

LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING IN CASES OF UNCERTAINTY AND RISKS-THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) CRISIS



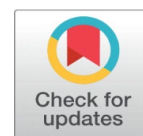
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ABSTRACT

Motivation/Background: The purpose of this paper is to shed light on leadership and decision-making in situations of uncertainty and risks -the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, as well as to give a systematic framework as a guide for leaders to deal with the COVID-19 and other sudden crises.

Method: This paper is based on theoretical analytical methodology, where questions of the study are built, and then data were collected from previous research about study concepts. This helps in extracting lessons and principles that help researchers to answer study questions and build the methodological framework.

Results: The current COVID-19 is a global sudden crisis that differs from previous crises in terms of its strength, effects, and speed. It struck all health, economic, social and psychological aspects of life. It caused a challenge of supply chains to governments and organizations, accelerated transformation to virtual work, and brought cultural change at all levels. All this forced leaders to take quick and bold decisions in the absence of complete information and lack of transparency.

Conclusions: The originality of this study stems from studying the new COVID-19 crisis that suddenly struck the world and confused the most powerful countries and institutions, as leaders stood unable to deal with this crisis and its destructive effects in various aspects of life. Research on dealing with this crisis is still incomplete and subject to modification and change. Therefore, studying this and coming up with a systematic framework increases originality and novelty of this study.

Keywords: Leadership, Decision making, Crisis, Corona Virus, (COVID-19)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world has seen through a century passed many financial and health crises, from the Spanish flu in 1918-1920 to the global financial crisis and the Great Depression in 1929, and various crises, the most recent of which was the global financial crisis in 2008, to this crisis (COVID-19 Crisis). What distinguishes this crisis from others is that it came in unprecedented conditions of openness that enabled this crisis to reach every country, organization, family, and individual in this connected world (Mckinsey (2020)). And threatened the lives of individuals and many organizations in their existence if not with its fatal health effects, in its economic and social effects which are no less dangerous. The Corona pandemic has forced a



sudden shift in how governments and business organizations around the world operate in an unprecedented challenge, especially in times of peace. The crisis has added new burdens to governments and leaders of public and private organizations, and increased coordination efforts between the public and private sectors. Not to mention the role of governments and business organizations in directing economic policies and managing high unemployment rates ([International Labour Organization \(2020\)](#)), and it is necessary to balance these competing priorities with accommodating orders to stay at home to keep social distance of people and workforce.

On the other hand, the Corona pandemic has demonstrated an exceptional need for leaders in all sectors ([Alexander, 2020](#)), and the human losses caused by COVID-19 have created a state of fear and panic among workers and other stakeholders. The wide spread of the disease and the unpredictability of it make it difficult for managers to respond to its effects. Indeed, the spread of the disease has created an unexpected crisis and a series of events at a tremendous speed, which has led to a state of uncertainty and risk that has led to confusion and a feeling of loss of control and turmoil which made the decision-making process very difficult.

2. PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Corona virus suddenly hit the world in the midst of the openness brought about by the revolution of advanced information and communication technology and associated smart systems such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and other technologies supported by huge capabilities of the Internet. Which made the world a small village in which the concepts of time and space were abolished ([Gharaibeh and Malkawi 2013](#)) ([Malkawi and Halasa \(2016\)](#)), not to mention many international legislations, agreements, and unions that strengthened this. Suddenly the countries of the world found themselves forced to close themselves, and the concepts of the national country returned to its narrowest borders, more than that the world found itself forced to close its borders and all its educational, industrial, service, and commercial establishments and institutions. The life takes place only in its narrowest limits. And leaders know that making good and fast decisions is difficult under the best circumstances, but more difficult are those unfamiliar high-risk decisions, when you have a crisis of uncertainty like the COVID-19 pandemic, which, causing governments and organizations to face a large volume of these big betting decisions.

In the midst of that, leaders of countries, governments, organizations and individuals began thinking about how to deal with that, whether to protect the lives of individuals or to protect the economy at all levels in conditions that no one can predict its unknown fate. The world stand unable to do anything but reserve people in their homes and stop the various activities of life. Everyone hesitated what decisions are better than others, what is useful for balance between health and economics, and what will the future of economics and business be like, all of which require outstanding leadership, exceptional leaders and decisions based on unknown information and a mysterious fate. Decision-making in such circumstances of uncertainty and risk is very complex ([Laudon and Laudon 2020](#))([Malkawi et al. \(2017\)](#)), and leaders of organizations cannot wait when events move as fast as they are now. So relying on fundamental principles of decision-making will help leaders make quick smart decisions to guide their organizations during this crisis. All of this represents a challenge and the need for distinguished leadership to make bold effective decisions relying on a general framework to deal

with COVID-19 crisis and its consequences, which represents the problem of this study.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

- 1) Knowing the types and properties of decisions taken in crises in general and the Corona crisis in particular.
- 2) To know the most important characteristics that distinguish leaders in crises from others.
- 3) Knowing the principles leaders can follow to make bold and rapid decisions to deal with the COVID-19 and its consequences.
- 4) Knowing the most important methods adopted by governments for decisions taken to deal with this crisis.
- 5) Provide a systematic framework that help decision makers in organizations to make decisions to deal with the COVID-19 crises and its consequences.

4. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

At a time when we find floundering in the procedures to deal with the Corona crisis; we find that this crisis affected all aspects of life: healthy, social, economic, educational...etc. and the difference of its effects between a countries and organizations was referred to sagacity and speed of taking bold decisions in light of information ambiguity surrounding these decisions. Not only that, but many difficult decisions are still waiting for governments and organizations around the world to cope with this crisis and addressing its effects even after its end, which many analysts believe that it will have effects for many years. Therefore, studying and knowing the leadership style and characteristics of decisions in COVID-19 in the absence of complete information ([Malkawi et al. \(2010\)](#)) and based on practical experiences of many governments and organizations is considered to be of great importance. Which constitutes a guide for leaders of organizations to deal with this crisis and its outcomes in a manner that enables organizations to stay and preserve their position and workers without compromising the lives of individuals, which is of great importance for this study.

5. METHODOLOGY

In this study researchers adopt analytical methodology study (content analysis) based on theoretical frameworks and practical experiences related to leadership and decision-making in crises and situations of uncertainty and risk, the most important is COVID-19. Present and analyse it, clarify the basic concepts of the subject, and come up with results that are useful in achieving the objectives of the study. So due to the proximity of the crisis and the lack of studies published in scientific journals about it, researchers will rely in collecting data on:

- 1) Previous literature to clarify the basic concepts of the topic.
- 2) What was published about the Corona crisis?
- 3) What was published on the internet about this crisis, taking into account and investigating accuracy in this field so that the focus is on the most reliable pages?
- 4) The experiences of a number of governments to deal with the Corona crisis.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

6.1. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crises are situations that require decision-making, and are historic turning points, crisis defined as any threat that might harm people or property, or lead to a disruption in the workflow. The term crisis management is concerned with studying possible future hazards and their effects on work, and developing a plan to address it positively, the crisis also defined as "an unusual situation "It has a major impact on the course of normal affairs "(Razim (1995)). As for crisis management, it means how to overcome the crisis with different scientific and administrative tools to avoid its negatives and benefit from its positives (Khudairi 2003) (Bowen and Lovari 2020).

There are a number of characteristics that characterize the crisis (Steve (2020): surprise, lack of information, escalating of events, loss of control, and panic. Steve also pointed out that crises do not give time for the decision-maker to reach a careful solution, and it is necessary to quickly select between a limited numbers of harmful solutions. He also showed that crisis management needs a number of skills like the ability to communicate, adapt, and self-control.

The crisis is of several types (Khudairi 2003):

- 1) In terms of formation, where the crisis goes through several stages: the stage of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and disappearance.
- 2) In terms of their recurrence: crises of a recurrent periodic nature, sudden, and non-recurring crises.
- 3) In terms of crisis depth: non-deep with marginal impact crises, and deep crises.
- 4) In terms of severity: violent and light crises.
- 5) In terms of comprehensiveness and impact: comprehensive public and special crises that are restricted to one or more specific areas.
- 6) In terms of the subject or focus of the crisis, it includes material crises: with economic, material, quantitative, and measurable nature, moral crises with psychological, personal and intangible impacts and crises gather the previous two types.
- 7) In terms of source: natural disasters and external threats (Sayrafi, 2008).

If we take the current crisis (COVID-19), we will find that in terms of formation it is still in the second stage (growth), in terms of repetition it is a sudden crisis that occurred without warning, the most prominent thinkers and most powerful regimes including the capabilities of artificial intelligence were not able to predict, in terms of depth. It is a very deep crisis that struck all different aspects of life, occurred violently, confusing everyone and the greatest strength systems and entities, and in terms of inclusiveness. It is characterized by a nature of inclusiveness in everything that may occur to anyone, and did not exclude an entity throughout the world and all components of any organization or entity; it is a health, economic, social, psychological ... etc. crisis. It is of a violent physical and moral nature that excludes nothing and externality in source. So it is a deep crisis, and this depth is what confused the world ability to deal with and address it, and to make decisions about it and track its effects, and there is no near visible horizon to its end, so it deserve to be studied.

6.2. LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

Leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to provide individual and group efforts to accomplish common goals. It is the process of influencing a group in a specific situation, time and conditions to push individuals to achieve the goals of the organization with desire and zeal (Cox and Hoover 1998), so it is a social process that seeks to influence the actions and behaviour of individuals to work hard and willing to achieve goals (Harem 2009). Whereas administrative leadership is defined as the activity that an administrative leader performs in making, issuing decisions, orders, and supervising others by using formal authority by influencing and grooming to achieve a specific goal (Sakarneh, 2010) (Frensch and Joachim 1995). From the above we can say that decision-making is an activity to solve a specific issue that results in an ideal or at least satisfactory solution. Thus, it is a rational process depends on explicit and tacit knowledge and beliefs (Godfrey-Smith 2001) (Kepner et al. 1997) (Brockmann et al. 2019) (Khasawneh et al. 2018).

Steps in the decision making process (Davidson et al. 2006) (Monahan (2000)):

- 1) Determine the objectives of the decision or problem to be solved.
- 2) Classify objectives and arrange them according to their importance.
- 3) Develop solution alternatives (decision options).
- 4) Evaluate each alternative against goals.
- 5) Choose the alternative or the best solution.
- 6) Implement the selected alternative and evaluate the decision.

The decision is the effective response that provides the desired results for a specific situation or a group of possible cases in the organization (Aladdin, 2002). When a sharp changes occur in the natural course of events, to control its effects and stop the failure of events; it is necessary to take group of decisions, these decisions are called (crisis decisions) (Dweik 2013). The process of assessing and analysing past decisions is an essential and important process, complementary and auxiliary to the current decision-making process in order to benefit from the positives and reduce negatives (Szalavitz 2011). The person's well-being inner and personal characteristics also play a catalyst in the decision-making process to deal with uncertainties (Barbey et al. 2014).

