Understanding turnaround leadership in business

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ABSTRACT

Modern business is an increasingly competitive and dynamic environment which presents leaders and managers new challenges. The ability of managers to change the performance trajectory of a team or organisation is at the centre of the study and is presented under the topic of Turnaround Leadership. The literature on business turnarounds is primarily focused on the strategies and methods of achieving a turnaround. This research paper seeks to expand upon the existing literature by focusing primarily on the nuances and substance of the individual behind the turnaround, the Turnaround Leader. This study aims to identify the leadership components and critical behaviours which form the substance of the Turnaround Leader. By mapping and understanding, the components of Turnaround Leadership, it is hoped that contemporary managers can equip themselves with the leadership behaviours most conducive to the implementation of their own performance turnarounds as the need arises.

The research was undertaken using a qualitative, exploratory approach. This approach was specifically chosen due to its ability to unlock new insights into modern Turnaround Leadership. The data collection was achieved using semi-structured, in-depth interviews with seven Turnaround Leaders and seven focus-groups with their respective teams resulting in a total of 14 data points. The individuals interviewed were chosen due to their history of achieving a turnaround performance within the business they operate. The sample included individuals from a broad demographic, job-title and industry.

The key findings generally agreed with and expanded upon, the existing literature. Key observations included a new understanding of the differences between the self-perceptions of leaders relative to the lived-experiences of their followers during performance turnarounds. Through this, meaningful insight into the prevalence and role of perceptions versus reality in the practice of Turnaround Leadership was achieved. From this, the Turnaround Toolkit model emerged and illustrated a practical behavioural-based approach for managers looking to initiate and pursuing a turnaround in performance from their team.

KEYWORDS: Performance turnaround, turnaround leadership, competency theory, leadership, business performance.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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"But management is also people. Every achievement of management is the achievement of a manager. Every failure is a failure of a manager. People manage rather than "forces" or "facts." The vision, dedication, and integrity of managers determine whether there is management or mismanagement." (Drucker, 1986, p. 6)

CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

1.1 Introduction and Description of the Problem

The ability to create a sudden and significant change in a business setting is undoubtedly a worthy pursuit for modern management science. The concept of a *Turnaround Leader* is an individual who possesses a unique set of skills and capabilities which can be channelled to drive significant positive change in the organisations they work for in a relatively short period. These individuals have a leadership style which is unique to the outcome they wish to achieve and is guided by the context and timeline of the turnaround opportunity at hand. Although typically framed in situations where businesses are experiencing imminent threats to their survival and in which drastic action is needed to achieve business turnaround (O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014), the case for understanding Turnaround Leadership extends to other areas of business performance too. When mastered and understood, the traits and decision making methodology in Turnaround Leadership can be systematically applied to a variety of scenarios in modern business when there exists the desire to kick-start a process of improvement no matter what the existing state of affairs.

The idea of being able to change the performance trajectory of a business is especially relevant because businesses invariably experience peaks and troughs in their ongoing performance throughout their existence. Eventually, areas of the company which perennially underperform will close, and their resources will be directed to other profit-generating activities. The question of underperformance is ever more relevant in an increasingly globalised economy where competition is evermore nimble, and consumers have an increasing ability to substitute between different services and products with little or no penalty or substitution cost. Thus, how to "turn-around" sub-standard performance and kickstart drastic improvements in marginal performance is a worthwhile endeavour to any business that wishes to remain competitive in this modern and dynamic marketplace.

The sensitivity of the required urgency in turning around underperforming teams or businesses should not be underestimated, especially whilst life-giving cash-flows are being absorbed, and competition moves in on opportunities to exploit value gaps. In these situations, companies require Turnaround Leaders who can make decisions quickly and who can correct the underperformance, or move away from that business endeavour entirely through retrenchments and closure. Thus, this topic has relevance not only for all for-profit businesses, but also any team aspiring to achieve high levels of performance in a relatively short period of time. For many businesses the prospect of being able to achieve a sudden and significant increase in the performance of an underperforming area of their business would seem too good to be true. However, as evidence has shown, with the right decision-makers aligned, and the correct leadership methodology employed, many businesses can be "turned around" and elevated to a higher level of performance.

Understanding how to achieve a turnaround has an undeniable attraction for business because rather than being focused on medium to long term performance projections, a Turnaround Leader is a role which looks to the quickest manner in which to improve the performance of a business outright. This leader has a clear and concise vision of what needs doing and how to do it. He/she is not concerned with existing formalities, policies or procedures which are not conducive to this outcome and will if necessary disrupt and change the standard course of the business to achieve the quickest possible positive result (Boyd, 2011)

The existing theory on the topic of Turnaround Leadership covers a broad selection of methodologies and frameworks which provide a backdrop to the very practical goal of a turnaround, or, a sudden and significant positive increase in performance. Despite the breadth of the existing literature, there are two distinct gaps in the current literature. Firstly, primary data collection and analysis on Turnaround Leaders are exceptionally thin after the mid-to-late 2000s. This has left the models and methodologies which seek to understand and explain the phenomenon lacking contemporary experience. This observation is especially appropriate in the context of South African business, where the author was not able to find an example of a published, peer-reviewed research on Turnaround Leadership. It is noteworthy, however, that some work has been done by South African authors regarding turnaround strategic models and methodologies rather than Turnaround Leadership specifically (Pretorius, 2008).

Secondly, the existing literature focuses on the lived experience of the leader and approaches the data collection from this one-sided perspective. The outcome of an

organisational turnaround is, however, a two-sided experience which involves the lived experience of the followers of that leader too. It can be argued that the lived experience of a Turnaround Leader from the perspective of the follower may provide a far richer data source for the styles, capabilities, and methodologies of a Turnaround Leader.

Furthermore, the literature on Turnaround Leadership, to an extent, presents these individuals in a somewhat heroic sense given their ability to 'save' businesses (Bibelaut, 1984; Slatter, 2011). This is problematic for future studies on two grounds. Firstly, it is acknowledged that leadership has an essential role in the facilitation and transition to better business outcomes. However, it is the followers (not the leader) and their corresponding efforts which operationalise the change, be it during a turnaround or not. This is especially relevant in environments where individuals inputs are strong complements and the lowest-performing individual determines the performance of the entire group (Brandts, Cooper, & Weber, 2014). Without team alignment and the ability to operationalise their strategies, all turnaround attempts would likely fall flat (Brandts, Cooper, & Weber, 2014). Thus the experience of the followers in the context of Turnaround Leadership is both understudied and under analysed in turnaround scenarios.

In addition to this, given the heroic positioning of many Turnaround Leaders, the potential for the dark side of this leadership type has not been thoroughly analysed or modelled. The severe and time-sensitive nature of turnaround scenarios can necessitate leadership styles and methods which are not always held in a positive light. And similarly, the disparities and contrasts in the lived experience of followers, relative to the self-perception of leaders are likewise not captured thoroughly in the literature.

Now, given this gap in the existing literature, and the realities of the modern hyper-competitive business environment, by understanding and modelling the experience of both the leaders and their respective teams during turnarounds, there can be a meaningful contribution to the broader study of leadership and management science. It can be argued that the rapid pace of modern business and competition requires that decisions are made decisively and quickly, and possibly that the qualities of the Turnaround Leader are relevant in situations beyond the traditional idea of a business in dire straits, but rather also in the context of general competition and daily management practice. It naturally follows that the role of the Turnaround Leader is to elevate marginal performance, correct underperformance, and dynamically manage the competitive advances by various competitors in a sudden and significant way. In this light, the qualities and substance of Turnaround Leaders can in a theoretical sense be placed alongside other contemporary

theories like transformational and transactional leadership (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, Demerouti, Olsen & Espevik, 2014; McCleskey, 2014) when applied in a contextually appropriate way depending on the timing and context of the required business outcome.

Thus, the qualities and methodologies of Turnaround Leadership can be viewed in a new theoretical light, as an equal and complementary part of the broader leadership toolkit for modern business leaders. Not only are these leaders required to maintain and grow performance over their tenure, but also, when necessary, have the ability to completely shift the course and performance of a team, business unit, or entire business. Insights into Turnaround Leadership are especially valuable in understanding how to channel the capabilities and competencies of a diverse workforce to drive the broader success of the business, and by doing so, their careers too. This understanding opens the forum for a more in-depth investigation into exactly how businesses can bring about the best in their employees and how leaders and managers drive effectiveness and productivity by aligning and channelling the energies, competencies and skills of their labour force in the most effective way possible.

Furthermore, despite there already existing a substantial body of literature dedicated to the study of turnaround methodologies and strategies, few of these studies place emphasis on the leadership component of a turnaround and more pertinently none (to the researchers knowledge) have focused on the lived experience of a turnaround from both the perspective of the leader and their followers.

This research seeks to understand the lived experience of Turnaround Leadership in the context of general business. Once understood, this study aims to create a leadership model for rapid positive improvement. This understanding can then be used by senior management to drive policies, operational change, recruitment, and training. The ultimate intention being a starting point to empower managers to develope turnaround capabilities in their leadership which can be used at opportune moments to positively change the course of a team, business unit, or entire organisation when required.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to understand the substance of what makes a Turnaround Leader. Leadership is a vast and multi-faceted topic which covers a variety of different styles and methodologies all aimed at rallying support, driving change, and amplifying

performance in some way. Interestingly, across the backdrop of differences in individual leaders' backgrounds, primary leadership-style, and demographics, there is a capacity and capability within specific individuals to create the sudden and significant positive changes in performance which is essentially the backbone of a turnaround. When declines in performance are identified, or the market demands a higher service standard, a leader needs to be able to act in such a way that the performance trajectory of their team is positively effected in a time and resource-efficient manner. Businesses and the teams within which they operate are all to an extent subject to variance in performance. Ideally, the most capable leader is one who can apply the most appropriate leadership style at different stages of the ascents, peaks, descents and troughs of performance. And by doing so, the leaders would be able to achieve what can be likened to preventative maintenance on the performance of a team, which then creates and drives high performance through defined alternate performance trajectories.

The study to follow will include a literature review of the key topics within the scope of the defined area of inquiry. From the literature review, research propositions will be presented to the reader based on the key theme's identified in the literature. Following this, Chapter 4 will cover the chosen methodology and the manner in which the data was collected. The results will then be introduced, described and analysed in the context of the research questions and their ability to verify or veer from the highlighted themes.

The study will look specifically at seven leaders who have been identified as achieving a turnaround in performance, and their seven teams which have experienced Turnaround Leadership first hand. Firstly, the leaders will be interviewed with the intention of understanding their self-perception of their leadership style, methodology, and human nature. Secondly, a focus group will be held with each of their teams to understand the lived experience of a performance driving Turnaround Leader. This data will then be coded and grouped into key themes. Once coded and grouped, the information will then be used to test the research proposition which were developed from the observations and gaps in the existing literature. The study aims to provide a model and framework which businesses and managers can use to inform decisions regarding their human resources and training initiatives and ultimately, equip their leaders with the tools and methodologies to achieve a significant and positive change in performance when necessary.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this research is to understand what human qualities are present in leaders that contribute to the success of teams in the form of a significant and sudden positive change in performance. In order to understand this topic thoroughly, the literature reviewed has been structured in the following way: Firstly the idea of a Turnaround Leader is explored and defined. Secondly, the substance of the Turnaround Leadership is examined by looking at the literature on different leadership styles and communication styles. Following this, a section on rewards, recognition, and incentives, is presented to understand how these mechanisms are used to drive performance. Then, the somewhat darker topic of retrenchment and underperformance is contrasted with the lighter topic of learning, growth and training. Lastly, there are two sections which cover the prevailing contemporary literature on leadership styles, competency theories, and business performance. These topics intrinsically link and form the backbone of the knowledge driving the research. The research is premised that the qualities and competencies of Turnaround Leaders are unique in their ability coordinate the efforts of teams in a way which is most conducive to driving sudden and significant increases in performance and have been chosen purposefully to capture the dynamic ability and vastness of people at the core of the research.

2.2 Turnaround & Turnaround Leadership Defined

The idea of a business turnaround and a Turnaround Leader has been present in the literature since the late 1970s with key contributions regarding the definitions of these situations and the individuals acting on the turnarounds coming from the seminal works of Bibeault (1984) and, Slatter (1984). The contemporary definitions typically understand the turnaround phenomenon in the context of organisational decline leading to an organisational crisis which then necessitates a turnaround in performance (O'Kane & Cunningham, 2013, 2014; Pretorius, 2008). These definitions are useful in that they have kept consistency with the original literature on the topic. However, in the context of this research, the definition cannot be limited by the stage of its decline or stagnation, but instead needs to include the potential of a turnaround applying to any business scenario

in which rapid, positive change is required. In this sense, turnaround is linked not to the performance cycle of a business, but rather to economic necessity. Brandts, Cooper, & Weber, (2014, p. 1) offer a definition in line with this thinking, understanding turnaround as the ability to coordinate organisational change to a more effective equilibrium. Or as has been put previous sections, and what is being used as the primary definition in this research: *The ability to create a significant and sudden positive change in performance.*

The concept of a turnaround is intrinsically linked to the capabilities, competencies and styles of the person tasked with, and responsible for, a turnaround; the Turnaround Leader. The literature on competencies and the effectiveness thereof forms the backdrop to understanding leadership performance. As put so succinctly by Boyatzis, (2008, p. 6) "a theory of performance is the basis for the concept of competency."

Competencies can be understood as the collection of key success factors or components that are necessary for achieving important results for a specific job or work role in a particular organisation (Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014, p.14). These competencies refer to the intellectual, managerial, social, and emotional abilities of an individual and are the best predictors of outstanding on-the-job performance (Boyatzis, 2008; Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014). In the context of this research, the competency identified is the ability to achieve a turnaround with the following sections understanding the collection of key success factors, traits, behaviours, styles, and methodologies which ultimately create the competency, Turnaround Leadership.

2.3 The Turnaround Leader

Thus, the Turnaround Leader, as identified in the literature, is a person able to achieve a turnaround as a function of their intellectual, managerial, social and emotional abilities. Bibeault (1984) forwards that a Turnaround Leader possesses a unique set of attributes which enable them to achieve the rapid pace of change necessary in a turnaround; listing entrepreneurial instinct, broad business experience, expert negotiating skills and expert interviewing skills as the foundation of the personality type. Following studies refine these broader categories into necessary traits, styles, and skills. Although there are overlaps in the themes and insights forwarded by each author, by listing the categories and traits of each leader from each study will result in an unnecessarily large and confusing set of variables. Instead is it more useful to understand the substance of what makes a Turnaround Leader, as a balance of tensions between competing decisions and activities,

and the effectiveness of that leader is his/her ability to purposefully navigate and balance apparently conflicting activities within these tensions (O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014, p. 963). The following section presents the literature that explores the values, substance, style and methodologies of Turnaround Leaders further.

2.4 The Substance of the Turnaround Leader

2.4.1 Introduction

A Turnaround Leader needs to be a dynamic and broadly skilled individual possessing both hard and soft skills. Although turnarounds are typically characterised by swift autocratic decision making which drives both operational and strategic efficacy (Bibeault, 1984; Boyd, 2011; O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014; Slatter, 2011), ultimately a Turnaround Leader needs to be able to appeal to the organisation's human resources too if they are to be sufficiently motivated and inspired to achieve the turnaround. The Turnaround Leader must encompass a wide array of interpersonal skills and 'softer' leadership qualities if they are to resonate with their broader teams. The soft skills of Turnaround Leaders receive relatively less attention in the literature on Turnaround Leadership but are no less critical to the overall success of the Turnaround Leader.

2.4.2 Soft and Hard Skills and Attributes of Turnaround Leaders

O'Kane & Cunningham (2012) emphasise the importance of trust and humility as leadership traits in the turnaround process. Similarly, Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers (2003, p. 41) highlight that in successful turnarounds close attention needs to be played to employee morale to overcome resistance to change in what they term a 'pride turnaround' which focuses on trust, dignity and company culture. Conversely, a majority of the literature emphasises the importance of action over empathy, where the Turnaround Leader does not have the luxury of time to inspire or motivate, but rather has to act quickly and assertively to achieve the required turnaround results (Monroe, 1992). Bibeault (1984, p. 152) understands the Turnaround Leader as a 'tough-minded manager' who is able to take drastic action at the expense of the relationships and emotional bonds built 'during the good times."

Brandts, Cooper, & Weber (2014) understand the importance and extent of a Turnaround Leader's authority in the context of the degree of their perceived legitimacy stemming from their leadership style be it autocratic or inclusive. Woulfin & Weiner (2019) further deepen this by emphasising the importance of the Turnaround Leader's ability to be both fluent

and dominant in operational tasks of the business. Their findings echo Bibeault's (1984) and Slatter's (2011) contribution necessitating the need for a Turnaround Leader to have broad business experience. De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog (2015) note autocratic leadership styles can have a positive effect on team psychological safety and performance by providing a predictable and ordered environment which contrasts the rapid change around the team.

2.4.3 Conclusion

The literature points out the necessity for an effective Turnaround Leader to incorporate and utilise different leadership styles and methodologies dynamically. They need to be able to be strong-minded and autocratic, but also have the charisma and empathy to allow them to appeal to, and inspire, their followers to perform at their highest level.

2.5 Communication and Communication Style

2.5.1 Introduction

Communication is the primary instrument leaders have available to them to influence their teams (Brandts, Cooper, & Weber, 2014, p. 24). The manner in which this is achieved is described in the literature as the communication method and communication style of leaders, both of which are prevalent topics for the research at hand. The ability of leaders to appropriate the most effective communication style in each moment is intuitively a critical element of their overall ability to achieve a turnaround in performance. Furthermore, the short-time span typical of turnarounds reduces the number of interactions a leader has to communicate their vision and operational requirements meaning that Turnaround Leaders typically have less time and scope for any potential miscommunication.

2.5.2 Autocratic and Inclusive Communication Syles

Leadership communication style in the context of the literature on Turnaround Leadership can be most easily understood as either autocratic, or inclusive, or a balance between the two. De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog (2015) identify the ability of autocratic leadership to have both a positive and negative effect of team performance depending on the context. Their research points out that in situations where there is low psychological safety and the high-competition between team members, the necessary hierarchy of autocratic leadership is beneficial to team performance. Bibeault (1984) identifies the "turnaround man" as someone who is not there to make friends, but rather to achieve results. Monroe

(1992) and O'Kane & Cunningham (2014) both recognise assertiveness and strong decision-making ability as core traits of the Turnaround Leader.

Quite contrastingly, Boyd (2011) identifies the need for the Turnaround Leaders codify the behavioural norms of the business by clearly articulating the values of the business. The logic follows, that if values, objectives and goals are articulated clearly and there will be less resistance to positive change and that simple communication of the vision for success will achieve greater efficacy for operational outcomes (Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers, 2003). Interestingly, the literature is consistent that if a Turnaround Leader is to achieve their desired outcome, it is absolutely necessary that they communicate both upstream to their superiors to achieve autonomy and buy-in (Bibeault, 1984; Boyd, 2011; Monroe, 1992; Slatter, 1998) and downstream to the employees to create alignment and clarity of tasks and responsibility (Harker & Sharma, 2000; Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers, 2003; O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014).

In this vein, there is a recurring theme in the literature that there is a necessity for the communication of both the need positive change, and the dire consequences should this positive change not be achieved. Monroe (1992, p. 42) speaks of the "survival stage," Boyd (2011) explains the importance of emphasising that the change is in the self-interest of the employees, and Pretorius (2008) highlights how a turnaround is more achievable before a crisis hits rather than after or during a crisis. By doing so, the Turnaround Leader includes the team in their plight for change and rallies them to their vision.

