be a cornerstone [2] It is easy to set up, use, and manage [3] Connects via desktop clients, browsers, conference rooms & mobile devices [4] Single platform for meetings, phone, webinars & chat [5] Allows to stay connected with the whole team
MS Teams	[1] Fosters incredibly targeted communication among teams [2] Meeting and scheduling tools allow to sync calendars. [3] Is a Digital Transformation Kickstarter

	[4] Allows real-time document collaboration. [5] It can be accessed anywhere, anytime, on any device
Whatsapp	[1] A very familiar tool used on a daily basis by most people [2] Speed and immediacy of messaging allow for discussing time-sensitive things [3] Excellent for engaging with and managing remote teams [4] Ease of communication [5] Enables creativity

Around 98% of our participants consider using some digital tools whenever they get back to the office, as these tools are useful to keep teams synchronized, appear to be more practical, and allow them to keep in contact with everyone, even those who work in other cities/countries.

4.3 Manage a Remote and/or a Hybrid Team

Leadership is generally described as an interpersonal process in which a leader influences his followers. He encourages and empowers others in a responsible, humble, and supportive manner to inspire others to follow him (Dansereau, 2013). Has organizations become more technologically evolved, it is necessary that leaders know how to manage their teams and subsequently distribute the work more effectively.

To this task be achieved in a practical and efficient manner, organizations must start to rely on teams and see from a more comprehensive perspective the convergence of leadership and teamwork (Daspit et al., 2013). Although the advantages attached to remote-work are observable and practical to the majority of businesses, nearly 100% of participants' team leaders stated that they did not feel like they were prepared to manage a remote and/or hybrid team.

Holt (1995) considers that organizations entered our lives in different ways, by people consuming their products, transforming buildings into offices, reading about in newspapers, and absorbing their advertisements. These constant challenges contribute to the ability of organizations to test their abilities and be successful. With this in consideration, it is necessary to develop effective human resources management practices and policies that will enable them to motivate and retain competent employees and attract talent that will contribute to the organizational objectives.

According to the collected data, only 15% of the organizations offered any specialized training, and 85% of our sample stated that they felt like they had to figure out what to do and how to do it on their own to adapt themselves and their teams to the new remote work reality.

Table 5: What do teams expect the most from their leaders when facing a crisis?

Dimension	Teams' and Leaders' expectations
Daily Tasks	[1] To make timely decisions [2] To provide the right tools, training, and environment [3] To keep people focus [4] To pursue goals [5] To give attention, constant interaction, and support [6] To build team spirit
Soft Skills	[1] Resilience [2] Courage [3] Collaboration [4] Communication [5] Flexibility [6] Leadership

	[7] Emotional intelligence
Behavior	[1] To remain calm under pressure [2] To reinsure others [3] To think positive [4] To never give up [5] To spread hope [6] To be fully dedicated [7] To give recognition to others [8] To promote solidarity

5. Discussion of the findings and Implications

With the constant changes throughout the pandemic crisis, organizations need to use their tools to adapt and overcome the continuous challenges they encounter every day. Leaders must show a higher degree of commitment, elevating and inspiring others (Uslu, 2019) so, which enables team members to have a higher level of ability, emotional security, and self-confidence to positively plan and make decisions with others (Mark et al., 2001).

One of the Covid-19 measures of protection was the social distancing policy administrated to reduce interactions among people (Chen, 2021), and as a response from organizations to face everyday challenges, remote-work was used as a working tool for their daily tasks. With these changes in working methods, it becomes necessary that employees have flexible schedules, cost-saving, environmental impact, a better work environment, and a better work-life balance (Carnevale, 2020); (Fisher et al., 2020).

In our research, we have discovered that managers become remote leaders who have to overcome challenges regarding how they communicate with their teams and how they influence their followers (Dansereau, 2013). There is a strong necessity to engage with workers following the organization's plan and objectives, and although people are working at home, it is necessary to find a balance.

To find a resolution to the gaps presented in teams and the leader's perspective, it is necessary to align the organizational objectives with human resources management to provide the options and conditions for employees to effectively contribute to greater results (Costa, 2019).

This new context makes leaders continue to reevaluate new ways to team's work maintaining social distancing as Covid-19 becomes an intrinsic part of the new normal. The contribution to social distancing is considered a measure that can limit the spread of infectious diseases between people (Kelso et al., 2009).