(Dweik 2013) divided decision-making cases based on the degree of information accuracy and the circumstances of the crisis into three types:

- 1) Decision-making in case of complete certainty: This is done when information is available on the various results of the decision's alternatives.
- 2) Make a decision in case of uncertainty (risk).
- 3) Make a decision in case of complete uncertainty.

Researchers believe that, for the purposes of this study it is necessary to distinguish between decisions taken in normal situations and decisions taken in crises such as the COVID-19 crisis. Where regular decision-making is made in normal conditions and sufficient data are available, and based on it a calm analysis, careful formulation and comparison between these alternatives to choose the best alternative. As for the decision of the crisis, it is an extraordinary decision made in exceptional circumstances characterized by the lack of sufficient data, the lack of

time for calm analysis the formulation of alternatives, and the trade-off between them (Stewart 1997).

A distinction must also be made between the leader and the manager. The manager: deals with a rigid system, tends to accept the status quo as it is, uses the chief and subordinate method, maintains the work in the same way, relies on oversight, works through predefined laws, rules, policies and procedures, asking how and when. Moving away from problems and mistakes; focuses on order, short-term planning, and expects others to abide by the laws. While the leader focuses on creativity and development, focuses on the human element, relies on trust, seeks change. He tolerates mistakes, works outside policies and procedures, focuses on the future vision and strategic plans, has good relations with followers, applies ideas, and creates champions. He uses a colleague-to-colleague method, works himself and engages others in management, cares for the team spirit and morale, and takes advantage of opportunities (<https://mawdoo3.com>). As the famous management scientist Peter Drucker said, "Managers do things right, but leaders do the right things. (Miller (2019)) (Jiffer 2020) also added a set of characteristics that distinguish people and make them leaders more than managers: the leader listens more than he talks, determines the direction of his decision and is decisive in it, and this is what creates actions. Anyone can pinpoint the problem, but the leader is part of the solution.

6.3. PREVIOUS STUDIES

A number of previous studies have dealt with the relationship between leadership and decision-making in situations of uncertainty, risk, and crises, including:

A study (BOIN et al. 2013) "LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF CRISIS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENT", a theoretical study that showed that evaluations of leaders' performance during and after crises are often quick and superficial evaluations, which are insufficient, as the public evaluate leaders only on what they see. It showed that there are many dimensions through which crisis leaders should be evaluated. The study also addressed the many tasks that strategic leaders are asked to undertake to deal with crises, and provided a comprehensive framework for leadership performance in times of crisis.

(Ustun (2014)) study "collaborative crisis management in the public sector: effective leadership under stress", aimed to find out how leadership capabilities affect the perceived effectiveness of crisis management. It showed that effective leadership in crises is one of the most important inputs to reduce the harmful effects of crises. It also found that leadership competencies (decisiveness, flexibility, communication, problem solving, innovation management, team building, motivation, communication and sharing, decision-making, environmental scanning, and strategic planning) affect the effectiveness of crisis leadership. The study recommended managers to increase their effectiveness in leading their organizations during crises.

(Fener and Cevik 2015) study entitled "Leadership in Crisis Management: Separation of Leadership and Executive Concepts", a theoretical study that assured that the reality of an accelerating and interconnected world makes any crisis affects all countries, organizations, and individuals in varying degrees. Most of the global variables and crises also are outside the control of the state or organization, and are affected by them whether they like it or not. So if the crisis is not properly controlled

or managed, it will result in a series of successive crises causing more chaos, and dealing with them requires leadership that believes in participation, teamwork and work teams. The study also showed the leadership characteristics needed in times of crisis, such as boldness, administrative flexibility, sympathy for those affected, inspiring charisma, and the ability to communicate, among others.

The study (Hasan and Rjoub 2017) "THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP STYLES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF ERBIL", aimed to know the relationship between leadership styles and crisis management in the Ministry of Planning in Erbil. The quantitative method was used to achieve the study objectives through a sample composed of 360 participants, the results showed that the highest value among the leadership styles was inspiring leadership that requires special charisma that must be available in leaders during crisis management.

Study (Sultani et al. (2017)) "Diagnosing the relationship between administrative leadership and crisis response strategy", a survey study of a sample of Babel Distribution Electricity Company. The study focused on two variables, namely crisis management and strategic leadership to clarify the divergence of leaders' opinion according to the type of strategies adopted in facing crises, and showed that adopting a specific type of strategy helps ease dealing with the crisis. The study recommended leaders to build work teams with a focus on information and data as an important source for dealing with crises.

(Malkawi (2018a)) study titled "how to improve decision making process through decision support systems & business intelligence: evidence from Jordan University Hospital ". The study concluded that decision support systems available at high rates in Jordan University Hospital, business intelligence in a moderate level, there is significant effect of decision support systems and business intelligence on decision-making process. The study recommended updating decision support systems & business intelligence to improve decision-making process phases in all its phases.

The study (Tokakisa et al. (2019)) entitled "Crisis Management in Public Administration: The Three Phases Model for Safety Incidents", the study aimed to identify the factors that affect crisis management in the public administration of accident protection in Greece during the pre-crisis stage, during the crisis, and the post-crisis phase. The results showed that the ability of the leader and members of the crisis management team to make the right decisions, internal and external communication and the type of crises predict the three stages of crisis management (pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis) in public administration.

