

Impacts of COVID-19 on an Individual's Leadership Skill
(*Kesan COVID-19 terhadap Kemahiran Kepimpinan Individu*)

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is a person's capability to accept, assess and convey information that benefits oneself and others. A leader learns and guides others toward personal growth and success. However, an individual does not develop this skill magically. One can learn and be trained to develop and hone the skill; however, not many have the privilege to do so. The majority of people would develop their self-leadership skills when they mature. Maturity happens when one faces life-changing events such as the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic has significantly impacted an individual's self-leadership skills, which is what this research paper is based on. Multiple methods were used to assist and demonstrate the legitimacy of this article's research. The methods used are a survey and a literature review of articles on related topics. Research shows this life-changing event shows one's resilience in facing the challenges during the pandemic and how one reinvents oneself to overcome the odds. Based on the results, it can be concluded that COVID-19 has influenced the leadership skills of individuals in ways such as adaptability and flexibility, crisis management, decision-making under uncertainty, prioritisation and time management, resilience and perseverance.

Keywords: Self- Leadership Skill, Mature, COVID-19, Survey, Resilience, Challenges, Reinvent

ABSTRAK

Kepimpinan ialah keupayaan seseorang untuk menerima, menilai dan menyampaikan maklumat yang memberi manfaat kepada diri sendiri dan orang lain. Seorang pemimpin belajar dan membimbing orang lain ke arah pertumbuhan dan kejayaan peribadi. Walau bagaimanapun, seseorang individu tidak mengembangkan kemahiran ini secara ajaib. Seseorang boleh belajar dan dilatih untuk mengembangkan dan mengasah kemahiran; namun, tidak ramai yang mempunyai keistimewaan untuk berbuat demikian. Majoriti orang akan mengembangkan kemahiran kepimpinan diri mereka apabila mereka matang. Kematangan berlaku apabila seseorang menghadapi peristiwa yang mengubah hidup seperti pandemik Penyakit Koronavirus 19 (COVID-19). Pandemik ini telah memberi kesan ketara kepada kemahiran kepimpinan diri seseorang individu, yang merupakan asas kertas penyelidikan ini. Pelbagai kaedah telah digunakan untuk membantu dan menunjukkan kesahihan penyelidikan artikel ini. Kaedah yang digunakan ialah tinjauan dan tinjauan literatur artikel mengenai topik berkaitan. Penyelidikan menunjukkan peristiwa yang mengubah hidup ini menunjukkan daya tahan seseorang dalam menghadapi cabaran semasa pandemik dan bagaimana seseorang mencipta semula dirinya untuk mengatasi kemungkinan. Berdasarkan keputusan tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahawa COVID-19 telah mempengaruhi kemahiran kepimpinan individu dengan cara seperti kebolehsuaian dan fleksibiliti, pengurusan krisis, membuat keputusan di bawah ketidakpastian, keutamaan dan pengurusan masa, daya tahan dan ketabahan.

Kata kunci: Kemahiran Kepimpinan Diri, Matang, COVID-19, Tinjauan, Ketahanan, Cabaran, Cipta Semula

INTRODUCTION

It has been more than three years since the virus outbreak started in China. In early December 2019, in Wuhan, China, the virus created a new worldwide public health issue that is fast spreading and has verified cases in practically every nation. All facets of life have changed as a result of the COVID-19 induced uncertainty. In order to stop communal transmission, people's ability to go about their regular lives was abruptly and significantly limited. As the virus spread rapidly from one country to another, people had little time to comprehend what was happening. Loved ones were lost: parents mourned their children, and children grieved for their parents. Many were stranded abroad, unable to return home. Livelihoods were destroyed as businesses went bankrupt and factories shut down. The entire world was placed under lockdown, and the entire human population was instructed to stay at home, uncertain of when the restrictions would end.

During these tough times, people encounter all sorts of challenges that would test an individual's perseverance and tenacity to the limit. Some would struggle to cope in a cooped-up space with other family members for a long time, and some would have a hard time not working or being productive at home. Business owners stress over a potential failed business if the lockdown continues for too long. Teachers were concerned about their students' academic performance during the lockdown, as many students struggled with learning from home. Additionally, parents who lost their jobs often because businesses had to make cuts to survive faced worries about how to support their children after losing their income during the pandemic.

