



Research Article

Does A Good Strategy Help SMES' Leaders in Managing a Crisis?

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Abstract

Since more than a year, Covid-19 has been affecting everyone in every part of the world. The fear of death has imposed a series of never-ending lockdowns. Lockdowns came along with a financial crisis that has left all business sectors in wonder, especially the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The idea of crisis is more approachable now than ever. This article aims at detecting the ability of SMEs' managers to overcome a crisis and its after-effects through the adoption of a good strategy. In the literature review part, the terms 'crisis, leadership, and strategy' are elaborated. The article's objective was closely observed using a quantitative approach. A small survey was conducted in March 2021 to detect how the Lebanese SMEs in the skin care and cosmetic sectors were able to contain the persistent crisis, at least till the time when the survey was conducted. This specified sector was selected because it is a luxe, yet, it was still operating. Twenty-seven Lebanese managers in this industry were selected to talk about the strategies that allowed them to maintain the existence of their firms. Results showed that when an SME's leader executes a proper strategy, he/she will fortify the company, making it more flexible in anticipating and containing crisis damages.

Keywords: Crisis Management, Leadership, SMEs, Strategy.

Introduction

There is no single enterprise, no matter how big or small, that is 100% immune to expected and/or unexpected crises. Each has an inherent vulnerability which might be reduced with proper planning and

following up. Currently, the Covid 19 pandemic is the first thing that comes to mind when mentioning the word 'crisis'. Almost a year after the corona virus came out of nowhere, being unexplainable and in constant mutation, the whole world is still in a shock. The whole world is struggling,

and in some sectors competing, to come up with a “survival kit”, which varies according to each and every industry. Therefore, what matters the most is to carry on, health wise, economical wise, and psychological wise. While everyone is trying to come up with this survival kit to face the pandemic ravage, Lebanon is facing another type of crisis: a non-anticipated financial crisis that started in October 2019 and whose after-effects are still bursting out one day after another. The financial crisis was accompanied by other forms of crisis; namely the Beirut blast, a skyrocketing inflation rate, the bank capital control, the daily threat of cutting the basic human needs such as medicines, bread, and fuel. Apparently, overcoming these crises will take ages. Consequently, to survive both crises, the Lebanese enterprises are left alone with their leaders/managers, whoever is left from employees, minimum access to funds, poor inventory on hand, and a one of a kind catastrophe to deal with. Perhaps, this is the best moment to observe what a responsible and efficient leader can do to contain a crisis by putting all the assets together and lead the firm to a safer board.

Literature Review

Crisis

The best way to start this article is to elucidate the term “crisis”. As Paraskeva (2006) explained, it is derived from the Greek word “Krisis”, a translation of “decision” or “choice”. It is defined as a serious event or series of events that can damage any business through threatening employees and operations and whose after-effects can either make or break them (Albrecht, 1996; Campbell, 1999; Mitroff, 2001; Seeger et al., 2003). It is further explained by Fink (2002) who stated that it is an atypical situation in the regular course of a firm’s lifecycle which can impend its operation, wellbeing, and existence. Therefore, it is an insecure time where a critical alteration approaches (Seeger & Ulmer, 2003), having the potential of shaming a business (Lerbinger, 1986). Weick (1998) stated that it is a low probable event that may trigger chaotic performances which would speed up a

catastrophe. A catastrophe arises when the business does not succeed in controlling a severe event which, in its turn, intensifies the crisis (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Campbell, 1999). Many researchers attempted to classify the crisis types. Perhaps the simplest classification is that offered by Laye (2002) who identified three types which are acts of nature, acts of human, and acts of technology. Regardless their type, all crises share almost the same criteria: they surprise companies by threatening their goals and by granting their management so little time to figure out a solution (Hermann, 1963). Crises also pass through sequential phases referred to as signal detection, preparation and prevention, containment and damage limitation, recovery, and learning (Mitroff & Pearson, 1993). In other words, Seeger et al. (2003) identified five serial crisis phases: pre-crisis situations, crisis commencement, containment, repair and reconciliation, and post-crisis. Although bearing different titles, the crisis’ phases are the same in essence. Consequently, one can assume the following three junctures: before the crisis or the crisis planning, during the crisis or the crisis response, and after the crisis or the crisis evaluation. Startlingly developed following an incident, the crisis’s effect continues to linger on till returning back to normal situation (Seeger et al., 2003). In enterprises, the crisis’ first sign is the contradiction between revenues and expenses movements: the former are sinking down, the latter are soaring (Fried, 2012) which weakens the company’s ability to adjust its economic system (Shiller, 2012). This leads us to thoroughly depict the two parts of each business’s story: the internal versus the external factors, also stated as management versus marketing. Management, being the business identification card, describes its human and financial capital, its processes, as well as its products. Marketing, on the other hand, designates the competitive environment, product and brand development, as well as consumer behavior (Messaki, 2020). In times of crises, the market share tends to shrink due to the weakness of the customers’ purchasing power. Instead of passively assessing losses, a successful company should react