And thus, to and extent, Turnaround Leaders must not only be autocratic and hard but also be able to appeal to the values, needs, and aspirations of their followers. Harker & Sharma (2000, p. 38) highlight the need for the Turnaround Leader to be captivating and charismatic in order to inspire faith, pride and respect. The substance of the Turnaround Leader's communication, in this manner, is less directed at the roles and tasks, but rather at appeals to the employee in a way which will, to an extent, self-regulate their behaviour and choices in a manner which is aligned to the operational goals of the leader. Bibeault (1984) explains that despite the harsh and decisive nature of a Turnaround Leader, they must also have the charisma and character to inspire and captivate those around them.

2.5.3 Conclusion

Communication is the primary tool a Turnaround Leader has to create and enact change in their immediate and extended environment. The Turnaround Leader needs to be an expert communicator and able to apply the correct style to the context at hand. The Turnaround Leader is primarily autocratic and is a single point of authority, there is little or

no reliance on the broader organisation for final decision making. The Turnaround Leader needs to be able to communicate effectively upstream and downstream in order to achieve their desired speed and efficacy of a turnaround. Despite the autocratic nature of the role, it is imperative that the Turnaround Leader is also charismatic and inspirational in order to achieve the loyalty, alignment, and respect of his/her followers. By having both a firm and soft approach to communication which is clear and comprehensive, the Turnaround Leader has the ability to drive alignment, buy-in, and regulate the behaviours of the broader team members, all with the intention of contributing and amplifying the turnaround process.

2.6 Rewards and Recognition

2.6.1 Introduction

Incentives, rewards and recognition are useful tools for leaders to motivate, amplify and encourage positive change in the organisations and teams within which they work. Rewards and recognition are both intuitive and present in the literature. By rewarding employees for their correct contribution, and acknowledging their successes, a Turnaround Leader can leverage a transactional or 'quid pro quo' exchange for strategic and operational alignment to the business turnaround.

2.6.2 The Use of Rewards and Transactional Behaviour in Turnaround

Transactional leadership is generally seen to incorporate a contingent reward or transaction between an employee and a leader whereby a specific task or function is rewarded upon its completion (Baştürk, Boz, & Yıldız, 2014). These types of leaders achieve high performance by clearly presenting the roles, responsibilities and performance levels required from each member of the team which will lead to both their own and the company's benefit (Harker & Sharma, 2000). Employees are motivated by the fulfilment of the expectations of their leaders and are then rewarded through material incentives (Breevaart, et al., 2014). Brandts, Cooper, & Weber (2014) find that financial incentives have a positive effect on performance by coordinating efficiency improvements. Boyd (2011) presents the importance of the leader's ability to leverage the compensation system to quickly signal what the organisation values and what it is ultimately trying to achieve. In addition to this, it is also noted that an increase in reward needs to be accompanied by recognition too, and, an increase in responsibility for that top performer. Bibeault (1984) notes the importance of tieing incentives to the short-term targets of the turnaround and the ability of incentives to reinforce the necessity for quick action. Brandts

& Cooper (2006) use an experimental study to show how the use of short term financial incentives can lead to permanent improvements in an organisations performance. Furthermore, they also put forward that financial incentives can be used to overcome coordination failure between teams and therefore, can be used to drive alignment of effort between individuals.

2.6.3 Conclusion

The literature comprehensively supports the notion that incentives, rewards, and recognition are useful tools for a leader to drive their strategic and operational goals for turnaround. It is however noted, that although effective, the timeframe for the incentives needs to be aligned to that of the turnaround process (Bibeault, 1984) and that incentives are most effective when implemented across the entire organisation creating company-wide buy-in and alignment by tieing their financial wellbeing to that of the organisation's prosperity (Slatter, 1984).

2.7 Approach to Existing Human Resources

2.7.1 Introduction

Undoubtedly, heading up a turnaround process requires the Turnaround Leader to make calculated decisions regarding the suitability of the current staff complement to achieve the desired change in performance. The majority of the literature on turnarounds references the role of retrenchment and firing in swiftly restructuring the human resources of a business to align them the resource constraints of the business and the new strategic and operational orientation. This is offset by the very practical need of Turnaround Leaders to optimise their existing talent and not downsize to the point of structural failure.

2.7.2 Retrenchment and the Optimisation of Human Resources

Often, turnaround situations necessitate that life-giving cash flows are immediately protected and that costs are minimised to ensure the short-term survival of the business. Importantly, even if the business is financially sound, resources need to be freed up and invested in projects and people that are more aligned to the new turnaround-led operational and strategic goals of the business. Bibeault (1984, p. 104) recognises the necessity for cost-cutting and retrenchment in the 'emergency phase.' Monroe (1992, p 43) references 'downsizing' during the 'survival stage' of a turnaround. In their investigation into retrenchment and recovery during a turnaround, Robbins & Pearce (1992), found that cost-based retrenchment was so pervasive that it could be considered

indispensable in achieving a turnaround performance. Similarly, Boyd (2011) speaks of the imperative to manage the cash in the business during a turnaround and the swift manner in which retrenchments should take place if needed. O'Kane & Cunningham (2014) frame retrenchments as part of strategic change and a necessary consideration for Turnaround Leaders in the context of the ongoing operations of their business.

Contrasting to pervasive notions of reduction, cost-savings, and retrenchments in the literature on turnarounds, there also exist strong references to the importance of maximising the potential of the human resources in business and optimising existing talent. Boyd (2011) specifically references the need to optimise talent by recruiting and retaining talented people as a means to get ahead of the competition. O'Kane & Cunningham (2014) look at the need for strategic growth initiatives to offset and balance retrenchment initiatives. Braun & Latham (2012) capture the balance between retrenchment and repositioning in their *Managerial Fulcrum* model*.* This model, presented in *figure 1* acknowledges the need for simultaneous consideration and interdependence of both retrenchment and strategic repositioning forces in achieving a turnaround, and, evaluates the success of the Turnaround Leader based on their ability to balance and utilise the two opposing forces in the most appropriate manner for each stage of the turnaround process. In the model, repositioning necessitates both the need for the optimisation of existing capabilities and the development of new proficiencies.

Figure 1: The Managerial Fulcrum of Retrenchment and Repositioning (Braun & Latham, 2012, p. 16).
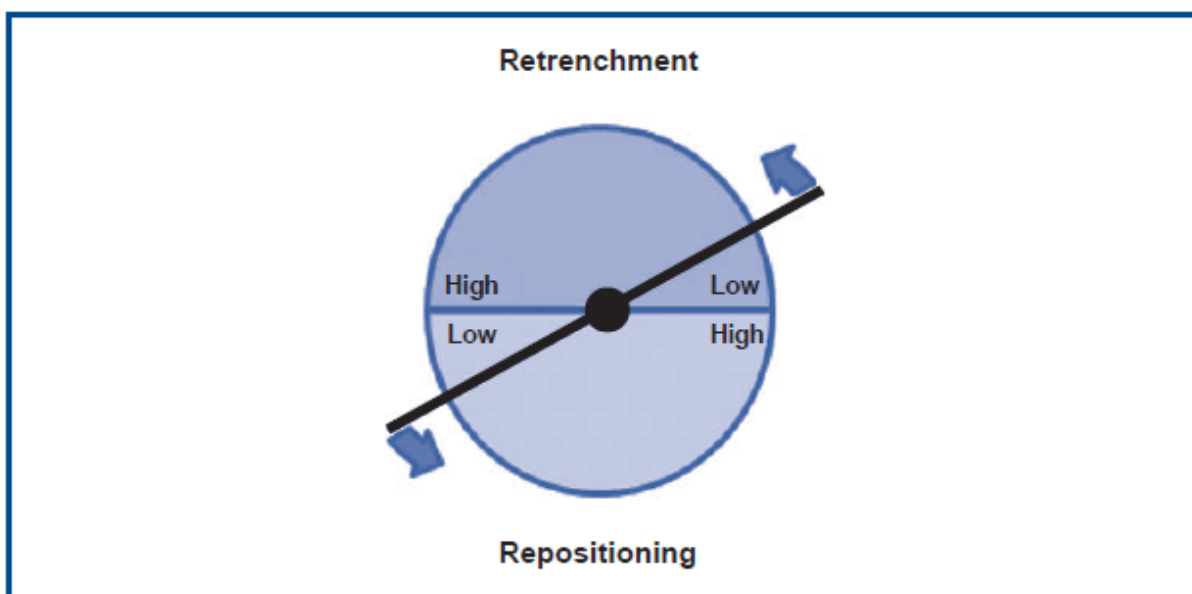
2.7.3 Conclusion

The manner and extent to which a Turnaround Leader should approach either downsizing or optimising their teams is not obvious from the literature surveyed. The literature suggests that a Turnaround Leader needs to be able to manage and implement both relevant training programs for key staff, and, quickly shed those resources not conducive to the desired turnaround performance in a simultaneous and contextually relevant manner.

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2.8 Leadership & Leadership Styles

2.8.1 Leadership and Leadership Theories

There is no conclusive agreement between what is the most effective manner in which to lead a turnaround. If anything, the literature suggests that if a leader is to be successful, they will need to be able to navigate between different styles depending on their relevance and applicability to the turnaround at that moment.

Leadership and leadership styles are widely studied phenomenon. It is the functions and role of the leader that are seen as the driving factor for the overall performance of the business, employee engagement, and employee turnover (Mekraz & Gundala, 2016; Rodriguez, 2016).

Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim (2014) highlight the importance of the leader in implementing the organisational strategy and driving the engagement of the broader workforce. (Hughes & Rog, 2008) explain that the more highly engaged an employee is, the more likely he or she will contribute to the performance and success of the business by exerting a superior level of commitment, effort and positivity towards the brand. Similarly, Baştürk, Boz, & Yıldız, (2014) acknowledge that because leaders have significant influence of the company policies and innovativeness, they have a direct effect on the competitive environment in which the business operates.

2.8.2 Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Transactional leadership, as briefly covered in the section covering rewards and recognition, is generally seen to incorporate a contingent reward or transaction between an employee and a leader whereby a specific task or function is rewarded upon its completion (Baştürk, Boz, & Yıldız, 2014). Employees are motivated by the fulfilment of the expectations of the leaders and are then rewarded through material incentives (Breevaart, et al., 2014). Boyd (2011) expands upon transactional leadership by saying

that material incentives need to be accompanied by both recognition and increased responsibility. Drucker (1986, p. 199) speaks of businesses as communities in which there need to be opportunities for leadership, responsibility and recognition.

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is linked to the leader's ability to communicate the importance and value of achieving the desired outcomes (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership involves acting as a coach or a mentor to a subordinate and bringing about the best in them through individualised consideration for their abilities, motives, and capabilities (McCleskey, 2014). Breevaart, et al., (2014, p. 140) define transformational leadership by being characterised by four "I's:" Idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation. By embodying these characteristics, transformational leaders go beyond transactions and encourage individuals to understand and buy-in to the vision of the company and understand that ultimately they will thrive in their careers if the business is able to achieve its performance goals and grow accordingly.

2.8.3 Contextual Leadership & Complexity Leadership Theory

"Leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a context where leaders function" (Oc, 2018, p. 218). Contextual leadership understands that there are not a universal set of traits or style which make one leader more effective than the next, but rather that there must be a match between the leaders traits and situational factors and explores how leadership takes place in specific contextual settings, rather than a generic and uniform environment (Oc, 2018). It is noted, that although not explicitly mentioned as 'contextual' most leadership theories have a contextual element to them, as leaders are unavoidably operating in a unique context, and trying to make the best decisions given that context. Anderson, Baur, Griffith, & Buckley (2017) show how the new generation of workers have unique needs from their leadership and in doing so, are challenging the prevailing leadership theories to adapt to the new context of work. Self-awareness, self-reflection and the ability to understand the appropriateness and effectiveness of different decisions and styles at different moments in the turnaround process are possibly fundamental to the success of that leader.

Arena & Uhl-Bien (2016) forward the notion of Complexity Leadership Theory. In this theory, they acknowledge the complexity of human capital models and the business environment. They argue that a leader needs to consider the social complexity and the connection (brokerage) between different cohesive social clusters. The complexity requires contextual ambidexterity and the ability of the manger to apply themselves across

the demands of the business in ways which are cognisant of the paradoxical forces of exploration and exploitation (Havermans, Den Hartog, Keegan, & Uhl-Bien, 2015). Complex business environments call for adaptive responses which capitalise on the collective intelligence of, and between, different social clusters. Complexity leadership Theory (Arena & Uhl-Bien, 2016) acknowledges the tension between entrepreneurial and operational forces and argues that innovation is generated between the pull of these two forces.

2.8.4 Ethical & Responsible Leadership

Ethical leadership, looks at the importance of ethical considerations in leadership practitioners, especially in the context of transformational leaders (Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2014). And, responsible leadership, which suggests that leadership is most effective when multiple stakeholders are involved, and corporate social responsibility is taken into account in decision making (Doh & Quigley, 2014).

2.8.5 Conclusion

Although the author notes the limited availability of literature which specifically references a leadership theory in the context of a Turnaround Leader, what is apparent is that Turnaround Leaders need to be uniquely dynamic in their ability to navigate different leadership styles and approaches to each situation and stage of a turnaround process. The Turnaround Leader needs to be able to leverage elements of a variety of different leadership styles and methodologies. They should be aware of the complexity of social clusters, be both ethical and responsible to stakeholders of their decisions, and most importantly, have a deep appreciation for the context in which their decisions and leadership takes place.

2.9 Competencies and Competency Theories

2.9.1 Introduction

It is not only important to understand the leadership styles and traits of the Turnaround Leader, but also to understand the competencies which drive the critical behaviours responsible for their ability to achieve a turnaround performance. Understanding competencies is a critical element of understanding leadership and performance (Boyatzis, 2008). Competencies are essentially the building blocks of the individual and are comprised of the different facets of their being which make them unique, and uniquely capable of a turnaround performance.

2.9.2 What are Competencies?

Tucker and Cofsky (1994) identify five major components of competency: knowledge, skill, self-concepts and values, traits, and lastly, motives. Trivellas & Reklitis (2014, p. 382) look at both *specific* and *general* competencies. Specific competencies are those which are specifically relevant to a profession or field whereas general competencies are those which are transferrable across multiple scenarios and include meta-competencies, diversity of concepts, and information-processing models.

Figure 2 (Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014, p.17) illustrates the components that create competencies which then drives critical behaviours and subsequently results in performance. In this model, knowledge, skills and attitudes (self-concepts) drive the level of performance (low, medium or high), whereas traits and motives are indicators of what an individual will do without close supervision.

Figure 2: Concept of Competency
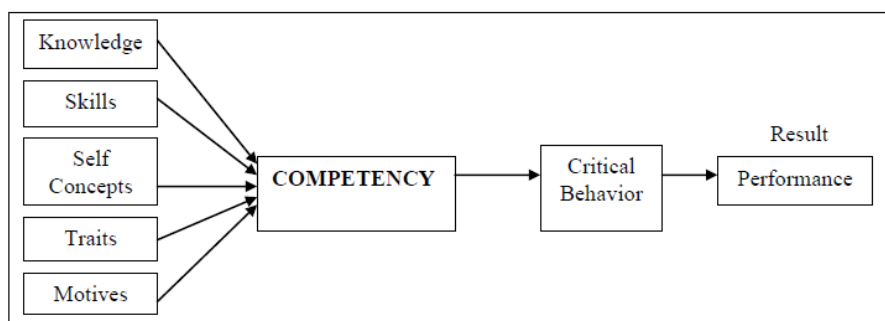
2.9.3 Competency Models and Competency Mapping

The multi-faceted nature of modern businesses and the roles require employees to be dynamic and competent across multiple functions. Competency mapping allows for businesses to map the competencies they require for the different roles in the business. This then allows businesses to build competency models which illustrate observable and measurable lists of competencies that have been identified as drivers of outstanding performance. These are then used to develop competency maps.

Competency models are similarly used as roadmaps for a company to define its desired end-state and the accompanying competencies it requires from its employees. On this basis, competency modelling is a core element of organisational strategy as it determines the requirements of the human capital in the business (Sanghi, 2016). *Figure 3* (Sanghi, 2016, p.27) illustrates the link between competencies, HR process and organisational strategy.

Figure 3: Linking HR Processes to Organisational Strategy

Figure 2.1   Linking HR Processes to Organizational Strategy

2.9.4 Business Performance and Competencies

Understanding how leadership style and competencies interact to drive the performance of a team or business is fundamental to understanding the substance of the Turnaround Leader and the subsequent significant increase in performance they are able to achieve. Boyatzis (2008) recognises performance as the intersection of a person's capabilities and the demands of their job. Broader business performance can be seen as the collection of the ability of employees to successfully and efficiently achieve the tasks allocated to them. In Looking at the link between competencies and leadership Trivellas & Reklitis (2014, p. 383) present the Competing Values Model (CVM) as an evolution of the original theoretical framework for organisational effectiveness done by Quinn and Rohrbaugh in 1983. The CVM model is premised on the contrast between flexibility and control, and, internal focus versus external focus. These then define four separate leadership styles, their corresponding leadership models, corresponding key competencies, and their managerial effectiveness. *Figure 4* (Trivellas & Reklitis, 2014, p. 383) illustrates the CVM model and the relationship between leadership roles, key competencies and managerial effectiveness

Figure 4: The Competing Values Model (CVM)

Leadership Roles	Key competencies	Managerial Effectiveness
Rational model		
Producer	1. Working productively 2. Fostering a productive work environment 3. Managing time and stress	1. Managing Competitiveness 2. Managing Employees 3. Managing Customer Service
Director	1. Visioning. Planning, goal-setting 2. Designing and organising 3. Delegating effectively	
Internal Processes		
Coordinator	1. Managing projects 2. Designing work 3. Managing across functions	4. Managing Acculturation 5. Managing the Control System 6. Managing Coordination
Monitor	1. Monitoring personal performance 2. Managing collective performance 3. Managing organizational performance	
Human Relations		
Facilitator	1. Building teams 2. Using participative decision making 3. Managing conflict	7. Managing Teams 8. Managing Interpersonal Relationships
Mentor	1. Understanding self and others 2. Communicating effectively 3. Developing subordinates	9. Managing the Development of Others
Open Systems		
Innovator	1. Living with change 2. Thinking creatively 3. Creating change	10. Managing Innovation 11. Managing the Future
Broker	1. Building and maintaining a power base 2. Negotiating agreement and commitment 3. Presenting ideas	12. Managing Continuous Improvement

2.9.5 Literature Review Conclusion

There is a prevailing theme in the literature on turnaround, leadership and competencies which illustrates the need for individuals to navigate the paradoxes and poles of different decisions and methodologies (Bibeault, 1984; Braun & Latham, 2012; Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers, 2003; Harker & Sharma, 2000; Monroe, 1992; O'Kane & Cunningham, 2013, 2014; Pretorius, 2008).

These contrasting and complementary forces are what O'Kane and Cunningham (2014) term 'tensions' and have been grouped into the following 5 themes from which the research propositions will be built. These tensions are those deemed most prevalent and pertinent to the study at hand and are most relevant to the clarification of the substance of the Turnaround Leader.

1. An authoritarian decision-making style VS an inclusive and democratic style.

2. Humility, trust, and integrity VS legitimacy, authority, hierarchy.

3. The type and extent to which communication is utilised.

4. The manner and extent to which recognition and rewards are used.

5. Shedding VS optimising current operations, human resources, and strategies.

In the following chapter, Chapter 3, presents these tensions in the form of concise research propositions.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Research Proposition 1

Understanding the relevance of both authoritarian and democratic or inclusive decision making in different situations is a key competency of a Turnaround Leader.

The Turnaround Leader needs to be a dynamic and broadly skilled individual possessing both hard and soft skills. Although turnarounds are typically characterised by swift autocratic decision making which drives both operational and strategic efficacy (Bibeault, 1984; Boyd, 2011; O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014; Slatter, 2011), ultimately Turnaround Leaders needs to be able to appeal to the organisations human resources too if they are to be sufficiently motivated and inspired to achieve the turnaround.