AlMazrouei (2023) explained that in uncertain situations, human instincts and basic management training might lead leaders to delay actions and minimise the perceived threat out of fear of making incorrect decisions and causing unnecessary anxiety. However, this approach fails the coronavirus leadership test. Effective leadership requires acting urgently, transparently, and adaptively. Recognising that mistakes are inevitable, leaders should focus on correcting errors and improving strategies rather than assigning blame. Indeed, outstanding leadership would cause individuals to react to the pandemic in haste and precision due to good judgment and better consideration of the situation (Kerrissey & Edmondson, 2020).

When encountering these problems, people would either accept their fate or want to change it; that, however, depends on one's leadership skills. From personal experience, as students, we know that continuing to be unproductive and inactive would cause

our minds to be less sharp and unfocused, reducing our problem-solving skills, which are very valuable for youth. We, students, would decide to keep ourselves active and engaged during the pandemic because that is the responsible thing to do and shows leadership qualities.

The reason for doing this research is to figure out how COVID-19 impacted the self-leadership skills of individuals who face hardship. This research also intends to determine what type of leadership skill significantly influences an individual's action during the pandemic.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This research was crucial for understanding the impact of COVID-19 on an individual's self-leadership skills. We will discuss five main impacts: adaptability and flexibility, crisis management, decision-making under uncertainty, resilience and perseverance, and prioritisation and time management. These characteristics will help us determine which qualities were most significant and how they affected individuals' lives during the pandemic (Leadership, n.d). Additionally, this paper highlights the importance of self-leadership skills, especially during a global crisis like COVID-19.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

To gain a more thorough understanding of the topic, we conducted two methods. The methods are:

- i. Literature Review
- ii. Online Survey

Literature Review

A literature review is intended to help us better understand the current topic and discussions pertinent to our subject or field of study and to communicate that information in the form of a written report. By conducting a literature review, we are able to gain more knowledge and get a better perspective on the topic we are studying.

For our research, we chose the context of self-leadership during the pandemic as a case study to analyse the various impacts of one's leadership skills. We hypothesised that an individual's leadership skills would grow through hardship, no matter the gender or age.

Mohan and Nambiar (2020) provide a detailed examination of the emergence and global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The authors discuss the rapid spread of the disease, its clinical manifestations, and the challenges faced in diagnosing and treating COVID-19. They highlight the importance of understanding the virus's origins in bats and its transmission dynamics through respiratory droplets and surface contact. The article also addresses the significance of preventive measures such as contact, droplet and airborne precautions in controlling the spread of the virus. Furthermore, the review underscores the need for ongoing research and clinical trials to develop effective treatments and vaccines to combat this unprecedented global health crisis.

Besides that, Vardiashvili (2022) has been discussing how the COVID-19 crisis has reshaped leadership qualities and behaviours in the business sector. The study highlights the increasing importance of traits such as resilience, empathy, and effective communication skills for leaders navigating through turbulent times. By examining the evolving demands placed on leaders during the pandemic, the research underscores the critical role of leadership in fostering employee well-being, driving organisational success, and adapting to the new realities of remote work and digital communication. Overall, the article offers a timely exploration of the key attributes and competencies that have become essential for effective leadership in the post-pandemic era.

Based on several articles reviewed, it is evident that well-established leaders of corporations demonstrate exemplary leadership skills. During the pandemic, major corporations with strong leadership managed to navigate the turmoil effectively. Although losses were inevitable, decisive actions taken early in the crisis helped prevent these corporations from suffering severe losses.