Many previous studies have dealt with crisis management, leadership and decision-making in situations of uncertainty, risk, and crises. Especially the various crises that have struck the world over a century which are often characterized by one area such as the health crisis or the financial crisis, previous studies mentioned also the most important features that leaders should be characterised in crisis management. And they dealt with this through field studies and sometimes analytical theoretical studies to benefit from the experiences of previous crises. However, the crisis that the current study deals with is the deepest among them, which affects all different aspects and areas of life. Because of the novelty of COVID-19 crisis, it has not been covered by research and studies in some detail. What has been published about that is still subject to updating and reviewing, so what distinguishes this study is its discussion to leadership and decisions make in the Corona crisis that the world is still living and suffering from its effects.

6.4. COVID-19

Because this research deals with leadership and decision-making in light of the Corona crisis; researchers consider providing a brief overview of it, as corona viruses were first discovered in the 1960s, and the first viruses from this family were discovered in the infectious bronchitis virus in chickens, and viruses from the nasal cavity. For human patients with colds, it was called human corona virus 229E, and human corona virus OC43, and since then other elements of this family have been identified, including: SARS Corona virus in 2003, Human Corona virus NL63 in 2004, Human Corona virus HKU1 in 2005, Virus Corona MERS in 2012, and the current COVID-19. Most of these viruses cause a serious respiratory infection. And the emerging corona virus is a family of diverse viruses, as at the end of the year 2019 a new series of corona viruses that humans had not previously infected with. this virus spread for the first time in the Wuhan region at the end of December 2019, where it appeared on a number of infected people Symptoms of pneumonia, and most of the cases were related to the seafood and animal market, research and studies are still investigating this virus in order to obtain more information about it. The danger of this virus lies in its rapid spread than any virus known to humankind in the past, and its symptoms range from simple to serious and may lead to death. This disease has affected all aspects of life around the world, the most important of these effects are the health effects, where millions of patients and hundreds of thousands of deaths, it has struck all countries of the world and all governmental and private organizations, large and small, and cast a shadow on individuals ([World Health Organization \(2020\)](#)).

6.5. GLOBAL EXPERIENCES AND DECISIONS TO DEAL WITH THE CORONA PANDEMIC

When looking at the decisions and reactions of the countries around the world on the Corona crisis, we find them have adopted multiple methods and paths to deal with it. In addition, the responses to this epidemic varied between countries, no country is almost identical to others in its decisions related to this, but according to successive ([World Health Organization Report Series \(2020\)](#)) ([Domenico et al. 2020](#)). It is limited within the area of three main tracks, distinguished leaders in the world in taking decisions to deal with this pandemic, namely:

The first method: depends on complete closure and the state's provision of basic needs to the citizens to ensure that none of them will leave during the period of dealing with the crisis. The Chinese experience was an example of that, as China took a decision to completely close down the city of Yuhan and disrupt all aspects of industrial, financial, economic and social life, regardless of its consequences and citizens' satisfaction about this; it has relied on artificial intelligence techniques to secure the basic needs of citizens and deal with the crisis. It has achieved success in curbing the disease and controlling it, but this method is not easy to apply in any country, as this requires a holistic mentality and a strong economic and health system with the ability to maintain medical equipment and supplies, and the ability to bear the economic consequences of that. The centralization of information was prevailed in this model, which is still in question all over the world.

The second method: relying on community immunity and keeping life going as usual, as some countries made a decision to adopt this method upon the arrival of the virus to their countries, and then realized the healthy seriousness of this decision, then came back late to take decisions, policies and precautionary measures and follow the method of closure. Examples of these countries are the majority of European countries (Italy, France, Spain, Britain ... etc.), USA and other countries. They initially suffered from health effects and lost many of their citizens, despite being great economies countries and a reference in their healthy systems efficiency, and then they were forced to shut down economies and life. Thus, bear the resulting economic burdens, and it took a decision to pump trillions of dollars to support the economy and alleviate the effects of unemployment imposed by the virus ([World Health Organization \(2020\)](#)).

The third method: This method represents alertness, and taking decisions and precautionary measures early, some of them are proactive before the virus reaches their countries. These measures are represented by gradual, partial, and sometimes total closure, focusing on social distancing, while allowing individuals to fulfil their basic needs within rigid health measures, while bearing a large part of the economic consequences of that, and the activation of the mechanism of work and distance education. They are bold but deliberate decisions that put individuals' lives at the expense of the economy, which has earned them a high degree of community satisfaction. The most prominent of these countries are the Emirates, Jordan, South Korea, and others.

6.6. MAKING DECISIONS IN TIMES OF CRISIS (COVIA-19 CRISIS)

The world has gone through many crises over a century, dealing with them with different and multiple plans and methods, some of which have been very successful, while others have achieved limited successes and thus the effects of crises are large and varied. Historically, governments at all levels, whether local or national, have played a role in managing crises in their countries, by providing a common language, and determining the chain of command when mobilizing multiple parties. This is based on the premise of handling crises with flexibility that goes beyond the formalities and hierarchy of the organizational structure. Researchers of this study believe that realizing that the organization is facing a crisis is the first thing that leaders must do, it is a difficult step especially at the beginning of crises that appears suddenly like COVID-19. Once leaders acknowledge the crisis in this way, they can begin to respond to it in a manner that differs from normal working conditions that depend on following pre-established plans. Crises governed by risk and uncertainty must be responded to in a different way. Given that, the Corona crisis has not ended yet and its effects have not been fully clear. What has been written in it is subject to amendment and change according to developments, therefor; researchers believe that there are still difficult decisions awaiting governments and leaders of organizations in the public and private sectors to deal with this crisis and its consequences, including:

- 1) Work and teach within a virtual environment in response to social distance and preserve public safety. Leaders also need decisions to exploit the virtual environment after the end of the pandemic.
- 2) Restart and unlock economies.
- 3) Maintaining safety and health measures, especially in the workplace.
- 4) Maintaining supply chains.
- 5) Shrinking and declining economies.