Research Proposition 2

Contextual humility, trust-creation and, integrity, or more colloquially being vulnerable, are ways to achieve employee alignment and buy-in, both of which contribute to operational and strategic alignment in a turnaround.

O'Kane & Cunningham (2012) emphasise the importance of trust and humility as leadership traits during the turnaround process. Similarly, Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers (2003, p. 41) highlight that in successful turnarounds close attention needs to be played to employee morale in order to overcome resistance to change in what they term a 'pride turnaround' that focuses on trust, dignity and company culture.

Research Proposition 3

Effective communication of the strategic, operational and transformational goals between leaders and employees is a core competency of Turnaround Leadership.

Communication is the primary instrument leaders have available to them to influence their teams (Brandts, Cooper, & Weber, 2014, p. 24).

Research Proposition 4

Incentives can be used to drive turnaround performance from employees.

Employees are motivated by the fulfilment of the expectations of their leaders and are then rewarded through material incentives (Breevaart, et al., 2014). Brandts, Cooper, & Weber (2014) find that financial incentives have a positive effect on performance by coordinating efficiency improvements.

Research Proposition 5

The optimising of existing capital and human resources and the shedding of those which are not aligned to the new performance trajectory are necessary conditions in a turnaround.

O'Kane & Cunningham (2014) frame retrenchments as part of strategic change and are necessary consideration for performance turnarounds.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Methodologies

This section covers the chosen research methodology for this study.

The literature covered in the literature review, and similar, previous studies (Mekraz & Gundala, 2016; Vleggaar & Smit, 2012) provided the context which informed the selected research methodology and the interview design. It was decided to undertake a qualitative and exploratory approach. This decision then informed the research method, design, sampling and analysis. Saunders & Lewis (2018, p. 115) explains that exploratory research is primarily focused on discovering information about a topic that is not understood by the researcher. This research approach allows for the use of unstructured observations and semi-structured or unstructured interviews in order to fully understand and explore a topic (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

The research philosophy underpinning and guiding the study is that of interpretivism. Saunders & Lewis (2018, p. 109) state that the interpretivist perspective is especially relevant in studies concerned with fields such as organisational behaviour, marketing, and human resource management. Given the that the study is primarily concerned with leaders who are "social actors" (Saunders & Lewis, 2018, p. 109) and which operate and interpret their environment in order to achieve a uniquely high level of performance, the interpretivist philosophy is a clear choice. Exploratory interpretivist studies lend themselves to qualitative research which aims to understand rather than quantify the data at hand and gain insight into a topic rather than achieve a measurement of magnitude or intensity regarding different variables studied (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

The premise of the study is to explore and understand what makes leaders able to drive sudden and significant positive changes in performance in a business or team. Business turnaround, leadership styles, turnaround strategies, and turnaround methodologies are all widely studied and documented areas of enquiry. However, Turnaround Leadership as a standalone concept is relatively under-examined. This study is primarily focused on understanding the substance and quality of the leaders who are able to achieve sudden and significant increases in performance. Thus, a qualitative and exploratory research method will be used. This approach will be of value to the study because it will allow the researcher to understand and delve deeply into the topic with the intention of gaining meaningful insight into factors which contribute to business turnarounds.

The data was collected over a short period of time during August and September 2019. The data was collected from different groups in the population, with both leaders and their teams interviewed separately. The researcher collected data through the use of semi-structured interviews in two formats. Firstly, the leaders were interviewed one-on-one in order to gain personal insight into their self-perception regarding their behaviours, skills, traits, values and leadership methodologies which allows them to mediate and drive performance in their teams. Secondly, their staff or teams were interviewed in a semi-structured focus-group format with the intention of understanding their lived experience of working with a Turnaround Leader. The aim of having focus groups was to see if insights confirming or contrasting the self-perception of the leaders could be uncovered. By either confirming or contrasting the responses of the leaders, the study aims to understand the true experience of Turnaround Leadership by avoiding any bias or self-promotion which could not be challenged or confirmed without a secondary, separate perspective given by followers. Having two distinct groups report on the same phenomena in the same setting led to interesting, and possibly previously undiscovered, insights into the factors driving turnaround performance which are at the core of the study.

Saunders and Lewis (2018) explain an inductive approach as an approach that involves building theory from analysing data already collected. It is a 'bottom-up' (p.113) approach that looks at specific observations in order to make broader generalisations and theories regarding a specific topic. This study aims to understand the variables at play in driving turnaround performance in business by observing a sample of high-performers and their respective teams. From this, the intention is to use these observations to inform decisions and theories to be applied to the broader business environment. Given this desired outcome, the study will follow an inductive approach.

4.2 Population

The population deemed most appropriate for this study are individuals who have been identified as Turnaround Leaders and their respective teams. These groups need to have a proven record of significant increases in performance metrics for their role. Importantly, the criteria for performance will be relative to the particular environment and industry that that individual operates.

4.3 Sampling Method and Size

The population sampling technique used will be purposeful non-probability sampling, where the researcher purposefully selected members of the population based on his subjective assessment of their relevance to the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2018) this was then backed up by empirical evidence of their ability to achieve a turnaround according to their performance metrics. The qualitative nature of the study and the relatively short time horizon necessitated that the study is confined to seven leaders and their seven associated teams, which resulted in a total size of 14 points of collection for data. Initially, eight leaders and eight teams were identified and requested for an interview. However, due to unforeseen circumstances and subsequent meeting cancellations, these additional two data points had to be removed from the sample.

The researcher sampled broadly across different geographical areas and demographics to the largest extent possible in order to try to avoid biases which may exist in different regions and between different cultures and demographics. These individuals were selected based on feedback gained from a point of objective assessment of the turnaround performance. In some cases it was the CEO of the business, in others, the Turnaround Leader was identified through their widely known ability or proven track record. Although this will not entirely bypass any biases which may be present, the data collected was still capable of producing meaningful insight.

4.4 Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study will be the opinions and sentiments of Turnaround Leaders and their respective teams. These individuals and teams were taken from a cross-section of different organisations and were not limited to a specific industry or geographical location. The individuals identified need to have achieved a 'turnaround,' or a relatively sudden and significant organisational change within the context that they operate.

The unit of analysis for this study will be the self-perception of Turnaround Leaders and the lived experience of their respective teams during a turnaround. The individuals studied needed to have had a record of achieving a turnaround according to the key performance metrics of that business or team. The experience of these individuals is aligned to the research questions and the area of investigation which allowed for the identification of the

components which comprise the competency associated with high-performing Turnaround Leaders.

4.5 Data Collection Tool

The primary method for data collection was done by conducting semi-structured interviews across seven individual high performing leaders and their seven respective teams. As highlighted by Saunders and Lewis (2018, p 115), exploratory research can be achieved by first searching the academic literature, then using unstructured observations to guide your thoughts, and then to use semi-structured or unstructured interviews to put together and conduct research. Furthermore, Saunders and Lewis (2018) explain that semi-structured interviews are well suited to qualitative exploratory studies because of their ability to provide useful insights into a social phenomenon. Thus, semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate and were used in the study.

The researcher initially approached the identified individuals via email, phone call, or WhatsApp. Following the initial contact, a formal email was sent highlighting the nature of the study and the requirements for participation. Once participation was agreed upon, the time and date were decided upon and the interview scheduled. The interviews took between 45 and 75 minutes each with some running slightly over or undertime. These interviews took place in a variety of different environments but were mostly conducted at the place of work for the leader and the team. The researcher travelled across Johannesburg and Cape Town to meet with these individuals and had two sets of interviews via Skype due to geographical limitations. The nature of the data collected necessitated that a relatively quiet and private area were used to conduct the interviews which were conducive to productive responses and allowed for recording without disruption.

Before holding the interviews and focus groups, the researcher collected information regarding the individuals involved, especially with regards to their performance over their tenure at the company or team, and their experience with taking a team from relatively low performance to subsequent high performance in a short time period.

Each individual was asked to sign a consent form to ensure the participants that the data is collected and used ethically. The interviews were recorded with permission from the interviewees.

4.6 Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and focus groups, including seven one-on-one interviews with Turnaround Leaders, and seven interviews with their respective teams. The two of the follower's groups were interviewed individually rather than in a focus group. These followers worked in the consulting industry and were busy with projects. At the instruction of their leader, they could not all attend the focus groups at once given that the focus groups were taking place during billable consulting hours. Despite the variation in format, the interviews were deemed successful by the researcher.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and focus groups were chosen based on the researcher's intention of creating a relaxed and conversational environment in which those participating would not feel as if they are being probed or prompted for specific answers, but rather that they feel open and comfortable. This design was used to allow for a free-flowing conversation on the topic and subject matter while still maintaining a focus and relevance by using prompting questions and themes which were distributed to the participants before-hand. By sending the participants the questions prior to the interviews, participants were given the opportunity to structure their thoughts and prepare for the interviews if they felt this necessary.

The researcher conducted the interviews himself. The effects that an interviewer can have on the outcome of data collection is well documented (West & Blom, 2017). Two of the Turnaround Leaders identified operated in the organisation in which the interviewer works. Given that the researcher is in senior management in this company it was important that the participants in the study felt that their contributions were safe and would not affect their careers, but rather, that they were contributing positively to management science which could then, in turn, be used by the business to inform their subsequent management decisions. Despite this concern, during the interviews the quality of the responses gained from these participants was amongst the most comprehensive and expressive which counter to previous concerns, actually produced some of the most insightful and valuable responses to the study.

The interviews and focus groups began with an explanation of the study being performed and both the academic and business rationale for undertaking the study. A brief explanation of the topics of competencies, leadership styles and overlap between the two topics was explained in the context of driving turnaround performance. Following this, the

participants were asked the interview questions in an open-ended and non-leading manner. The intention was to foster open and honest dialogue regarding their perceptions, opinions and lived experiences of being in high performing teams and being exposed to leaders who were, and are, able to achieve sudden and significant positive change.

During the data collection process, the researcher had predefined categories and topics which were of specific interest. When these topics were mentioned in the interview process, the interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on these topics. Despite there being pre-defined categories when other relevant categories became apparent during the interviews, these too were encouraged and were included in the final data categorisation and subsequent analysis.

All interview notes were typed corresponding to the skills of the researcher. Interviewee's opinions and perceptions were accepted in a respectful and understanding manner. The interviews were scheduled for 45 to 60 minutes but in practice were undertaken until the researcher had achieved a point of data saturation which was sometimes before or after this range. This point typically came after the scheduled timeline. Most of the interviews took place during working hours. Given the demands of the workday, there was a concern that the interviews would be disrupted and the momentum lost. However, in practice, this was not an issue and did not affect the research negatively. The flow and momentum of the interview were handled in real-time, and disruptions were infrequent and not catastrophic to the study.

4.7 Data Analysis Approach

Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry (2019) explain thematic analysis as a systematic method for identifying and organising a data set in order to gain insight and identify patterns of meaning. This allows the researcher to make sense of shared meanings and experiences across a data set (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2019, p. 57). Thematic analysis allows for an understanding of what is common between inputs in a dataset (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Thus, a thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data in order to identify the commonalities and themes present across the different interviews. During the interviews, the researcher attempted to analyse and sort the data as it was uncovered; however, the majority of the analysis took place after the interview. The prompting questions distributed prior to the interviews did, however, mimic the structure of the

research propositions. This meant that when the transcripts were coded, the codes were already loosely grouped according to the questions which did provide some structure to the analysis upfront. During the coding process, prefixes were used to loosely group the data for easier subsequent analysis on Atlas.ti.

The existing literature was used as the starting point to identify the relevant themes and categories. Following this, the themes and categories were finalised through the researcher's ability to recognise and identify themes which repeat themselves and are relevant to the research questions. This was achieved by reading the transcripts and cross-referencing the topics with the sentiment identified in the researcher's interview notes. This data was coded in order to understand the frequency of the different responses. The responses were then organised using different methods in Atlas.ti. Different analysis tools were used to reveal different connections and occurrences in the data. Tables were used to show, frequency, co-occurrence, groupings, and distributions between different groups, of codes identified in the data. These tables were then used to clarify the observations, allow for thorough analysis, and to the point the researcher to where conclusions relevant to the research questions were drawn.

4.8 Quality Controls: Validity & Trustworthiness Criteria

Saunders & Lewis (2018) highlight the importance of collecting data in such a way that it is sufficient in its relevance, breadth, and depth in order to be capable of answering the research questions posed. Content validity was achieved by collecting data from seven interviews with leaders, five focus groups with followers and two interviews with followers. This sample allowed for a sufficient amount of data from which to extrapolate information relevant to the research. Construct validity will be achieved by structuring the interviews, and questions posed, in a manner which is similar to previous, similar studies undertaken.

Norwell, Norris, White, & Moules, (2017, p. 1) explain that for data "to be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent and exhaustive manner through recording, systematising, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible." In order to achieve this, all the data collected in the study will aim to achieve credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Norwell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

4.9 Limitations

The research to be undertaken is at risk of being influenced by a number of factors and biases. Specifically, and most notably, there is an element of subjectivity in the term 'Turnaround Leader.' Although the criteria for selection have been defined and identified, when looking at the term 'performance' there are a number of elements which are subjective by nature and which rely on the sentiments and opinions of the people presenting the evidence for a 'turnaround.' Furthermore, although a sample size of 14 is enough to achieve a worthwhile analysis, in the broader context there is a risk of selection bias which can influence the final results. In addition to this, the researcher is a relative novice in the competency of interviewing. This can affect both the quantity and quality of data gained from the interview process.

The environment in which the interviews took place could also potentially affect the study. Especially in the context of the focus groups, despite the consent form guaranteeing their anonymity, if the participants did not feel like their contributions are genuinely anonymous and protected, their responses could be curated to protect their careers in order to protect their progress and prosperity in their working environment. Furthermore, the group dynamics and personal relationship between participants in the focus groups could have also affected the responses because despite being guaranteed anonymity by the researcher, they are not guaranteed anonymity from their colleagues. It was thus of utmost importance to the researcher that confidence in the anonymity of their responses was achieved. The researcher believes that this was achieved.

Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges that when interviewing people from the company in which he works, there was the potential for bias from the interviewees to tailor their responses to match the perceived desires of the interviewer, rather than the open and honest truth and lived experience. Given this potential, the researcher endeavoured to be perceived as neutral and independent from the working environment and positioned himself as a researcher and not a colleague.

Lastly, unlike the researcher, English is not the first language of the majority of leaders and followers interviewed. The researcher acknowledges that this could have resulted in misunderstandings and miscommunications between both the interviewer and the interviewees both during the interviews and when the researcher was analysing the subsequent transcripts.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results and information gathered from the in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted will be presented. The results are a representation of the opinions and perspectives of the individuals involved in the study. The interview questions were derived from the research propositions presented in Chapter 3, which in turn was informed by the literature review in Chapter 2.

The interview questions sought to get respondents to speak about some of the broader topics revealed in the literature review. The questions for each research proposition were grouped sequentially which mimicked the order of the research propositions and the topics which the researcher desired to cover. This allowed for data collection which approximated the logical flow of the propositions being explored and for the systematic analysis thereafter.

The names of all participants have been removed from the results and replaced with their participant code found in Table 1 and Table 2. Furthermore, all pronouns will reflect as "she" to further protect the anonymity of the respondents. In responses where gender-specific nouns like "mother" or "father" were used, the pronouns and nouns have been left unchanged.

5.2 Description of the Sample

A total of 15 interviews were ultimately conducted. One of these interviews for followers group F3 had to be excluded from the study due to a technical error resulting in the recording being too unclear to transcribe. With that interview excluded the remaining sample contained seven interviews with leaders and seven groups on followers resulting in the sample size of 14.

The sample consisted of two separate groups. Seven individuals identified as Turnaround Leaders, and their seven teams. These individuals were selected based on their fit to the definition identified in the literature review in Chapter 2. These individuals were intentionally chosen from a variety of different industries and different geographical locations to allow for the most comprehensive sample possible given the limitations of the

study. The names of the individuals and their organisations have been coded to protect their anonymity. Two sets of the leaders identified were from the same organisations. Despite this, due to their separation both geographically and within the structures of the business in which they operate, they were regarded as independent and thus separate respondents

None of the responses from the seven Turnaround Leaders were excluded from the study. All of the leaders were selected based on their suitability and alignment to the definition of a Turnaround Leader, as identified in Chapter 2. Despite not all having revenue-based targets, all of the leaders interviewed were able to achieve sudden and significant results within the operating parameters of their role and business. Leader P5 and follower group F5 were the only participants not purposefully selected, but rather were identified via snowballing sampling from leader P3. Table 1 below provides a summarised view of the relevant information relating to the leaders who participated in the study.

Table 1: List of Interviewed Turnaround Leaders

Classification	Participant	Organisation	Industry	Position	Qualifying information
Turnaround Leader	P1	C1	Retail	General Manager	Achieved a significant increase in performance as measured by group CEO
Turnaround Leader	P1	C2	Software & IT	Team Leader	Significantly Increased team output and influenced positive behaviour changes as identified by company COO
Turnaround Leader	P3	C3	Consulting	Executive	Achieved significant departmental growth in a short period of time.
Turnaround Leader	P4	C4	Tradesmen	CEO	Achieved significant company growth and achieved industry best retention and hiring targets
Turnaround Leader	P5	C5	Consulting	Executive	Achieved significant and sudden growth in revenue
Turnaround Leader	P6	C6	Consulting	Executive	Achieved significant and sudden growth in revenue and client base

Turnaround Leader	P7	C7	Retails	General Manager	Achieved 2x revenue increase within a 6 month period as identified by group CEO

With the exception of the team interviews for companies C3 and C5 which were one-on-one, the remaining five interviews with followers were done in a focus-group setting with between 2 and 4 participants in each group. The 'turnaround followers' as they are referred to, are directly linked to their respective Turnaround Leaders based on the reporting structures within their different companies. Most importantly, the turnaround followers needed to have been involved firsthand in the sudden and significant increase in performance as created through the efforts and methods of their leader. Table 2 below provides a summarised list of the turnaround followers and information relevant to their participation.

Table 2: List of Interviewed Focus Group Participants

Classification	Turnaround followers Group	Organisation	Industry	Number of participants
Turnaround followers	F1	C1	Retail	4
Turnaround followers	F2	C2	Software & IT	2
Turnaround followers	F3	C3	Consulting	1
Turnaround followers	F4	C4	Tradesmen	2
Turnaround followers	F5	C5	Consulting	1
Turnaround followers	F6	C6	Consulting	3
Turnaround followers	F7	C7	Retails	3

5.3 Results for Research Proposition 1

Understanding the relevance of both authoritarian and democratic decision making in different situations is a key competency of a Turnaround Leader.

Research Proposition 1 seeks to understand the leadership style of the Turnaround Leaders specifically between the contrasting styles of centralising decision making and power through what has been labelled 'autocratic leadership' and, decentralising power and decision making through what has been labelled 'democratic leadership.' The interviews consisted of 2 questions for the Turnaround Leader and 3 questions for the turnaround followers. These questions where curated to understand the self-perception of the Turnaround Leader's leadership style, versus the lived experience of the turnaround followers. This proposition is aimed at understanding the dominant leadership style and how different leadership styles are applied to different areas of a leader's daily tasks, operations and behaviours.

5.3.1 Autocratic Goal-setting; Democratic Methodology

When asked about their leadership style, all the Turnaround Leaders had a strong leaning towards describing themselves as tending towards a more democratic and decentralised leadership style. However, as the interviews progressed, it became very clear that despite having a deep respect and appreciation for the capabilities and efforts of their teams, all the Turnaround Leaders were strictly autocratic in their strategic and operational goal-setting activities. There was a clear distinction between the areas of the turnaround which were open for discussion and manipulation by the team and those which were not. From this, it appeared that there are two distinct spheres of consideration, each of which was characterised by a different leadership style.