These people have strong self-leadership skills. They have the ability to take control of one's actions, thoughts, and emotions to achieve personal and professional goals. The pandemic has presented unique challenges that have both tested and shaped self-leadership skills in several ways:

- i. Adaptability and Flexibility
- ii. Crisis Management
- iii. Decision-making under uncertainty
- iv. Prioritisation and Time Management
- v. Resilience and Perseverance

Online Survey

The method used to gather the information or data regarding this issue was an online survey. It was done to identify which self-leadership skills affected respondents' lives the most. The purpose of doing a survey was to gain further evidence of how COVID-19 affected individual's self-leadership. The survey was accepting responses for a week. These methods were employed to aid and demonstrate the credibility of this article's research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the survey, we received responses from a total of 31 participants over the course of a week. The results are detailed in the subheadings below.

General Data

Age analysis.

The average age of the respondents is shown in the chart below. A majority, 83.9%, are aged between 17 and 25 years old. This age group includes individuals who are in their final year of school, those at the pre-university level, undergraduates, and those who have recently entered the workforce. The remaining people are 26-30 years old and above 30.

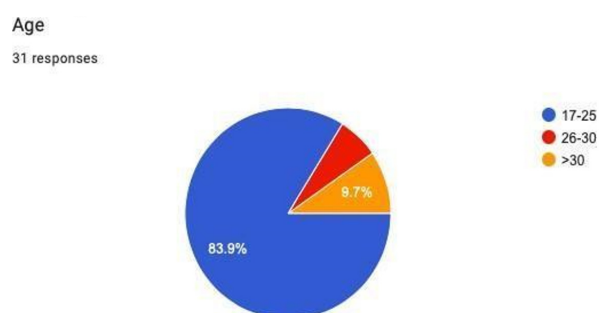


FIGURE 1 shows the average age of the respondent

Gender analysis.

Next is gender analysis. We can see that both males and females took part in this survey. As for males, we have 19.4% and females 80.6%.

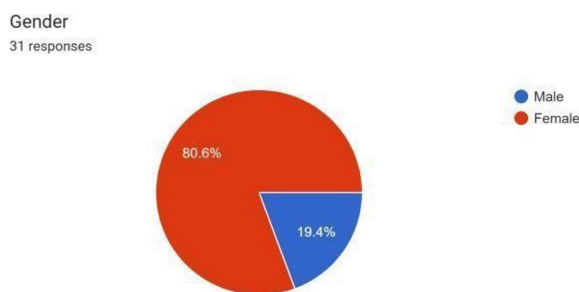


FIGURE. 2 shows gender analysis

Leader analysis

Based on the leader chart, we can see that most of the respondents are leaders, with a percentage of 90.3%.

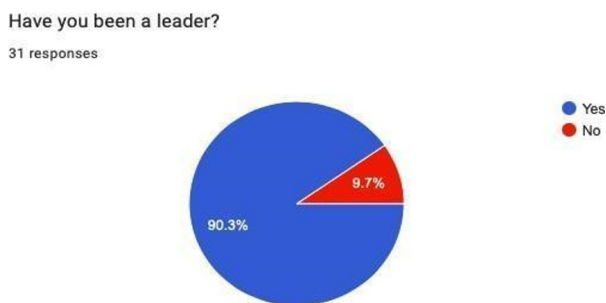


FIGURE 3. shows leader analysis

Health analysis.

Based on the chart, we know that COVID-19 has infected 74.2% of respondents, and only a minority, 25.8%, have not.

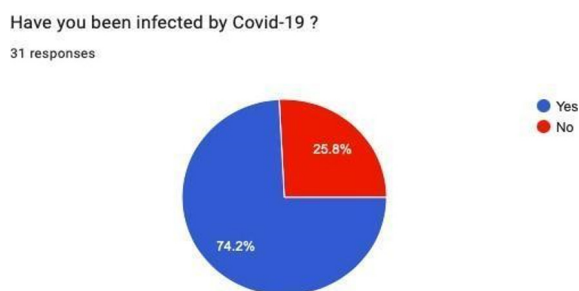


FIGURE 4. shows that health analysis

The impact analysis.

Based on the chart, it is clear that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our daily lives, with 87.9% of respondents stating that the pandemic has affected them.