quickly by keeping an eye on the markets, prioritizing its needs to assure an ultimate survival.

Strategic Leadership

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are very important to any economy as they contribute largely to its wealth. However, in times of crises, they are the most vulnerable ones. With little access to capital and with constant threats of vanishing, SMEs are in urgent need to carry on by effective leaders/managers. Nowadays, SMEs' leaders are facing a very complicated and changing environment. Recently, chaos has become the new normal where everything seems to fall apart. In the absence of effective managers, demotivation and lack of innovation would quickly reign, rendering the ability to handle the crisis almost impossible (Al-Zahrani, 2018). Upon exploring the literature of leadership, many definitions were found. The majority embrace the term "influence", making leadership a process of influencing subordinates by motivating and empowering them (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Lee & Welliver, 2018), inspiring a shared vision, granting harmony and direction, and promoting changes to reach the overall goals (Saffar & Obeidat, 2020). Furthermore, crises raised the importance of crises leaders, who, according to Laye (2002), should preoccupy themselves by being aware of existing and future dangers, through getting involved in efficient decision making processes, as well as developing and implementing plans.

Effective leadership in crises is mostly displayed through defining these four areas: the nature of the crisis, its timing, the reasons behind its occurrence, and the parties affected (Mitroff & Pearson, 1993). The earlier the crisis signs are detected, the more flexible the organization will be when facing the abnormal. In a perfect world, there is a manual to deal with each type of crisis. Unfortunately, this is not feasible! This leaves people in charge free to improvise multiple scenarios (Mitroff & Pearson, 1993). After all, this is the time that allows observers to either promote or

demote a manager by labelling him/her a leader or a boss. Accordingly, this is the time during which a manager should learn how to cope with the impossible (Mitroff, 2001). Therefore, it is vital to recognize the leaders' manners in formulating a strategy (Ireland & Hitt, 2005).

Strategic leadership, being a fundamental function of the top management, is defined as a process of effectively recognizing and exploiting the resources on hand in order to realize organizational goals (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). This is done by adequately serving the markets, which in turn, leads to high organizational performance for the benefit of all stakeholders (Obeidat, 2019). The strategic leader has a crucial responsibility when facing the uncertainty, especially in matters of adaptation to new events (Hitt & Ireland, 2002), through figuring and implementing adequate plans (Bass, 1996; Lee & Welliver, 2018). Thus, strategic planning involves formulating and executing objectives which allow the firm to become resilient when facing changing situations (Kerzner, 2001). It involves a series of steps that start by developing long term goals, then predicting external factors that might come along, designing several fight back plans, selecting the best plan, and finally evaluating the overall results (Boyle, 2001; Vargo & Seville 2011; Sotirios & Nikolaos, 2016). In times of crises, leaders can be either proactive or reactive. A proactive approach relies on forecasting and drawing a variety of plans before the crisis occurs. In contrast, the reactive approach depends on planning during and after the crisis. No matter which approach to follow, the goal is one: to contain the loss and eventually survive (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Hough & Spillan, 2005). Furthermore, four styles are depicted upon dealing with crisis (El-Mahdi & Hiba, 2002).

- The escape style: Where the firm's leader fails to resist the crisis and accuse employees of being the reason behind the inability to deal with the situation.
- The containing style: Where the firm's leader limits the crisis effects.

- The teamwork style: Where everyone works together to overcome the crisis once it occurs.
- The confronting style: Where the firm's leader, together with the whole team, scientifically defy the crisis through almost accurate forecasting and proper task description that allow a quick getting back to normal.