- 6) Dealing with the decline in the number of jobs and the loss of millions of them. Where the International Labour Organization estimated that more than 7% of jobs will be lost during the current year 2020. Which is equivalent to 195 million jobs worldwide, while remaining job returns will be reduced in varying proportions, which in turn leads to a decrease in the volume of consumption and thus the size of the entire economy (International Labour Organization, 2020).
- 7) Taking decisions in light of lack of information and lack of transparency that accompanied this pandemic.
- 8) Engaging in a large and rapid manner in electronic business and commerce.
- 9) Decisions related to addressing with social, psychological, political and economic impacts.
- 10) Decisions to deal with the cultural change that this pandemic has brought on individuals, organizations and societies, whether during or after the pandemic, as a culture of remote work, electronic shopping and others.

Leaders know that the usual approach in the normal circumstances of many organizations will be very slow in keeping pace with the Corona crisis, and postponing decisions awaiting more information may be logical while working under normal conditions. But when the environment is uncertain; and it is defined by urgent and incomplete information; postponing a decision may have major negative effects, boldness and speed are the most important factor in dealing with this crisis, so (Alexander, 2020) indicated that to take bold and speedy decisions, leaders can follow the following principles:

- 1) Take a moment and think. Research shows that pausing for even a fraction of a second allows the brain to focus on the information most relevant to the issue at hand, which is necessary in the current crisis.
- 2) Involve more individuals. Amidst the ambiguity and uncertainty associated with the Corona crisis, leaders often feel a desire to limit the authority of individuals in top management, while forming a small team to make influential decisions behind closed doors. Leaders do not prefer the hierarchical model that is appropriate for ordinary times, which may lead to making rational decisions without neglecting the speed of making these decisions. Leaders rather relying on a limited number of decision makers, multiple experts, and a limited number of relevant stakeholders to monitor and contribute information and ideas to gain the greatest possible views about the crisis.
- 3) Make critical small choices. Some of small choices that leaders make in the short term may be beneficial in the long run, as the crisis gradually becomes clearer. It may be difficult to define, but leaders must make an effort to find and search for them, as in the event of crises, some decisions that seem small at first, they can have significant long-term strategic implications in managing sudden crises such as COVID-19. These decisions range from measures to preserve employment and ensure liquidity to measures that enhance the flexibility of supply chain and more.
- 4) Create a nerve centre. In times of crisis, leaders will have to make big and worrying decisions. Whatever capabilities leaders have, the potential for making mistakes remains strongly evident, and the nerve centre (decision centre in the organization-network of cross-functional teams - which is a source of information, authority, work, leadership, organizing and control) can help leaders in making decisions related to the crisis and its consequences.

- 5) Empowering leaders with distinct personal characteristics and the ability to have a mental judgment that suits the nature of crises. Where the leaders with the appropriate temperament and personality are considered essential in times of crisis. Those leaders are curious, flexible and can make sensitive and difficult communications, even if that makes them unpopular, they make decisions with the interests of the organization, without the need for full consensus. They demonstrate calm and resilient personality when dealing with crises. Therefore, when dealing with the current crisis, it is preferable to empower other leaders, other than the leaders who are usually referred to in normal circumstances.

Also ([D'Auria and De Smet 2020](#)) stated that what leaders need during sudden crises is not a predetermined response plan, but rather behaviours and mind-sets that avoid overreacting to developments with a focus on the future, and they listed a set of these behaviours and ideas that can help leaders overcome the Corona pandemic and its impacts which are:

- 1) Adoption of good organizing to face the crisis: building a network of work teams. In routine emergencies, organizations can rely on the leadership structure to well manage business processes. However, organizations during emergency crises cannot rely on this method, as the leaders of organizations in the current crisis face unfamiliar problems whose features are unclear. The senior management in the organization cannot collect information or make quickly enough decisions to respond effectively, so it is imperative for leaders to mobilize their organizations in a better way by setting clear priorities for responding to the crisis and enabling others to discover and implement solutions that serve those priorities. Leaders can organize an integrated network of work teams, each of them consists of a group of adaptive subgroups united by a common goal, and they work together in the same way that individuals collaborate on one team. Team networks are characterized by being multidisciplinary and subject to adaptation, or reorganization and expansion. The idea of a team networks also supported by ([Alexander, 2020](#)).
- 2) Thoughtful calm and cautious optimism. As senior management in an organization must prepare to go beyond the hierarchy of leadership in some tasks to a network of teams, they must also enable others to contribute to the organization's response to crises. This involves giving them the authority to make and implement decisions without needing to refer to top management. Organization leaders must also make sure that they empower the right people to make decisions to respond to a crisis. Where crisis response leaders must be able to unite teams towards one goal, and one of the most important of these qualities is "intended calm," the ability to overcome tense situations, in addition to "limited optimism", or confidence with realism.
- 3) Stop for meditation, evaluation, anticipation, and then take action. Waiting for full facts about a crisis to emerge to determine what to do is a common mistake leaders make during crises. The nature of crises conceals many surprises, the facts may not be clear in the time available for decision-making, and this does not mean that leaders rely on their intuition alone. Leaders can deal with a crisis by constantly gathering information as the crisis develops, and observing the success of their responses to it. This means stopping repeatedly during crisis management, assessing the situation in several respects, anticipating what might happen next, and then

taking the necessary measures. The pause - evaluation - expectation cycle must be continuous, as it helps leaders maintain a state of calm and avoid overreacting to new information as soon as it is received.

