

**Title: The contribution of crucible experiences to the
development of leaders for crisis management**

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ABSTRACT

Theory on leadership has emphasised the need for contributing towards leadership in extreme context. Give the rise in crisis, and the study aims to contribute by exploring how crucible moments can contribute towards leader's development for crisis management. The objective of the study is to use the insights gained from the leader's journey to develop a framework to contribute towards leadership development for crisis management.

A narrative approach is used in this qualitative study and explores the themes identified from the leader's life journey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 executives in manufacturing organisation within the automotive sector, in the eThekweni region in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The research found that crucible experiences have contributed towards developing leader's identity through self-awareness and discovering their potential. They learned decision making and allowed for change to occur. Crucible experience is also related to transformational learning, as it provided a trigger for learning. Leaders developed their approach for crisis management through applied experience and stepping up in a crisis. This crucible experience has found to contribute towards the leader's approach to crisis management.

KEY WORDS

Leadership development, Crucible moments, Crisis management

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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Date: 29 March 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

The COVID pandemic has resulted in a rise in crisis management, presenting uncertainty and unpredictability (Tourish, 2020). Given this context, it consequently has become critical that leaders can navigate and manage crises effectively in organisations (Hannah, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, & Cavarretta, 2009). Leaders' ability to deal with crises typically stems from their internal resources in dealing with their own personal crises (Bell, 2018). These crises can be related to the term "crucible experiences" as defined by (Thomas, 2008). While the concept of crucible moments is closely associated with the concept of crisis, a key difference is that a crucible moment results in the transformation of individuals.

This research study aims to understand how crucible experiences can contribute to developing leaders for crisis management. Asking whether there is something to gain from understanding leaders' crucible experience, and how they could contribute to the development of leaders' ability to manage crises. This qualitative study used a narrative approach and explored the themes identified from the leader's life journey. It includes the crucible experiences and the linkage to their crisis management approach.

1.2 Background of the business need for the research

The COVID-19 pandemic is a recent example of a crisis that has led to disruptors to businesses and has impacted the economy at large (Engineering news, 2020). The organisation had to face the challenges of restarting operations within the COVID guidelines. Businesses are required to adhere to the legislative and regulatory change introduced by COVID-19 while managing the impact of the pandemic on overall performance and staff morale (SA Coronavirus, 2020). The pandemic has presented a test for leader's ability to manage crisis (Dirani et al., 2020). While COVID pandemic has given rise to gaining an understanding of the leaders' crisis management approach, it is not the only crisis that has had a significant impact on organisations.

The automotive industry is still exposed to the effects of the global economic crisis in 2008, having an increase in imported vehicles and threatened local production sustainability. Amongst the other challenges faced by the industry to be cost-effective, access to the global market increases competitiveness (KPMG, 2020). The automotive industry is a labour-intensive industry that relies on exports and international funding for growth. The COVID pandemic has had a considerable impact, affecting employees, exports and halting growth plans (Rumney, 2020).

The Industry has had to face some crisis with natural disasters causing floods and strike in the industry that has brought the production to a complete halt. In 2017 Kwa-Zulu Natal faced a great flood that resulted in death and several damages. The Toyota Manufacturing, located in prospecton, experienced damage to its facility and equipment (Bubear, 2017).

In 2013 the automotive industry experienced labour strike that resulted in a three-week shutdown of production, causing R20 million in losses (France-Press, 2013). The strike further also affected the industry reputation creating a further setback in the global market (England, 2013). Strikes cause crises for the industry due to its impact on organisations and the supply chain (Roelf, 2013).

Given this, crisis has become a common event in the automotive industry, and it is pertinent that leaders play a vital role in managing crisis in organisations (Hannah et al., 2009). Megheirkouni states that complexity in business requires a different type of leadership (Megheirkouni, 2016). Leaders have to face these challenges and provide direction regardless of any emotion attached to the change (Delk, 2016). Failure to manage a crisis could have consequences on the organisation (Anderson, 2018).

1.1 Academic need for the research

Leaders are required to make decisions and lead others through crises (Tourish, 2020). The rise of crises and extreme situation in business would lead us to assume that there is much in literature about leading in these conditions, however Hannah et al (2009) states that this is not the case. Although scholars have contributed towards literature on leading in crisis it has focused predominately on leadership style (Barge, 2018; Geier, 2016; Hadley, Pittinsky, Sommer, & Zhu, 2011). The current business

environment has also set a requirement for leaders' development in a complex and challenging environment (Megheirkouni, 2016). Leaders are expected to not only adjust to this constantly changing environment, but to lead others through it as well (Holmberg, Larsson, & Bäckström, 2016).

Geier (2016) states that there is a gap in leadership literature on leadership in context, and the context within extreme situations varies from everyday context. Although leadership development focuses on the development process and not on leadership theories (Atwater, Day, Fleenor, McKee, & Sturm, 2014). It is important to evolve leadership development as the leadership paradigm shifts (O'Connell, 2014).

The field of leadership development is slowly progressing behind the rapid and constantly evolving leadership theories (Ardichvili, Natt och Dag, & Manderscheid, 2016). Academics identified the need for development in line with context (Hannah et al., 2009; Oc, 2018). When evaluating leadership and the leadership approach that is effective in a non-crisis situation, the context matters may differ from what is considered effective in a crisis situation (Holmberg et al., 2016). Megheirkouni, (2016) adds that learning and development is only effective when done in context. The effectiveness of leaders development should be considered in alignment with the business need (Holmberg et al., 2016). Feser, Nielsen and Rennie (2017), add that what is important for effective leadership development programmes is; alignment to the business context, span across the business, learning transfer, and sustain change encounter through the programme (Feser et al., 2017).

Crucible experience has been noted to transform individuals (Thomas, 2008), and hence the question arises whether there is something to gain from understanding the crucible experiences and how it could contribute to the study of leadership development. Crucible is closely related to the crisis, with the key difference that is, a transformation process. It also leads to the question, crucible experience better-equipped leaders to manage through crisis moments.

A Crucible experience is defined as an experience of multiple crises that occurred concurrently and led to the emergence of a new self (Thomas, 2008). Scholars positioned crucible as an effective way to develop leaders (Bell, 2018). Hannah et al

(2009), propose that future study is done on how leaders change after being exposed to extreme situations and how crucible experiences can accelerate a leader's development to manage crisis.

Given this, the research aims to contribute towards the body of knowledge on a leader's development for extreme/crisis management using crucible moments. This study's structure starts with review of literature review on crucible experience, leader development, and crisis management.

1.2 Scope of the research

1.2.1 Purpose statement

The study will involve the collection of manufacturing executive's life stories on their leadership journey to understand the context that enabled them to develop as leaders. To gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the crucible moments and how it contributed to their development as a leader. The dimensions of the study are crucible experience, leaders development and crisis management.

- a) What enabled the leader to develop through crucible moments?
- b) What was the meaning of the experience to the leader?
- c) How has the crucible experiences shaped leader's ability for leading in crisis?

The literature review investigates the skills and competencies identified for leading through a crisis and evaluate how this has been addressing leadership development initiatives. The learning from crucial moments is further elaborated to understand how life experiences impact a leader's development. The research thus explores the leader's development journey through the lens of crucible moments. The objective of the study is to use the insights gained from the leader's journey to develop a framework to contribute towards leadership development for crisis management.

1.2.2 The objective of the study

The overall objective of the study is to understand how an organisation can develop leaders to lead through a crisis. The study aims to explore leaders' crucible moments and the learning gained from these in depths to gain insights into the development of leaders' capability to lead in times of crises.

The literature review investigates the skills and competencies identified for leading through a crisis and evaluates how this has been addressed in leadership development initiatives. The learning from crucible moments is further elaborated on to understand how these life experiences impact a leader's development. The research explores the leader's development journey through the lens of crucible moments. The objective of the research is to use the insights gained from the leader's journeys to develop a framework to contribute towards leadership development for crisis management.

1.2.3 The layout of the research report

The report is made up of seven sections, starting with; the introduction to the research, the literature review, research questions, research methodology, results, discussion and conclusion.

The literature review provides more insights into the study's dimensions, which are crucible moments, leadership development and crisis management. The dimensions are further broken down into the components that contribute to this study. The literature review is followed by the research questions, which are crystallised using the literature review's insights. The methodology then explains the research approach and design, outlining the research design, quality controls, and limitations.

The research results are then presented in the results chapter highlighting the key insights and themes identified through the research analysis. The results are discussed according to the respective research questions' themes before the research report is concluded. The conclusion includes the limitation of the study and the opportunities for further research that's been identified.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research is to understand how crucible moments contribute to developing leaders for crisis management. The literature review explored the three central dimensions identified in the research objectives, namely crucible moments, leadership development and crisis management. The literature review entailed three sections according to the specified dimensions and were broken down into the different facets contributing to the research's aim.

2.2 Crucible moments

2.2.1 Definition of crucible experiences

Researchers define crucible experience as difficult yet defining situations that lead to the emergence of a new self (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Typically these experiences are described as turmoil, chaos and tension, (Thomas, 2008). When leaders recall their crucible experiences, it is often associated with negative emotions, and they question how they survived (Thomas, 2008). The experience creates tension, as leaders recognise a difference between the current and the ideal circumstances (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Byrne, Crossan, & Seijts, 2018). Although being faced with intense emotions by making decisions, leaders enable personal transformation (Ensher, Nielson, & Kading, 2017). Orlando (2011) argues that a leader may be confronted by a crucible and not be in a position to benefit from it. The author suggests that for such an experience to be of advantage, the leader is required to possess moderating traits, (such as extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness), resulting in a change of the persona (Olivares, 2011).

Byrne et al. suggest that transformation arising from crucible moments confronts the leaders character (Byrne et al., 2018), and changes the leaders' character, which is supported by Bennis and Thomas (2002). Crucible moments are described as a testing ground by Allio and Bell (2008; 2019), in which leaders question the meaning of their lives and what they represent (Byrne et al., 2018). Through questioning their values are shaped or changed, and they emerge as a different or stronger version of

themselves with a better sense of their identity, according to Bennis and Thomas (2002). Byrne asserts that crucible experiences also allows the leaders to discover something new about themselves (Byrne et al., 2018).

It is documented that leaders often position themselves in a path of a crucible moment (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Leaders who emerge and transform through crucibles are set apart as having a learning mind-set, actively seeking out opportunities to grow through continuous reflection (Thomas, 2008). These leaders do not allow themselves to stagnate and look for opportunities to move forward, despite the challenges they may face (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Bennis and Thomas (2002) suggested that true leadership is best predicted by individuals who are able to find meaning in difficult situations, and the skills acquired when facing adversity, which are similar to those required for extraordinary leaders (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Orlando (2011) adds that these critical events contribute to the effectiveness of such leaders.

Although there is limited literature that defines crucible experience, scholars such as (Barge, 2018; Byrne et al., 2018; Fernandez & Shaw, 2020), have recognized their role in leadership development. Their work is based on the seminal work of Bennis & Thomas (2002). Scholars agree that crucible moments can be seen as an excellent platform for leader development (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). To gain a deeper understanding of the crucible experiences, the types of crucible moments, how individuals manage through difficulties, and the learning that occurs through challenges is explored in the literature review. The role of crucible experiences in leader development is further explored in section 2.3, and the link to crisis management is made in section 2.4.

2.2.2 Types of crucible moments

Crucible experiences can occur in a personal leadership capacity, in the workplace or on a national and global scale (Bell, 2019). These experiences have included job losses, death in the family, financial constraints, and exposure to a new environment such as overseas assignment (Allio, 2008). The crucible experience could also be shared experiences, such as a war of natural disaster, but could also be very private isolated events (Thomas 2008).

Therefore, crucibles experiences can be presented in various shapes and forms, ranging from life-threatening situations to slightly positive career-defining opportunity (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Every crucible experience is different and would require a different response (Bell, 2019). The type of crucible experience provides a context, and although the circumstances are different, learning from the experience is a common thread. Orlando (2011) describes four types of defining events, namely: originating events from early in a leader's life which motivates and inspire them to set life goals; anchoring events happen to remind a leader of their core values or beliefs; turning points occur at a point in their life requiring change; analogous events are lessons on how a leader should act going forward. Ultimately authors agree that a crucible moment is an event that leads to change within individuals (Bennis & Thomas, 2002).