When it came to the operational and strategic goals of the business or leader, all the Turnaround Leaders had a clear idea of what needed to be done and agreed that there was little or no need for consultation or intervention from the turnaround followers in the setting and creation of these. In contrast, during the operationalisation of the strategy, the leaders included and consulted with their teams to ensure that there was 'buy-in' and that the goals were both achievable and clearly understood by the followers. In the operational or more 'democratic' side of the Turnaround Leader, the general sentiment towards the leader was that they were willing to lead by example, showed a preference towards a flat equality-based leadership structure, where the empowerment and upliftment of the team were a priority. In this sphere, there is a distinct focus on the leader being approachable,

available, and inclusive. These two distinct spheres indicate a dynamic transition between leadership styles that are applied differently depending on the nature and requirements of a particular context.

Table 3 shows the frequency of codes grouping for both leaders and followers associated with autocratic leadership, democratic leadership, and dynamic leadership (dynamic leadership being instances when the presence of both autocratic and democratic leadership styles were highlighted directly by the respondents). This table presents the data which informed the results. Turnaround Leaders have a strong self-perception of being more 'democratic,' however, in practice, there is an equal, if not slightly larger tendency to be autocratic especially when dealing with the strategic and operational goals of the business.

Table 3: Frequency of Code Groupings of Different Leadership Styles Between Leaders and Followers

	Turnaround Leaders	Turnaround Followers
Autocratic Leadership Style	42	39
Democratic Leadership Style	65	38
Dynamic Leadership style	7	9

The below Table 4, Table 5, Table 6 and Table 7 show selected perspectives from both the followers and leaders regarding the contrasting and collaborative forces which define a leadership style as either predominantly autocratic or predominantly democratic. The final table, Table 8 leadership styles highlighting direct quotes which contrast and overlap different leadership styles

Table 4: Turnaround Leaders' Self-Perception of Autocratic Leadership

"I'm still assertive. They must still know that, you know, I am there for a reason and a purpose and what my purpose is"

"Yes, exactly, but ultimately I will have the final say. Then it's up to you to decide what you're going to do."

"The standard you walk past, standard you accept so we are very strict on rules and standards."

"I mean if you go to one person and say we want to build a house, um, in the end you'll get seven ideas of a house, but we need to get to the singular point. So I've cut that out of the process by saying this is the house we are going to build. Having a clear picture on that helps drive the team."

"You need to tell people what to do. They are not leaders, they are followers…"

Table 5: Turnaround Followers' Lived Experience of Autocratic Leadership

"So, from her perspective, she will tell us this needs to be done. It's part of the project or whatever. These are our goals. This is what we've been hired to do. This needs to be done."

"And sometimes it's more like, you know the Hitler type when I say what I say goes and that."

"I also think authoritarian, definitely no democratic decisions have been being made. It's what I say goes…"

"So it would be a sort of consensus seeking process but ultimately the decision would still lie with her."

"Well she is a manager to me. So I just listen to what she tells me and I do it"

Table 6: Turnaround Leaders' Self-Perception of Democratic Leadership

"So I try to be as inclusive as possible, finding that joint decision making the best the guys buy into, where they want to go or how we solve a problem. So definitely not an authoritarian type of situation."

"Then we come to an agreement. By doing so you are not a dictator, by doing so you are making life easy for the next person"

"Be with the team. Be in the army."

"I want to give them as much decision making power as I can"

"Here's the data to confirm that, here's the suggestions, which one will have the biggest impact, inclusive."

"Each member needs to buy into that and to do that they need, their voice needs to be like a, they need to be, feel that their input is valid and stuff like that."

"The first thing I did was underline the democratic… I like to have them included."

"Would most certainly have a committee. We get seniors that have been working for more than 15 years…"

"The people know that everybody is on the same journey to create the same goals."

"Yes, they have independence within a bigger umbrella to make sure the job is done within an orderly fashion and the client is kept happy at all times…"

"if you want your perspective to stand up and be heard, you have to allow others. So it's having full buy-in on that as a principal, um, to the core of the team."

Table 7: Turnaround Followers' Lived Experience of Democratic Leadership

"And how you go about doing it? Well, obviously, it will depend on you and the client and how you guys interact and all that stuff. As long as it gets done, she doesn't really care how you do it."

"believe each and every one has the right to exercise their own initiative.."

"The framework has always been there where you are able to assist in decision making…. So, definitely not the... you know it's definitely more the democratic stuff than authoritarian."

"This is what we need to do and I shall take into account your input and that makes a big difference."

"It's very democratic"

"She usually lets you have a discussion about it and then you usually make the decision as a team"

"But she is always the first [person] to sit and do it. She is always the first [person] to sit and do those 16, 18 hour days if she has to."

Table 8: Instances of Identified Dynamic Leadership

"We have experienced quite a blend between the democratic and authoritarian kind of leadership but I think it tends to be a little bit more authoritarian just because we need like clear direction, you know, but there is definite room for democracy and it adds such value to the whole process. So I would say it's a blend but a strong blend, if that helps."

"Well 99 percent of the time it is democratic in terms of getting buy-in and sort of encouraging us to get in, buy-into decisions and ideas and things like that but there are, there are certain situations where it is a sort of, a decision needs to be made at the spur of the moment and there is no time to sit and debate it and then she will pull his veto rights and make the call"

"To be honest I think I have a bit of both. I feel that you need to have the one as well as the other. You can only do as much as what you with the team members that you have, for an example. So my way of getting it done of course is, the sit down, explain and show and tell, explain to them what is the expectation, you need to do it this way. There is no other way for you to do it because it needs to be done this way but if you have your input into it, then we can have a look at it but first you are going to do it this way."

"I would try and do in a collaborative way where, I will throw diagrams on the board or 3 different scenarios in terms of how we can come to a solution, but I suppose if we "hoe vas" then at some point I have got to make the decision"

"it's having the goal as clear as possible but also open to adjusting on it"

"Even if you do feel that it's not what it needs to be, but giving the opportunity for those processes to take place and letting both parties feel heard and validated."

"Then of course it is open for discussion, what if I do it this way or that way etcetera. So I do take the input from my staff to make sure that they also understand that I am there to listen to them but at the end of the day, it's important that we just get it done."

In addition to the above, the below Table 9 looks at the co-occurrence of the three most frequent (grounded, Gr) codes for the code groups "autocratic leadership" and "democratic leadership." The table indicates that relative to the frequency, there is a considerable co-occurrence of contrasting leadership styles in the same identified excerpts.

Lastly, Table 10 presents the top occurring codes for Research Proposition 1 and provides further insight into the prevalence of different leadership methodologies and traits across the sample.

Table 9: Co-occurrence of the Three Most Frequent Codes for Autocratic and Democratic Leadership Styles

	Democratic Leadership Gr=40	Empower the team Gr=22	Inclusive Leadership Gr=28
Autocratic Gr=30	6	1	4
Goal Orientated Gr=38	6	2	3
Setting Goals Autocratically Gr=24	4	2	3

Table 10: Table Showing the Frequency of the Top Occurring Codes for Research Proposition 1

Code	Frequency
Democratic leadership	40
Goal orientated	38
Flat hierarchy	30
Autocratic	30
Inclusive leadership	28
Inclusivity leads to teamwork	22
Empower the team	22
Self-awareness	19
Dynamic leadership style	16
Leader is approachable	16
Be present & available	13
Monitoring & measuring performance	13
Simple structures	13
Leadership has a high EQ	12

5.4 Results for Research Proposition 2

Contextual humility, trust-creation and, integrity, or more colloquially being vulnerable, are ways to achieve employee alignment and buy-in, both of which contribute to operational and strategic alignment in a turnaround.

This Research Proposition seeks to understand the substance of the human being who is a Turnaround Leader. The literature in chapter 2 highlighted the importance of having 'soft skills' in addition to 'hard skills.' A Turnaround Leader needs to be able to captivate and inspire the human resources of a team or organisation which will ultimately be responsible for the variety of tasks and operations which result in the desired turnaround in performance. Thus, this Research Proposition aims to explore the character traits and values which are most prominent in Turnaround Leaders. Furthermore, this proposition seeks to understand how Turnaround Leaders balance their power relationship with their teams and what values and traits assist in legitimising their power and position (hierarchy), and if this contributes to the turnaround in performance. The interviews consisted of three questions each for the leaders and followers, all of which were aimed at understanding the substance of the person who had been identified as a Turnaround Leader. A summary of the data for Research Proposition 2 is presented in Table 11 which lists all the codes associated with this proposition which achieved a frequency of 10 or greater across both leaders and followers.

Table 11: Frequency of Codes Applicable to Research Proposition 2

Code	Frequency
Psychological safety	42
Personal connection with the team	31
Awareness of their follower's emotions & personalities	30
Awareness of staff's strengths + weaknesses	27
Positive interpersonal relationship between leader and staff	24
Understanding personal lives	24
Core value - trust	23
Trust and reciprocation	22
Teamwork is a priority	19
Core value - leading by example	16
Core value - consistency & fairness	16
Mistakes are not punished	16
Core Value - honest	15

Leader comfortable making mistakes	13
Focus on teamwork	12
Core value - transparency	11
Strong staff = strong business	11
Achieving accountability	11
Total	363

Codes relating to Research Proposition 2 represented a large percentage of all the data collected. Research Proposition 2 contributed 63 codes (out of a total of 159), and these codes appeared 485 times (out of a total of Gr=1483). As a percentage, this means that 40% of all codes related to Research Proposition 2, and 33% of all coded responses related back to this proposition. This is a clear indication of the importance of the human element of the study, not only from the followers but also from the leader's point of view. Table 12 shows the distribution of the top 10 codes between leaders and followers.

5.4.1 Psychological Safety

Psychological safety was a recurring theme in the responses which indicates that respondents felt at ease with their leader and had the mental and psychological stability when at work. This stability can be a contributing factor to both the leaders and follower's willingness to participate in a turnaround performance and be both productive and efficient in their contributions to the turnaround process.

Table 12: Table Showing the Distribution of Frequency Between Followers and Leaders for the Top Re-occurring Codes for Research Proposition 2

	Followers	Leaders
Awareness of their follower's emotions & personalities	8	22
Awareness of staff's strengths + weaknesses	4	23
Core value - consistency & fairness	10	6
Core value - leading by example	9	7
Core value - transparency	2	9
Core value - trust	16	7
Core Value Honest	6	9

Focus on teamwork	7	5
Leader comfortable making mistakes	7	6
Mistakes are not punished	6	10
Personal connection with the team	20	11
Positive interpersonal relationship between leader and staff	17	7
Strong staff = strong business	7	4
Teamwork is a priority	9	10
Understanding personal lives	12	12
Achieving accountability	3	8
Psychological safety	31	11
Trust and reciprocation	12	10
Totals	186	177

The importance of the personal relationship between leaders and followers is clear from the results of the interviews and subsequent data collection. However, possibly the most insight can be gained from looking at where there are significant differences between the frequency (groundedness) of responses between the leaders and followers. This shows where the perceptions and experiences differ between the two groups when addressing the same leadership theme. Table 13 shows a purposeful selection of codes across the entire data set which highlights some of the differences in perception regarding key themes between leaders and followers for Research Proposition 2.

Table 13: Selection of Codes Appearing Between Leaders and Followers for Research Proposition 2

	Followers	Leaders
Flat Hierarchy Gr=30	11	19
Leader is approachable Gr=16	15	1
Leadership has a high EQ Gr=12	8	4
Being vulnerable Gr=6	4	2
Core Value Listening Gr=6	4	2
Core Value Straight Forwardness Gr=9	5	4
Humble Leadership Gr=7	2	5
Not showing vulnerability Gr=8	2	6
Totals	51	43

Interestingly, despite the contrast highlighted in Table 13, the overall sentiment captured by both leaders and followers was that of an open and meaningful connection between both leaders and followers. Table 14 presents selected quotes from both leaders and followers which speaks to the extent and depth of the perceived personal relationship.

Table 14: Selected Perspectives on the Leader Being Aligned to the Team in Their Personal Capacity and Showing a Personal Relationship

"She is very open. It's a big smile and welcoming"

"We had got a good banter, good clean fun"

"80 percent of the job is actually personalities,"

"We are all on the same level"

"Attuned, very personalized, very"

"I'm very vulnerable. I think throughout, I'm actually probably more vulnerable from a work perspective than in personal life."

"Unfortunately I think people do forget that we are social creatures and not social media creatures…"

"I felt very comfortable from the beginning with [Leader P6]. I feel it's a very personal thing for her to be the way she is. She's very approachable, which I feel is very important."

"You don't feel awkward to bring something up even if it's personal or you want to talk about finances or whatever you want to talk about"

"I try to understand your home life, what you are outside of work, the full individuals."

"Be friendly about sharing it, so that people are not scared to ask you for help"

"Being a fatherly figure and interested in, in your, in your personal life, as much as you will allow her to be interested in your personal life"

"I'm very consistent."

"She's also very wide awake in that he watches his employees and he sees… she is not her normal self"

"You have to deal with that in such a sensitive way as to not offend them cause they're not necessarily doing wrong."

"She's never said one thing and then done another."

"She's consistent. She's fair."

"I will say that she drops his guard quite a bit with me and that she is vulnerable"

"You are going to show that you are valuable, and you can be successful and you are not just average, you are more than average, you can rock the world if you want to. The only thing that stops you from being successful is you, that's what it's about."

"In a position whereby he's a father figure, regardless of whatever problem you have, come, you sit down with him and you talk, you tell him all your problems"

5.4.2 Contrasting Perspectives on the Personal Relationship Between Leaders and Followers

However, when asked directly about the level of vulnerability and the degree of the personal relationship, the direct responses revealed that leaders, in particular, held the perception that despite having a strong prima facie relationship with their teams, that they were not vulnerable nor did they desire to have a real personal relationship with their team and instead were quite guarded in their personal capacity. This sentiment was acknowledged by some of the followers but was not prevalent in the overall data collected from followers. Table 15 presented some of the selected perspectives which highlight these contrasting perspectives.

Table 15: Selected Perspectives on Leader Not Being Aligned to the Team in Their Personal Capacity and Not Showing a Personal Relationship

> "So sometimes it's us, majority it's us, it's the leaders, we are expecting too much. We are putting too much trust and too much expectation into people that just cannot do the job."
>
> "It is not always easy to be vulnerable."
>
> "She didn't bring his own emotions in."
>
> "I absolutely do not have a personal relationship with my team. At the end of the day, if we need to have a successful business and we need to do what needs to be done… Nobody knows what is going on in my life. I keep it that way because I am the leader."
>
> "Definitely very hard on principles and sort of the standard is non-negotiable… The job in general is probably the most valuable actually."
>
> "I wouldn't show them any vulnerability"
>
> "you also don't want that manager to show everything about themselves."
>
> "I personally dont have a relationship (with my leader), so I just have to be honest."

This contrast is further demonstrated by the leaders acknowledging the separation of their personal and professional lives through direct quotes presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Selected Perspectives on Leader Showing Separate Personal and Professional Connections With Their Team

"So, you've got to find a fine balance because you don't want to be too friendly and your work almost drops. You also don't want to be too much of a hard-ass boss and then the culture is not great and no one really likes it."

"What's happening? This is happening in your life. What was the feedback? How's your mum? And then, now, let's get to business. What's the feedback on our goal?"

So from my perspective, we all know each other quite personally, but to a certain extent it's limited, where our relationship is very functional.

"Yes if anything it accommodates and helps, she definitely helps us in terms of if, if there are difficult things that you are going through at home and then personal life and she, obviously the work is very important."

"The work is very important and we do have deadlines and we have do goals and objectives but it, it does always feel like the person is prioritised over the, over the role. Once you have sort of earned your stripes and you are doing what you need to be doing, he is very accommodating and that."

"We keep work, work and personal, personal, but we do understand each other's personal lives, our personal dilemmas, things that are going on"

Both the leaders and followers were directly questioned to identify and the core values of the Turnaround Leader. In addition to this direct question, values were a key theme throughout the interviews with respondents often citing and referring to their, or their leaders', values in their responses. Table 17 shows the different core values identified and their frequency between followers and leaders responses

Table 17: Frequency of Core Values Identified by Both Leaders and Followers

	Followers	Leaders
Core Value - Authentic Gr=2	2	0
Core value - consistency & fairness Gr=16	10	6
Core value - integrity Gr=8	4	4
Core value - leading by example Gr=16	9	7
Core Value - Respect Gr=7	3	4
Core value - transparency Gr=11	2	9

Core value - trust Gr=23	16	7
Core value - work comes first Gr=4	3	1
Core Value Honest Gr=15	6	9
Core Value Listening Gr=6	4	2
Core Value Straight Forwardness Gr=9	5	4

The nuance of human inter-relations is a challenging phenomenon to capture fully. Despite this, what is clear from the data is that psychological safety, underpinned by trust, transparency, consistency & fairness, and an environment where mistakes are not punished are prevalent in turnaround teams. Furthermore, the data suggests a certain asymmetry regarding the perceptions and extent to which personal relationships exist between leaders and followers. Notwithstanding, the existence of asymmetries of perceptions, and a clear leader-follower chain of command, the data points to, at least the perception (if not genuine existence) of, a high occurrence and focus on the personal relationship between the leader and the follower. Even in the face of clear quotes which deny vulnerability and personal relationships, there are contradictory codes and evidence which indicates otherwise. The presence of contradictory data indicates that in the context of the human relationship present in turnaround teams there may exist a difference in the perceived relationship versus the actual relationship held between leaders and followers and vice versa.

5.5 Results for Research Proposition 3

Effective communication of the strategic, operational and transformational goals from the leader to the employees is a core competency of Turnaround Leadership.

Communication is the primary instrument leaders have available to them to influence their teams (Brandts, Cooper, & Weber, 2014, p. 24).

The literature explored in Chapter 2 identifies effective communication as a core competency of Turnaround Leadership and leadership in general. A leaders ability to

communicate their strategic and operational goals are critical for team alignment and the overall successful execution of a turnaround strategy. In addition to this, the manner and extent in which a leader communicates with his or her teams plays a direct role in how he/she is perceived and is a leading factor in the building and maintaining of personal relationships which have an effect on team buy-in, and the overall motivation and effectiveness of the team.

5.5.1 Prevalence, Extent, and Importance of Open Communication

The data relating to Research Proposition 3 produced the fewest number of codes and quotes with only 15 codes in total, of which 7 were direct in-vivo quotes. Despite this, the few codes produced strong responses with the code "open communication" being the most frequent code across the entire study with 69 occurrences. Table 18 shows the frequency of codes relating to Research Proposition 3

Table 18: Frequency of Codes Relating to Research Proposition 3

Code	Grounded
Open communication	69
Awareness of the impact on non-verbal communication	26
Setting goals autocratically	24
Dynamic communication (formal & informal)	21
Vision creation & explanation	20
Communication to an extent (need to know basis)	14
Separation of Strategic and Operational Goals	8
Teams value structure & instruction	7

The responses associated with Research Proposition 3 were approximately consistent in frequency between both leaders and followers with the exception of codes with a clear leaning towards either leaders or follower, for example: "Communication to an extent" which highlights leaders communicating certain things on a 'need to know' basis was far more frequent in leaders' responses. "Open communication," the most grounded code in the entire study occurred practically equally between the two groups with a frequency of 34 and 35 for followers and leaders respectively. The below Table 19 shows the difference in frequency between leaders and followers for all the codes associated with Research Proposition 3. Table 20 shows selected perspectives on open communication and its prevalence and importance to the respondents.