In order to execute a strategy that saves a firm during times of crises, the strategic leader depends on the following four practices (Ireland & Hitt, 2005):

The first practice includes instilling a long term organization vision of growth which relies on subordinates' motivation and empowerment (Kitonga, 2017). This vision is based on long-term goals (Shao, 2019) which the firm expects to achieve (Narayanan & Zane, 2009). These goals constitute a general outline that tolerates proper task synchronization (Al-Ta'i & Kubaisi, 2016).

The second one includes identifying, conserving, and diversifying the firm's core competencies that allow it to gain a competitive advantage. Resources may be the product itself or the relationship with the clients (Mutia, et al., 2016).

Thirdly, improving and developing the human capital, which will help firms innovate while reacting to external changes. Human capital involves employees' know-hows and engagement (Saeed & Abbas, 2016).

Finally, supervising the strategy execution process, as well as adjusting and improving it when necessary to guarantee the overall strategy success (Norzailan, et al., 2016).

Crisis Management

As noted earlier, crises are inevitable and may attack firms at any moment. What increases the firm's ability to overcome the consequences of a crisis is the presence of an efficient and adequate fight back plan (Kash & Darling, 1998). Therefore, firms' leaders should be able to identify, predict,

and supervise the crisis, which, in other terms, means managing it (Barton, 2001). A direct explanation of the term 'crisis management' simply illustrates how the enterprise leader manages the business operations before, during, and after the crisis (House et al., 2001). To elaborate more, crisis management represents the firm's ability to deal with unexpected events by formulating and implementing a plan of action to guarantee its continuance in the long run (Junhong & Vanhala, 2010). This is not an easy task to perform, especially that crises cause stress, which certainly makes it hard to implement a backup strategy (Al-Shibli, 2018). It is the role of the company's strategic leader to come up with a procedure to manage the crisis (Saadoun, 2009). The leader should be able not only to cope with the disastrous situation, but also to convince the whole team to work hand in hand toward reaching a safe side (Harwati, 2013). Nowadays, in light of everything collapsing around us, crisis management imposes itself as a basis for organization's persistence (King, 2002). The objectives of crisis management are to take quick, suitable, and feasible decisions while facing sudden and perilous events (Pearson, 2002). A well-managed crisis relies on the identification, confrontation, and solution of the crisis (Öcal et al., 2006). According to Pearson and Mitroff (1993), crisis management can be divided into five phases. When facing a crisis, each phase aims at behaving either proactively or reactively for the ultimate goal of overcoming its effects and preventing the company's dissolution. The first phase involves the detection of warning signals before the crisis onset. In this stage, top management can act proactively by thinking about ways to prevent the crisis or to diminish its brutality. The second phase involves readiness and anticipation, where the company settles techniques that allow thinking before the crisis hits and therefore minimizing its effects. The third stage is related to damage containment where plans are drawn and executed by using the resources on hand. Afterwards comes the restoration of activity stage, during which suitable processes are implemented to fix the harms caused by the crisis. The final

stage is related to feedback, and more specifically denoting what has been learned in order to prevent a possible recurrence.

Research

Crises threaten all companies, carrying along a great risk of dissolving them. How leaders proact and react shape the organization's future, namely its survival. Nothing attributable to crisis is positive while it occurs. During crises, everything seems extraordinarily abnormal, calling for special, prompt, and delicate treatment. Among all organizations, SMEs seem to be the most endangered ones. They suffer from lack of funds and their survival highly depends on their respective managers' performances: Did they forecast the crisis? Have they tried to escape and declare loss or have they confronted the crisis? Did they pre-plan to reduce its negative effects? How quick were they in reacting while making decisions during the crisis containment stages? Did they act solely or did they depend on communication and contribution with staff members? These questions and many others were addressed to SMEs' managers in Lebanon, specifically merchandising enterprises that sell skin care and cosmetic products.

While other sectors seem to be collapsing in the Lebanese markets, the skin care and cosmetic Lebanese SMEs are confronting the crisis with every possible mean. This sector is still holding on despite the surrounding negative factors. And when talking about negative factors, the list is really long. As noted earlier, the whole Lebanese market is suffering from two types of crisis; nature made and human made:

- First, the corona virus imposed the longest lockdown in the new history. Due to this lockdown, many social events were cancelled or limited to the minimum. Going out was prohibited, which means more time at home, working, cooking, internet surfing... etc. These are mainly indoor activities that do not require much taking care of beauty attire.