2.2.3 Getting through the crucible moment

2.2.3.1 Resilience

As leaders journey their way through a crucible moment, they often require reflection to help reframe the situation (2002). Reflection is documented as a method which allows leaders to identify their own strength to help them face the challenges (Delk, 2016). Inner strength provides the hope to get through the crucible experiences, according to Bennis and Thomas (2002), and is focused on the leader's identity and understanding of their potential (Thomas, 2008). Not only is inner strength quality of resilience, but interpersonal strength is regarded as a significant quality by Thomas (2008), which is the ability to make difficult decisions drawing from relationships and networks that can be relied upon.

Resilience allows the leaders to reframe a negative experience into a positive experience, according to Elkington and Breen. The ability to learn and be resilient is key to the success of being adaptable. In the moments that leaders have to identify the force to change and overcome the resistance against it Thomas (2008). Authors agree that, to some degree, inner strength and resilience may already exist before going through the crucible experience (Barge, 2018; Bennis & Thomas, 2002). However, in the overcoming of crucible moments, the development of resilience appears to be an outcome. Thus resilience could be explained as an innate ability or an intentional process to learn from adversity (Thomas, 2008).

The development of resilience is based on context (Teo, Lee, & Lim, 2017). In the leadership context, leaders have to be exposed to a situation that has a significant impact on them in order to require resilience (Elkington & Breen, 2015). While resilience can be defined as the ability to push through a difficult situation (Teo et al., 2017), in the leadership context, resilience can also be seen as a developmental process as it better prepares leaders for the next challenge that might arise (Teo et al., 2017). Resilience can be learnt through life experiences which is not necessarily learnt through leadership development programmes (Elkington & Breen, 2015). Thomas (2008) states that leaders develop resilience through crucible experiences, supporting the idea that resilience is developed through difficult lived experiences. However, several authors assert that it is only in reflection on these experiences that resilience is built (Barge, 2018; Thomas, 2008).

2.2.3.2 Reflection

The process of reflection through a crucible is difficult, as leaders have to evaluate themselves and be confronted with the reality that there are changes required in their leadership (Byrne et al., 2018). Although these moments are challenging, through reflection, the individuals also recall the lessons learnt afresh, as if it was recently experienced (Thomas, 2008). Reflection is required to make sense of the learning, and ground the change that occurred (Byrne et al., 2018). Illeris (2014) adds that individual awareness, aspiration, motivation and ability to learn is what allows leaders to gain value from the difficult experiences they are exposed to. This self-awareness is crucial in the reflection process.

Reflection includes reviewing experiences and understanding the lessons learnt from it (Byrne et al., 2018). Byrne et al (2018), suggests that leaders gain an understanding of their actions over time, assists in making the changes necessary to their leadership approach. Orlando (2011), further asserts that reflecting allows leaders to learn and understand the people and happenings around them. Reflection and support from a mentor or similar figure have been positioned as a key element that enables leaders to learn through a crucible experience.

2.2.3.3 Support from others

Crucible moments occur without warning and tests leaders' ability (Hannah et al., 2009). Although reflection allows the leaders to gain new insights (Ensher et al.,

2017), leaders often need help from an external source (Bell, 2019; Ensher et al., 2017). Leaders have done this by seeking help from a coach (Elkington & Breen, 2015), a close friend (Thomas, 2008), or they draw on others' experience (Bell, 2019).

Reflecting on, and during crucible experience is difficult, as it challenges the leaders' character and values (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Leaders have to make sense of the crucible experience and question their values (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). According to Delk (2016), coaches have been able to assist leaders with reframing their views. Ladegard and Gjerd (2014) confirm the value of coaching discussions in the development of a leader and their resilience. Thomas (2008) adds that they provide an opportunity for the leaders to see the bigger picture by drawing on past experience and showing that the strength of the past still exists and has future possibility (Delk, 2016). This further supports the view that leaders already possessed strength.

Although crucible experience can be both personal or shared experiences (Bell, 2018; Thomas, 2008), to survive and grow from the crucible experience, leaders had to take a broader perspective of the situation by reflecting and seeking help (Thomas, 2008). Through this process of reframing, they challenged and questioned their beliefs, which enables a transformation to occur. Without the process of reflection, the support of others and inner resilience, the transformation and learning from a crucial moment cannot transpire.

2.2.4 Crucible moments as a transformative and learning process

Byrnes et al (2018) quoted Bennis & Thomas that crucible experiences are “transformative experiences through which individuals come to a new or altered sense of identity” (Byrne et al., 2018, p. 276). It is a process that tests the leader's capability and builds their character. It is proposed that leaders' characters are developed through deep reflection combined with learning strategies (Byrne et al., 2018).

Bell (2018) asserts that the value of a crucible experience is the learning derived from it. Although crucible experiences may be challenging, Bell, Thomas, Hanna and other scholars recount that they typically result in a transformation (Bell, 2018; Hannah et al., 2009; Thomas, 2008). It is a transformative process that starts from

within (Delk, 2016). According to Mezirows theory on transformative learning, transformation can only happen when leaders allow themselves to challenge their values and the assumptions that formed them (Mezirow, 1997). This has been common through the definition of crucible experiences (Thomas, 2008). However, Christie et al (2015) recall that people are resistant to change, unless they have no option and being in a crucible situation leaves leaders with no option but to change, and move past the current state. Byrne et al (2018) indicate that change is triggered by the internal tension that exists as the leaders' challenge their values and current circumstances. This internal battle can pre-empt the process of transformational learning (Nohl, 2015).

Through transformative learning, leaders have to make sense of experiences that influenced their assumptions and beliefs (Christie et al., 2015). Leaders see a need for a change to happen (Christie et al., 2015), although transformative learning has been positioned to start with a period of disorientation (Mezirow, 1997). Nohl (2015) argues that it could have a non-determining start where leaders are not even aware of what triggered the transformation. Thus, Nohl (2015) discredits the disorientation trigger as the start of the transformative learning process. His study recognises that through reflection and challenging the self, leaders are able to transform without any specific trigger. Considering that crucible experience have been positioned as a learning and transformative process despite the type of experience (Bennis & Thomas, 2002), they can be regarded as transformative learning experiences.

Hannah et al. (2009) assert that the crucible experience is similar to an intense accelerated leadership development process and learning. Byrne et al., (2018) recognise that a crucible is more than experiential and simulation training, as it can create triggers for leaders to evaluate their assumptions and judgement. When supported by deep reflection that may not form part of training, the leaders can learn and drive change once triggered (Byrne et al., 2018). Although there are various lessons learned through the crucible, surviving through such adversity gives leaders confidence to face other challenges that may come their way (Bennis & Thomas, 2002), and build confidence in managing through a crisis (Bell, 2018).

2.2.5 Summary of literature review on crucible moments

Crucible experiences, despite their context, are a trigger that enables personal transformation to occur. Through the literature review, crucible experiences have been positioned as an effective way to develop leaders due to the transformative nature of the learning process. Leaders are able to develop their characters and build resilience through reflection and soliciting the help of others.

"What distinguishes learning from the crucible and simply surviving it (or worse yet, not surviving it) is partly a product of personality and learned behaviour." (Thomas, 2008, p. 14). While personality is outside of this study's scope, learning from crucible moments and how it influences leaders in managing crisis is the leadership development focus of this study.

2.3 Leader development

For this study, we are concerned with the literature review of leader development through lived experiences and its relevance for preparing leaders for crisis situation. In section 2.2 the literature positions crucible experiences as an effective methodology for developing leaders. Leaders solicited the support of others as they challenge and reshape their behaviours. Through this process, they develop resilience and leadership characteristics. Gaining an understanding of leader development through lived experience will contribute to positioning crucibles as an effective way to develop leaders.

Leaders develop their intrapersonal competencies and technical ability over time, it is a longitudinal journey (Kelemen, Matthews, & Breevaart, 2020). "Leadership development refers to almost every form of growth or stage of development in the life cycle that promotes, encourages, and assist in one's leadership potential." (McCain & Matkin, 2019, p. 2). Scholars including Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, McKee (2014) and Hezlett (2016) confirm the idea that leaders development is a lifelong process, influenced through life experiences.

Life's challenges increase leaders' capacity to face complexities through life's progression (O'Connell, 2014). Hezlett's (2016) research indicates that experiences that influence a leader's development is not limited to experiences within an organisation, and not all organisational experiences offer an opportunity for

development. Bennis and Thomas (2002) add that leadership is best learned through experience and has a better development rate than classroom training. Megheirkouni (2016) agreed that difficult experiences contribute towards the leader's development, and developing leaders without context fails to achieve the objective. Hannah et al., (2009) stated that leadership development's effectiveness relies on the context in which it exists. Thus, supporting the idea of leader's development through lived experience, and the importance of aligning leader development to the context in which it would be evaluated.

Holmberg (2016) points out that the outcomes expected from leadership development has to be aligned to the context, and therefore the evaluation of leadership development has to base on the context (Hannah et al., 2009). To understand the expected outcomes of a leader's development for crisis, the study needs to explore the outcomes aligned with crisis management. This will be explored in section 2.4.

Leadership development programmes generally have a specific set of skills it aims to develop in leaders (Holmberg et al., 2016), and considering the continuous change in business context, Holmberg (2016) argues that it should rather focus on building generic capacities that will allow the leaders to adapt to changes in circumstances. Byrne et al, (2018) illustrates that leaders require adaptive capacity to survive and learn through a crucible experience. Considering that capacity has relevance in leader development and crucible experiences, it is valuable to explore how capacity is developed in leaders. To gain more understanding of how capacity is developed, literature of leader identity development is explored.

2.3.1 The role of leader identity in leadership development

Leaders identity is at the core of leader development, it is deeply embedded in the leader and contributes to the leaders motivation to attain leadership skills (Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, & Lord, 2017). Scholars argue that leader identity allows the leaders to engage with the leadership development opportunities provided (Day & Sin, 2011; Kwok, Hanig, Brown, & Shen, 2018; Miscenko, Guenter, & Day, 2017). There is significant research supporting the importance of leader identity in leader development (Kwok et al., 2018; Miscenko et al., 2017).

Leader identity is how individuals think of themselves as a leader (Kwok et al., 2018). The perception is formed through a collection of knowledge and the perceived behaviour against the perceived role of leader (Miscenko et al., 2017). According to scholars, the more leader identity is developed, it increases the probability to take on leadership role (Epitropaki et al., 2017; Yeager & Callahan, 2016). Kwok (2018) suggests that leader identity also influences a leader's effectiveness when placed in a leadership role.

It is essential to understand how an individual perceives and identifies as a leader, as it is significant to the leadership development process (McCain & Matkin, 2019; Miscenko et al., 2017). Guillén, Mayo, & Korotov (2015), further suggest that leaders require motivation to lead, to face challenges that may be presented. The motivation to lead is measured based on leaders eagerness to assume leadership roles, and pursue leadership development opportunities (Guillén et al., 2015). This is important for developing leaders for crisis management (Kwok et al., 2018). Thus leaders need to identify as a leader and have to motivation to pursue leadership.

Steele & Day, (2018) suggests that self-attend and self-efficacy support leader identity development. Self-attend is the openness to discussions of real-life problems, which helps build self-efficacy (Holmberg et al., 2016). Self-efficacy also contributes towards leaders motivation to lead (Guillén et al., 2015). Self-efficacy within the context of crisis, is a better predictor of leader's behaviour in a crisis (Hadley et al., 2011). Efficacy could be linked to leader's motivation, and motivation could be a driver for leaders to take on crisis leadership role (Hadley et al., 2011). By focusing on self and reflecting on life, leaders can build self-efficacy that will support their development process (Steele & Day, 2018). Developing through life experiences supports leader identity development (Day & Sin, 2011) .