Tools like Zoom, MS Teams, and WhatsApp were embraced by some of the participants arguing that people are ready to work remotely to achieve the same purpose and goals of providing outstanding service quality (Sanyal, 2018). However, looking at the respondents at an individual – level contributors it becomes clear that some believe in remote work while others believe that they are not ready to work remotely

As organizations continue to be challenged in providing services and products to their clients, human resources management has to create new policies and practices that will enable workers to be motivated, search for new talent with new ideas, and retain competent workers who will continuously contribute for the growth of the organization. Due to these changes in leaders' approach, the structural and measurement model (Chansatiporn, 2019) need to be altered to give a correct assessment of the reality by adding, according to the assessments in table 5, the daily tasks which involve what leaders need and what they expect from its followers.

The renovation of soft skills is needed to surpass the difficulties regarding the pandemic, and the behavior component which will make the team more effective in converting team inputs (e.g., member characteristics, organizational team member function) into outcomes (team member satisfaction, team performance) (Mark et al., 2001)

Given these considerations, we obtain in our theoretical implications a more profound understanding of how remote leadership works and what managers should be aware of working and being part of a team, and not only leading the team. Regarding the practical implication, the knowledge of what tools are available for the daily work of managers, the adjustment of skills to work towards the goals in the organization, and the holistic engagement of human resources management, managers, and employees lead to organizational excellence.

6. Conclusions

This paper analyses how team leaders adapt to a remote work setting during the Covid-19 pandemic. The topic was analyzed through the triangulation of data and literature review, in which we could understand that with this pandemic, in an almost mandatory way, many businesses were forced to close, leading to an unprecedented disruption of commerce in most industries (Donthu, 2020).

Leaders identified the problem and made several changes to continue operations and acquire a competitive advantage in the process. The adaptation to remote work was made through the use of digital tools like (1) Zoom, which allows teams to stay connected during the conference call or work itself and can be connected via desktop, clients, browsers, conference rooms, webinars, or video chat. (2) MS Teams permit real-time document collaboration, be accessed anywhere, anytime, on any advice. (3) Whatsapp is becoming one of the best communication tools for engaging with and managing remote teams.

The challenges attached to the present context are considered a difficulty to remote technology: the lack of support of communication, disengagement, and work-life balance. In our data, we presented the leader's perspective, which, in terms of communication, encountered the difficulty of sharing and got the desired result when explaining something to someone remotely or keeping up with every team member and providing continuous feedback.

The disengagement of employees results in less productivity and a lack of social interaction. Lastly, in work-life balance, leaders continue to battle with a new set of *"distractions"*, the fusion of work and private life, and the difficulty in disconnecting at the end of the workday.

Regarding expectations, we have found three dimensions that need to be worked on, (1) the Daily Tasks, which are all about providing the right tools, training, and work environment to people as well as focusing on company goals and building team spirit. Leaders need to develop (2) soft skills such as resilience, courage, flexibility, communication, and emotional intelligence in a remote work context. Regarding (3) behavior, teams expect their leaders to remain calm under pressure, reassure others, think positively, and promote solidarity.

Bearing this in mind, remote leadership opens up new doors to new hirings, the possibility of attribute tasks to people with disabilities, the redoing of leadership and remote work models, including the data from our research, and the pursuit of better communication which pointed it out as the most prominent flaw due to the arrival of remote work.

Leaders worldwide seek to test and improve the use of technological tools available to keep up and motivate their teams, having two huge concerns: Ensuring work continuity, fulfilling the goals and objectives, and maintaining the team united and motivated.

6.1 Future Research

This research focused on overcoming leadership challenges during tricky times. We developed our theory and noticed that several subjects need to be broth in, targeting an intense study that helps understand how leaders can operate during pandemic times and how organizations can benefit from these scientific contributions.

With this in mind, some topics need attention and future research, understand how can human resources management can help team leaders engage with their teams during remote, the learning and ability to know what meaningful soft skills while remote-work is being made, and what best practices can be (re)design from remote-work communications.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

ORCID iD: Daniel Mandel Gandrita (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3577-2954); Ana Gandrita (https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7570-6030) & David Pascoal Rosado (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3232-0063)

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors, and the reviewers.