- 4) Show compassion: Deal with the humanitarian crisis as a first priority. In COVID-19 crisis, human beings' thinking turns first to being alive and meeting their basic needs. This requires leaders to acknowledge the humanitarian and professional challenges that employees and their loved ones face during crises. Leaders must pay close attention to their suffering and take measures to support them, show compassion for others and focus on their well-being.
- 5) Effective communication: dealing with transparency and providing frequent updates on crisis. We often see leaders being overconfident in the early stages of a crisis because of their ineffective communication it, and consequently reaching to wrong conclusions about it, this worries stakeholders about the leaders' ability to deal with the crisis. As Amy Edmondson writes, "Transparency is the first job for leaders in a crisis", means be clear about what you know, what you don't know, and what you do to learn more. As effective communication shows that leaders follow the situation and correct their reactions as they discover more about the crisis, this helps them reassure stakeholders that they are facing the crisis with high efficiency and transparency.

This crisis will restructure the whole world, especially the economic structure in it, and as Lan Davis (2009) said in the midst of the 2008 financial crisis, "For many organizations, survival is the primary goal for them, and some organizations are thinking about how their position will be after the crisis ends and returns to normal. Which may take several years to return to normal". If it is difficult to predict what will happen, but we can take lessons from the distant and near past to build on that in thinking about the future, as, after each crisis, governments and organizations as well as researchers conducted assessments of these crises and how they were dealt with them. Then came up with lessons that benefit them in dealing with COVID-19 crisis ([Mckinsey Global Institute \(2020\)](#)) ([Dolfing 2019](#)) ([DeCorte 2018](#)) ([Malkawi \(2018b\)](#)) ([Bernstein 2005](#)). The following elements help in shaping the future, and leaders of all levels should exploit them in their decisions ([Sneader and Singhal \(2020\)](#)):

- 1) Distance is back again. With the advent of the Internet and electronic applications in the mid-nineties of the last century ([Malkawi \(2016\)](#)), the idea of "eliminating spaces" gained great importance. Where new technologies based on communications and Internet networks have made communication and work in new ways that significantly reduce physical convergence ([Banhani et al. 2009](#)). The flow of information has become smooth and inexpensive, and global supply chains ([Mohailan \(2020\)](#)) are able to offer products and services in a timely and easy manner. Cross-border trade has reached unprecedented levels ([Alraja and Malkawi 2015](#)). Even before the Corona crisis, there were worrying indicators of global openness, and this was expressed in protectionist calls, immigration that is more restrictive and visa policies, in pursuit of greater separation and protection. These positions were far to be global, but dealing with the COVID-19, imposed governments around the world to impose restrictions on people and goods that had not been seen in decades. Therefore, globalization has become the focus of everyone's question, and the return to the national state and being satisfied

with the internal product is the talk of peoples and governments during this crisis.

- 2) Resilience and efficiency. As lockdown restrictions start to ease, organizations will need to know how to operate in new ways. Resilience will be the key to long-term survival and prosperity. Again, history repeats itself, as during the global financial crisis of 2008, organizations that were flexible in adapting their business and bold in making innovation and creativity decisions achieved greater ability to re-realize profits and reduce costs.
- 3) The rise of the contact-free economy. The COVID-19 pandemic could be a critical turning point in three main areas: e-commerce, mobile service delivery, and business and process automation. Although electronic business and commerce have been popular during the last decade; however, it increased dramatically during this pandemic, as the quarantine, social distancing and closure found an easy way in electronic commerce to meet basic needs at the level of individuals and organizations. This pandemic has also accelerated business automation and entry without hesitation, even at the expense of giving up millions of jobs around the world. So research in strategic studies and best practices indicates that governments and their participants should take urgent steps in two main areas to deal with this ([David et al. 2020](#)):
 - Create an accurate and clear vision for who needs help maintaining jobs or looking for a new job. With a special, focus on small and medium business organizations ([Malkawi 2017](#)) and those working in the private sector.
 - Building smart solutions that include all sectors and provide assistance to them, to increase employment, while providing protection to reduce new infections by following proper health guidelines.
- 4) Government intervention in the economy. At a time when voices were calling for the state to move away from the activities of life, especially economic ones, we find during this crisis that voices rose quickly and inevitably, the state's intervention with full weight in various aspects of life. As it is the guarantor of all activities and sectors, and citizens and business organizations have demonstrated their readiness to accept more government control on the economy.
- 5) Changing industry structures, consumer behaviour, market attitudes, and sector attractiveness. One of the main questions facing leaders of organizations is whether or not their material or service industries will recover from the economic shock imposed by the COVID-19 crisis or not, and will it cause permanent damage to their business. This depends on the degree to which these businesses find themselves able to cope with this crisis and its consequences. In addition to changes in consumers' attitudes toward social distancing, privacy, increased health awareness and the desire to live healthier lives which may lead to a lasting change in where, how and what people eat.

However, a report issued by the Gartner Foundation for International Studies and Research indicated that organizations tend to follow traditional strategies and plans for business continuity. And focusing on the stability of resources and processes, but neglecting the business model, which may lead to risks to the continuity of operations when external events and crises such as the Corona crisis occur. Gartner advised organization leaders to take

strategic steps to ensure business continuity and to enhance the resilience of their current business models to cope with the current crisis (Bayern 2020). Researchers support this measure because of its illiteracy in dealing with crises, especially the current crisis, COVID-19.