Leaders require efficacy to conduct these tasks during the time of crisis, and Hadley et al (2011), proposes that previous experience can assist in building efficacy. "Leader efficacy is defined as a person's confident belief that they have the knowledge, skill, and ability to leaders others effectively" (Hadley et al., 2011, p. 635). Leaders tend to engage more with tasks that require skills that they have built confidence in a set context (Hadley et al., 2011). Some scholars have also indicated that self-awareness is another key element of the development of leadership identity.

2.3.1.1 Self-awareness as part of leader identity

Leaders require self-awareness and knowledge of leadership to identify and develop themselves as a leader (Byrne et al., 2018). Self-awareness and identity can be seen as the starting point for developing as a leader, and leader's identity evolves and it starts from the self (Epitropaki et al., 2017). They are aware that to grow as a leader, change is needed, and experience or the fear of reflecting could prevent participation in the development process (Barge, 2018).

Building character starts with individual self-identity, which is discovered through the individual's stories (McCain & Matkin, 2019). Leader identification is consistent with self-perception theory, where individuals interpret themselves by drawing on their experiences (Epitropaki et al., 2017). The experiences that they had and how it influences the individual's self-perception (Barge, 2018). Further contributing to using reflection of life experience to develop leader's identity.

In the crucible experience, leaders are exposed to tension between their current reality and what needs to change their circumstances (Byrne et al., 2018). To align this leader identity, the leaders need to have self-awareness to experience and learn from this tension. We could then assume that leaders who have already identified the potential within themselves would experience this turmoil because they have become aware of something that does not feed into their desired aspirations. This self-awareness enables leaders to respond more effectively to the crucible (Bell, 2019). This could create room for the desire to change as leaders are reminded of where they are right now (Byrne et al., 2018). It is not clear if a sense of leader identity is a prerequisite for learning through the crucible experience or if crucible experience allows for the discovery of leader identity. However, in both instances the process of learning from life experiences is evident (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Day & Sin, 2011). Leadership development processes that focus on this learning from life experiences are designed with leadership identity development in mind (Day et al., 2014; O'Connell, 2014b).

2.3.1.2 Leader identity development through life experiences

Miscenko (2017) proposes that leader identity is stable and does not change when viewing longitudinally. A leader's identity development is a lifelong process that starts from early childhood, and the leader's experiences define what a leader is and form

the bases on which individual's identity as leaders (McCain & Matkin, 2019; Miscenko et al., 2017).

The environment and the individual readiness for the next stage affect the process and transition cycle (McCain & Matkin, 2019). The leader identity strengthens over time, and as the leader gains knowledge on leadership, observes other leaders and reflects on their experiences through leadership development programmes (Acton, Foti, Lord, & Gladfelter, 2019; Adler et al., 2017; McCain & Matkin, 2019). The strength of the identity grows over time, and although the perception is changed as knowledge is gain on leadership (Miscenko et al., 2017).

Miscenko (2017) further states that developing interpersonal skills strengthens an individual's identity as a leader. These experiences can be positive or negative, the positive encourages the leaders to grow and strengthen their identity on the journey (Epitropaki et al., 2017). The negative leads to a weakened identity as a leader fails to apply leadership capability (Epitropaki et al., 2017).

According to Guillen and other scholars (Guillén et al., 2015; Kwok et al., 2018), the observation of other leaders contributes towards the leader's identity development. Yeager and Callahan (2016) assert that leaders are likely to learn from the observation of other leaders, exposure to experienced leaders support leaders identity development. Bell (2019) that leaders can learn how to manage through crucibles by learning from other leaders experiences. Work experience, knowledge of leaders, and relating it to leaders' roles contribute to developing leaders (Epitropaki et al., 2017).

Leaders' identity has been argued to have an important contribution towards developing leaders. The evaluation of the learning that happens through crucible experience has a link to help shape leaders' identity by increasing self-awareness and leader character development. Through the shaping of leadership identity, it is proposed that crucible could contribute toward leadership development.

2.3.2 Developing leaders character through crucible experience

Leader character is built through the crucible, however the same characteristics developed in the process are required to survive the crucible. Byrne et al (2018)

suggest that crucible could be a methodology for developing leader's character. Leaders have to be self-aware to build their character (Byrne et al., 2018). Leaders best learn from the uncomfortable moments in life or from hearing inspiring stories (Bell, 2018). The ability to face crucible moments is important for leadership development and growth (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020).

The test of leaders' character in their day to day situation supported with reflection and sense-making of their experience may contribute towards leadership character building (Barge, 2018). To work through the tension of the individual's character and the conceive character required in the situation requires the individual to actively work towards finding a balance (Byrne et al., 2018). To build leadership character the individual needs to be "self-aware and proactive about their development (Byrne et al., 2018, p. 267).

The leadership skills and characteristics are all informed by how the leader or individual identifies as a leader (Miscenko et al., 2017). Lessons learned through the crucibles stories have been found to create a cornerstone for the leaders' character development. Powerful lessons are learned, and leaders often reflect on these through their journey (Thomas, 2008).

The leader's identity evolves as they learn to respond to uncertainties, and they assess the response and evaluate the impacts. The learning contributes to how leaders character transitions. It develops a greater motivation to grow as a leader. They grow to a stage where their values construct their understanding of different contexts and build flexible leadership capacity to respond to the situation (McCain & Matkin, 2019). Some scholars indicate that this identity can also be grown through leadership development programmes (Kwok et al., 2018; Middleton, Walker, & Reichard, 2019).

2.3.2.1 Develop leader identity through leadership development programmes

Leader identity development research has focused on surveying leaders through leadership development programmes (Kwok et al., 2018; Middleton et al., 2019). In the study of how leader role identity influences the process of leader emergence, Kwok (2018) concludes that individuals with leader identity are more likely to emerge as a leader after participating in leadership development programmes. Middleton et

al., (2019) suggest that leadership development creates a context from which leaders can develop their leader identity.

2.3.3 Summary of Leader development

Leader identity and the motivation to lead can be seen as the driver behind leader development. Leader identity is developed over time and reflecting on life experiences contribute towards shaping leader identity. Leader's identity starts with self-awareness which could trace back to childhood. By reflecting on crucible experiences, leaders identity and character development occur and leads to transformative learning. The depth of this learning cannot be achieved through traditional methods of based leadership development programmes. Ways to harness crucible moment learning through leader reflection could be valuable for leadership development in general, and for in managing in crisis (Byrne et al., 2018).

2.4 Managing crisis in organisations

To gain better understanding on the leader development requirements for managing in crisis, this section reviews literature on crisis management. It has an aim to understand the behaviours and capability required for leading in crisis. This will support understanding the leader's leadership requirement in the context of a crisis (Megheirkouni, 2016) and review how crucibles experience can be used to develop leaders for managing crisis.

Scholars have provided multiple frameworks on crisis management, outlining the tasks, skills, behaviours and competencies for leaders in a crisis situation (Anderson, 2018; Bell, 2018; Boin, Kuipers, & Overdijk, 2013). The literature reviews starts with defining a crisis, and is followed with review of various crisis frameworks provided.

2.4.1 Definition of crisis

Crises are disruptions that follow their own course and can often not be predicted (Anderson, 2018). Crises are unplanned event, associated with uncertainty and emotional turmoil (Kapucu & Ustun, 2018). It is an unlikely event that is presented with uncertainties that required actions under time pressure (Teo et al., 2017).

In the study of a framework for examining leadership in extreme contexts, Hannah et al (2009), provides a theoretical basis for future research on leadership in extreme context. Hannah et al (2009), distinguishes between the extreme context and crisis, in comparison to the definition of crisis, and extreme context posed a threat of higher magnitude. The key differences that differentiate an extreme context are that it poses a higher magnitude threat and can be a predicted event (Hannah et al., 2009).

An example used is an event that could result in jobs losses is a crisis, where a situation that places life at danger is an extreme context (Hannah et al., 2009). Considering the current context of COVID pandemic and other crises defined in section 1.3, understanding both extreme context and crisis is relevant to this study. Thus, we define crisis as a situation that poses a threat and disruption to normal course of operation for this study.

2.4.1 Leadership in crisis context

Crises can create chaos in business and applies immense pressure on leaders (Dirani et al., 2020; Hannah et al., 2009). A leader's emotional state can affect the decisions that are made in this context (Kapucu & Ustun, 2018). Leaders' abilities are tested during crises, and leaders can benefit from being personally prepared for uncertainty (McNulty, Marcus, & Henderson, 2019). Since crisis management can be defined as the activities pursued to counter the crisis (Boin et al., 2013), what matters during a time of crisis is leaders' ability to direct action that works towards mitigating the crisis and providing direction and support through it (Boin et al., 2013).

Studies on leadership in extreme situation have typically focused on leadership styles (Geier, 2016). It has been proposed that transactional leadership can be more affected as there is a need for decisive action to resolve the crisis (Geier, 2016). Literature supports a more transactional and directive approach when leading through crisis (Geier, 2016; Hannah et al., 2009). When in crisis, the directive and transaction approach is suggested to be more prominent, this is especially the case during extreme events that required quick action (Hannah et al., 2009). The management of crisis is not the only factor to determining the outcome of the crisis but it has a part to play toward the effectiveness of the outcome (Boin et al., 2013).

Boin et al.(2013) suggested a leadership in crisis framework for evaluation of leaders and identified ten important tasks for executive management. Scholars have made reference to further elaborate on Boin's work in the study of the relational activation of resilience model Teo et al (2017). The framework consists of practical and objective steps to manage a crisis. The ten tasks identified by (Boin et al., 2013), and the work of the others scholar, (Bell, 2018; Combe & Carrington, 2015; Hannah et al., 2009), is used to investigate the leader requirements in a crisis.

2.4.1.1 Boin et al (2013) Framework for assessment of leadership times of crisis

2.4.1.1.1 Early recognition

Boin et al (2013) stated that leader needs to acknowledgement that there is a crisis, based on signals observed and activate immediate action. These signals could vary based on the type of crisis that is at hand (Boin et al., 2013). Leaders have to be sensitive to their environment and interpret the signals of a crisis (Boin et al., 2013).

Leaders need a level of foresight and awareness of their environment (Dirani et al., 2020), to act on a signal of potential threats (Boin et al., 2013). Feser et al (2017), states that organisations have expressed the need to have leaders who can identify challenges and risk. Previous experience can provide leaders with foresight that allows them to recognise the crisis early (Boin et al., 2013). This supports leadership development through experience for crisis management, as leaders require exposure to crisis to have the foresight and identify a crisis. In situations of uncertainty, such as a crisis or crucible, leaders are required to display sense making abilities (Boin et al., 2013).

2.4.1.1.2 Sense making

Sense making is the process of gathering information to develop an image of the situation at hand (Boin et al., 2013). Hadley et al (2011) adds that information gathering is an integrated process and may require different information types from different sources. Leaders are to make sense of their current reality using information that is available (Combe & Carrington, 2015; Geier, 2016) which is triggered by uncertainty (Teo et al., 2017). This is used to provide insights that will develop a way forward (Boin et al., 2013). Leaders use sense-making to provide clarity, and it is a basis on which strategy is formed to address the crisis (Teo et al., 2017).

The challenge with sense-making during a time of crisis is the ambiguity and uncertainty that exist, which could lead to incorrect assumption or ignorance of the situation (Combe & Carrington, 2015). Leaders should enlist the help of their teams when exposed to crisis to assist in the sense-making process (Combe & Carrington, 2015). Boin et al (2013) asserts that there is a challenge in gaining consensus of the sense-making, and a failure to reach agreement or understanding could ultimately affect the decision made (Boin et al., 2013; Combe & Carrington, 2015). Combe and Carrington (2015), further states that leaders should be warned that relying on the help of others or using past experience could lead to misinformed sense-making

Sense making happens concurrently with action taken to resolve the crisis (Hannah et al., 2009), and through the process leaders should have confidence and the ability to challenge their thought process (Hannah et al., 2009). This suggests that leaders are required to respond in crisis and provide a clear image to others of what expected

(Hannah et al., 2009). Sense-making and action can then be seen as an iterative process (Hannah et al., 2009).