- Second, it looks like the current financial crisis has a mind of its own. It constantly throws a whole population into a gap, especially with such an inexplicable inflation rate and no apparent plans to solve the issue. The following fact will certainly help in understanding the depth of the problem: In October 2019, one US dollar was equivalent to 1,500 Lebanese pound. As of today, one and a half years later, one US dollar is equivalent to 15,000 Lebanese pound. Lebanon is known for depending on importing goods, all paid with fresh dollars. As a result of this US dollar/Lebanese pound rates, merchandising sectors had to increase their prices to be able to import goods and continue their work cycle. Here, we are not talking about a slight increase in price. Not at all! Prices had quadrupled and they will keep increasing as the future looks more confusing than ever before.

The article's main objective is to describe the strategy of SMEs' leaders to contain the crisis and to demonstrate that with proper actions, the impossible can become possible. This objective could be met through conducting a small research to detect how Lebanese SMEs in the skin care and cosmetic sectors were able to contain the persistent crisis. Thus, this article raises the following research question: Does a strategic leader have the ability to fortify the company in times of crises and guarantee its survival? In the light of literature, the following answer was anticipated: When an SME's leader executes a proper strategy; he/she will fortify the company, making it flexible in anticipating and containing the crisis damages.

This article follows a quantitative approach. In order to know more about the strategic leadership's effect on crisis management, a questionnaire was prepared and addressed to a sample of twenty-seven Lebanese managers of physical and online surviving shops of skin care and cosmetic products. The results of this study were evaluated using the

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS19). The questionnaire was prepared through google forms and it consisted of twenty-five questions distributed over five parts:

- Respondents' personal information: Five questions were asked to know about their age, educational level, years of experience, and their affiliation to the firm, as well as the firm's age.
- Instilling a long term organization vision of growth: This section enclosed five questions, highlighting the importance of setting and communicating the company's goal to everyone in the firm.
- Identifying, conserving, and diversifying the firm's core competencies: This section included five questions, tackling what makes the firm competent.
- Improving and developing human capital: Five questions were asked to discern what the leader had done to harden the human capital and motivate it during this time.
- Supervising, adjusting, and improving the strategy execution process: It included five questions and was designed to clarify the importance of feedback and fine tuning during the crisis.

Respondents were contacted via WhatsApp twice to check if they have the willingness to help. After receiving their approval, the questionnaire link was sent to them. The first part's questions were answered by "yes" or "no". The other questions were answered according to a Likert scale from 0 to 4, where:

- -0- Not at all
- -1- Once in a while
- -2- Sometimes
- -3- Fairly often
- -4- All the time

The questionnaire was written in English and French. There was no need to translate it into Arabic since it was known ahead of time that the respondents master either of the two foreign languages. On average,

each participant took around ten minutes to answer all the questions.

Results

The majority of the respondents belonged to the mid-age educated category. All of them were owners of their businesses. This comes with no surprise at all, since the target was SMEs, where the manager is either the founder himself or one of the founder's heirs. The results revealed that 86% of these enterprises had been established twenty to thirty years ago. This proves that people built their small companies in a rather financially stable era in Lebanon. This also indicates that none had experienced a severe crisis before, thus, none had a past know-how when it comes to dealing with crises related problems. It is important to notice here that the respondents were still managing their enterprises when the survey was conducted.

The following results have been observed:

- Instilling a long term organization vision of growth: The results showed the following:
 - In order to survive the crisis, managers should start by cutting costs. Unfortunately, this comes at the expense of employees. Several enterprises, even large ones, adopted the same style since October 2019 through laying off employees or forcing them to work only three times per week, thus decreasing the salaries expenses to the maximum. In the absence of the usual number of employees, many other expenses were further reduced: electricity, water, and office supplies. Thus, the first tactic used to secure the growth of the firm is through minimizing expenses.
 - Second, to keep on operating, companies need markets to sell. During this time, sales became very rare, and the usual target market was no longer sufficient for a company to grow. Thus, it