References

[1] Baloch, S., Zhen, T., & Pei, X. (2020). The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Pandemic. *The TOKU Journal of Experimental Medicine, 250*(4), 271-278. https://doi.org/10.1620/tjem.250.271 10.1620/tjem.250.271

[2] Bauman, D. (2013). Leadership and the Three Faces of Integrity. *The Leadership Quarterly, 24*(3), 414-426. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.01.005

[3]   Butterick, M., & Charlwood, A. (2021). HRM and Covid-19 Pandemic: How can we Stop making a Bad Situation Worse? *Human Resource Management. 31*(4), 847-856. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12344

[4]   Chansatiporn, N., & Pobkeeree, V. (2019). Leadership and Quality Measurement Models: An Empirical Study. International Journal of Health Quality Assurance, 33(1), 52-66. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJHCQA-07-2019-0118

[5]   Campell, J., & Macdonald, C. (2007). Defining a Conceptual Framework for Telework Research. *International Journal of Business Information Systems, 4*(4), 387-402. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJBIS.2009.024502

[6]   Caufiled, L., Lee, K., & Richards, A. (2021). Leadership as an art: An Enduring Concept Framed within Cotemporary Leadership. *Leadership & Organizational Development, 42*(5), 735-747. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-11-2020-0524

[7]   Caringal-Go, J., Calleja, M., Bertulfo, D., & Manaois, J. (2021). Work-Life Balance Crafting during COVID-19 Exploring Strategies of Telecommuting Employees in the Philippines. *Taylor and Francis*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2021.1956880

[8]   Chen, J., & Sriphon, T. (2021). Perspective on Covid-19 Pandemic Factors Impacting Organizational Leadership. *Sustainability 13*(6), 3230. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13063230

[9]   Chen, K., Pun, C, & Wong, H. (2021). Efficient social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic: Integrating Economic and Public Health Considerations. European Journal of Operational Research, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2021.11.012

[10]   Carnevale, B., & Hatak, I. (2020). Employee Adjustment and Well-being in the Era of Covid-19: Implications for Human Resource Management. *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 183–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.037

[11]   Carroll, N., & Conboy, K. (2020). Normalizing the "new normal": Changing tech-driven Work Practices under Pandemic Time Pressure. *International Journal of Information Management*, 55, Article 102186. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102186

[12]   Corvino, F. (2021). Kant on Remote Working: A Moral Defense. *Philosophy of Management*, https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-021-00189-7

[13]   Chamakiotis, P., Panteli, N., & Davison, R. (2021). Reimagining e-Leadership for Reconfigured Virtual Teams due to Covid-19. *International Journal of Information Management*, 60, 102381. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2021.102381

[14]   Costa, A., Paschoal, T., & Demo, G. (2019). Do Human Resources Policies and Practices Produce Resilient Public Servants? Evidence of the Validity of a Structural Model and Measurements Models. *Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios, 21*(1), 70-85. https://doi.org/10.7819/rbgn.v21i1.3965

[15]   Dansereau, F., Seitz, R., Chiu, C., & Yamarino, F. (2013). What Makes Leadership, Leadership? Using Self-Expansion Theory to Integrate Traditional and Contemporary Approaches. *The Leadership Quarterly, 24*(6), 798.821. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.10.008

[16]   Daspit, J., & Tillman, C., Boyd, N., & Mckee, V. (2013), Cross-Functional Team Effectiveness: an Examination of Internal Team Environment, shared leadership and Cohesion Influences, *Team Performance Management, 19*(1/2), 34-56. https://doi.org/10.1108/13527591311312088

[17]   Delfino, F., & Van der Kolk, B. (2021). Remote Work, Management Control Changes and Employee Responses during the Covid-19 Crisis. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, 34*(6), 1376-1387. https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-06-2020-4657

[18]   Donthu, N., & Gustafsson, A. (2020). Effects of Covid-19 on Business and Research. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 284-289. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.06.008

[19]   Donelly, R. (2020). Recontextualizing Remote Working and its HRM in the Digital Economy: An Integrated Framework for Theory and Practice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 32*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2020.1737834

[20]   Fletcher, G., & Griffiths, M. (2020). Digital Transformation during a Lockdown. International *Journal of Information Management*, 55, Article 102185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102185

[21]   Fisher, J., Languilaire, J., Lawthom, R., Nieuwenhuis, R., Petts, R. J., Runswick-Cole, K., & Yerkes, M. A. (2020). Community, Work, and Family in times of Covid-19. Community, *Work & Family, 23*(3), 247–252. https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2020.1756568

[22]   Fukuda, K. (2020). Science, Technology and Innovation Ecosystem Transformation Toward Society 5.0*, International Journal of Production Economics*, 220(C), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2019.07.033

[23]   Khan, S., Shereen, M., Siddique, R., & Bashir, N. (2020) Covid-19 infection: Origin Transmission, and Characteristics of Human Coronaviruses. *Journal of Advanced Research*, 24, 91-98. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jare.2020.03.005