7. A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR LEADERS TO DEAL WITH THE (COVID-19) CRISIS AND OTHER CRISES

The Coronavirus has imposed an exceptional need for leaders in various sectors. Its losses caused a state of fear among citizens, workers and other stakeholders. The widespread of disease prevalence and its unpredictability make it difficult for executives to effectively respond to it. In fact, the outbreak of the disease caused a worldwide crisis: it is an unexpected event or a series of huge successive and fast-paced events on various aspects of life; this led to a high degree of confusion, sense of loss of control, and a state of turmoil that affects various decisions to deal with the crisis and its consequences.

Seeing a crisis evolving and predicting what it might become, and not relying on being safe from it, empower leaders to lessen its effects. Once leaders view the crisis in this way, they can begin to respond to it. And responding to the crisis is not as effective as in routine emergencies by following pre-established plans. Where during unfamiliar crises, this requires an effective response to them in innovative and unfamiliar ways. COVID-19 has become the first challenge for leaders at the present time whether at the level of political or governmental leadership, that strive to support the political leadership in dealing with this challenge and ensuring the continuity of government services and business. Or at the level of the leaders of the private sector, who are striving to escape with their organizations from the consequences of this crisis, and the question is how should leaders deal with crises in general and this crisis in particular? So based on the data of the current crisis, in addition to the previous readings and experiences of researchers, and what has been studied in the folds of this paper; Researchers provide a framework to help leaders of organizations in the public and private sectors and civil society organizations in taking discreet decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This framework is represented in the following steps:

- 1) The speed of feeling the crisis, recognizing it, and giving it sufficient attention without confusing exaggeration, or underestimating that destroys to avoid the fatal mistakes that some make by ignoring the crisis or reducing its size and importance. Then working to form a vision and a common concern about the crisis among workers and all stakeholders. As effective leadership of the crisis cannot be achieved by simply taking the right actions, so it is necessary to formulate a vision coherent to help clarify the nature of the crisis for everyone and unite their efforts to obtain a voluntary consensus about it.
- 2) Boldness, speed and proactiveness in decision-making. Where the delay and hesitation within this crisis have devastating effects on the organization, and there is no time for an in-depth analysis of the crisis.
- 3) Going beyond the organizational structure and administrative ladder to deal with the crisis by forming a crisis cell and a network of multi-disciplinary and experienced work teams and strengthening communication between them, as the traditional organizational structure and managers working in normal conditions are often not suitable to deal with sudden crises. In other words, crisis leaders must shift to leading teams based on outputs and goals, with a

- focus on three main areas (structure, processes and culture) to achieve success during and after this pandemic.
- 4) Controlling communication and communicate with workers, stakeholders and the media through thoughtful and directed messages with clarity and transparency, and not to conceal the information, to assure and reassure everyone that the organization's leadership is working seriously and efficiently to deal with the current crisis. Thus eliminating the rumours that spread in case absence or poor communication between leaders and all stakeholders. In recent history, the rapid manner in which New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern acted with the armed attack in Christchurch last year could serve as a model for a leader who achieves communication goals efficiently.
 - 5) Managing information and striving to obtain and update it constantly, as data and information are the basis for supporting decision-making related to the crisis, where the world has not witnessed a crisis dominated by ambiguity and the lack of availability and transparency of data and information as is the case in the current crisis. Often, leaders will have to make decisions within ambiguity and insufficient information during this crisis.
 - 6) Dealing with the challenge of cultural change imposed by the current crisis, whether at the level of individuals, organizations or society in general. As everyone believes that after Corona will not be the same as before Corona in all areas of life, the most important of which is cultural change such as the culture of remote work (the culture of virtual), organizational structures decentralization, decision-making, the escalation of the importance of work teams, and the social distance imposed by this crisis. Many of these new standards may continue after the end of the crisis, which constitutes the greatest opportunity for the desired cultural change.
 - 7) Relying on internal sources of components of products and services and all parts of supply chains, developing them in a manner that achieves greater internal sufficiency or at the level of the national state. As it was found that supply chains were significantly affected during this pandemic, and the countries and organizations that achieved successes during this crisis, the one had a greater amount of national products and services and their components, whether at the state or organizational level.
 - 8) Attention to the legal issues that result from the crisis. This requires studying all the legal issues that arise from the rights and obligations of organizations and individuals resulting from the crisis.
 - 9) As a leader, know your limits and capabilities during a crisis. Where when leaders' Knowing and acknowledging to their strengths and weaknesses; They can find the right people to help them at this crisis.
 - 10) If you can, do not reduce your budget. Encourage creativity and innovation and search for new opportunities. Organizations that have sufficient flexibility and creativity are the ones that will achieve successes ([Malkawi et al. 2018](#)) and secure liquidity during and after the crisis. We do not suffer from a lack of expectations about how the world will be different after COVID-19. Education and health services have so far been largely protected from the disruption of established business models due to remote work, why do not leaders of organizations invest these job opportunities to achieve flexibility in their organizations and thus gain new opportunities such as entering new sectors or new partnerships. During these periods, organizations may resort to innovations that assure their resilience and superiority during and after the end of the pandemic. If previous crises provide lessons for the future, then we have the greatest lesson in the Great Depression of the 1930s, as the

collapse of the stock market in 1929 was followed by difficult years, marked by frenzied innovation that created many inventions. And the data from the recent 2008 financial crisis confirm this, where many organizations made major investments in innovation despite the economic slowdown, and these organizations outperformed with high returns for shareholders.