Sense making is important when guiding followers through a crisis, by have clear goals and understanding of the situation, however crisis often require quick response and limit the time taken for sense-making (Hannah et al., 2009). Sense making allows the leaders to provide meaning to the organisation and it also provide a bases for post-mortem of the crisis (Hannah et al., 2009). Quick action without sense-making maybe be a detriment to resolving the crisis (Hannah et al., 2009).

The leader creates a sense of calm when they demonstrate that they are at the crisis's front line (Bell, 2018). They gather information and make sense of the situation to provide an image that can be understood and enable decision making (Bell, 2018). Leaders are to assess the situation before deciding how to respond, which is similar to sense-making but provides an additional point of remaining calm. It has been said that remaining calm will allow the leader to make sense and, therefore a clearer decision (Bell, 2018).

2.4.1.1.3 Making critical decisions

Critical decisions focus on a strategic decision and the process followed in considering the best way to adapt given the current situation (Boin et al., 2013). Hadley et al. (2011), states that decisions making is essential in time of crisis. Leaders decide how to proceed given the current situation and the key objective that they wish to achieve (Boin et al., 2013). Teo et al. (2017), notes that leaders decisions in a crisis impact the course of the crisis and affect the organisation. Hannah et al (2009) points out that quick response to a crisis reduces the uncertainty that followers may have about the situation (Hannah et al., 2009).

Considering the nature of crisis, leaders usually have to perform these task under time pressure (Hadley et al). Leaders follow the process of making sense of the information provided once they are aware of the crisis situation, and decisions are made thereafter (Boin et al., 2013). Kapucu and Ustun (2018), argued that the process of making sense of the information and taking decision requires time, and leaders are reminded to slow down. Bell (2018) adds that leaders are required to make decisions and push for action, however, it should not be done at a pace that

creates panic within the followers. Therefore leaders should act quickly, but not quickly (Anderson, 2018; Boin et al., 2013). Hannah et al (2009), argues that threat in a crisis situation may probe leaders and followers into action, as often the quickest response is identified as a crisis leader. The danger with this is that the quickest response may not be the best response (Hannah et al., 2009).

When dealing with extreme events leaders are subjected to their emotion, and that could affect their ability to make decision (Hannah et al., 2009). Hadley et al (2011) points out that the quality of the decision making process followed gives the leaders confidence in their decision (Hadley et al., 2011), and Dirani et al (2020) adds that leaders need a level of certainty in their decisions, despite the uncertainty that exists in a crisis. Leaders draw on the experience and expertise of others through collaboration, and it allows them to act decisively under uncertainty (Kapucu & Ustun, 2018). Anderson (2018) notes that leaders appreciate the urgent nature of the crisis and have to be comfortable to make decisions with the information gathered (Anderson, 2018). Dirani et al (2020) adds that hearing others' opinions also contributes towards building diverse prespective.

The urgent and uncertain nature of crisis does not allow sufficient time for sense-making, and leaders need to find a balance and understand when quick decisions have to be made and which decisions require times. Comber and Carrington (2015) states that leaders also have to manage the follower's expectations as the process of decision-making unfolds. Leaders also need to creating a balance between knowledge and intuition while leaning towards decision that drive action (Anderson, 2018). Dirani et al (2020), adds that leader should be flexible to change their decision when needed.

2.4.1.1.4 Orchestrating vertical and horizontal coordination

Vertical and horizontal coordination relates to influencing and exercising a level of control to ensure coordination between all stakeholder impacted by the crisis (Boin et al., 2013). Anderson (2018), adds that leaders manage all the stakeholders and create alignment (Boin et al., 2013). It requires collaborated efforts through the networking, and in the process leaders are to find a balance between commanding and persuading cooperation (Boin et al., 2013). Rohrich, Hamilton and Chung (2020), comments that collaboration allows the leaders to draw on the expertise of others

and increases flexibility by the expanded control. Hannah et al (2009) notes that having a clear and common goal allows for better action to resolve the crisis and reduces the follower emotional response.

The leaders are to create an environment that is conducive to teamwork (Rohrich et al., 2020). Providing a platform for followers to share their views contributes towards the effectiveness of resolving the crisis (Hannah et al., 2009). Fernandez and Shaw (2020) adds that leaders also need to have emotional stability and create an inclusive environment while empowering followers during the crisis. Combe and Carrington (2015), notes that teams are diverse and present different ways of understanding the problem and how to proceed, and this makes it important for the leader to create consensus and gain buy-in on the strategy. Fernandez and Shaw further adds that it is important for leaders to build mutual trust in the teams, and have a clear set of objectives in mind before enlisting the support of others (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). Along with achieving this coordination, trust, and congruency, leaders must also provide clarity and direction to followers and lead the way forward (Boin et al., 2013).

2.4.1.1.5 Meaning-making

Meaning-making is the ability to interpret the situation and provide a convincing image of how to navigate and lead followers through a crisis (Boin et al., 2013). It creates a frame for all follower on how to interpret the crisis (Teo et al., 2017). Boin et al (2013) adds that failure to provide this could result in cross assumption being formed. Hannah et al (2009), notes that it could affect the process of building trust through the crisis. Rohrich et al (2020) suggested that leaders should provide information on the strategy applied through the crisis to give followers' confidence that their wellbeing is prioritised. Emotional stress caused by extreme events could lead to withdrawal as individuals seek for sense of meaning (Hannah et al., 2009). Teo at al (2017) suggests that meaning-making aims to inspire hope in a time of crisis and contributes towards organisational resilience.

A wider range of perspectives contributes toward effective meaning and sense-making, and leaders often draw on their network to achieve a broader perspective (Teo et al., 2017). Meaning-making is not done in isolation but rather to facilitate decision and collaboration to address the crisis (Teo et al., 2017).

2.4.1.1.6 Communication

Geier (2016) states that communication is a central task when managing through an extreme event. The timely sharing of information provides clarity on the situation, and the consequences of the actions that need to take place to manage the crisis (Boin et al., 2013). Bell (2018), adds that the information should be transparent and relevant (Bell, 2018). This includes communicating what is known and the uncertainty that exists (Dirani et al., 2020). Rohrich et al (2020), notes that communication of all relevant information to the follower creates trust in the follower for the decision-making process, as they are aware of the progress of the crisis and the action taken throughout it.

Leaders should communicate with confidence and focus while displaying a level of competency (Hannah et al., 2009). Rohrich et al (2009) asserts that leaders should be commanding in their communication as it reassures the follower that they would overcome the crisis. Hanna et al (2009), adds that followers want to trust in what is being presented to them and have security that the leaders have things under control (Hannah et al., 2009). The presence of a leader and involvement throughout the crisis has been perceived to reduce the need for communication (Hannah et al., 2009). Fernandez and Shaw (2020) (2020) comments that communication methods always play an important role, and leaders should consider the preferred method of communication.

2.4.1.1.7 Rendering accountability

Rendering accountability is the responsibility taken by the leaders to share what actions were taken openly and the positive and negative of it, and taking ownership for the out by preventing blame (Boin et al., 2013). Bell (2019) adds that leaders are to provide followers with a sense of confidence that they are in control of the situation. They can achieve this by ensuring that action is taken towards resolving the crisis and displaying autonomy (Bell, 2018). Anderson (2018) comments that's leaders should share the burden of the crisis and distribute responsibility to stakeholders who can effectively resolve the crisis (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020). This creates an environment that enables others to actions (Dirani et al., 2020).

2.4.1.1.8 Learning

Learning is the ability to adapt as they discover new ways of managing crisis through reflection and recording new discovery (Boin et al., 2013). Dirian et al (2020) notes that leaders should look for opportunities in crisis (Dirani et al., 2020), and be open to experimenting and testing different hypotheses during the crisis (Boin et al., 2013; Hadley et al., 2011). This could allow for better management of the crisis and possibly finding new innovative solutions. Boin et al (2013) adds that leaders should display resilience and flexibility in these circumstances (Boin et al., 2013).

2.4.1.1.9 Enhancing resilience and flexibility

Bell (2018), and Geier (2016), states that leaders require flexibility to adjust their strategy and course of action as a better understanding of the situation unfolds. Enhancing resilience and flexibility is the ability to rapidly adapt to change and recover quickly from a negative situation important for leaders' development (Boin et al., 2013). Hahhan et al (2009), adds that and leaders are required to adapt during a crisis, and as it evolves (Anderson, 2018). Leaders should create a culture of awareness to assist in building resilience within the organisation (Boin et al., 2013). Bell (2018) adds that creating an inclusive team will assist the leader in creating more flexibility in dealing with the crisis.

2.4.2 Summary of crisis management

Crisis present many uncertainties, uncertainty about the crisis, how long it will last. Leaders are required to make decisions with the information at hand, despite all the uncertainties (Anderson, 2018). Despite this, leaders are expected to lead during, and follower looks to the leaders for direction during a crisis. The different crisis management frameworks explore the skills, competencies and behaviours required for a leader in a time of crisis. The common element from the crisis frameworks is communication and leaders ability to instil trust during the time of the crisis. The different skills and competencies provide a toolbox for the leaders during a crisis (Bell, 2019; Byrne et al., 2018).

Boin et al (2013) framework for assessment of leadership times of crisis provides ten tasks for leaders. The tasks have been explored in details with reference to others scholars. This creates a basis from which leaders approach to crisis management can be established.

2.5 Crucible experience as leader development for crisis

Bell (2018) states that skills required to lead through a crisis is learnt from the crucible moments (Bell, 2018). McNulty et al (2019), adds that crucible experiences contribute towards building leaders confidence when facing challenging time uncertainty. Exposure to previous crisis builds leaders' confidence to lead through other or new crises (Hadley et al., 2011). A study further suggested that effective crisis leaders are better at certain leadership traits and are seen to yield great results in everyday leadership (McNulty et al., 2019). These three traits namely, tenacity, focus on order beyond control and ask great questions (McNulty et al., 2019).

During times of uncertainty, fear and anxiety arise (Rohrich et al., 2020). Dirani et al (2020) suggested that leaders lead by example and present themselves to instil calmness in followers. Rohrich et al (2020), adds that followers will follow the leader's example, and if they are calm, the follower's anxiety will be calmed. Hannah et al (2009) further notes that trust between the leader and the follower may influence the follower's motivation while working towards resolving the crisis (Hannah et al., 2009).

Rohrich et al (2020) states crises also present an opportunity for leaders to step up, grow and learn. Koehn (2019) adds the the individuals who emerge as leaders through a crisis are identified through the emotional intellect and efforts to pursue the purpose and their experiences have enabled them to manage their emotions and can see a crisis from a broader perspective. Rohrich et al (2020), further adds that leaders emerge in the time of crisis, is forged by the inner strength developed in the leader (Rohrich et al., 2020).

Crucible moments are difficult moments that result in growth and has been identified as an opportunity for leaders to develop in crisis management (Bell, 2019; Byrne et al., 2018) . It is exposure through the crucible moments that allow the leaders to face a crisis (Bell, 2019). Resilience is an important capacity when facing extreme situation (Hannah et al., 2009). Gaining confidence in your own capability to survive through difficultly is something that can be learned (Hannah et al., 2009). Leaders need confidence and courage (Bell, 2019).

Bell (2018), further explains that the only way a leader can fail at leading through a crisis is if nothing is done about it.

2.6 Literature review Conclusion

Leaders continuously encounter crises, and their approach to these situations may affect the ultimate outcome (Kelemen et al., 2020). Meaning-making of challenging events is crucial for leaders to lead through a crisis effectively, and organisations need to understand how to develop and enable this leadership ability, so critical in today's leadership context.

Understanding the skills and competencies required to manage or lead effectively through a crisis is an important starting point to develop leaders for crisis management. It has been seen through the review that many of the identified skills and competencies are developed through the context of experience of crisis or adversity (Bell, 2019; Byrne et al., 2018).