Table 19: Frequency of Codes Associated with Research Proposition 3 for Both Turnaround Leaders and Followers

	Followers	Leaders
Awareness of the impact on non-verbal communication Gr=26	13	13
Communication to an extent (need to know basis) Gr=14	4	10
Dynamic communication (formal & informal) Gr=21	13	8
Open communication Gr=69	34	35
Separation of Strategic and Operational Goals Gr=8	2	6
Setting goals autocratically Gr=24	13	11
Teams value structure & instruction Gr=7	2	5
Vision creation & explanation Gr=20	11	9

Table 20: Selected Perspectives on 'Open Communication'

"I think the, that, um, ability to read non social, like nonverbal communication is, is a weapon that you have to show up in at least every day"

"It is very direct but that's the nice thing about it because then you know what is expected of you and where you stand. You don't have that question or doubt in your mind, what do I actually need to do or am I supposed to do this. It's very informative and direct."

"The nice thing about *Leader L3 (redacted)*, I don't know if I can say this, but well, everything goes."

"If you're not sure you can ask and she will clarify and it's an open form of communication"

"Usually I just ask her for her opinion about something and then she will tell me okay this is what could work and try this as well and I think it is great, because she did it in a way that you would feel like she is your peer and she is your leader at the same time."

"She gives you context, she explains to you why, she even asks us for advice sometimes, because she says sometimes you can see it in another way that she did not think of."

"To sum it up all in all, I always believe that communication is key, communication is key, no one knows everything."

"Communication wise I think um, she's good, personally."

"Being available, open door policy."

"Open and unambiguous"

"From my perspective, communication style is always open, honest, transparent"

"I show them everything I can, because it puts them at ease and makes them more comfortable"

"Open communication it's very like, if you have a problem come and talk to me."

"Yes, she keeps eye contact. She talks to you like a real person. She doesn't talk down to you or anything."

The results for Research Proposition 3 further show preferences for clear and frequent communication of the goals, structures and decision-making frameworks necessary to achieve the turnaround in performance. This is aligned to the need for open communication between leaders and followers. It follows that open communication needs to be purposeful to achieve the desired outcome and thus needs to have the relevant substance in order to drive the desired outcome. Table 21 gives examples of codes relevant to the substance of the type of communication as perceived by leaders and as lived by followers.

Table 21: Table Showing Prevalent Codes Relating to the Substance of Communication Between Leaders and Followers.

	Followers	Leaders
Goal Orientated Gr=38	15	23
Simple structures Gr=13	3	10
Separation of Strategic and Operational Goals Gr=8	2	6
Setting goals autocratically Gr=24	13	11
Teams value structure & instruction Gr=7	2	5
Vision creation & explanation Gr=20	11	9

5.5 Results for Research Proposition 4

Incentives can be used to drive a turnaround performance from employees

This Research Proposition seeks to understand the effectiveness and prevalence of variables which encourage high performance from employees and team members. The literature in Chapter 2 indicates that rewards, recognition and career development all play a role in the overall performance, motivation and efficiency of an individual. When conducting the interviews and focus groups, it was this research proposition which generated the most lively and passionate responses, especially from the followers. Some of the Turnaround Leaders expressed their concern about transactional-style leadership resulting in misaligned expectations and complacency. Furthermore, despite the importance and effectiveness of incentives, concerns were raised regarding their ineffectiveness if not tailored to the specific individuals' preferences.

5.5.1 Beyond Monetary Incentives
Table 22 shows the distribution and total frequency of the top occurring codes relating to Research Proposition 3 and give and an indication of the ranking of different elements of incentives and transactional leadership which drives the behaviour of followers, and the decision of how to incentivise by leaders.

Table 22: Top Occurring Codes Relating to Research Proposition 4 and Their Relative Weighting Between Leaders and Followers

	Followers	Leaders	Total Frequency
Trust and reciprocation Gr=22	12	10	22
Aligning company goals with individual goals Gr=21	13	8	21
Career goals of followers are valued Gr=28	15	13	28
Followers want to perform at a high level Gr=10	8	2	10
Incentives are important Gr=21	12	9	21
incentives need to be tailored Gr=15	4	11	15
Incentives to drive behaviour Gr=21	14	7	21
Recognition of accomplishments Gr=33	19	14	33
Transactional leadership Gr=29	18	11	29

5.5.2 Understanding the Efficacy of Different Types of Incentives

The results relating to Research Proposition 3 provided meaningful insights into the different perceptions and opinions regarding incentives. Table 23 illustrates selected opinions from both leaders and followers regarding the nature and effectiveness of different forms of rewards, recognition and career development opportunities as incentives.

Table 23: Table Showing Selected Opinions Regarding the Effectiveness of Different Incentives

"I am motivated by other things. I like money. I want money, as we all do, but if you give me a hundred thousand Rand bonus, you are not going to get a hundred thousand Rand more out of me, because I'm already giving you."

"I make it fully aware that people need to be recognised on a continuous basis"

"The 'why' is strong enough, then, and you, as a leader, believe in the 'why,' and there's a need not to have incentives then, yes, I would implement it without incentive to achieve the why."

"I'm just throwing money at it and burning it and it's not doing what I need it to do"

"Discovering what works best for each person or how to motivate them as a whole."

"She basically asks where we want to be in five years' time, what we want to be doing."

"If you tailor make the reward to the individual, you get better motivation"

"If the team meets its financial revenue targets, they will be rewarded with a bonus, but based on the employee framework, if they've actually shot the lights out, they can be rewarded over and above the normal pay out of a bonus."

"And so transactional behaviour definitely is effective, but if it needs to be tailored to the individual and to be quite content contextual,"

"I don't believe in incentives. I believe in personal incentivising. I believe in empowering people by giving them the knowledge, there is more in it than giving them a dollar incentive"

"It can also be de-motivating."

"INTERVIEWER: We need you to flip (turnaround) this business, would you use incentives?

INTERVIEWEE: Nope, I will just pay people more and fire the majority of the people that don't do their job."

"So they get incentive and then it's almost like, okay, I can do this so I can sit back a little, see, instead of going, okay, but let's pass the target. So then they kind of slack off [from] the incentive."

The results show mixed feelings regarding the efficacy and necessity of using incentives to drive a sudden and significant increase in performance. In order to further explore the balance of these sentiments, codes that revealed contrasting views regarding incentives were assigned to different code-groups. The frequency of these code groups was then assigned between leaders and followers to reveal further insight into the data on contrasting opinions regarding incentives. Table 24 shows the weighting for the code-groups which offer different perspectives on incentives between leaders and followers.

Table 24 reveals the perceptions of leaders and followers regarding the effectiveness of monetary rewards, recognition, and career aspirations as incentivising forces.

Table 24: Table Showing the Weighting for Different Code-Groups Relating to Research Proposition 4.

	Followers	Leaders	Totals
Career goals are important Gr=73	50	23	73
Recognition is important Gr=34	19	15	34
Recognition not important Gr=2	1	1	2
Rewards are important + effective Gr=55	29	26	55
Rewards not important & effective Gr=8	2	6	8

5.6 Results for Research Proposition 5

The optimising of existing capital and human resources and the shedding of those which are not aligned to the new performance trajectory are necessary conditions in a turnaround.

This research proposition deals with some of the more uncomfortable topics regarding leadership and some of the more difficult decisions that Turnaround Leaders need to make in order to achieve the desired sudden and significant increase in performance from their teams. The data collected for this research proposition deals with a leader's ability to manage and recognise the forces which result in an optimised team. This extends into the training, learning and growth areas promoted by the leaders and, the way conflict and underperformance are handled.

5.6.1 Training, Learning, and Growth
The data revealed a reluctance, or possibly inability, to terminate employees and rather revealed the leaders' self-awareness and commitment to upskilling and empowering their team. Furthermore, key insights were uncovered regarding the way instances of conflict and underperformance were dealt with. Interestingly, many of the responses for Research Proposition 5 linked back to Research Proposition 2 which dealt with the personal

relationship between the leader and the followers indicating connections between the personal relationship and the general ability to handle topics outside of praise and positivity. Table 25 shows all codes associated with Research Proposition 5.

Table 25: Table Showing the Frequency of Codes Associated with Research Proposition 5

Code	Grounded
Training of staff	33
Commitment to learning and growth	28
Handle underperformance immediately	21
Training leads to confidence leads to motivation	19
Underperformance handled one-on-one	12
Mentor/Mentee relationship	11
Underperformance addressed informally initially	8
Underperformance handled in a team setting	8
Underperformance is an upstream problem	7
Underperformance handled formally (labour law)	6
Conflict dealt with one-on-one (separately)	6
Conflict dealt with informally	3
Confidence is important	3
Conflict is not necessarily bad	3

Interestingly, the most frequent codes are not those associated with conflict or underperformance, but rather training, learning and growth. The general sentiment from both leaders and followers is that underperformance is not a function of the inability of the person but rather the inhibition of opportunities to grow to the challenges presented to the individual. Nevertheless, in the presence of underperformance, the followers all had opinions to share regarding how their leader handles underperformance, and similarly, the leaders had clear responses when describing their own style when confronted with underperformance or conflict.

5.6.2 Underperformance and Conflict

The respondent's answers to questions on regarding underperformance and conflict were unambiguous and to the point. Both followers and leaders appeared to have a clear understanding of how these topics were handled.

Table 26 shows the weighting of codes dealing with conflict and underperformance between leaders and followers. The most striking contrast in occurrence relates to the code "underperformance is an upstream problem" where the code occurs 6 times with leaders, but only once with followers. This gives an indication that leaders hold themselves responsible for the performance of their team and hold the perception that their teams are not held back by their inherent ability, but rather their access to resources and opportunities to train and upskill themselves.

Table 26: Table Showing the Weighting of Different Codes Between Leaders and Followers Relating to Underperformance and Conflict

	Followers	Leaders
Conflict dealt with informally Gr=3	0	3
Conflict dealt with one-on-one (separately) Gr=6	3	3
Conflict handled in a group environment Gr=2	0	2
Underperformance addressed informally initially Gr=8	3	5
Underperformance handled formally (labour law) Gr=6	2	4
Underperformance handled in a team setting Gr=8	5	3
Underperformance handled one-on-one Gr=12	6	6
Underperformance is an upstream problem Gr=7	1	6

During the interview process for Research Proposition 5, respondents organically linked their responses back to the core values of the leader and the personal connection with the team. Although not explicitly stated, the subtle links back to codes dealing with Research Proposition 2 do indicate that there is an overarching team-mentality and personal relationship which impacts perceptions of both leaders and followers even in the case of

underperformance and conflict. Understanding this link in the data can provide further insight into the prevalence of codes relating to psychological safety and open communication. Table 27 shows the subtle connections between Research Proposition 5 and Research Proposition 2 by illustrating the co-occurrence of selected codes.

Table 27: Table Showing the Co-Occurrence of Selected Codes Between Research Proposition 2 (X-axis) and Research Proposition 5 (Y-axis).

	Core value - integrity	Core value - transparency	Core value - Honest	Focus on teamwork	Personal connection with team	Achieving accountability
Conflict dealt with one-on-one (separately)					1	
Handle underperformance immediately	1	1	1			1
Underperformance handled in a team setting				1		
Underperformance handled one-on-one		1				

Research Proposition 5 furthermore provided insights regarding how underperformance and conflict are handled and how these link back to the value structure of the leader. Table 28 shows selected opinions expressed by both leaders and followers regarding Research Proposition 5.

Table 28: Table Showing Selected Opinions Expressed by Both Leaders and Followers Regarding Research Proposition 5

"So underperformance, if it's skill-based? I think the problem is mostly upstream"

"The standard you walk past, is the standard you accept so we are very strict on rules and standards."

"If you have skilled, happy, employees you'll have a great business. It's not rocket science."

"You want other people to be more successful than you are and then you know you have done a great job"

"It's the leaders, we are expecting too much. We are putting too much trust and too much expectation into people that just cannot do the job."

"If I have to deal with conflict then by all means, I like that. You need to have bit of excitement in your life. I enjoy challenges. I enjoy someone telling me they think they can do it and I will show them you cannot do it."

"We are working as a team so why should that guy be privileged to be taken into a little room and been talked to, to say he is not doing his job properly, you are letting down the team. So what this means is, your team needs to know what you are doing."

"I think she is pretty good at pulling, sort of reigning in the troops and eventually, but sometimes it in my opinion could be quicker."

"So the leading by example is the crucial point in the industry because we need to make sure that everybody understands; if you can't do it, I will show you how to do it."

"It's completely open, the door is open, everybody can do what they want to do with communicating with me. I have never not had time for them."

"She gives you context, she explains to you why, she even asks us for advice sometimes, because she says sometimes you can see it in another way that she did not think of."

"Encourage them to learn on the side in their own time"

"I guess she would know that it was her own responsibility and I am sure she would be very hard on herself, equally as hard and if not more than he would to us, had we made the same mistake"

"I guess she would know that it was his own responsibility and I am sure she would be very hard on herself, equally as hard and if not more than she would to us, had we made the same mistake"

"I guess she would know that it was her own responsibility and I am sure she would be very hard on herself, equally as hard and if not more than she would to us, had we made the same mistake"

"We can't keep on dragging along and thinking it's just going to be okay."

"If you need her, she's there. Like you can count on her."

"She does not shout, she takes the person away from everyone else."

No you do it in a group because by repeating yourself in this industry is what makes people stronger. If you can constantly hear the same thing every day for the next 30 days, do you think you want to make a mistake?"

"We will performance manage the person out of the team"

5.7 Contrasting Opinions Between Leaders and Followers Across All Research Questions

Across all the data collected, possibly the most interesting data did not come instances where there was strategic and operational alignment between leaders and followers regarding Turnaround Leadership but rather when the self-perception of the leader was in contrast to the lived experience of the followers. This phenomenon was most pronounced from followers group F1, whom despite achieving a turnaround in performance, had the most negative and contrasting opinions regarding their leader. These contrasting opinions are captured in the codes presented in Table 29.

Table 29: Table Showing all Codes Relating to Negative or Contrasting Sentiment and their Occurrence Between Different 'Followers' Groups

	Followers F3	Followers F6	Followers F2	Followers F4	Followers F1	Followers F7	Followers F5
Followers not empowered Gr=2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Respond badly to autocracy Gr=4	0	0	1	0	3	0	0
Lack of sympathy for followers Gr=3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Lack of trust of leader Gr=4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
Leader perceived as inconsistent Gr=1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Leader perceived as too soft Gr=1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Psychological discomfort Gr=3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Incentives promised but not given Gr=2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0

5.8 Final Thoughts as Expressed by leaders

At the end of all the interviews with both leaders and followers, the participants were encouraged to speak openly and add any further comments regarding the topics already covered. For the followers, no new codes were generated during this final open-ended question. Their responses were repetitions of topics and themes already covered and have thus been captured in the previous sections.

When proposing the final open-ended question to the leaders, the interviewer encouraged the participants to speak about how much of what they do as leaders was intentional and how much of it was simply a natural part of who they were. Although unintentionally, this suggestion ended up guiding the theme for the final question during the interviews with the leaders and was the source for new codes being generated. The question of being intentional vs 'being born with it', or 'natural' was challenging for those involved possibly because the level of self-reflection across the multifaceted discipline of leadership would require more time than what was available. Nevertheless, the results indicate a mixture of both 'natural' and 'intentional' actions by leaders which in hindsight is not that surprising given the natural endowment of skills and gaps for improvement which defines an individuals progression in any discipline (including leadership).

The frequency of these codes in the final stage of the interviews/focus groups were low and represented a mix of both purposeful/intentional leadership and, leadership using intuition or being intrinsic to their being. Table 30 shows the four codes generated in this final question and their frequency across the different leaders.

Table 30: Table Showing the Frequency of Codes Generated in the Final Open Ended Question During Interviews With Leaders

	Student of leadership and personal growth	Leadership using intuition (being born with it)	Being purposeful or intentional in actions	zero tolerance for non-conformity to team orientation
Leader P1	0	0	4	1
Leader P2	3	1	7	1
Leader P3	1	1	2	0
Leader P4	0	0	0	0
Leader P5	0	2	0	0
Leader P6	0	0	0	0
Leader P7	0	1	0	0

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results from the 14 interviews conducted with both leaders and their respective followers. The questions proposed in the interviews were intended to either support or disprove the research propositions highlighted in Chapter 3. In addition to the insight gained regarding the research propositions, additional information and themes came to the fore during the interview process. These results are analysed in the following Chapter 6 to see whether or not they support the research propositions and the underlying theory which informed them. Furthermore, the results will be analysed to understand if there are any new insights not yet covered in the literature surveyed.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6 the results are discussed in-depth and analysed according to the theory presented in the literature review in Chapter 2. The results are used to support, contrast or improve upon the insights gained in Chapter 2, and then to assist with answering the research propositions presented in Chapter 3. The findings are intended to contribute to a better understanding of the human and leadership traits which form the substance of a Turnaround Leader. The connection between the theory and results are presented and explored in the following chapter.

6.2 Discussion of Results for Research Proposition 1

Understanding the relevance of both authoritarian and democratic decision making in different situations is a key competency of a Turnaround Leader.

Research Proposition 1 sought to understand the ability of a Turnaround Leader to dynamically apply both centralised decisions through autocratic-style leadership and, to embrace and practice decentralised decision making through democratic-style leadership where the followers are empowered and have a degree of autonomy. The literature presents the need for both hard and soft skills where autocratic decision making (Bibeault, 1984; Boyd, 2011; O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014; Slatter, 2011), is complemented with trust and humility (O'Kane & Cunningham, 2012), and the ability of the Turnaround Leader to appeal and inspire the human resources of the organisation/team (Gadiesh, Pace & Rogers, 2003). For this Research Proposition, the self-perceptions of the leaders are compared and contrasted to the lived experiences of the followers. This then either reinforces concepts where there are similarities in responses or, captures otherwise hidden disparities in opinions, perceptions and experiences when there are contrasting results.

6.2.1 Understanding the Dominant Leadership Style in Turnaround Leaders

Research Proposition 1 was presented to the interviewees as two sides of the same coin. Turnaround leaders were asked how they lead in a turnaround situation, and their followers where asked what leadership style they had experienced during a turnaround. The data is first analysed and presented in Table 3 which looks at the frequency code groups associated with a leadership style dominated by centralised power (autocracy), a leadership style dominated by decentralised power (democratic), and then, instances where both autocratic and democratic where acknowledged simultaneously. This table gives a broad perspective of the different leadership styles and how they were self-perceived or experienced by leaders and followers, respectively.

6.2.2 Understanding the Lived Experience of Autocratic Leadership Styles

The code groupings for autocratic leadership styles occurred with minimal difference between Turnaround Leaders and turnaround followers. This indicates that there is a more or less equal shared experience of centralised decision making and power both in the self-perception of the leader and the lived experiences of the followers. Both leaders and followers had a high frequency of codes related to autocratic leadership style with 42 and 39 occurrences respectively. This is aligned to the theory which states that turnarounds are usually characterised by quick and decisive autocratic decision making which drives the operational and strategic effectiveness of the turnaround (Bibeault, 1984; Boyd, 2011; O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014; Slatter, 2011) and confirms both the relevance and the presence of this style of leadership.

This indicates that followers generally experience both autocratic and democratic leadership styles in fairly equally from their leaders which aligns to the literature acknowledging the necessity for a Turnaround Leader to be capable across multiple dimensions of a business and dynamic in their approach to achieving a turnaround. The literature is typically contrasted between a leader who is coercive, abrupt and decisive (Bibeault, 1984; Monroe, 1992) and one which incorporates interpersonal relationships, trust and a belief in the abilities of their followers to execute on their tasks successfully (O'Kane & Cunningham, 2012, p. 57; Gadiesh, Pace & Rogers, 2003). These two contrasting styles are acknowledged, but not held as equally present as presented in the results of the lived experience of the followers. This observation does support Research Proposition 1, as the experience of the followers shows their dynamic experience of their leader and their leadership style.