- 11) Adopted the holistic and comprehensive view of the crisis, and this requires preserving the overall picture required to deal with the crisis.
- 12) To deal with work within this pandemic; Focus on preserving public health in the workplace, following the instructions of the responsible local authorities about that, and what is issued by the World Health Organization to coexist with the disease within strict health measures that guarantee safety for all.
- 13) Compassion and winning the minds and hearts of people. Individuals during this crisis have many fears and psychological pressures, such as the health threat, securing basic needs, job loss and others, and they need more human sympathy to gain their support and participation.
- 14) Look for opportunities between these amounts of negative effects left by the crisis, even if they are limited. Leaders are picking up some bright opportunities among this rubble, such as exploiting them in cultural change, entering new businesses or changing existing businesses according to new requirements for work, consumption, provision of services, etc.
- 15) Documentation, documentation, and documentation. Every crisis is followed by many internal audits and investigations. Therefore, all crisis management activities and its procedures must be documented, and should be subject to scrutiny, review, and investigation to learn lessons from it. Where the crisis and dealing with it provide an educational opportunity for leaders and all stakeholders. When the whole crisis is over, a set of recommendations and "lessons learned" must be formulated, which can be used in managing future crises.

In conclusion, we say: Remember that the leaders of tomorrow are created today, and the crises make leaders, so be responsible in dealing with the crisis.

8. RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

From the folds of the research, the following results can be concluded:

- 1) The current Corona crisis is a sudden global crisis that differs from previous crises in terms of the strength of its effects and the speed of its spread, as it struck all health, economic, social and psychological aspects of life, and all countries, societies and organizations large and small.
- 2) This crisis has accelerated the transformation of the virtual digital environment and remote work, which was presented and handled slowly before the occurrence of this crisis; this has brought about a cultural change at the level of individuals, organizations and society as a whole.
- 3) This crisis has brought back protectionist policies and the nation-state, it struck globalization and openness in a dead end. And those who had called for it until recently before the crisis acknowledged that it had ended.
- 4) The rapid and confusing entry of this crisis forced leaders to take quick and bold decisions in the absence of complete information and lack of transparency.
- 5) The study showed that managers who rely on high capabilities in managing organizations in normal circumstances are not necessarily those who are fit

- to manage the Corona crisis, as the current crisis needs leaders and not managers.
- 6) The erosion of the hierarchical structure of public and private organizations during this crisis in favour of more flexible structures that depend on work teams to deal with crises.
 - 7) There are basic principles that leaders must take into account when making decisions to deal with the current crisis, such as calm, transparency, boldness, ability to communicate ... etc.
 - 8) There are several models and methods in the world to deal with the current crisis, ranging from complete closure to total openness. And every has its positive and negatives.
 - 9) Supply chains pose a challenge to governments and organizations during this crisis, and a country or organization that is more self-sufficient is better able to deal with the crisis than others.
 - 10) It has become imperative for governments and organizations to accelerate work and deal with the concepts of e-business and e-commerce, which have become necessity for all.

Based on the foregoing, the main implications of this study is that it is considered one of the few studies that dealt with leadership and decision-making during the Corona crisis in an integrated, systematic way. As most of what was written in it are daily or periodic reports that are not based on an integrated systematic methodology. So this study is expected to be of benefit to researchers those interested in this field, and be at the same time a guide for leaders in the various health, economic and social sectors ... etc., governmental, private and other related sectors to deal with this crisis and its various consequences.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the previous results, the researchers recommended the following:

- 1) Giving the current Corona crisis the attention it deserves, by coordinating efforts, building plans and making decisions, especially those related to preserving the safety and health of workers, citizens and residents, as well as on related health, social, economic and psychological consequences of the crisis.
- 2) Building and strengthening the technical infrastructure at the level of the state and organizations, in a way that enables the speed of dealing with the virtual work environment, working remotely and meeting the requirements of electronic commerce.
- 3) Dealing with the legal consequences of this crisis, by enacting legislation that regulates that and the consequent rights and duties, not to mention laws that regulate the new virtual work mechanism.
- 4) Owning supply chains and striving to achieve self-sufficiency in products or components of products and services within the borders of the organization and the national state as possible.
- 5) Shifting from the manager's capabilities to the leader's abilities to deal with this crisis, by selecting leaders who have personal traits and characteristics that qualify them to deal with this crisis such as boldness, confidence and calm, the ability to communicate,... etc.
- 6) Adopting flexibility when making decisions to deal with the crisis, by forming a crisis cell and building a network of work teams with multiple experiences and specializations that ensure speed, flexibility and ease of decision-making.

- 7) Evaluating global and local experiences in dealing with the Corona crisis and its consequences, in order to take lessons and learn from them.
- 8) Take advantage of the framework researchers presented in this study in leadership and taking decisions to deal with the current and future crises.

10. LIMITATION

- 1) The newness of Covid-19 crises.
- 2) The wide range of effects result from this crisis, which made it difficult to cover everything in one study.
- 3) No enough data about the crisis and its consequences.
- 4) What is written and decisions about the crisis are unstable and updated continuously.
- 5) The issue of transparency about the crises, and there is no near horizon of its end.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Nazem Malkawi was the main leader of the study, who organized the study and distributed roles and tasks, he is also formulated the study methodology (importance, objectives, questions...of the study), and the suggested framework (guide) for leadership and decision making during crises which is the main contribution of the study. Mohailan gathered literature review, previous studies about crises and decision making besides recommendations. Ahmad Malkawi gathered information about leadership and decision making during COVID-19 crises besides limitations of the study. And Rehmeh Malkawi gathered information about COVID-19 virus, types of countries responses to the crisis and implications of the study. All the authors also contribute in analysing data content to evaluate it and get results to build the suggested framework.

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