- has become vital for companies to exert more efforts into knowing their target audience better to keep them, and at the same time seek new market segments to diversify the revenue sources.
- Third, and speaking of new market segments, it is important for companies to identify competitors. Competitors are struggling and also doing their best to survive with minimum losses. Therefore, managers should know their rivals' identity, audience, products, and customer service relationship. It is by knowing what the other has that a company is able to take over the other's share.
 - Fourth, to be able to dominate and attract markets, companies should offer differentiated products; products that are perceived by consumers to be the best in terms of price-quality rapport. This survey focused on only shops of skin care and cosmetic products. Consequently, products could be differentiated by brands, retail prices, and product mix.
 - Finally, and most importantly, managers should be aware of their cash on hand. Cash is what makes the accounting cycle turn around. To be able to make inventory purchases, the company should have cash; otherwise, its existence is threatened. Managers should adopt strict cash policy rules when it comes to selling on credit and purchasing with cash discounts, via credit cards, or on account.
 - Identifying, conserving, and diversifying the firm's core competencies: The results of this section showed that it is crucial for managers to take responsibility in all times, especially when it comes to crises.
 - Managers must be aware that the decisions they are making do not affect only the present, but also the future. They also affect a whole range of people, employees and customers. Therefore, it is true that crises require urgent decisions, but not harmful ones. Managers should conduct a self-management approach by effectively regulating their emotions, their thoughts, and behavior throughout the crisis. When they know the magnitude of their responsibility, they will be able to seek new opportunities despite the chaos that comes with the crisis.
 - An opportunity may appear in the form of a supplier who is liquidating the business and selling products at a reduced price. This will reduce the firm's cost, and, eventually, the selling price. Another opportunity may come in the form of meeting a technological specialist who can offer a website establishment with no cost at all, and thus starting an online business that was never thought of before. Managers should be able to see opportunities to be able to seize and employ them for their companies' benefit. Managers must have the initiative to think of solutions and think outside the box. This can be realized by identifying new market needs and inventing ways to fulfill them.
 - Buying skin care and cosmetic products during the lockdown and the financial crisis is not a priority by itself. It is rather a mere luxury, especially in the absence of social events. Despite this fact, that type of products is selling, why? It is simply because managers targeted a women's eternal psychological need, which is how to stay beautiful no matter what. They were able to incite this need through marketing campaigns performed via Instagram bloggers' comments,

tags, and offers. After all, this is the internet age, and the influencers' era. Managers realized that they should make use of this, especially that it bears little cost. By using the image of many bloggers and granting their followers a special discount code, managers guaranteed a secure portion of sales.

- Finally, managers must remain persistent when everything seems like tumbling down. Only by having high morale and determination, success could be reached. This can be realized by simplifying the selling process through establishing an online store that is reachable by all. This creates a new form of relationship with clients. Digitalization grants access to clients' contact information, the number of orders they made in the past, as well as the type of products they love buying or keep on buying. It is through this set of data that a company will be able to suggest loyalty programs and special promotions. By identifying clients' needs, the company's management will know how to attract them regularly, and eventually increase the company's sales.
- Improving and developing human capital: Results showed that in time of crises, only irreplaceable employees are retained, and later on promoted, especially that, during the crisis, salaries expenses are reduced initially. Consequently, any employee who has nothing to offer will be easily laid off. It is important to define the expertise needed to overcome the crisis and to redefine the employees' skills accordingly. This allows to recognize and to retain the most useful ones. Moreover, and especially with the case of remote workers during the lockdown, it is decisive to elaborate a chain of commands

where each staff member knows exactly what is required from him/her. This is how managers keep the staff focused on important activities rather than wasting time on solving conflicts. Managers agreed that communication with personnel should take place regularly, whether it is face to face or through online meeting applications.

- Supervising, adjusting and improving the strategy execution process: From time to time, it is imperative to stop and observe if anything is going on wrong with the implementation of the strategy. Not only in times of crises, but in normal times as well. Obviously, crises require a more urgent need for constant feedback to be able to detect mistakes and resolve them as soon as possible. Crises are not stable, especially the one currently taking place in Lebanon. Every day brings new news and challenges. Hence, managers should be more alert towards any surprising events. For example, they should ask themselves why sales started to decrease. The reason may be because the market is saturated, and thus it is time to launch a new product, a new promotion, or to go for a one-on-one selling approach. As long as clients are satisfied, the enterprise is surviving.

The survey' results enclosed an answer to the research problem originally raised: Does a strategic leader have the ability to fortify the company in times of crises and guarantee its survival? The hypothesis was accepted. The results showed that when an SME's leader executes a proper strategy, he/she will fortify the company, making it more flexible in anticipating and containing the crisis damages.