Crucible moments have been suggested as a mechanism to enable crisis management, Thomas, (2008) indicates that leaders who have experienced crucible moments are better able to lead through a crisis. Thus, the study aimed to gain insights on leading through crises in organisations by understanding how leaders navigated through personal crucible experiences.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the research is to explore leaders' life stories and understand how crucible experiences have contributed to their development as leaders, specifically in relation to their ability to lead at times of crisis. Thus, the overall research question is how do crucible experiences in a leader's life journey influence the way they manage a crisis?

Three research questions have been posed to answer the overall research question:

Research question one: How do leaders narrate the crucible experiences in their lives that shaped them as leaders?

This question aims to understand the context around leaders' crucible experiences, with a focus on how the leaders narrate their experiences. It hopes to provide insight into the events that contributed to the crucible experience, how the leaders perceived these events, and what happened through the experience. It creates a framework to understand the significance these moments had on the leader's journey.

Research question two: How do leaders make meaning of the crucible experiences in their lives?

This question aims to understand what these crucible experiences meant to the leaders. It explores how the leaders' crucible experiences can contribute to the leader's development.

Research question three: How do leaders use lessons learnt from the crucible experiences in the way they managed a crisis?

This question aims to explore how leaders approached leading through crisis and gain insight into how this approach was formed in relation to crucible moments. The question will explore whether crucible moments have contributed towards the leader's ability to lead in crisis, focusing on leadership behaviour identified through the literature.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research is to understand how leaders' crucible experience can contribute to their capability to manage crises. The study explores the challenges faced in leaders' life experiences, the meaning of these challenges, and how it influenced their approach to managing organisational crises. Leaders often emerge as a better version of themselves after a crucible experience (Bennis & Thomas, 2002), and insights gained from their life story could guide the development of leaders to manage more effectively through crises.

The overall research question aims to understand how crucible experiences in a leader's life journey influence the way they manage in a crisis. It is explored through the sub research questions stated below:

- a) How do leaders narrate the crucible experience in their lives that shaped them as leaders?
- b) How do leaders make meaning of the crucible experience in their lives?
- c) How do leaders use lessons learnt from the crucible experience in the way they manage in a crisis situation?

A qualitative research methodology was applied in the study to explore the contribution of a crucible experience in a leader's life journey. Qualitative research observes and interprets practices in the world to understand the meaning it brings to individuals, and society, (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Although a crisis management framework is used as a lens to understand the leader's approach to crisis management, the study does not have defined constructs. Instead, the constructs emerged from the qualitative data captured from the leader's narrative.

A narrative approach is used in this qualitative study. It explores the themes identified from the leader's life journey, including the crucible experiences and the linkage to their crisis management approach. The approach provided a structure that enabled storytelling to understand the individual's experience as it unfolded over time. This helped gain insights from leaders' interpretation of their crucible experience and how it enabled them to grow.

The McAdams life story framework is a well-researched tool, used to conduct narrative research and was applied in this study. It has been used to understand the individual's life stories as a springboard for identity development, through exploring the positive, and negative influences of challenges (Adler et al., 2017; McAdams, 2018). The framework has been applied in leadership studies, such as the study to understand the leader's identity development (McCain & Matkin, 2019) and exploring experiences of power in women leaders (Kinnear, 2014). Crucible experiences are typically evaluated through understanding an individual's life story, further supporting the use of a narrative study in this research (Thomas, 2008). Nohl (2015) made use of life story interviews in the narrative study of the typical phases of transformative learning. Narrative research is used to make sense of lived experiences (Merriam, 2009; Plummer, 2011) to gain insights into phenomena by interpreting participants' lived experience (Mazur, 2018).

The research methodology is provided below, followed by the research position, quality control and limitations.

4.2 Research methodology

The research methodology selected provided a structure that was used to conduct the study. It includes the philosophy and approach that was used (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

Interpretivism is a research philosophy used to interpret perspectives from various lenses and aims to achieve a deep understanding of the dimensions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The study aims to gain an in-depth knowledge of the crucible experience, and leader's approach to crisis management through the narrative analysis of life stories, rather than testing predefined interpretations of these constructs. The study used a bottom-up approach, starting from the observations and assumptions that are shaped through the collection of data and interpretation of the theory associated with it (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The data for the study was collected and interpreted using a narrative approach. Narrative research allows a story to unfold through sharing personal life experiences, with all the complexity and meaning associated with it. (Carless & Douglas, 2017). Narrative research provided the opportunity to gain insight from leaders' crucible

experiences, understand what happened, when it happened, and how it enabled their development (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The crucible experiences are explained through storytelling (Thomas, 2008).

The study investigated the connections between how the leader's approach for managing crises was formed, and the crucible experiences in the leader's life story. As proposed by McAdams (2006), the evidence provided in the narrative checked for coherence in the life story, creating the link between how events are interpreted, and how these different elements are explained. The connections allowed for understanding how the different contexts enabled the leaders to grow through their life story (McAdams et al., 2006).

Interviews were used to conduct the research, making use of the McAdams' life story interview guide as a base (McAdams et al., 2006). Interviews are intentional conversation guided by topics or question posed by the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In the narrative interview, the interviewee was encouraged to share their journey as they recalled and reflected on their life stories in the present. The interviewee was guided by a semi-structured interview guide with topics aligned to the research questions. The researcher intended to conduct all the interviews face-to-face, however, given the current context with the COVID pandemic, two interviews were conducted thorough use of Microsoft Team's video call.

4.3 Position of the Researcher

It is necessary to position the researcher when doing qualitative narrative research. The researcher's views and opinions shape how the study is conducted, and influences the data's interpretation. It is, therefore, a common practice in qualitative research, to position the researcher for the purpose of transparency, and to acknowledge any bias that might exist in the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This section provides a brief overview of the researcher's position in reference to the study that was conducted.

The researcher currently holds a leadership position in a larger automotive manufacturing organisation in Kwa-Zulu Natal, and has been with the organisation for nine years. She has participated in multiple leadership development programmes and is responsible for human resource development, and talent management. Her

responsibility includes sourcing and developing a healthy pipeline for future leadership positions within the organisation.

Throughout the journey, thus far, she has experienced personal crucible experiences that have changed her view of leadership. In various discussions with mentors, there has been an observed trend that their motivation to progress in their careers, was born from experiencing challenges in their personal life. They have shown a sense of calmness and control when managing a crisis. Some failure has also been observed of individuals in leadership roles through panic, and isolated decision making. The observation of both success and failed leadership, and how the organisation views and evaluates its leaders, has sparked the interest in how leaders are developed. Further interest was gained through the observation of our leadership roles in current challenges faced in 2020 from disruption due to the COVID pandemic.

The observation has also led to the assumption that crucible experiences can be a good learning ground for leadership capacity and organisations' need to better understand ways to develop leaders for managing in a crisis.

4.4 Research Design

The research design outlines the process used to conduct the narrative research on leader's crucible experience in their life journey. It includes the sample, measuring instrument, data gathering, and data analysis applied for the study.

4.4.1 Sample

The sample refers to the candidates selected to participate in the study from the defined population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The sample is determined using a sample methodology and size.

4.4.1.1 Population

The population is defined as the collective participants available to the researcher (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The population for the study were all executives in medium to larger manufacturing organisation within the automotive sector, producing automobiles, and automobile components first trier products in the eThekweni region

in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The population was chosen due to accessibility and the researchers' experience in the industry, as described in section 4.3.

To narrow the population to a manageable size and consider the accessibility to participants, larger to medium-sized manufacturing organisations in the eThekweni region were selected. The study participants were selected based on specific criteria, which is discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.4.1.2 Sampling method and size

Purposive sampling identifies participants through set criteria (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This method seeks out individuals who are likely to contribute to the understanding of the research (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Criteria were developed to narrow the population to a sizeable sample and select leaders with a diverse portfolio. The following criteria was established to identify the most suitable participants:

- 1) The participant should be in an executive position, leading multidisciplinary teams of senior to middle managers;
- 2) Have a minimum of 10-years of work experience, with five being in an executive role;
- 3) The participants should be over the age of 30.

The years' experience allowed for a richer story, with exposure at different levels within the organisation, and significant experience in their personal lives. Using the criteria, narrowed the population to similar profiles, however, the differences in the life journeys of participants provided a source of rich data. All participants had individual life experiences, and different career paths that led to their current role which allowed for further diversity in the sample.

To support accessibility to executives, the snowball sampling approach was used, starting with participants within the organisation, where the researcher is employed. Snowball sampling is an approach that gains access to other potential interviewees, using the interviewee's existing network (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Executives were asked to recommend other executives who met the profile criteria.

A total number of 13 interviews were conducted out of the 15 participants approached for interviews. The measure that a sufficient sample was reached, is achieved through the decline of the new trends identified in the interview analysis, which is known as saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Saunders & Lewis, 2012) as this research focused on life stories of executives and aimed to reach a diverse sample, common trends were not as significant as the depth and richness of data provided by the narratives. This study's sample was guided by previous studies conducted by Elkington (2015), on how senior leaders develop resilience in adversity, where he aimed to reach a sample size between 12 to 20 participants, as well as Teo (2017), who reached seven participants while doing in-depth interviews with leaders on the relational activation of resilience model. Saturation was therefore not applied to the sample size in this study.

4.4.1.3 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the level from which the primary data is collected (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The unit of analysis in this research is the individual selected from the defined population, which is executives with a minimum of 10 years' experience in leading a multidisciplinary team in large to medium manufacturing organisations.

4.4.2 Measurement instrument

The McAdams' life story interview (McAdams, 2018) helped to create a structure that guided the process of navigating the leader's life story. It includes questions about the different phases in life, the negative experiences and positive experiences, and the meaning that the individual attaches to these. The tool explored the individual's life story, and how it influenced the individual's life path (McAdams et al., 2006). The interview guide has been adopted to gain a deeper understanding of the crucible experience in the participant's life, and how it influences their approach to managing a crisis. The interview questions were developed by referencing McAdams' framework and was guided by the interview questions from PhD research on emerging models of power of women in leadership, using the McAdams life story interview (Kinnear, 2014). The interview guide is provided in appendix A.

The interview guide was developed to gain insights into the research question, guided by the literature review. The McAdams' life story interview was used to develop interview questions that aim to elicit a response, to enable insights into the research questions. The development of the interview guide is explained below.

Research question one: How do leaders narrate the crucible experiences in their lives that shaped them as leaders?

The interview guide asked the participants to describe their life journey, drawing on their past and most recent experiences. This question created a starting point for the participants to share their life story. Further promptings were used to guide the participant to discuss challenges, or difficult experiences that shaped them as a leader. The intent of the question was to understand the context of the crucible experience, how the participant describes and identified the experiences that shape them. This helped to gain a deep understanding of crucible experience, and how they shaped the participant.

Research question two: How do leaders make meaning of the crucible experience in their lives?

The participants were asked to share both the negative, and positive perceptions of the challenges, or difficulties that have had an influence on their life. The intent of these questions was to understand the significance of crucible experience and what they meant to the participants. It explored the elements of the crucible experience that has either had a positive or negative impact on the participant.

Research question three: How do leaders use lessons learnt from the crucible experience, in the way they manage in a crisis situation?

The participants were asked to describe an experience where they had to manage in a crisis situation, and explain how they led through the crisis. The participants were asked to draw on experiences that assisted them in leading through crises. These questions aimed to understand the linkages participants made between the crucible experience, and their approach to leading in crises.

The interview questions fed into the overall research question on how crucible experience in a leader's life journey influence the way they manage in a crisis. The interview was ended by asking the participants if they have anything to add about managing in a crisis, and how their life story has influenced it.

Pilot interviews

The interview guide was tested by conducting a pilot interview with an executive in the organisation, in which the researcher is employed. The topic and interview style were reviewed, based on the level of information received. The process helped to determine whether more guiding or prompting questions were required (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The findings of the pilot interviews were discussed with a human resources executive, as an expert in the field, who could give a view on the value of the data emerging from the questions asked. The results were satisfactory and no changes were made to the initial interview guide. Through this process, it was noted that further prompting may be needed, based on the participant's position. This was an additional quality control in assessing the effectiveness of the data gathering process.