[24]   Kathleen, S., Sven, S., Claudia, N., & Elberzhager, F. (2021). Fulfilling Remote Collaboration Needs for New Work. Procedia Computer Science, 91, 168-175. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2021.07.021

[25]   Khattak, P., Waseem, M., & Shah, M. (2020). Impact of Knowledge Sharing and Teamwork on Team Performance with the Moderating Role of Supervisor Support. *British Journal of Research*, 7(2), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.36648/2394-3718.7.2.57

[26]   Katzenbach, J., & Smith, D. (1994). The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization. Harvard Business Review Press. https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.30-4489

[27]   Kelso, J., Milne, G., & Kelly, H. (2009). Simulation Suggests that Rapid Activation of Social Distancing can Arrest Epidemic Development due to a Novel Strain of Influenza. *BMC Public Health*, *9*(117). https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-9-117

[28]   Marks, M. (2001). A Temporally Based Framework and Taxonomy of Team Processes. *Academy of Management Review, 26*(3),356-376. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2001.4845785

[29]   Mather, P. (2020). Leadership and Governance in a Crisis: Some Reflections on Covid-19. *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change, 16*(4). 579-585. https://doi.org/10.1108/JAOC-08-2020-0123

[30]   McCloskey, W., & Igbaria, M. (2003). Does "out of sight" mean "out of mind"? An empirical Investigation on the career Advancement prospects of Telecommuters. *Information Resources Management Journal, 16*(2), 19–34. https://doi.org/10.4018/irmj.2003040102

[31]   Mohammed, S. (2020). Covid-19 Challenges and Human Resource Management in Organized Retail Operations. *Utopia e Praxis Latino Americana, 25*(1), 81-92. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4280092

[32]   Galanti, T., Guidetti, G., Mazzei, E., Zappala, S., & Toscano, F. (2021). The Impacto n Employees' Remote Work Productivity, Engagement, and Stress. *Journal of Occupational and Environment Medicine, 63*(7), 426-432. https://doi.org 10.1097/JOM.0000000000002236

[33]   Gualda, E., Krouwel, A., Galvez, M., Marent, E., Pascual, I., & Garcia, E. (2021). Social Distancing and Covid-19: Factors Associated with Compliance with Social Distancing Norms in Spain. *Frontiers in Psychology, 727225*(12). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.727225

[34]   Gandrita, A., & Rosado, D. (2019). The Effect of Incorporating a Human Capital's Analysis into Strategic Planning. Journal of Reviews on Global Economics, 8, 206-225. https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-7092.2019.08.19

[35] Hamouche, S. (2021). Human Resource Management and the Covid-19 Crisis: Implications, Challenges, Opportunities, and Future Organizational Directions. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2021.15

[36] Harris, A. (2020). Covid-19 – School Leadership in Crisis? *Journal of Professional and Community, 5*(¾), 321-326. https://doi.org 10.1108/JPCC-06-2020-0045

[37] Holt, J., Sims, D., Fineman, S., & Gabriel, Y. (1995). Organizations and Organizations: An Introduction. *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, *46*(1), 136. https://doi.org 10.2307/2583847

[38] Iqbal, A. (2018). The Strategic Human Resource Management Approaches and Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Creative Climate, Journal of Advances in Management Research. https://doi.org/10.1108/JAMR-11-2017-0104

[39] James, H., Wooten, P., & Dushek, K. (2011), Crisis Management: Informing a new Leadership Research Agenda, *The Academy of Management Annals, 5*(1), 455-493, d https://doi.org /10.1080/19416520.2011.58959

[40] Latha, S., Cristopher, B. (2020). VUCA Engineering Education: Enhancement of Faculty Competency for Capacity Building. *Procedia Computer Science*, 172, 741-747. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.05.106

[41] Larson, B., Vroman, S., & Makarius, E. (2020, March). A Guide to Managing Your (Newly) Remote Workers, [*Harvard Business Review*]. 1-8. https://hbr.org/2020/03/a-guide-to-managing-your-newly-remote-workers

[42] Lwin, C., & Regmi, K. (2020). Impact of Social Distancing Measures for Preventing Coronaviruses Disease 2019 (Covid-19): A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocol. MedR xiv. 10.1101/2020.06.13.20130294

[43] Oliveira, L., & Rocha, J. (2017). Work Engagement: Individual and Situational antecedents and its Relationship with Turnover Intention. *Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios, 65*(19*), 415-431*. https://doi.org/10.7819/RBGN.V19I64.3373