Conclusion

Upon reading the article's literature and the analysis of the results, it becomes clearer to realize the importance of leadership, and more specifically strategic leadership, when facing a crisis. For an enterprise to anticipate and prepare itself for future unpleasant events, top management must be able to set a clear long term goal, making sure to communicate it with subordinates in order to work together toward achieving it, thus securing the organization's good performance.

In addition, it is imperative to anticipate the changes. Internal and/or external factors may trigger the change; however, it is the management's inner recognition and response to those changes that guarantee the company's survival. Recognizing such changes should incite the management to be flexible and to quickly adapt to new situations. The faster they adapt, the quicker they can come out with minimum losses.

Strategic leadership combined with crisis management will certainly help in times when sales are low, expenses are high, and the market share is attenuated. It gives managers the urgent sense of efficiency in handling tangible and intangible assets.

When a crisis hits, it is fundamental to integrate crisis management with the strategic leadership process. This combination results in making the company stronger and more resilient, and thus equipping it with adequate capacity to thrive against all odds. Undoubtedly, a crisis is a hard time on everyone and many can easily miss all the opportunities that might come along by simply escaping. However, those who stay and play the tough game are mostly rewarded at the end. It is through having a clear objective, appropriate tactics, and a strong team work that strong players win at the end, benefitting all stakeholders.

Recommendations

Nowadays, problems look much more different and complicated than the nearest past. Things seemed to have rushed in a catastrophic way leaving everyone wondering. One crisis is indeed a difficult obstacle to handle, two crises at a time seem even impossible to overcome. This calls for a hero to come up with adequate solutions. In SMEs, heroes are definitely their leaders, which raises the importance of leadership.

Day after another, leadership proves that it is not a myth and it is not an innate trait. It can be acquired, stimulated, built with time and fortified when facing big issues. Thus, training managers has become a constant necessity. This can be done by regularly organizing training sessions and inciting SMEs managers to attend them. This is particularly true when it comes to hard times, like the ones we are currently dealing with. It is crucial for managers to have the adequate capabilities enabling them to act and manage in a responsible way, armed with strategic goals and tactics, for the benefit of the whole firm.

Moreover, real life crises are showing the importance of the human capital in enterprises. Their commitment contributes to achieving the organizations' objectives. The more they are empowered and trusted, the greater they become involved in solving issues at work.

Finally, and despite the sudden feature of the crisis, managers and subordinates can't just overcome this hard time without learning the lesson. Regardless of their depleted energies in the midst of the crisis and afterwards, company personnel are required to stop and think about what had happened: What were the signals they missed? Why didn't they notice them? If the situation repeats itself, what will be their priority list? What are the techniques that proved to be most helpful and need further development?

Indeed, overcoming a crisis gives a feeling of satisfaction and grandiosity; however, it is the lesson learned that will give the company the extra push, should the crisis recur in the future.

Limitations

The article tackled the aspects of strategic leadership only from the managers' point of view without getting into the details of subordinates' feelings and reactions. The aim was to describe what a strategic leader would do to secure the survival of the company during the times of crises. Through the analysis of the survey, much was learned about leadership techniques. Furthermore, it should be noticed that the sample was selected from a population of only skincare and cosmetic physical and online surviving shops, without taking drug stores, nor manufacturing companies into consideration. It is believed that this scope reflects the overall strategy because of many common factors. However, the results cannot be generalized because of the following:

- The sample of the study was small, as it composed of only twenty-seven managers. Despite the overall observation that the majority of respondents are facing the same struggle during the crisis, one cannot generalize the conclusions. This is why, it is better to increase the sample population in future research so that results would be more comprehensive and more accurate.
- Second, all respondents were selected from one industry: the skin care and the cosmetic products industry in Lebanon. This again raises a generalization concern. For better results, future research may compare the strategic leadership techniques in times of crises in diversified industries.
- Third, leadership, like all other organizational behavior concepts, is a subjective matter. It is true that the Likert scale simplifies the researcher's work when entering the data on SPSS; however, it does not grant the respondent the space to elaborate his/her answers. Maybe the secret of survival lies beyond the twenty-five questions suggested in the questionnaire, maybe it lies in

what the leader only knows but did not have the chance to communicate to the researcher. A future qualitative study is suggested here to uncover that part through interviewing many managers, using open questions.

- Furthermore, this research can be further extended in the future by denoting the subordinates' reactions to the leaders' perspectives in crises times.

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