4.4.3 Data gathering process

The starting point of the data gathering process was to locate the participants for the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Snowball sampling was used, after initial interviews were conducted to access participants from additional organisations. Executives are not easily accessible, so personal referrals were helpful to ensure the executives interest in participating in the study. An email with the aim of the study was sent to executives in the researcher's current place of employment, to request their participation in the research. Seven of the 13 participants were reached from within the researcher's place of employment, and a further three participants from the researcher's network. An additional seven participants were recommended, five were reached, from which only three agreed to participate in the study.

The data was collected using a digital voice recorder, while conducting the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), further supported by journal notes made by the interviewer. The interview guide was issued to the participants before the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) to provide the interviewee with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the topic, and review if they were comfortable to proceed with the interview.

Interviews took place in the executive's office or in a preferred location selected by the executives, this allowed for a comfortable setting with no interruptions. The interview started with a brief explanation of the research topic. The interviewees

were then given the opportunity to share their story in the way they felt most comfortable, and guiding questions were only asked to gain clarity or deeper understanding. The recording of the interviews was transcribed using an external service provider, and this was processed over four weeks.

Of the 13 interviews 11 were conducted face-to-face, and two of the interviews were conducted using Microsoft Team's video call. The participants were requested to share their video, provided they were comfortable to do so, and this allowed for observation of nonverbal cues. Once all the data was collected, the next process of the research was to analyse the data.

4.4.4 Analysis approach

Analysis is an iterative process where the data is analysed multiple times to grasp relations between the themes (Mazur, 2018). The interview data was analysed three times to allow for deeper understanding of the data. The analysis was conducted using both the audio recording of the interview transcriptions, and the interviewer's notes. The interview transcripts were printed and analysed manually, highlighting the key take-outs. Codes were assigned to the key phrases, and this was grouped to create categories and identify themes (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The analysis was done according to the research questions, and allowed for themes to be identified in each section. The themes were then presented in a conceptual model to display the overall findings of the research.

The researcher made notes while replaying the audio recordings, and used the notes while reviewing the codes, categories, and themes developed. The second review of the interview transcripts was used to check if any codes might have been omitted, it also assisted in gaining a better understanding of the data. The research analysis approach was split into two different phases.

Phase one of the analysis was the coding of the interview transcripts, according to the different key take-outs identified in the interviewee's narration. The data was analysed by reviewing the experience, the impact it had on the individual, the narration used to describe it, as well as the contribution the experience had on the leader's approach in managing through crises. The data was presented in tables

and graphs to present the summary of the findings from the various interviews. Quotes were provided to support the analysis of the findings.

The data was then evaluated to determine what common and unique codes emerged from the interviews, with a particular interest in the codes and themes that repeat themselves within the research question sections (Creswell & Poth, 2016). From this, patterns emerged in the data, which enabled a more refined clustering of themes. The theory from the literature review will be applied to the research, to identify the commonalities and additional findings that were present in the data.

Phase two of the analysis was the identification of causal connections. This process involved identifying causal connections made on the review of the interview. This was done by identifying points that the interviewee related to each other, an example could be that, “Experiencing poverty in my upbringing allowed me to develop perseverance when facing challenges in the workplace.”. This is a process described and recommended by (McAdams et al., 2006) in the analysis of narrative interviews. The findings are presented to show the themes and casual links identified in the study.

The literature review was used as a lens through which to analyse the data, and open coding was used to allow for the emergence of themes. The use of literature as a lens for the analysis was used to create clusters from the data collected, and is referred to as a thematic analysis in a inductive approach (Plummer, 2011). Ensher, (2017) used a blended thematic approach and inductive analysis in the study of the causes of career-defining experience. In a similar process, the literature review was used in the study for the themes generation, while the inductive analysis allowed for the emergence of new themes.

4.5 Quality controls

4.5.1 Validity

The design of the methodology adds rigour to the research, which results in validity. Rigour is the level of accuracy based on sound theory guiding the research, limiting bias, good sample selection and collection of reliable information (Connelly, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Credibility is a measure of the accuracy of findings, which

in qualitative research is assured through a strong theoretical foundation, and the quality of data collection methods through the interviews (Connelly, 2016).

Strict criteria were applied in selecting the sample, as indicated in the sampling process. The research questions were informed by the literature on crucible experience and managing in crisis, and the instrument used in the research was based on McAdams (2006) established protocol for narrative data collection. A pilot interview was used to test the interview guide and evaluate the relevance of the tool. This provided the opportunity to gauge the responses against the intent of the questions. The findings from the pilot were also reviewed with a human resource executive, from industry, to evaluate the relevance of the information gathered to the organisational leadership context. The researcher's position was outlined in section 4.3 to account for any potential bias that may reflect in the findings.

4.5.2 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is also considered as the dependability of the research, and measures the reliability of the data collected (Connelly, 2016). The interviews were recorded, transcribed by an external service provider and analysed manually. The data was gathered, using an established narrative methodology and analysed systematically, as outlined in section 4.4.4.

4.5.3 Ethical clearance

Ethical clearance is a process used to review the research methodology and gain approval to conduct the study. This adds to the rigour of the study by ensuring that participants' anonymity is protected, and their consent has been given to participate in the study. All participants in this study were asked to sign an informed consent form before proceeding with the interviews. The purpose of the research and the interview questions were shared with the participants before the interviews took place.

4.6 Limitations

4.6.1 Generalisability

Qualitative research has a small number of participants, limiting the research findings of the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The study was conducted on a sample of 13 executives in the automotive industry within the manufacturing sector, and can therefore not be generalised to all executives across various industries.

4.6.2 Access

The challenge of using a narrative strategy is that it requires a lot of time and the right interviewee to share their story. The right interviewee is someone who owns their story and is in a position to share the story reflectively (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The interview was a lengthy process and, in some instances, took up to 110 minutes. Executives were not easily accessible and had limited available time which may have affected the depth of the data collected.

4.6.3 Participants' position

The personality type of the selected interviewees could affect the data collected, as some individuals may not feel as comfortable as others sharing their experiences. Sharing of life stories can evoke emotion that shapes the conversation based on the comfort of the individual (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

4.6.4 Researcher's position

The research is inductive and allows room for bias to arise, and should be considered when interpreting the data (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The researcher's position is stated in the research methodology to counter this by acknowledging the researcher's context, and how that may influence the lens through which the data is interpreted.

4.6.5 Scope of the study

The scope of the study was to explore the leaders' crucible experience, and how it influences their approach to manage in a crisis. The study focuses exclusively on the elements related to crucible experiences, leader's development and crisis

management. It excludes inputs such as the personality or psychological development of the participants.

The study was not focused on the tools to manage through a crisis but rather on how leaders build the capability to manage in a crisis. Although the study looked at leaders and their approach, it did not focus on the different types of leadership styles, and the role these play in managing crises. Reference may be made to elements of various leadership styles, but it does not explore the preference of the styles used in a crisis situation.

The framework for understanding leadership in crisis is used as a lens with which to explore how the capability to manage in times of crises develops. The study does not explore the effectiveness of the capability, nor does it aim to evaluate the leader's capability for managing through crisis. Instead, the study aims to understand how leaders make sense of crucible experiences in their life journey, and how they connect the lessons learnt from this to their approach to managing in a crisis.

The following chapter (5) will present the results of the findings from the study and chapter 6 will integrate the findings from the literature with the findings from the research conducted.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The results present the findings from the life story interviews conducted, to gain insights into the executive's leadership journey, from the automotive section in KZN. The leaders narrated their life stories and unpacked the difficult and significant experiences. They reflected on their journeys relating the impact of these experiences and how it shaped them as leaders. The leaders also related the lessons from these challenging and significant experiences or crucible experience to approaches they have adopted to manage crises in their leadership role.

The analysis process started by identifying codes from the key take outs highlighted in the interview transcripts. The codes were categorised and clustered to create themes. The results share the key insights from this process and documents the themes created. The themes are then discussed in more detail, and supported with quotes from the participants, to highlight the findings.

The results are presented under headings that coincide with the three research questions, starting with a context of the type of crucible moments experienced by the participants. The leaders' narration of their crucible moments is analysed under research question one. The meaning attached to these crucible experiences is categorised using both the positive and negatives influences in research question two. Finally, the participants' reflections on managing crises and the lessons learnt is analysed in question three. The finding and themes from the analysis is then presented in a conceptual model, at the end of the chapter.

The results section begins with an overall presentation of the participant's profile, and the demographics of the sample achieved. The representation of the sample, support the intent of achieving a diverse sample.

5.2 Sample profile

Executives from the automotive industry in KZN were sampled to participate in the research, and a total of 13 participants were interviewed. All participants in the study were from medium to large manufacturing organisations in the automotive manufacturing sector. The 13 executives comprised one chief executive officer, two chief financial officers, three human resources directors, six manufacturing directors, and one corporate service director. The sample thus provides diversity in the core skillset and exposure in the automotive industry.

While the majority of the executives were responsible for manufacturing operations, the inclusion of finance and human resources executives allows for a broader perspective from the manufacturing organisations. The Human Resources division in the organisation plays a crucial role in developing leaders for the organisation. The span of responsibility for executives in finance would include that of the manufacturing division of the organisation. Providing experiences that, form a widespread view of the manufacturing operation. The different experiences in the industry will support in providing a broad range of crucibles and crisis experiences.

Table 1: Participant profile

Participant	Organisation	Position	Role
1	Automotive	Exec Vice President	Operations and Engineering
2	Automotive	Director	Human Resources
3	Automotive	Vice President	Facility and Maintenance
4	Automotive	Vice President	Operations
5	Automotive	Vice President	Operations
6	Automotive	Senior Vice president	Operations
7	Automotive	Vice President	Human Resources
8	Automotive	Chief financial officer	Finance
9	Automotive	Managing executive	Operations
10	Automotive	CEO	
11	Automotive	Director	Corporate Service
12	Automotive	Director	Human Resources
13	Automotive	Chief financial officer	Finance

5.2.1 The demographic profile of the participants

The sample was representative of multiple racial groups and included both genders. The participants averaged at the age of 49 years, with only one participant under 40. With 24 years between the youngest and oldest participants, the wide range of age groups provides a generational diversity within the sample of the 13 executives. This support in providing an overall diverse demographics sample profile. In the analysis of the research data, no reference is made to the participant's demographic profile, and is not considered part of the leader identity.

The interviews average length was 59 minutes, with some interviews as short as 39 minutes and others as long as 110 minutes. The interviews length was most affected by the leader's choice to elaborate on, or summarise the details of their crucible experiences. The participant's position may have contributed to the difference in the length of the interview.

Table 2: Participants' demographics

Participant	Gender	Race	Length of interview	Age
1	Male	White	00:51:37	57
2	Female	African	00:39:19	34
3	Male	White	00:52:06	58
4	Male	African	01:00:48	40
5	Male	Indian	00:56:08	45
6	Male	Foreign National	00:37:50	50
7	Male	Indian	00:53:31	57
8	Female	White	00:58:01	43
9	Male	African	00:55:39	48
10	Male	White	00:50:00	53
11	Male	Indian	01:42:35	55
12	Male	White	00:41:43	55
13	Female	Indian	01:50:57	42
		Average	00:59:15	49

5.3 Research question one

Research question one asked how leaders narrate the crucible experiences that shaped them as a leader. The participants were asked to describe their life journey, drawing on experiences in different phases of their lives, with a particular focus on the challenging, yet significant experiences that impacted them as a leader. The context of the leaders crucible experience, provided a lens for the reflections of their stories.

The analysis of the narration of the crucible experiences in the research, is interested in how the participants made sense of their experiences. The starting point for gaining insights on the significance of the crucible experience is classifying the different types of crucible experiences. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of how the leader got through their crucible experiences. The insights gained are further explored through the categories and themes identified. The section ends with key insight and the contribution towards answering the research question.