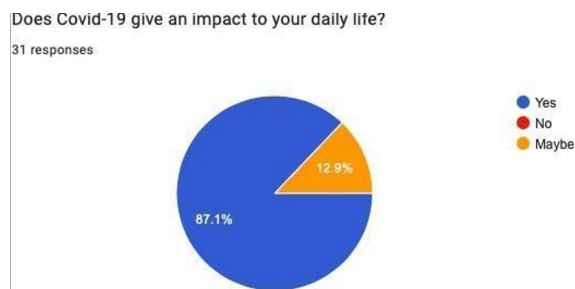
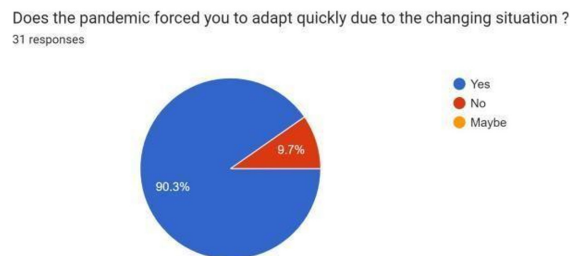


Figure 5. shows the impact analysis

Adaptability and Flexibility

Based on the chart below it shows us the percentage of respondents adapting to the pandemic. Most of the respondents, 90.3% adapted to the situation. In comparison, the remaining 9.7% did not adapt.



The chart below shows us the percentage of respondents who have more flexibility in their planning during COVID-19. Most of the respondents, 54.3%, agreed. 29% do not agree. Whereas the remaining 16.1% answered maybe.

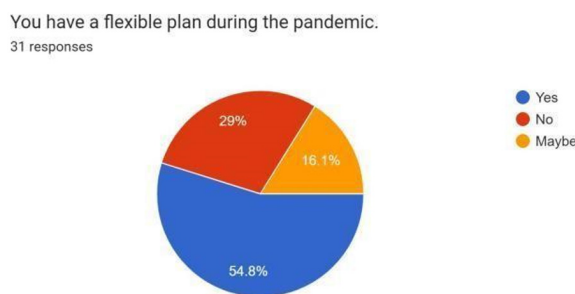


FIGURE 6. shows adaptability and flexibility during COVID-19

The pandemic brought sudden changes to work, education, and daily routines. Individuals had to quickly adapt to remote work, online learning, and other disruptions. Those who demonstrated adaptability and flexibility in adjusting to new circumstances showcased strong self-leadership skills.

Crisis Management

The chart below shows us the percentage of respondents needed to make a tough decision to navigate the crisis. Most of the respondents, 54.8%, do make the decision. 29% of respondents are not certain. In contrast, the remaining 16.1% answered that they do not make tough decisions.

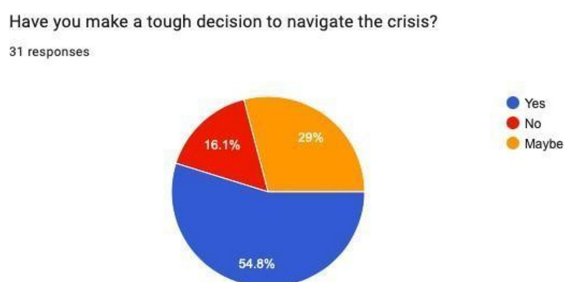


FIGURE 7 shows the crisis management analysis

During the pandemic, families were often faced with harrowing decisions, such as whether to authorise life-ending treatments for a family member infected with COVID-19. These decisions, with direct life-or-death consequences, placed a heavy burden on those making them.

Decision-making under uncertainty

The chart below shows us the percentage of respondents who needed to make a decision, even if they were uncertain about the situation. Most of the respondents, 58.1%, made the decision. 29% of respondents are not certain. In contrast, the remaining 12.9% do not make decisions under uncertainty.