[44] Pettinger, R (2020). The Socio-Economic Foundations of Sustainable Business. *Palgrave Macmillan*. 69-79. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-39274-1

[45] Prem, K., Liu, Y., Russel, T., Kucharski, A., Eggo, R., Davies, N., Flasche, S., Clifford, S., Pearson, C., & Munday, J. (2020). The effect of Control Strategies to Reduce Social Mixing on Outcome of the Covid-19 Epidemic in Wuhan, China: A Modelling Study. *The Lancet Public Health, 5*(5). https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30073-6

[46] Pianese, T., & Errichiello, L. (2016). Organizational Control in the Context of Remote Work Arrangements: A Conceptual Framework, 3, 273-305. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-351220160000031009

[47] Piovani, D., Christodoulou, M. N., Hadjidemetriou, A., Pantavou, K., Zaza, P., Bagos, P. G., Bonovas, S., & Nikolopoulos, G. K. (2021). Effect of early Application of Social Distancing Interventions on Covid-19 Mortality over the first Pandemic Wave: An Analysis of Longitudinal data from 37 countries. *J. Infect. 82*, 133–142. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2020.11.033

[48] Probert, R., & James, K. (2011). Leadership Development: Crisis, Opportunities, and the Leadership Concept. *Sage Journals, 7*(2), 137-150. https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715010394810

[49] Santos, A. (2015). Human Resources Management in the Company, Performance, and Sense of Commitment. *Revista Brasileira de Gestão e Negócios, 17*(56), 1134-1148. https://doi.org/10.7819/rbgn.v17i56.1736

[50] Salas, E., Cooke, N., & Rosen, M. (2008). On Teams, Teamwork, and Team Performance: Discoveries and Developments. *The Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, *50*(3), 540-547. https://doi.org/10.1518/001872008X288457

[51] Sanyal, S., & Hisam, M. (2018). The Impact on Work Performance of Employees: A Study of Faculty Members at Dhofar University. *Journal of Business and Management*, *20*(3), 15-22. https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-2003011522

[52] Smith, L., Gennaro, F., Pizzol, D., Marotta, C., Antunes, M., Racalbuto, V., & Veronese, N. (2020). Coronavirus Diseases (Covid-19) Current Status and Future Perspectives: A Narrative Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, (17), 2690, 1-11. h https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17082690

[53] Silveira, I., Aquino, E., Aquino, R., & Pescarini, J. (2020). Social Distancing Measures to Control the Covid-19 Pandemic: Potential Impacts and Challenges in Brazil, *PubMedgov 25*(1), 2423-2446. https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232020256.1.10502020

[54] Surji, K. (2015). Understanding Leadership and Factors that Influence Leaders' Effectiveness. *European Journal of Business and Management*, *7*(33), 154-167. https://doi.org/10.7176/EJBM/7-33-2015-03

[55] Talu, S., & Nazarov, A. (2020). Challenges and Competencies of Leadership in the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Proceedings of the Research Technologies of Pandemic Coronavirus Impact*, 486. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201105.092

[56] Van Zoonen, W., Sivunen, A., Olsson, T., Ropponen, A., Henttonen, K., & Vartiainen, M. (2021). Factors Influencing Adjustment to Remote Work: Employees' Initial Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(13) 6966. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18136966

[57] Venkatesh, V. (2020). Impacts of Covid-19: a Research Agenda to support People in their fight. International *Journal of Information Management*, 55, Article 102197. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102197

[58] Uslu, O. (2019). A General Overview of Leadership Theories from a Critical Perspective. *Marketing and Management of Innovations,* (1), 161-172. https://doi.org/10.21272/mmi.2019.1-13

[59] Waltman, L., & Eck, N. (2010). Software Survey: Vosviewer, a Computer Program for Bibliometric Mapping. *Scientometrics*, 84, 523-538. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3

[60] Malti, W. (2020). The Changing Work Landscape as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic: Insights from Remote Workers' life situations in South Africa. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, 40*(9/10), 1237-1256. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-08-2020-0386

[61] Waldman, D. (2011). Moving Forward with the Concept of Responsible Leadership: Three Caveats to Guide Theory and Research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 98, 75-83. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1021-8

[62] Wooten, L., & James, E. (2008). Linking Crisis Management and Leadership Competencies: The Role of Human Resource Development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 10*(3), 352-379, https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422308316450

[63] Yuen, K., Ye, Z., Fung, S., Chan, C., & Jin, D. (2020). SARS-CoV-2 and Covid-19: The Most Important Research Questions. *Cell Biosci, 10*(40), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13578-020-00404-