5.3.1 Type of crucible moments

The participants were provided with a dictionary definition of crucible experiences, along with the interview guide prior to the interview. Through the narration of the leader's life stories, they made reference to crucible experiences and defining moments. The participants identified their own crucibles experiences and elaborated on them further with prompting from the interviewer. All the participants experienced multiple crucible moments, with the most common being work-related and financial crucible experiences. The count of the type of the crucible experiences is provided in figure 2, below.

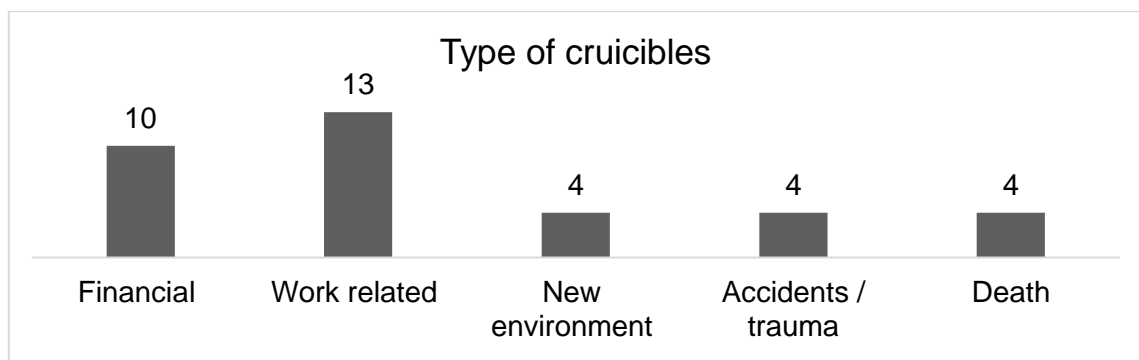


Figure 1: Type of crucible moments

5.3.1.1 Financial crucible experience

All the encounters of financial crucible experiences occurred at a young age, and was presented as a defining point for the participants. Although this occurred prior to being in a leadership position, it seems to have played a role in developing the leader's identity, and creating motivation to succeed.

Participant Two had developed work ethic, and took the responsibility to pursue the opportunity of furthering their education. Although presented with a challenge the participant did not submit to the circumstances and rather proceeded with action to address the challenge.

*"...I started working from the age of 17, straight after high school, December. Because my parents **couldn't afford to take me to university**. So, I needed to raise registration funds and I worked right throughout university..."(P2)*

Participant Five's experience had affected their view of themselves negatively, but despite this, it also created a drive to do better. The awareness of this negative view enabled positive actions to work towards changing their situation.

*"...I come from a **very poor and humble background** and growing up it was typical kind of challenges growing up in a poor household so to speak. Lots of having to do more than other kids and so on, so I always felt like less and behind than some of my friends and others in school..."(P5)*

Participant Seven had a sense of responsibility to change their current circumstance. This led to action with no signal provided in the interview, to indicate that the participant was asked to take on this responsibility.

*"...I grew up in a **sort of low-income average family**, where you know, parents didn't have stable jobs and after high school although one had the results to proceed and go straight to university, one **did not have a choice but to find a job** and bring income to the table or put food on the table kind of situation..."(P7)*

Although the financial crucible experiences were different, it all led the participants to action that helped change their situation. The participants encounter these experiences at a younger age, and it was viewed as an opportunity rather than a limitation. This presented as resilience from a young age and a sense of self-awareness.

5.3.1.2 Work-related crucible experience

The work-related crucible experiences included situations of high pressure, while facing difficulties to gain support to manage work expectations. These experiences were difficult, as the participants knew what they intended to achieve, but the current circumstance are not favourable.

Participant Five struggled and wanted to give up, however continued to work through the difficulty and on reflection, understood the value of it. It could be assumed that the participant continued through, despite their views of the situation, drawing on their inner strength through the crucible experience.

*“...But what I didn’t realise was that I was getting noticed in other spheres of the business, there’s someone always in the firing line, that’s **always hammered and harassed**, he’s always the one stepping up at the presentations. Now when I look back, I see it that way but at that time I thought that I need to quit, I’m tired of this and this is not sustainable...”(P5)*

To get through a difficult situation Participant Two relied on past experience as a guide to work through the crucible experience. Also making reference to an ability already identified.

*“...So, you’ll appreciate **that crisis comes with the job**, but when staff are taking to down tools, because of a loss of faith in management and lack of transparency, for me **I had to draw quite deeply into my ability** to make people,..., I’m highly convincing...So, I was able to convince staff and I think it grew me a lot as a person...”(P2)*

Through the work-related crucible experiences, leaders had to draw on their inner strength and relied on their learnt ability from past experiences. It differs from the

financial crucible experience as the participant had reference to prior experiences. Both types of crucible presented resilience formed from self-awareness.

5.3.1.3 New environment crucible experience

The exposure to a new environment creates a challenge, as the participant and their families faced barriers, associated with being in a foreign environment.

*“...It was probably the most, **toughest time in my life** because you, **you're in a foreign country** the language barrier, not only do you have to settle down as an individual as a family man but you also have to cope with the work situation...”(P7)*

*“...Going to America, especially the first year, was a very, **very tough environment for me**. One thinks that we speak the same language and that there's some cultural similarities, but when I got there, I would be honest with you, the first three months I didn't know what they're talking about ...”(P10)*

The participants had tough time being exposed to foreign environment yet managed to overcome it, and learn from the experience.

5.3.1.4 Accident and trauma crucible experience

Accidents and trauma encounters were experienced in the leader's personal capacity.

*“...accident that nearly killed me, nearly drowned, got bashed up by the rocks etc, got pulled out, broken ribs all those kinds of things but I told I would never go back to fishing. That's it. **My dreams wiped I'm not going to do it but I came out of it,..**”(P7)*

*“...There're a few personal defining moments, **getting hijacked at gunpoint was the third defining moment...**”(P12)*

These experiences presented fear and anger in the participants, and they had to challenge their views on the experience to allow the opportunity to learn from it. In both instances, the participant overcame the negative impact of the experience, by

facing the fears associated with it. Also making reference to an inner strength to move past the negative view of the experience.

5.3.1.5. Death of close relative of friend crucible experience

The death of a close relative of a family member occurred at different phases of the participant's life journey.

"...In 2009, we lost my youngest brother to a very tragic motor vehicle accident and my mum went into depression, and I suddenly was left as the eldest of three, planning my brother's funeral. And for me, that was a very adult role that I suddenly had to take up..."(P2)

The participant was aware of a gap that needs to be filled in the middle of a difficult experience and was able to support others. Leaning toward resilience to overcome challenges.

5.3.1.6 Value of crucible experience

The participants' experience multiple yet different crucible moments, however the type of crucible moment did not determine the value of the experience. All the leaders gained value from the challenging and yet significant experiences they described. The participants learned from the experiences and were better equipped to deal with future difficulties.

"...I'll know how to deal that better because of the experience I had with that previously. So, I think tapping into those experiences is what's going to help me get through..."(P7)

".... I've grown the most when I've had the toughest times. And I think that's natural, but I think we forget that. So, when you've seriously got your back against the wall and you think this is never going to work, that's when you probably develop most as a person...(P10)

5.3.1.7 Summary of the type of crucible experiences

In summary, the type of crucible experiences provides context of the challenges and difficulties the participants faced. Although the experiences were diverse in nature,

they all contributed towards a learning experience for the participants, who displayed a level of self-awareness and resilience to transition out of crucible experience.

It was also noted that the participants recounted crucible experiences predominantly in their career, with limited crucible experiences in their personal capacity. There could be various reasons for this. It is possible that the participants have limited crucible experiences in their personal capacity.

One of the limitations of the study relate to the participant's position in section 4.6.3, which could also be a contributor to the participant's choice of crucible experiences that were shared. One observation while conducting the interviews, was a participant who had shed a tear, giving rise to the sensitivity of the crucible experiences in their personal capacity.

In another instance, a participant also noted personal crucible experience, and acknowledge that it had an impact, however the details of the impact, was not shared.

“...my father passed away in my matric year, so it was quite an impact...”(P3)

One participant also mentioned there are some crucible experiences they would rather not share in the interview.

“...So, in some small ways that was one of my crucible moments, unfortunately I don't want to share too much detail in that regard, but it was being in the wrong crowd in high school...”(P5)

The type of crucible moments does not influence the value of the experiences, therefore the experiences shared are deemed sufficient for the evaluation of the research data. To gain further understanding and insights on crucible experiences, analysis was also done on how the participants got through their crucible experiences. This is presented in the next section.

5.3.2 Getting through the crucibles

The analysis of how the participants got through the crucible experience used the categories identified from the literature review in section 2.2.2. A count was done of the occurrence of the categories in the data. All the participants had reference to resilience, this supports the insights from the type of crucible experience. All participants made reference to reflection to get through the crucible, and only eight of the 13 participants made reference to help from others. The graph below provides an image of the count done on the occurrence of the categories for getting through the crucible experience.

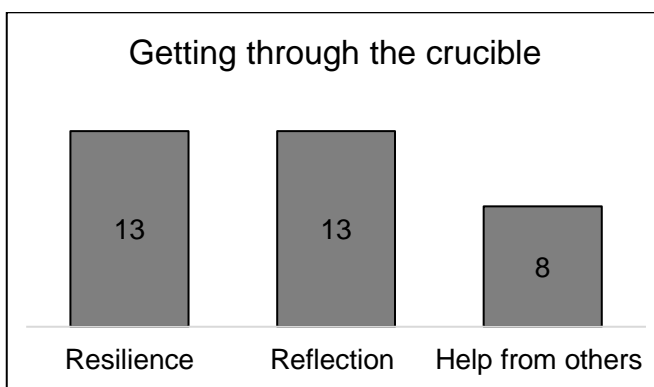


Figure 2: Getting through the crucible

5.3.2.1 Resilience

In the analysis of the type of crucible experience, resilience emergence as a common insight. To gain further understanding, the analysis explores how resilience was presented, and used to get through the crucible experience.

Participant One had the responsibility of leading a team through a life and death experience. Their resilience was triggered by the realisation of the magnitude of the situation. This could relate to a survival instinct as the participant took responsibility in the situation.

*"...And now **I had 120 people that are my responsibility** in this big platoon. And I'm in charge of these guys,.. We've got guns in our hands and we're going to kill somebody or they're going to kill us. And I realised,... there's 119 **people looking at me to show their leadership** and I need to make quick decisions, otherwise we ain't all going home..."(P1)*

Participant Two understood that difficulties are a part of life, and they would have to challenge themselves to action. Also creating a linkage to survival and taking responsibility to change their circumstances.

*“...that was one of the **moments that I think, probably, catapulted me into a higher level of being, and understanding, and wisdom.** And I think that’s **when I realized that life is tough, but you’ve got to rise to the occasion.** You’ve got to accept the challenge and you’ve got try and think of “How I am going to wiggle myself out of this one...”(P2)*

Participant Eight described having to put their emotions aside to focus on getting through the situation. This also makes reference to survival, as action was needed to despite challenge faced.

*“...I **had to get up and physically go there** and lead the team to do what they needed to do and **separate the emotional stuff** and all that other stuff which was noise..., but you only learn...”(P8)*

Resilience was triggered by the difficulty the participants faced, and the realisation that they had a responsibility, and needed action to change the circumstance. Resilience is then associated with a need to change the current circumstances, and engages survival instinct.

5.3.2.2. Reflection

All the participants made reference to reflection when narrating their crucible experiences. It created a moment of realisation, that something could change.

Participant Seven had a moment of realisation that changed their cause of action. Reflection allowed the participant gain self-awareness, and understand that they are able to change their situation.

*“...**you realise that,** “hang on, there is more to life, than just earning wages at the end of the week or a salary at the end of the month” and you know, to cut a long story short, once **I had the realisation** that I needed further education, and realised that that was the key to unlock doors...”(P7)*

Reflection enable Participant Five to make a decision, and reference is made to previous decisions made. It could be that the reflection also formed the participant's approach to making decisions.