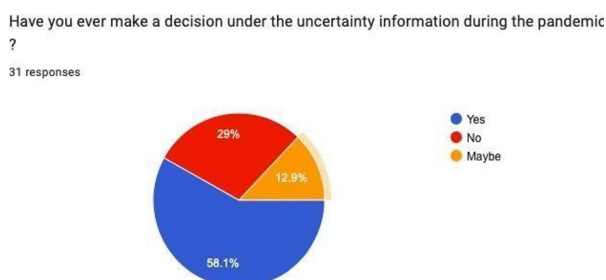


FIGURE 8. shows decision-making under uncertainty analysis

Leaders use data, scenario planning, and expert advice to make choices when facing the pandemic uncertainty. Communication that is open and honest, flexibility, and empathy are crucial. Effective leadership is the

capacity to learn from results, preserve one's resilience, and strike a balance between prudence and adaptation.

Prioritisation and Time Management

The chart below shows us that 83.9% of respondents are able to differentiate their priorities during the pandemic. 9.7% of the respondents are not certain, and the others are not able to differentiate their priorities.

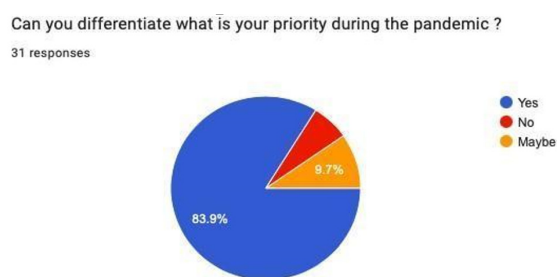


FIGURE 9. shows prioritisation and time management analysis

Effective time management and prioritisation are essential for pandemic leadership. Tasks must be prioritised according to priority and urgency, and leaders must concentrate on their essential duties. This all-encompassing strategy guarantees that leaders overcome obstacles while protecting their well-being and establishing organisational stability.

Resilience and Perseverance

The chart below shows us that 48.4% of respondents can adapt to the pandemic in less than five months. 9.7% of the respondents took a year to adapt. 19.4% of respondents took less than a month and more than a year to adapt, respectively. A small percentage are not able to adapt to the pandemic.

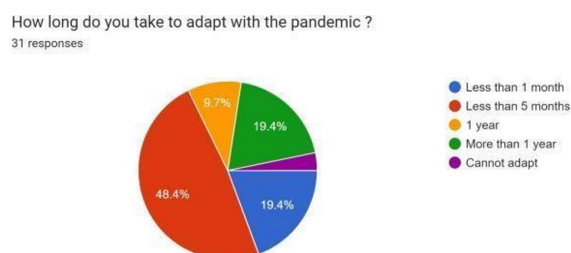


FIGURE 10. shows how long respondents have to adapt to the pandemic

The chart below shows us that 32.3% of respondents immediately panicked when they first heard about the pandemic. 35.5% of the respondents do not know what to do.

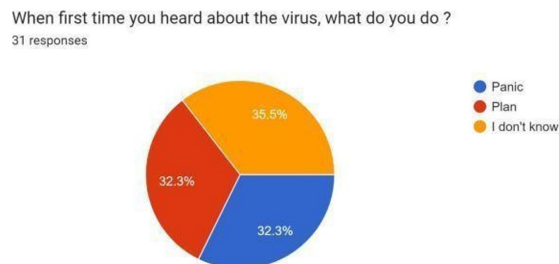


FIGURE 11. shows the resilience and perseverance analysis

The uncertainty, isolation, and health concerns caused by the pandemic challenged individuals' mental and emotional well-being. Developing resilience became essential for coping with stressors, maintaining focus, and sustaining motivation during tough times.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, we are able to determine how COVID-19 affects a person's capacity for self-leadership. We spoke about five primary effects: adaptation and flexibility, crisis management, making decisions in the face of uncertainty, tenacity and resilience, as well as prioritisation and time management. In addition, we can determine which traits were the most important and had the most effects on people's lives throughout the epidemic based on these few criteria. Furthermore, this research also emphasises the significance of an individual's capacity for self-leadership, particularly in times of global catastrophe like COVID-19.

In conclusion, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on individual self-leadership skills.

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Understanding and developing these skills in each of us is crucial. They prepare us to handle future disasters or major issues effectively, allowing us to face challenges positively and courageously. Therefore, self-leadership skills are essential for individual success.

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