6.2.3 Understanding the Lived Experience of Democratic Leadership Styles

Unlike the codes group for autocratic leadership, the code group for democratic leadership (also Table 3) showed a large variance in frequency Turnaround Leaders and their followers. Democratic Leadership Style had a frequency of 65 for Turnaround Leaders and 38 for turnaround followers. Interestingly, unlike the lived experience of the followers which shows a relatively equal distribution between the two leadership styles, the self-perception of the leader is that they are more inclusive and democratic in their leadership style. This contrast is insightful in that it indicates that the Turnaround Leaders interviewed generally want to be perceived, and perceive themselves, as an inclusive democratic-style leader. This could be linked to leadership current leadership trends which applaud this type of leadership but is, however, out of scope for this research.

The lived reality of the followers is, however different, to the self-perception of the leader when commenting on the autocratic elements of the leadership style. One follower noted 'and sometimes it's more like, you know the Hitler type, what I say goes and that.' Another follower noted, 'well, she is a manager to me. So I just listen to what she tells me and I do it." These comments are in stark contrast to any self-perception of inclusivity or the decentralisation of power between leaders and followers. Further opinions regarding the lived experience of autocratic leadership by followers can be found in Tabel 5. These findings confirm the theory presented by Bibeault (1984); Boyd (2011); O'Kane & Cunningham (2014); & Slatter (2011), which understand that turnarounds are characterised by swift autocratic decision making which drives the effectiveness of the operational and strategic goals during the turnaround.

Rather than a duality of leadership styles, the results from the interviews point to a context-based application of different styles based on their appropriateness at different moments at varying intensities. This is aligned to the literature on contextual leadership and confirms Oc's (2018, p.218) comment that "leadership does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in a context where leaders function." These findings furthermore align to Anderson, Baur, Griffith, & Buckley's (2017) understanding of the limitations of older leadership models to capture the dynamic and unique needs of modern employees who demand the ability of leadership to understand different leadership tactics to optimise business outcomes. This is also supported by complexity leadership theory presented by Arena & Uhl-Bien (2016) which posits that managers are required to have contextual ambidexterity and to apply themselves across the broad demands of the business (Havermans, Den Hartog, Keegan, & Uhl-Bien, 2015).

6.2.4 Understanding How and When Different Leadership Styles are Applied and are Effective

Turnaround Leaders responses to the questions posed for Research Proposition 1 to a degree reveal in which contexts they apply each leadership style. The top occurring codes for autocratic leadership styles presented in the co-occurrence Table 9 and the frequencies in Table 10 show that the autocratic leadership style seems to be utilised in the strategic goal setting and the overall direction and framework-setting by the leader. This is aligned with the selected perspectives highlighted in Table 4. One leader spoke about the need to communicate the purpose assertively: "I'm still assertive. They must still know that, you know, I am there for a reason and a purpose and what my purpose is." Another revealed their opinion regarding the inefficiency of inclusive decision making when setting strategic goals: "I mean if you go to one person and say we want to build a house, um, in the end you'll get seven ideas of a house, but we need to get to the singular point. So I've cut that out of the process by saying this is the house we are going to build. Having a clear picture on that helps drive the team." Another leader went so far to simply highlight the distinction between the roles of leader and follower: "You need to tell people what to do. They [are] not leaders, they are followers…"

It is clear that the leaders understand the necessity for swift autocratic decision making at a strategic level when dealing with the operational elements of the business, the leaders are aware that they require their followers to execute their strategy, and to do so requires a different more inclusive approach to leadership. The codes 'flat hierarchy,' 'inclusive leadership,' 'empower the team,' 'inclusivity leads to teamwork' and 'be present and available' all show a high frequency and suggest a large focus on teamwork and empowering the team to execute on their tasks. This is further backed up by the selected opinions from leaders and followers presented in Table 6 and Table 7.

One leader clearly expressed the division between the strategic goals where followers have no power, and the operational goals where they do; "Yes, they have independence within a bigger umbrella to make sure the job is done within an orderly fashion and the client is kept happy at all times." Another leader expressed their commitment to their team: "Be with the team. Be in the army." These sentiments are echoed by the responses of followers when they commented: "Believe each and everyone has the right to exercise their own initiative." And another, when understanding operational requirements: 'She usually lets you have a discussion about it and then you usually make the decision as a team." The dynamic and multi-faceted ability of the Turnaround Leaders in the research aligns to the necessity for leaders to be contextual and fluid in their application of different

leadership style presented by Oc (2018) and is supported by Anderson, Baur, Griffith, & Buckley's (2017) notion that modern leaders are required to understand the appropriateness and effectiveness of different decisions and styles at different moments in a turnaround process.

6.2.5 Conclusive Findings for Research Proposition 1

The findings for Reseach Proposition 1 conclude that Turnaround Leadership is a function of different leadership styles and methodologies, rather than one particular style in isolations. Leaders and followers acknowledged the presence of instances of leadership which have both centralised power and decentralised power depending on the suitability of that style to a particular situation. The research findings concluded that typically a leader is unwavering, assertive and autocratic in their strategic decision making. In the face of the strategic direction and desired operational outcomes, leaders do not include, nor do they see the need to include, their respective teams in the decision-making process. The leadership approach is, however, contrasted when dealing with the manner in which the operations are to be undertaken.

When deciding 'how' to achieve the desired end-state, Turnaround Leaders are inclusive and team-orientated. They show a preference for a flat hierarchy and a willingness to lead by example and get involved personally with the team should the operations require their input. In this sense, the Turnaround Leader is someone who is strategically autocratic but operationally inclusive and democratic. They are unwavering in their direction, vision and goals. But are flexible, dynamic and contextual in their ability to execute on their goals. Possibly most interestingly, the research findings point out that whilst leaders self-perception is generally that they are less autocratic, the results point out that despite this self-perception, the lived experience of followers points, and the to a robust and unwavering presence of autocratic and assertive leadership present in Turnaround Leaders and is backed up by the direct quotes presented in Table 4 and Table 5

Furthermore, the findings confirm the literature that Turnaround Leaders are decisive, swift and assertive, but also need to be able to appeal to, and navigate the human dynamics of their teams. The findings point to the need for the literature on Turnaround Leadership to expand and incorporate more elements of newer leadership models like Complexity Leadership Theory and Contextual Leadership if the literature is to truly capture what makes a modern Turnaround Leader.

6.3 Discussion of Results for Research Proposition 2

Contextual humility, trust-creation and, integrity, or more colloquially being vulnerable, are ways to achieve employee alignment and buy-in, both of which contribute to operational and strategic alignment in a turnaround.

Where Research Proposition 1 looked to understand the leadership styles and methods a Turnaround Leader incorporates into their turnaround process, Research Proposition 2 seeks to understand the personality traits and human-nature of the Turnaround Leader rather than their leadership style necessarily. Research Proposition 2 builds upon Research Proposition 1 in that having understood the styles and methodologies of the Turnaround Leader; Research Proposition 2 sought to understand the personality traits which informed these styles and methodologies which then drive the sudden and significant increase in performance associated with a turnaround.

This Research Proposition argues that the core values of the leaders and their personhood are key factors in motivating and coordinating the performance of their team. The literature points out how implementing operational strategy is underpinned by the engagement of the broader workforce (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2014). Huges & Rog (2008, p. 749) highlight that the more engaged an employee is, the more likely they will contribute to the performance and success of the business through increased effort and commitment. In their assessment of leadership in retail environments, Mekraz & Gundala, (2016) and, Rodriguez (2016) highlight the importance of the leader in the overall performance of the business, the employee engagement and the prevalence of employee turnover.

The interview questions for Research Proposition 2 dealt with two main themes for both leaders and followers: Firstly, the core values of the leader as perceived by the leader and lived by the team. And secondly, the extent to which leaders allowed themselves to be vulnerable with their teams and their teams vulnerable with them. The questions sought to understand the breadth and depth of the personal relationship in order to reveal the core values of the leader. Both leaders and followers were encouraged to talk about the extent and depth of their personal relationships with each other; both leaders and followers responded openly and insightfully.

6.3.1 Understanding a Psychologically Safe Environment for Leaders and Followers

As stated in Chapter 5 the responses associated directly with Research Proposition 2 not only generated the most codes but also generated the highest frequency of codes across

the different research propositions. The responses from both leaders and followers were rich and insightful. Table 11 shows a list of codes with a frequency greater than 10 relating to Research Proposition 2. The most frequent code associated with Research Proposition 2 is 'psychological safety.' This code relates to the ability of the leader to create an environment where their followers feel a degree of psychological safety within which they flourish without the presence of performance-crippling fear or stress. This sentiment is backed by the strong occurrence of the codes 'mistakes are not punished' and 'leader comfortable making mistakes,' and 'core value – trust.' Together these codes paint a picture of an environment and culture where both leaders and followers exist in an operational environment where they are able to collaborate and practice, and improve without fear of the inevitable mistakes during the learning or operationalisation process.

These findings are aligned to those presented in Chapter 2 by O'Kane & Cunningham (2012) and, Gadiesh, Pace & Rogers (2003). Both sets of authors speak to the importance of the leadership traits of trust and humility during a turnaround, with Gadiesh, Pace & Rogers explain a Turnaround Leaders ability to achieve a 'pride turnaround' (p. 41) where the followers maintain their dignity during the performance turnaround as a function of the team culture and the trust in the process and leaders. Linking back to Research Proposition 1, De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog (2015) note how autocratic leadership styles can have a positive effect on team psychological safety and performance by providing a predictable and orderly environment within which the team operates. Thus, the high prevalence of psychological safety present in the results is supported both theoretically and practically as correlated with the presence of autocratic leadership styles.

6.3.2 The Extent and Variance of the Personal Relationship

Table 12 shows the occurrence and distribution of the top 18 frequent codes associated with Research Proposition 2. Amongst the top 18 codes are five core values with a frequency of greater than 10. These core values are consistency & fairness, leading by example, transparency, trust, and, honesty. The codes: Trust, humility, and, leading by example are supported and present in the theory offered in Chapter 2. O'Kane & Cunningham (2012) speak of the importance of trust and humility, Woulfin & Weiner (2019) stress the necessity for a Turnaround Leader to be able to lead by example and be fluent in operational tasks. The literature does not, however, speak to transparency, and, consistency & fairness as values necessary in Turnaround Leadership.

Table 12 provides further insight into the difference between the self-perception of the leader and the lived experience of the followers. Whereas Table 11 showed the frequency

of codes, Table 12 distinguishes between the frequency of codes for leaders and followers and through this allows for a deeper understanding of the human elements of Turnaround Leadership. The key insights stemming from where there were noticeable contrasts in the data. Turnaround Leaders showed a significantly higher frequency of codes relating to the awareness of their followers' emotions & personalities and their followers' strengths & weaknesses this is aligned to common sense in that leaders should have, or at least believe they have, a comprehensive understanding of their followers' personalities and capabilities. Leaders also showed strong responses to the code "core value – transparency" and "achieving accountability." These findings suggest that despite leaders seeing transparency and accountability as being part of their leadership style, this was not the lived experience of their followers, or at least they were not reported as frequently by the followers during the interviews.

6.3.3 Misaligned Personal Connections Between Followers and Leaders
Possibly more interestingly are the instances of codes for Table 12 where the frequency is significantly higher for the followers. The codes more frequent for followers highlighted in Table 12 are:

- Core value - consistency & fairness
- Core value – trust
- Personal connection with the team
- Positive interpersonal relationship between leader and staff
- Psychological safety

With the exception (to a degree) of 'core value – consistency and fairness, all the aforementioned codes deal with an element of the personal relationship between the followers and the leaders. The high frequency for followers and low frequency for leaders show that there is a real difference in the lived experience of followers relative to the self-perception of leaders when it comes to the degree of vulnerability and the personal relationship held between leaders and followers.

Bibeault (1984) speaks of the need for the Turnaround Leader to have the character and charisma to inspire their team but also as someone who is not there to make friends. Monroe (1992) emphasises the importance of action over empathy. The results for the leaders support the literature in that codes associated with personal relationships show relatively lower frequency than the same code do for their followers (Table 12). What is unexpected are the findings that indicate the opposite for their followers, showing a high frequency for codes related to personal relationship and connection. The results appear

to show that followers are engaged in a one-way relationship or are under the impression that the personal relationship they have with their leader is far more extensive and meaningful than it actually is. The literature on Turnaround Leadership does not specifically cover the personal relationship between leaders and followers, it does, however, express the need for trust and humility (O'Kane 7 Cunningham, 2012) and the literature on competencies highlight how social and emotional abilities are contributing factors to outstanding job performance (Boyatzis, 2008: Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014).

The findings in Table 12 indicate that there is an imbalance between the experience of the personal relationship between leaders and followers. It appears that followers are under the impression that they are far closer to their leader than they actually are. The findings presented in Table 14 show that leaders are highly aware of their followers' personalities and personal lives, this is backed up from the findings in Table 12 where there was a high frequency for the codes for leaders relating to the awareness of their followers' personalities, emotions, strengths and weaknesses. Table 14 reveals key insights into the personal connection between the leaders and followers: One leader noted "80% of the job is actually personalities," another said, "unfortunately I think people do forget that we are social creatures and not social media creatures." Another leader said, "I try to understand your home life, what you are outside of work, the full individual."

Similarly, followers expressed their connection with their leader with one follower exclaiming; "I will say she drops her guard quite a bit with me and that she is vulnerable," another said "she's never said one thing and then done another" another stated " I felt very comfortable from the beginning with [Leader P6]. I feel it's a very personal thing for her to be the way she is. She's very approachable, which I feel is very important." Table 13 backs up these quotations by revealing the frequency of some of the subtleties revealed in the interviews, specifically the codes: Leadership is approachable; flat hierarchy; and, being vulnerable.

Table 15 and Table 16 present direct quotes from both leaders and followers, which illustrate the separation between the professional and personal elements of their relationship. One leader stated (Table 15): "So from my perspective, we all know each other quite personally, but to a certain extent its limited, where our relationship is very functional." Another leader explained; "We keep work, work and personal, personal…" Table 15 presents harsh evidence from leaders denying vulnerability or a personal relationship. One leader stated definitively "I absolutely do not have a personal relationship with my team…. Nobody knows what is going on in my life. I keep it that way

because I am a leader." Another leader clearly stated, "I wouldn't show them any vulnerability." These statements are in contrast to the general perception of the followers in that there does exist a more-or-less equivalent personal relationship between leaders and followers, in fact, they present an entirely conflicting view to those generally expressed by followers and presented in Table 14. There are however instances where followers too acknowledged the separation between the personal and professional relationships, these are captured in Table 15 where some of the statements are presented: "She didn't bring her emotions in," and, "you also don't want that manager to show everything about themselves," and most passionately, one respondent in focus group F1 conclusively said "I personally don't have a relationship (with my leader), so I just have to be honest." These acknowledgements of the separate relationships by followers did not, however, mimic the general sentiment of the followers captured in the interviews.

Table 17 presents the core values of leadership as highlighted by both leaders and followers. The results mirror some of those already discussed with trust, honesty, consistency & fairness and, straightforwardness all being reported frequently by both leaders and followers. Both leaders and followers were asked directly what they perceive the core values of their leadership to be; the responses were forthcoming and consistent across both leaders and followers. The results for core values shown in Table 17 suggest that a Turnaround Leader is someone who gets involved with their team, someone who is consistent, and who is able to lead by example. Furthermore, Turnaround Leaders both embody and display their values openly to their team through their actions and involvement in the team's operational tasks. This is supported in the literature which states that a leader should be fluent and dominant in operational tasks (Woulfin & Weiner, 2019), and have broad business experience (Bibeault, 1984; Slatter, 2011).

6.3.4 Conclusive Findings for Research Proposition 2

The findings and results for Research Proposition 2 present both expected and unexpected insights into the nature of Turnaround Leadership as understood through the personal relationship and the value-structure of the individual. The ability to create and maintain a personal relationship is a noteworthy characteristic and ability of a Turnaround Leader. The results are clear in showing the importance of a relationship which promotes psychological safety and the ability for both leaders and followers to grow and learn without fear of punishment for inevitable mistakes during the operationalisation process. Turnaround Leaders are able to form deep relationships with their followers by understanding their strengths, weaknesses, personal lives, and emotional quirks. They

use these relationships to create a safe and accountable space where followers are able to achieve their potential and are motivated to do so. Turnaround Leaders present their values and capabilities openly and are unwavering in their consistency, discipline and willingness to lead by example.

The most interesting findings uncovered in the results for Research Proposition 2 are not the moments of alignment, but rather the revealing of the difference in how leaders generally approach their personal relationship with their followers, relative to how their followers experience that same relationship. Leaders present themselves and are perceived, as being open, approachable, personal, and in some instances, even vulnerable to their followers. However, when directly asked about their personal relationship with their team and the extent of their openness and personal vulnerability, the results were generally in stark contrast to that of the lived experience of their followers. The results captured by the leaders speak of a strict barrier between the personal and business relationships they have with their team.

Despite the impressions of their followers, leaders are generally focused on business results and business outcomes first and are intentional in the extent of their personal lives which they reveal to their followers. This is not to say that leaders are disingenuous or use their personal relationship and awareness of their followers as a means for achieving business goals, but rather that the distinction between personal and professional relationship is far more established in the minds of leaders than it is in followers. The findings generally confirm Research Proposition 2 but simultaneously provide key insights into the nature and extent of the personal relationship in the context of driving a turnaround performance in a business setting.

6.4 Discussion of Results for Research Proposition 3

Effective communication of the strategic, operational and transformational goals from the leader to the employees is a core competency of Turnaround Leadership.

Research Proposition 3 deals with the style, extent, and effectiveness of a leader's ability to communicate with their team. The research proposition follows that in instances where a sudden and significant increase in performance is needed, a Turnaround Leader needs to be intentional in the manner and extend to which they communicate if they are to achieve the alignment and coordination required to achieve a turnaround in performance.

The literature identifies communication as the primary instrument leaders have available to them to influence their teams (Brandts, Cooper, & Weber, 2014). The literature stresses the appropriateness of different communication styles and their ability to have a positive or negative effect on team performance depending on the context in which they are applied. De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog (2015) show that autocratic styles can be beneficial where there is high competition between team members and low psychological safety. The seminal works of Bibeault (1984) speaks of a strong leader who is direct and not personable.

This is contrasted with more transformational styles of communication where leaders communicate the values, goals and objectives clearly and by doing so are able to achieve greater efficacy in their team's performance. McCleskey (2014) explains a transformational leader as someone who is able to get the best from their employees through and individual consideration of their abilities, motives and capabilities.

The interview questions for both the leaders and the followers dealt with the communication style of the leader, non-verbal communication, and the extent and nature of the communication. The responses were clear and concise. Both leaders and followers were unambiguous in their understanding and appreciation for the importance, frequency, and style of communication they have experienced and how it contributed to in their team's turnaround performance. The questions sought to understand how communication was used as a tool to achieve different operational and strategic goals during a turnaround.

6.4.1 Clear Open and Frequency Communication

Table 18 presents all the codes and their frequency relating to Research Proposition 3. The code 'open communication' was the most frequent code across all the data collected. This finding is unsurprisingly supported comprehensively in the literature. Boyd (2011) speaks about the leader articulating the values and codifying the behavioural norms. Bibeault (1984), Boyd (2011), Monroe (1992), and Slatter (1998) all refer to the necessity of leaders ability to communicate effectively both with their superiors and their employees. Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers (2003), Harker & Sharma, (2000), O'Kane & Cunningham, (2014) all point out how leaders use communication to create alignment and clarity of tasks and responsibility in their teams. Table 19 shows that the code 'open communication' appeared practically equally between leaders and followers with 35 and 34 occurrences respectively.

During the interviews, the importance of and prevalence of open communication between teams and leaders was very apparent. Table 20 presents selected perspectives of both

leaders and followers relating to open communication. When asked about their own communication style, one leader stated: "[it's] open and unambiguous." When commenting on the importance of communication, another stated "communication is key, no-one knows everything." One leader reflected on their own communication style as "open, honest, and transparent."

6.4.2 Goal Setting

Communication is a primary tool for the dissemination of goals, objectives and vision from leaders to followers. Clearly articulated goals, and the forum to ask questions and operational advice for those goals was a prominent theme in the interviews. The codes "setting goals autocratically," and, "vision creation and explanation" shown in Table 19 both show a high frequency. Followers supported this in their opinions captured in Table 20 with one follower capturing this relationship succinctly: "It is very direct but that's the nice thing about it because then you know what is expected of you and where you stand. You don't have that question or doubt in your mind, what do I actually need to do or am I supposed to do this. It's very informative and direct." Another follower summarised this sentiment by saying: "If you're not sure you can ask and she will clarity and it's an open form of communication"

Leaders mirrored these sentiments with one saying "I show them everything I can, because it puts them at ease and makes them more comfortable." And another saying "if you have a problem, come talk to me." And another "being available, open-door policy."

The results show that goals are set clearly and centrally by the leader with little or no ambiguity. In instances where further explanation or input is required by the followers, the leaders are available, open, and willing to lead by example. These results support the findings for Research Proposition 1 in that goals are set autocratically, but the operationalisation of those goals and communication thereafter is an inclusive and dynamic process between leaders and followers. By communicating openly and frequently with their teams, leaders were able to create psychologically safe environments where followers knew exactly what was required from them and they had an open platform for asking for help and assistance when they needed it. These findings are consistent with the literature which notes the necessity for clear and non-negotiable autocratic-style goal setting (Bibeault, 1984; Slatter, 2011; De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog, 2015), but also allow input and communication when necessary to drive efficacy in achieving the operational goals of the business and being able to lead by example (Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers, 2003; Woulfin & Weiner, 2019).

6.4.3 Goal Setting on Two Levels: Long-Term Aspirational Goals, and Short-Term Immediate

The results from the interviews suggest that Turnaround Leaders are able to communicate goals on two different levels and that these goals then link to the overall efficacy, motivation and operational output of the team. The immediate goal setting and subsequent communication are done to clearly articulate the tasks required to achieve the performance increase (Bibeault 1984; Slatter, 1998). The results do however also indicate that leaders also communicate their values and vision because this helps to codify the behavioural norms (Boyd, 2011) and reduce any resistance to the positive change necessary to achieve the turnaround (Gadiesh, Pace & Rogers, 2003). The results support this with the code "vision creation & explanation" presented in Table 21 being frequent for both leaders and followers. The alignment of the company's long term goals and the individual goals of the followers were also identified in the results for Research Proposition 4 in Table 22 where the code 'aligning company goals with individual goals" showed a significant frequency of occurrence and is highlighted as a driver of motivation.

6.4.4 Communication Style

The literature on Turnaround Leadership and leadership surveyed in Chapter 2 does not go to great lengths regarding the method of communication which is most used by Turnaround Leaders. The findings from Chapter 5 do however provide insight into the communication style and methods of Turnaround Leaders and are worthy of inclusion in this study. The results indicate that Turnaround Leaders are dynamic in their communication style. Specifically, they can use both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication to achieve their desired outcomes, and, they apply both formal and informal elements of communication in their daily interactions to achieve their desired outcomes. Table 19 shows high frequencies for the codes 'awareness of the impact of non-verbal communication" and "dynamic communication" for both leaders and followers. One leader commented (Table 21) "I think that the ability to read non-social, like non-verbal communication is, is a weapon that you have to show up in at least every day."

6.4.5 Conclusive Findings for Research Proposition 3

The results and findings for Research Proposition 3 highlight the importance and prevalence of effective communication between both leaders and followers during a turnaround in performance. The results mimic the findings for Research Proposition 1 where leaders contextually apply different styles depending on their applicability and usefulness to that situation, similarly, leaders communicate differently when explaining the goals and vision, to when they are explaining the operational requirements for a task. The

literature supports the findings and provides further alignment to the necessity for leaders to have contextual fluency and to be dynamic communication to match the unique demands of a specific context (Oc, 2018). Furthermore, the results indicate communication is clearly a component of the competency "Turnaround Leadership" and is supported by the Concept of Competency model presented by Chouhan & Srivastava (2014, p.17).

6.5 Discussion of Results for Research Proposition 4

Incentives can be used to drive turnaround performance from employees.

Research Proposition 4 sought to understand the role incentives play in motivating and achieving a turnaround in performance. Incentives in this context were broken down into three distinct areas, namely: financial incentives, recognition incentives, and, career progress incentives. The questions asked in the interviews revealed which type and to what extent leaders used incentives to get the most from their followers. Followers provided especially insightful and passionate responses when asked about rewards and incentives. Baştürk, Boz, & Yıldız (2014) present transactional leaders as leaders who utilise a contingent reward based on a transaction occurring once a specific task or function has been completed or achieved. Typically, this type of leadership technique is associated with a material or financial incentive (Breevaart, et al., 2014); however, the literature is not generally prescriptive and does not conclusively say that the incentives need to be financial. The results to be discussed show that incentives have varying effectiveness and are not always financial, but rather, that Turnaround Leaders utilise a combination of rewards, recognition and career incentives in order to achieve their desired increase in performance.

6.5.1 Understanding Different Mechanisms for Driving Performance

Understanding exactly how leaders incentivise their employees to achieve at their highest level is a crucial area for exploration when trying to understand the substance of a Turnaround Leader. Table 22 presents the top occurring codes relating to Research Proposition 4 and their frequency between leaders and followers.

Followers showed relatively high frequency for the more general codes relating to transactional leadership and incentives, these codes are: "Transactional leadership," "incentives drive behaviour" and, 'trust and reciprocation." Furthering this topic, and

despite not being prompted, some followers showed that there was a desire to perform at a higher level. Interestingly, this may indicate that followers were inherently transactional having mentioned that they wanted to achieve their highest potential, but not that they were, in fact, not achieving their highest potential and thus implied that they would only do so if incentivised accordingly.

Table 24 shows code groupings for the three incentivising mechanisms in both their positive and negative formats i.e. When they were highlighted as having a positive effect, and when they were highlighted as having a negative effect. These code groupings are: Rewards, recognition, and, career goals. Notably, the code group 'career goals are important' was both the most frequent code group and had no corresponding negative code grouping (unlike that for rewards, and recognition).

Rewards (relating to material and financial rewards) were identified as important and effective by both leaders and followers with a high total frequency (55) and a relatively even distribution of occurrences with 29 and 26 respectively. These findings are consistent with the literature which states that motivation for high performance is influenced positively by material incentives (Baştürk, Boz, & Yıldız, 2014; Breevaart, et al., 2014). One leader captured this conditional transactional reward mechanism, as presented in Table 23 by simply stating: "If the team meets its financial revenue targets, they will be rewarded with a bonus."

The results for recognition presented similar results with both a high frequency (34) and, relatively equal distribution between leaders and followers with 19 and 15 occurrences, respectively. Recognition as a form of incentive or motivation is not as prevalent in the literature but nevertheless is seen as an accompanying and complementary factor to the material incentives offered during a performance turnaround (Boyd, 2011; Drucker, 1986). One leader stated (Table 23) "I make it fully aware that people need to be recognised on a continuous basis."

Career goals as a motivating factor did not show up directly in the literature however, indirectly it is implied. Gadiesh, Pace and Rodgers (2003) speak of the importance of the long term vision for the business being part of the alignment process to achieve an increase in performance. Similarly, (Breevaart, et al., 2014) in their four "I's" of transformational leadership include inspirational motivation and individual consideration as factors embodied by leaders and which contribute to motivation and performance. The code group (Table 24) "career goals are important" showed the highest frequency with 73 occurrences, and had an especially high frequency for followers with 50 occurrences. The findings show that unlike what is found in the

literature, which places more emphasis on material and financial rewards, followers are more motivated by having the opportunity to move forward in their careers. In agreement with these findings, one follower stated: "She basically asks where we want to be in five years time, what we want to be doing." The emphasis placed on career goals and progression is also in contrast to the responses of leaders which have a more or less equal emphasis on material rewards and career goals, and less emphasis on recognition.

6.5.2 Tailoring Incentives

A key theme which appears in the results and which was not present in the literature was the need for a tailored approach to incentives rather than using a general or blanket approach to increase their effectiveness. In their "Four I's" model for transformational leadership, Breevaart, et al. (2014) mentions the importance of individual consideration, this is not however linked back directly to incentives. Table 22 shows the frequency of the code "incentives need to be tailored, with leaders showing almost three times the occurrence of the code when compared with followers.

Leaders produced rich responses to the questions regarding incentives and showed their appreciation for the subtleties and nuances of their followers' personalities and what will truly motivate them. Table 23 presents selected opinion from leaders who mention the necessity for tailored incentives. One leader stated, "If you tailor-made the reward to the individual, you get better motivation." Another said, "transactional behaviour definitely is effective, but if it needs to be tailored to the individual and to be quite contextual." When asked about incentives, one leader said "discovering what works best for each person or how to motivate them as a whole." Turnaround leaders generally agree that incentives are less effective if they are not tailored to the individual.

6.5.3 When Incentives Result in Complacency

Another theme which emerged from the results was the unexpected insight that incentives, especially monetary incentives, can have the opposite intended effect and counter-intuitively result in complacency and a drop in performance. This phenomenon was not present in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Also presented in Table 23, leaders captured this phenomenon by saying "it can also be demotivating" and another identified a reduction in effort from followers after an incentive had been achieved; "so they get the incentive and then its almost like, okay, I can do this so I can sit back a little…" Even more unexpected was one follower's acknowledgement of the ineffectiveness of monetary rewards on their operational output "I am motivated by other things. I like money, I want money as we all do, but if you give me a hundred thousand Rand bonus, you are not going to get a hundred thousand Rand more out of me, because I am already giving you (my full

effort)." This phenomenon was not prevalent in all the responses, it was however acknowledged by both leaders and followers and is recorded in the code groupings in Table 24 under the code-group "rewards are not important & effective."

6.5.4 Conclusive Findings for Research Proposition 4

The results for Research Proposition 4 produced both expected and unexpected insights. There is a strong general agreement that incentives are important and useful when trying to achieve an increase in performance from a team, especially in the context of aligning efforts and motivating teams. However, despite the findings presented in the literature, incentives need to be tailored to the individual if they are to be truly effective. The findings show that career progression is a strong motivating factor for followers which is likely underused by leadership in driving increases in performance. The research also points out that if used and applied incorrectly incentives can achieve the counter-intuitive effect of reducing the motivation and productivity of the individual by creating complacency. The ability to create and use incentives is a powerful tool in Turnaround Leaders' performance-driving mechanisms. However, if the leader is not attuned enough to the true desires and needs of their teams, inappropriately applied incentives can have disastrous effects on their ability to achieve the desired turnaround.

The results generally support and confirm Research Proposition 4.

6.6 Discussion of Results for Research Proposition 5

The optimising of existing capital and human resources and the shedding of those which are not aligned to the new performance trajectory are necessary conditions in a turnaround.

Research Proposition 5 investigates the so-called darker side of leadership. One of the prevailing themes on Turnaround Leadership is the need to keep a business from permanently shutting its doors and closing down due to its operational uncompetitiveness and negative cash flows. Bibeault (1984) calls this the "emergency phase" (p. 104) and Monroe (1992) the "survival stage" (p. 43). The reality often is, is that Turnaround Leadership is called into action not when a business is thriving and wants to increase their performance further, but rather when businesses and teams are in dire need of help and are often in their final stages before facing permanent shut down. Thus Research Proposition 5 sought to understand how Turnaround Leaders approach their human

resources from two distinct angles, namely: How do Turnaround Leaders approach the optimisation, training, and development of their existing team/business, and, if necessary, how do they handle conflict and underperformance in their team. The findings illustrated a reluctance from leaders to follow the route of dismissal or retrenchment in favour of training and optimisation of existing human resources. The questions for Research Proposition 5 were designed to tackle these topics directly and produce answers which did not allow room for ambiguity. Interestingly, the findings appeared to have a subtle link to both the value structure of the leader and the realities of the bureaucracy when either retrenching or dismissing an unproductive employee.

6.6.1 Commitment to Learning, Training, and Growth

The most frequent codes relating to Research Proposition 5 are illustrated in Table 25. Of the six most frequent codes, four of them relate not to underperformance or conflict, but instead to training, learning and growth with the code "training of staff" occurring most frequently with 33 occurrences. These findings are aligned to Boyd (2011), who sees the need to maximise the potential of existing human resources. Similarly, O'Kane & Cunningham (2014) look at strategic growth as an equal priority to retrenchments during a turnaround process.

The interviews revealed that leaders felt personally responsible for the performance and skillset of their team and ultimately saw that if there was skill-based underperformance, the problem was not with the follower, but instead with the leader. One leader commented (Table 28) "So underperformance, if it's skill-based, I think the problem is mostly upstream" and another leader stated, "the standard you walk past, is the standard you accept." When discussing the relevance of training and upskilling employees, one leader captured the relationship between follower skills, buy-in, and the operational goals of the business say simply stating "If you have skilled, happy employees you'll have a great business. It's not rocket science." Even in cases where underperformance persisted despite training and empowerment by leadership, one leader still took personal accountability for the underperformance of their followers and said "It's the leaders, we are expecting too much. We are putting too much trust and too much expectation into people that just cannot do the job."

Leaders were passionate about their commitment to their teams growth and as highlighted in previous research propositions, when necessary were fully capable to lead by example and were committed to training and growing their teams which supports Woulfin & Weiner's (2019) emphasis on the necessity for a leaders to be both dominant and fluent

in the operational tasks of the business. This is confirmed by selected responses by leaders in Table 28: "…Leading by example is the crucial point in the industry because we need to make sure that everybody understands; if you cant do it, I will show you how to do it" and followers mimicking the leader's commitment to training by saying "if you need her she's there. Like, you can count on her."

6.6.2 Underperformance and Conflict Management

Balancing this need for upskilling and training, Turnaround Leaders also need to undertake downsizing, firing, or retrenchment related activities during a turnaround situation. The literature forwards a general sentiment that cost-cutting and retrenchment are an almost indispensable part of the turnaround process Robbins & Pearce (1992). Monroe (1992, p. 42) mentions the 'survival stage" of a turnaround, and Bibeault's (1984) seminal work recognising the necessity for cost-cutting and retrenchment during the "emergency phase." (p. 104). The results for this element of Turnaround Leadership did not directly support the literature. Although *underperformance* and *conflict* were frequent topics in the research as captured by the codes in Tables 25, 26 & 27, *firing* and *retrenchment* were not generally present in the responses. As shown in the results presented in 6.6.1, leaders usually placed a more significant focus on their preference for training and upskilling, rather than downsizing, and that they felt personally accountable for the performance of their teams, seeing their underperformance as a reflection on their management as much as it is a function of the individual's performance. This sentiment is beautifully captured with one leader stating, "you want other people to be more successful than you are and then you know you have done a great job."

Nevertheless, all the leaders had dealt with underperformance or conflict in one form or another. Through their insights uncovered during the interviews, an understanding regarding how underperformance was handled and what methods were ultimately used to correct the performance issues and re-direct the negative performance back to a positive trajectory were further understood. Shown in Table 26, leaders showed a preference for initially addressing underperformance informally, and in a one-on-one setting, one follower acknowledged this too (Table 28) "she does not shout, she takes the person away from everyone else." Only one leader, Leader P7, showed a preference for handling underperformance in a group setting. This leader passionately revealed that the team-focus was present even in situations of underperformance by saying (Table 28), "we are working as a team so why should that guy be privileged to be taken into a little room and be talked to, to say he is not doing his job properly, you are letting down the team. What

this means is, your team needs to know what you are doing." Eventually, leaders and followers acknowledged that repeated underperformance would result in dismissal, and when it got to this stage, responses blandly referred to the labour laws governing this process. As simply put by Leader P6, "we will performance manage the person out of the team."

This balance of optimising human resources with potential, and removing those which are not conducive to high performance is prevalent in the literature and is succinctly captured by Braun & Latham's (2012, p.16) Fulcrum Model of Retrenchment and Repositioning where they argue that both retrenchment and strategic repositioning need to be equally understood and taken into account in the turnaround process. The model sees the need for balance between these two forces, the data collected for this study shows a preference of leaders for strategic repositioning (through training) of underperforming human resources rather than retrenchment or dismissal. To this end, the findings can be explained to an extent by the Managerial Fulcrum of Retrenchment and Repositioning model presented by Braun & Latham (2012, p.16) which illustrates how retrenchment and strategic repositioning need to be considered simultaneously rather than in isolation when making managerial decisions.

More importantly, the simultaneous consideration of opposing forces is aligned to the tensions highlighted by O'Kane & Cunningham (2014, p. 963) who link the effectiveness of management to their ability to navigate conflicting and competing decisions. The findings also reinforce the Competing Values Model (Trivellas & Reklitis, 2014, p. 383) which lists 'managing conflict' and 'building teams' in the same list of competencies under their *Human Relations* leaderships role presented in the model.

6.6.3 Conclusive Findings for Research Proposition 5

The result and finding generally support and confirm Research Proposition 5. Leaders need to balance and navigate the simultaneous consideration of whether or not to down-size or optimise their followers. The leaders interviewed were inclined to believe in the abilities of their followers and saw instances of underperformance as more a reflection flaws in their leadership and management abilities, rather than a direct reflection of the incompetence of their followers. When, however, underperformance was present, it was addressed without delay and if unresolved would be handled by relying on the structures and procedures outlined by the labour laws. Ultimately, the findings for this Research Proposition also added subtle insights into the human nature of the leader. The commitment to the development of their team, even in the face of underperformance

suggests a highly attuned, empathetic, and aware individual who is not necessarily the hard and abrasive character presented in the seminal work of Bibeault (1984) and captured in the autocratic responses in Research Proposition 1.

6.7 Final Thoughts and Insights Across All Research Propositions

The results thus far have covered many critical behaviours of leaders which contribute to achieving a turnaround in performance. Understanding what drives these behaviours is a core concept of this study. The results presented and analysed thus far present Turnaround Leaders as individuals capable of dynamically manoeuvring and managing different tensions (O'Kane & Cunningham, 2014) which ultimately drive their operational and strategic decision making, which then drives the desired performance.

6.7.1 Competencies & Turnaround

Boyatzis (2008) calls these unique abilities, competencies, in the context of this research the ability to turnaround. The necessity for the diversity of skills and method and appropriation of those skills and methods at contextually relevant moments is evident and apparent. Turnaround Leaders show both hard and soft skills, autocratic and inclusive (Table 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). They need to be able to hold meaningful relationships with their teams but also not compromise their perception of strength by revealing too much (Table 12) and be humble, approachable and empathetic (Table 13). They need to have excellent communication ability (Table 18, 19, 20), they must tailor their rewards and recognition styles (Table 22, 23, 24), and balance the necessity for training and growth with downsizing and retrenchment. The multitude of components required to achieve the competency of turnaround is supported in the literature. Tucker & Cofsky (1994) identify significant components of a competency, Trivellas & Reklitis (2014) look at the difference between specific and general competencies and present the Competing Values Model which shows how different leadership roles require different competencies and how these result in managerial effectiveness. Chouhan & Srivastava (2014, p. 17) capture the link between the components of competencies, competencies, critical behaviours, and performance in their Concept of Competency Model presented in *figure 2.*

6.7.2 Contrasting Results

The open and conversational nature of the interviews lent themselves to responses which were conversational and sometimes fluid across different topics and themes. Although not common across all the responses, some of the most interesting and insightful responses came from instances when the self-perception of the leader was in stark contrast to the lived experience of the followers. This contrast was especially present in the interviews for focus group F1. Aligned to the general response of all the leaders interviewed, leader P1's self perception was that they were attuned and contextual in their application of different styles of leadership and operational methods with a distinct leaning towards inclusiveness, decentralising of power, a focus on learning and growth, and a meaningful personal connection with their follows. The responses from focus group F1 were, however, in stark contrast to this and whose responses resulted in the majority of codes relating to negative or contrasting sentiment across the entire data set. Table 29 illustrates the prevalence of instances of contrast and across all followers groups. The data suggests that unlike what their leader perceived, followers group F1 felt unempowered, they did not trust their leader, and felt a high level of psychological discomfort.

What is more interesting from these results is that despite the apparent discontent from the team, a turnaround in performance was nevertheless achieved. What this suggests is that when a sudden and significant increase in performance is required the overall wellbeing and perceptions towards the leader from the followers are not necessarily worthy of the consideration from leaders who are actually there to drive a performance increase rather than empathise with the team. Or put simply, in the context of a turnaround, as long as the leader can achieve the buy-in and alignment initially to drive the desired outcome, how the followers feel or perceive the leader post-turnaround is possibly irrelevant. It is however noted, that the long-term trajectory of the team/business will likely be heavily influenced by this, this is, however not within the scope of this study.

6.7.3 Intentional Vs Natural

In addition at the final stages of each interview, respondents were encouraged to speak openly and freely regarding any of the topics already covered. Leaders were specifically prompted to mention whether they saw their leadership ability as natural or learned, and, how much of their leadership practice was done intentionally. The results for this final section are presented in Table 30. Being at the final stages of the interviews, respondents were somewhat brief in their responses, there was however a general consensus that

being able to achieve the competency of being a Turnaround Leader was something they were born with, and following which, were intentional with their decisions and actions. This suggests that leaders saw themselves not only as natural-born leaders but also as students of leadership who intentionally learn and grow in their capabilities. These findings were not present in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 7 the principal finding of the research are presented in accordance with the results presented in Chapters 5 and 6 and their relationship to the research propositions developed from the literature in Chapter 2 and subsequent research propositions presented in Chapter 3. Based on the findings, the implications for management and suggestions for future research are suggested.

7.2. Understanding the Substance and Competency of Turnaround Leadership

The principal findings for the research confirm that the competency of being able to achieve a turnaround in performance is more a function of the leaders ability to dynamically navigate between different leadership styles, methodologies and behaviours as they are relevant to a specific desired outcome in the turnaround rather than their subscription to a particular leadership style or behaviour applied universally. The notion for Turnaround Leadership is not a static set of characteristics, but rather the ability to manoeuvre between different methodologies and styles depending on their suitability to a specific action or outcome. The findings suggest that the context drives the Turnaround Leader's real-time decision making, and that Turnaround Leaders are broadly skilled and knowledgeable of when and how to display specific characteristics at different moments depending on their effectiveness. Thus the competency "achieving a turnaround" or "Turnaround Leadership" is supported by a set of traits, knowledge, skills and behaviours. It is these components of the turnaround competency which inform the model to be presented, The Turnaround Toolkit, and how the behavioural, stylistic and methodological components come together to create a Turnaround Leader.

7.2.1 Decision Making

Turnaround leaders control when and how decisions are made in their teams. They purposefully retain control of those decisions which are relevant to the strategic direction and desired end-state. The clarity and unwavering nature of the decisions regarding the strategic direction of the turnaround provides followers with the opportunity to both buy-in to the subsequent operational tasks and to achieve psychological safety necessary for followers to perform at their highest without fear of punishment or risk of misalignment. When operationalising the turnaround strategy, Turnaround Leaders are flexible, dynamic and inclusive. They are comfortable in a flat hierarchy, will work alongside the team, and will encourage participation and experimentation as the team grows and moulds to the arising challenges typical of the operationalisation of any goal or strategy.

In these moments, followers are able to make decisions guided by the strategic direction set by the leader and the communication of the core values and vision for the end state. Ultimately, despite the inclusivity and democratic approach to decision making, the Turnaround Leader is predominantly autocratic. Even when decisions are outsourced, and followers are empowered to make decisions, the framework within which those decisions are made is controlled and architected by the Turnaround Leader. In this sense, even though there is a perception of inclusivity, the operational and strategic frameworks are centrally controlled by the Turnaround Leader supporting an overall autocratic approach to decision making and broader leadership.

7.2.2 Personal Connection

The results show that a significant part of a Turnaround Leaders ability to inspire a turnaround in performance is linked to their ability to create and maintain a personal relationship with their followers. In addition to this, the personal relationship gives Turnaround Leaders meaningful insight into the forces influencing their followers outside of their career and daily work-related tasks. The personal insight guides the leader when making decisions, allows them to communicate more effectively, and understand and moderate fluctuations in individual performance. The personal relationship also impacts the effectiveness and frequency of open communication between leaders and followers and contributes to the overall psychological well-being of the team, both of which support effective decision making and contribute to creating and an environment in which high performance can exist and thrive.

Turnaround Leaders design their personal relationships with their followers in such a way that they are able to gain as much insight and connection with their teams as possible in

order to understand and manage the forces impacting their teams not directly linked to their work environment. The depth of the relationship is unidirectional with the Turnaround Leader only creating the perception of a deep personal connection whilst remaining guarded and focused on the desired business outcome and not the personal relationship. This is not to say that the leader is not genuine nor authentic in their inter-personal relationships, but rather that they are able to see what role these relationships have in driving an effective turnaround and how to use them to assist their followers to achieve the performance excellence associated with a turnaround.

7.2.3 Frequent and Clear Communication

Turnaround Leaders need to be expert communicators. The art of inspiring a turnaround in performance necessarily requires the Turnaround Leader to be able to articulate and communicate the variety of tasks and goals of their desired turnaround in a way which their followers can internalise and understand. Turnaround Leadership requires constant communication and nuanced interactions in order to maintain the strategic trajectory of the turnaround and ensure that the operational requirements are fulfilled effectively. In addition to this, frequent, effective communication empowers the leader with real-time feedback and decision making opportunities which they can use to mitigate challenges and exploit opportunities as they become available. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the primary tool a Turnaround Leader has to coordinate the efforts of their team to achieve a turnaround. Effective communication is the characteristic underpinning all the actions, methodologies and styles of a Turnaround Leadership. Effective communication is both an indispensable and necessary component of the Turnaround Leadership competency.

7.2.4 Incentivising Correctly

The results show that using incentives is a powerful and effective tool used by Turnaround Leaders to achieve sudden and significant increases in performance. Incentives are most effective when aligned and tailored to the individual desires of each follower. It is the role of the Turnaround Leader to use their personal connection and empathy to understand the true forces driving their followers and then use appropriate incentives to motivate and coordinate the efforts of their followers to their highest achievable state. Traditional monetary-based incentives can work; however, they are general by nature and should play a complementary role to other forms of incentives which can be more attuned to the individual, specifically: Recognition, and, career prospects/progression are equally if not more compelling in their ability to incentivise followers.

If not applied correctly, incentives can have disastrous effects on followers' performance and can incorrectly encourage complacency and operational misalignment. Nevertheless, followers must perceive an "up-side" following their increase in effort and output. By rewarding, recognising, and providing their followers with meaningful career prospects, Turnaround Leaders can use incentives as an effective tool to drive sudden and significant increases in performance which ultimately contribute to the business turnaround.

7.2.5 Approach to Human Resources

Turnaround Leaders are committed to upskilling and empowering their teams to achieve their highest possible level of individual and group performance. Turnaround Leaders take personal accountability for the skills, abilities and, behaviours of their followers. When underperformance is skills-based; time, training, and resources are given to that person to upskill themselves and correct their behaviour. When underperformance is a result of inability, unsuitability, or a negative outlook, that person is removed swiftly from the team in accordance with labour law regulation. Turnaround Leaders typically believe in the inherent ability of their teams to perform. Turnaround Leaders have the ability to amplify the efforts of their followers by being attuned to both the underlying reasons for any instances of underperformance or conflict and, by understanding addressable gaps in their skillset and operational ability.

7.3 The Turnaround Toolkit

The Turnaround Tool kit presented in *figure 5* is a practical representation of the core behaviours of Turnaround Leaders as captured in this research and summarised in Chapter 7. The vastness and nuances of Turnaround Leadership and its contextual nature make a single model able to capture and present the nuances of a Turnaround Leader entirely an almost impossible task. Thus, the Turnaround Toolkit has been designed simply as a set of core behaviours which inform the decision making frameworks for any Turnaround Leader. The model is intended to be a simple and implementable framework which managers and leaders can engage with immediately to begin their turnaround process.

Figure 5: The Turnaround Toolkit

Leadership Component	Core Behaviours
Decision Making	
	1. Control strategic decision making
	2. Implement decision-making frameworks for operationalisation/implementation
	3. Set vision & values
Personal Relationship	
	1. Keep personal and professional lives separate
	2. Do not show vulnerability
	3. Foster meaningful connections with your team to understand the forces shaping their behaviour
Communication	
	1. Clearly communicate the desired end-state and goals of the turnaround
	2. Communicate frequently and openly
	3. Communication is the primary tool for influence and change, use it every day
Incentivising	
	1. Career progress and recognition are more powerful than monetary incentives
	2. Tailor your incentives to the individual, not the group
	3. Be cautious of encouraging complacency and operational misalignment
Human Resources	
	1. Handle conflict and underperformance immediately
	2. Focus on constant upskilling and growth of your team
	3. Remove unproductive/uncooperative followers as fast as labour laws allow.

7.3.1 Understanding the Turnaround Toolkit

The Turnaround Toolkit as presented in Figure 5 is purposefully simple in its construction and design. The model is intended as a simple and elegant starting point and reference tool for managers who wish to achieve a sudden and significant increase in performance from their teams.

The model is practical in its construction and is broken down into five *leadership components* with three corresponding *core behaviours* each. The leadership components echo the research propositions and the core behaviours provide three practical behaviours which can be implemented and acted upon immediately.

As the name suggests, the model is intended to be used as a tool for practical implementation. The model is not intended to be a representation of the complexity and vastness of the research covered in this study, but rather as a foundation for implementation, and a starting point for managers to begin grappling with the concept of being able to achieve the competency, "Turnaround Leadership." More detail for each leadership component is covered in the principle findings in section 7.2.

7.4 Recommendations for Managers

The data collected and subsequent findings illustrate that Turnaround Leaders are uniquely skilled and nuanced individuals. Traditional understandings of Turnaround Leadership are limited and one-dimensional in their approach and assessment of the nature of the individual capable of achieving a turnaround performance.

- It is important that managers understand that developing the competency to achieve a turnaround in performance is a skill which can be learned and developed. The leadership components and core behaviours of Turnaround Leadership as presented in the Turnaround Toolkit are not difficult to understand or to implement. In the modern competitive landscape, managers ought to equip themselves with the tools to achieve turnaround results when necessary and to adapt their leadership style within their organisations and teams according to the demands of the market and, to responses from their competition. In this sense, the Turnaround Leadership competency can be viewed as a tool which modern managers can call upon as they need, and appropriate at different points along their business and teams performance trajectory.

- When attempting a turnaround, managers need to acknowledge that driving the collaboration necessary to achieve a sudden and significant increase in performance is as much an exercise in perception as it is a reflection of the actual state of affairs. Thus, to achieve a turnaround, managers need to understand that the perceptions they create in the minds of their followers are incredibly powerful

tools to drive performance and can be used to drive alignment, foster personal relationships, and give managers commanding insight into the variables which will have the most significant impact for their turnaround.

- Managers need to be purposeful in their approach to their management and leadership. Although the leaders interviewed generally believed that their abilities were part of a natural endowment, all the leaders interviewed showed a willingness and humbleness in both their ability and potential to grow and learn. If managers adopt an open and adaptive mindset, they will have the potential to purposefully create a working environment which is conducive to a turnaround.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Turnaround Leadership generally appears as a sub-theme in the literature focused on turnaround strategies and turnaround methodologies. Few studies have paid full attention to the substance of the human being behind turnaround performances. This study has shown the tip of the iceberg in terms of the depth required to fully understand and profile the characteristics of a Turnaround Leader. Acknowledging this gap in the literature, the following five recommendations for future research would add meaningful value to the topic.

- The literature on turnarounds is generally older than 5 years. On this basis alone, there is a need for future research on turnarounds in general.
- There is a significant need for further studies aimed at understanding and mapping Turnaround Leadership as a separate topic from turnaround strategies and turnaround methodologies.
- There is potential for further research to map the psychological traits of Turnaround Leaders using methodologies from the field of Organisational Psychology.
- Noting the prevalence of retrenchments and downsizing in the literature on turnarounds, research can be undertaken to understanding what role labour laws and regulation play in the ability of a company to achieve a turnaround. A comparative study between businesses operating in countries with strict versus relaxed labour laws can be undertaken.
- Further data can be collected to expand, validate or refute the "Turnaround Toolkit" model.

7.6 Limitations of the Research

Although the researcher took care to avoid the introduction of personal bias and influence over the output of the research, the subjective nature of qualitative research makes it challenging to entirely rule out bias from both the researcher and the respondents. In addition to this, the following further limitations have been identified:

- The findings and research could have been impacted by the relative inexperience of the researcher in collecting and conducting a qualitative study.
- The idea of a 'turnaround' is by nature a subjective term. Although efforts were made to identify leaders who had indeed achieved a turnaround, the extent and nature of that turnaround were often subjectively identified by there superiors and almost certainly contained some element of bias.
- Despite efforts made to achieve the highest possible sample size across a broad demographic and geographical range, the sample size and time considerations restricted the researcher's ability to achieve a larger sample which would have further validated and contributed to the findings.
- Given the size of the sample and its relatively limited scope, the results are limited in their generalisability and applicability to other industries and geographical regions.
- Sudden and significant increases in performance are a function of a variety of different internal and external forces. This research did not include the ability to exclude or differentiate between performance turnarounds which were a result of market or external forces, rather than those directly linked to the efforts of a specific person and team.

7.7 Conclusion

Despite the literature on turnarounds being present since the early 1980s, it is the researcher's opinion that the phenomenon is still relatively understudied and lacks a comprehensive body of knowledge which is applicable to the dynamics and challenges of the modern business environment. This is especially so when dealing specifically with the competency identified in this research as "Turnaround Leadership." The research seeks to contribute to closing this gap in the literature and furthering the study of turnarounds and Turnaround Leadership. The findings from the interviews presented meaningful

insights into the substance, behaviours, and methodologies of a Turnaround Leader which ultimately resulted in the development of the "Turnaround Toolkit" model. Importantly this study highlighted the need for additional contributions to the field and highlighted some of the ambiguities in the existing literature which need to be investigated further.

The researcher hopes that this study can contribute to the study of management and leadership and that future researchers are inspired to delve deeper into this topic which is worthy of further attention. Lastly, it is hoped that managers are able to use the "Turnaround Toolkit" model as a starting point for their education and execution of Turnaround Leadership in their ongoing careers and future endeavours and in doing so, create prosperity and success for the teams and businesses in which they operate.

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9. APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Interview Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

UNDERSTANDING TURNAROUND LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESS

Researcher: Robert Buchanan, MBA Student at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria

I am conducting research into the concept of a 'Turnaround Leader' and am trying to identify the key traits of these individuals to their leadership style, behaviour, and decision making.

This interview is expected to last between 45 minutes and 1 hour. The information and insights gained through this interview are intended to help me identify the traits of a leader who is able to achieve a sudden and significant positive effect on their team's or organisations performance.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without question or penalty. All data collected will be kept confidential and any quotations used will be anonymised. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact my supervisor or I. Our details are provided below.

Robert Buchanan   Karl Hofmeyr

buchanan.robert@gmail.com   hofmeyrk@gibs.co.za

0723572953   0828873473

Participants Name:_____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Researcher's Name: Robert Buchanan

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the "Turnaround Leader."

Research Proposition 1:

Understanding the relevance of both authoritarian and democratic decision making in different situations is a key competency of a Turnaround Leader.

Question 1.1. How do you lead in a turnaround situation, and, how does this differ from your general leadership style if at all?

Question 1.2. How does your aforementioned Turnaround Leadership style contribute to your ability to achieve a turnaround?

Research Proposition 2:

Contextual humility, trust-creation and, integrity, or more colloquially being vulnerable, are ways to achieve employee alignment and buy-in, both of which contribute to operational and strategic alignment in a turnaround.

Question 2.1. How do you position yourself in your team from a human perspective?

Question 2.2. What are your core values as a leader?

Question 2.3. What role does organisational hierarchy play in your leadership style in a turnaround?

Research Proposition 3:

Effective communication of the strategic, operational and transformational goals from the leader to the employees is a core competency of Turnaround Leadership.

Question 3.1. Describe your communication style.

Question 3.2. How much of the strategic and operational goals of the business do you communicate with your followers?

Question 3.3. What non-verbal forms of communication do you use to communicate your substance as a leader and your operational/strategic goals?

Research Proposition 4:

Incentives can be used to drive turnaround performance from employees.

Question 4.1. What role, if any, do incentives play in your turnaround style and process?

Question 4.2. Retrospectively, and given the relatively short timeframe of a turnaround, are incentives necessary to achieve a turnaround?

Research Proposition 5:

The optimising of existing capital and human resources, and the shedding of those which are not aligned to the new performance trajectory, are necessary conditions in a turnaround.

Question 5.1. Explain how you handle underperformance from your team.

Question 5.2. How do you deal with conflict?

Question 5.3. Explain how you create high performance from existing employees

Question 5.4. Describe your approach to attracting, retaining and growing talent

Final Question:

Thank you for your contribution and time, before we wrap up, I would like to offer you the opportunity to voice any other elements of your leadership style which are fundamental to your substance as a leader, and I would like to know, of the methods and styles you have mentioned in our interview, how much of it is done purposefully and how much of it is done intuitively.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the "Turnaround Followers."

Research Proposition 1:

Understanding the relevance of both authoritarian and democratic decision making in different situations is a key competency of a Turnaround Leader.

Question 1.1. What style of leadership have you experienced during your team/business's turnaround?

Question 1.2. What style of leader do you respond best to?

Question 1.3. If you had to achieve a turnaround, how would you lead?

Research Proposition 2:

Contextual humility, trust-creation and, perceived integrity, or more colloquially being vulnerable, are ways to get employee buy-in, and drive both operational and strategic alignment in a turnaround.

Question 2.1. Describe your relationship with your leader.

Question 2.2. What are your core values of your leader?

Question 2.3. How would you describe your psychological state when at work?

Research Proposition 3:

Effective communication of the strategic, operational and transformational goals from the leader to the employees is a core competency of Turnaround Leadership.

Question 3.1. Describe the communication style of your leader

Question 3.2. Do you know the strategic, operational and business goals of the business/team you form part of?

Question 3.3. Would you describe yourselves as committed to the vision of your leader?

Question 3.4. Are you aware of any non-verbal communication which affects your performance both positively and negatively?

Research Proposition 4:

Incentives can be used to drive turnaround performance from employees.

Question 4.1. How does your leader incentivise you to perform at your highest level?

Question 4.2. How do you respond to rewards in the context of your work performance?

Question 4.3. How important is recognition of your efforts to you?

Research Proposition 5:

The optimising of existing capital and human resources and the shedding of those which are not aligned to the new performance trajectory are necessary conditions in turnaround.

Question 5.1. How is underperformance handled in your team?

Question 5.2. How is underperformance handled by your leader?

Question 5.3. How does your leader deal with conflict?

Question 5.4. Are you given opportunities to grow to the demands of the business?

Final Question:

Thank you for your contribution and time, before we wrap up, I would like to offer you the opportunity to voice any other elements of your lived experience of Turnaround Leadership which may not have been covered in this interview.

Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance Letter

Gordon Institute of Business Science

University of Pretoria

15 August 2019

Robert Buchanan

Dear Robert

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

Please note that approval is granted based on the methodology and research instruments provided in the application. If there is any deviation change or addition to the research method or tools, a supplementary application for approval must be obtained

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

Kind Regards

GIBS MBA Research Ethical Clearance Committee