"...those are very difficult times, because I was really considering my long-term horizon versus where I was at the time and I had to make some very difficult decisions, and it took me back to even when I had to make the decision of not playing baseball anymore and going to focus on my education and work..."(P5)

Through reflection, the participants gained self-awareness, an understanding of their current position, and it enabled decision making. These decisions resulted in action that changed their current circumstances.

5.3.2.3 Help from others

In the analysis, eight of the participants received help from others which assisted them in getting through the crucible experience. The help received was both solicited and unsolicited.

5.3.2.1 Help from others: Unsolicited

Participant Seven recalled receiving help from a mentor to support them through the process of facing a fear. This provided the participant with a perspective that they were possibly not able to see. The participant made no reference to seeking the assistance this assistance.

"...I had another great man speak to me in my personal capacity and he said, "You know what, you are going to have to overcome your fear. You have to go back to the exact spot where you fell and you are going to do exactly what you were aiming to do from that spot." Probably the best piece of advice I've ever had..."(P7)

5.3.2.2 Help from others: Solicited

Participant Two sought guidance in a time of crisis, and it was used to review the participant's decision making. The guidance could support with checking of the

participants decisions against other views. It also provides the participants with confidence in their decision making.

*“... I think for me, the one thing that **helped me to be clearer of mind**, was **having somebody to bounce off**, a sounding board that was my ex-HR director, who actually was the one that put me forward for the role. So, him being a phone call away to say, “Okay. This is what’s happened. This is how it’s progressed. This is what I’m thinking. This is my strategy. This is how I’m going to deal with the situation...” (P2)*

Receiving help from others provided an alternative view that either, the participant was not able to see, or they used the guidance to check their decision making. The alternative allows the participant to see the situation differently, or gain confidence in their decision making. This also resulted in action to get through the crucible experience.

5.3.2.4 Summary of getting through the crucible experience

To get through crucible experience the participant required resilience, reflection and help from others. Resilience enabled the participant to take action through the realisation that they had the responsibility and the need for change. Reflection provided the participants with self-awareness that resulted in decision making. Lastly, the help from others, both solicited or unsolicited, provide an alternative to check the participants’ decision-making process. This provided the participant with a new perspective and confidence in their decision making.

The analysis of the type of crucible experiences, and the way participants got through the crucible experiences, provided insights from the participant’s life stories. It also created a context for further analysis. Codes were created through further analysis, which were clustered into categories and themes. The themes identified are presented in the next section.

5.3.3 Themes identified from the first research question

Two themes were identified from the analysis of the participants response, to the first research questions. The themes were developed from the codes and categories identified through the analysis. The literature was considered and assisted with

aligning the categories to the themes. Reference is also made to the insights gained from the analysis of the type of crucible experiences, and of getting through those crucible experiences.

The two themes identified in relation to how leaders narrate their crucible experiences that shaped them as leaders were, leadership identity development, and motivation to overcome challenges. The categories which related to each of themes are presented in a table format in the discussion of each theme. Each category provides insights that are supported with quotations from the interviews. The codes used to formulate the categories are provided in appendix D.

5.3.3.1 Theme 1: Leader Identity development

The categories developed from the analysis are; competitive, change, potential decisive, and self-aware. These categories formed part of the leader identity development as presented in table three below.

Table 3: Theme 1 codes and categories

Categories	Theme
Potential	Leader Identity Development
Self-aware	
Decisive	
Change	
Learning	

5.3.3.1.1 Potential

Throughout the participant's experience, they had moments of realising their potential. It was discovered by others or by themselves when achieving something greater than what was expected.

Participant Seven was able to take on a new opportunity provided when they gained potential in their own ability. This confidence was gained through recognition of their potential from others.

“...probably saw more and knew more about me than I knew about myself, which is a strange thing because one tends to doubt oneself then but they had more faith in my ability than maybe I even realised it and they then provided the opportunity for me...”(P7)

Participant Five was able to change their circumstance when they identified their own potential.

“...fortunately by the time I got to matric I was back on track, I was able to really understand my potential...”(P5)

The discovery of potential created an awareness that the participant could achieve more than they previously expected. Being aware of their potential created confidence in the participant's own ability. This allowed the participant to take on new opportunities and work towards changing their current circumstance. This related back to self-awareness.

5.3.3.1.2 Self-aware

The leaders had a sense of self-awareness through knowing what they wanted, and did not want. This enables them to make a decision that could change the direction they were heading towards.

Participant Five had an awareness of what was required to contribute towards change circumstance. Self-awareness enabled action with a reflection, that the participant was required to do something to change their situation.

*“...I knew that I needed to do more- I wanted to do more, I wanted to start earning money and **contribute** to bringing everyone at home a level up and that kind of thing...”(P5)*

Participant 12 realised an area where they had a lack of knowledge, this awareness enabled the participant to seek out opportunity to grow that knowledge or find alternative ways to contributing to substitute for the lack of knowledge. The participant's awareness enabled actions and contributed towards the participant's confidence.

*“...the third defining moment that was a wake-up call because as Finance you are king of your castle I came to HR, **I knew nothing...**”(P12)*

“...I think for me it was good, it was a good defining learning moment, you could always learn something new, you could always do something new...”(P12)

Self-awareness is an enabler of change, and it was driven by the participant’s need to contribute towards a current situation.

5.3.3.1.3 Decisive

When facing difficulties and challenging moments, the participants were expected to make a decision. These decisions enabled change from their current norms of life.

Participation One felt the pressure of the situation and drove them to make a decision. The presence of pressure triggered the decision making.

*“... **I decided I can't take this.** So, I've got one option, I either run away. If I stay in South Africa, they put me in jail or I'll leave the country or **I put my hand up ...and I'll be a leader,** which I duly did...” (P1)*

Participation Three realised that something had to change and this triggered them to make a decision. They evaluated their circumstances against their desired state.

*“...**I decided no, I'm not going to progress much further here...** I'm going to move and I got this great idea that I was going to move to, one, another company and two, it was not going to be my future...”(P3)*

The participant’s decisions were triggered by a need for change. The decisions were made in evaluation of current circumstances.

5.3.3.1.4 Change

The participants underwent change that was triggered by their crucible experiences. The change resulted in the participants becoming better, and embracing the difficulties they faced. Their experience brought about change in their approach.

Participant One had resistance working with a foreigner, however, by embracing it they were able to learn from it. It changed from a challenge to an opportunity to learn.

*“...I **learned so much** from that guy in four years, it’s unbelievable, and I then promised myself that every co-ordinator, doesn’t matter how bad they are, I will learn something from them. And **I will embrace** the Japanese...”(P1)*

Participant Eight experienced growth from a difficult situation. A change occurred from feeling that their professionalism was questioned, to acknowledging that they experienced growth in the same area.

*“...and I **became a better** professional as a result of going through that experience. I wouldn’t wish that experience on anybody, but I do believe that I came out stronger...”(P8)*

The participant’s experienced change going through the crucible. They overcame their own views of the situation, and when they went through it, they realised and improved. The participants needed resilience to challenge and get through the crucible experience. This, themselves, gave the opportunity to change some, and develop themselves.

5.3.3.1.5 Learning

Through the narration of the crucible experience, the participants identified various opportunities for learning. The learning led to self-improvement and opportunity for application of skills.

*“...And for me that was a great, **big learning opportunity**. It really **allowed me some freedom to apply myself** and I really enjoyed it...”(P5)*

*“...I thought what a great **opportunity to learn** form the best. Again, I think that goes back to my early days of always **wanting to continuously improve myself**. I wanted to learn more, I was curious, I was eager to always learn more and when the opportunity came up to work for Toyota. I took it...”(P6)*

Learning was found to be common across all the participants' experiences. The participants expressed and desired to learning, and an understanding of the value of the learning in the leader journey.

In addition to the themes identified, two of the participants drew on their faith as a source for strength when facing their crucibles. Their faith provided opportunities for the participants and supported the participant in getting through a crucible.

"...So, I would say that my Christian beliefs are fundamental in recognising that there are some doors that you need to take advantage of and that was a good example of a door that was open to me that I took advantage of to get a better education..."(P6)

"...And also, a family that have a strong spiritual depth to it, which I have continued in my life, which I think to a large degree has enabled me to deal with a lot of crises and setbacks..."(P10)

The leader identity development theme consisted of five categories; potential, decisive, self-awareness, change and learning, all of which contributed to the development of the leader's identity through their life journey. The discovery of potential developed confidence in the participant's own ability. Crucible experiences resulted in participants' self-awareness, which created the impetus to make decisions to change. Lastly, a commonality between all the participants is the emphasis on learning from the crucible moments.

In the context of getting through the crucible experience, as outlined in figure 2, the participants relayed the need for resilience and self-awareness, regardless of the type of crucible they experienced. To get through the crucible experiences, the participants received support from others while having to reflect and rely on their resilience. Their competitive nature was related back to resilience, while discovering their potential and self-awareness supported the leader's development of confidence. The evolving nature of leadership identity development was narrated through participants' recounting of their crucible experiences.

Research question one asked how leaders narrate the crucible experiences in their lives that shaped them as leaders. The narration included the type of crucible experience and how the leader got through it. The finding of the results in six categories support the theme of leader identity development. Positioning leader identity to guide the participant in getting through the crucible experience. The leader’s identity was also developed through the experience.

5.3.3.2 Theme 2: Motivation to overcome challenges

The categories developed from the analysis are determined, aspiration, inspiration, competitive. These categories formed part of the theme motivation to overcome challenges as presented in table four below.

Table 4: Theme 2 codes and categories

Categories	Theme
Determined	Motivation to Overcome Challenges
Aspiration	
Inspiration	
Survival	
Competitive	

5.3.3.2.1 Determined

The participants had a determination to achieve something and this allowed them to focus both on the results, and what was needed to achieve the result.

*“...I was incredibly hot-headed, hardcore, direct, **results-driven**, no-one could stand in my way about results and just drove here so hard...”(P3)*

*“...I got into army and I thought **I’m going to do this**. I’m going to go and get the best job I can there...”(P3)*

*“...but certainly there were some experiences that shaped my hunger for **wanting to do better** and wanting to change my situation because I realised that this is not me and this is not where I should be...”(P5)*

*“...you put in all the **hard work**, in your early 30’s you know do the long hours...”(P8)*

5.3.3.2.2 Aspiration

The participants presented a sense of being determined to achieve progress and form aspiration in their journey. These aspirations varied along the journey, with some being the need to learn something, to the need to contribute.

*“...I **knew** seven years ago I **wanted** to be in this office...”(P1)*

“...I had an aspiration perhaps to move on up and I wanted to be exposed to those first, before ever fulfilling that aspiration...”(P9)

5.3.3.2.2 Inspiration

The journey was also shaped by the inspiration they were exposed to, and this could be from the participant's parents, mentors or those who assisted them on their journey.

“...my mother didn’t study and every time when I go home, she just wanted me to teach her how to write her name, so that was guiding me to say, “You know, I want to go to school because when I come home, I need to get my mother to write her name...”(P4)

*“...80% wasn't good enough because **my dad’s view of me** was always you must do what your ability...”(P8)*

“...I just felt the inspiration that there’s a difference I could make with the skill that I’ve learnt...”(P9)

5.3.3.2.3 Survival

The instinct of survival becomes prevalent when going through the crucible as the participant felt that they had no other option. This could be driven by the motivation to achieve more, or by the circumstances that created a need for something different to emerge.

*“...And for me, that was a very adult role that I suddenly had to take up, which I don't think I was mature enough at the time, **but I didn't have a choice.**”(P2)*

*“...I'm really **going to lose my family** if I don't do something.” And I got to a crossroads, and I thought, “**I've got to do something** now and get back my sanity...”(P3)*

“...but I realised leaders need to know when to step up. And even in a very, very volatile situation how to make the judgement, responsibly take action and from that point in time that's another lesson that we learnt that there are times where you have to step up, and you have to stand up as a person...”(P7)

5.3.3.2.4 Competitive

The category of competitive, found that sports played an important role in the leader journey, it created an opportunity for the participant to take responsibility for a team. Six participants made reference to sports in their life story, and one participant made reference to being competitive with no indication of participating in sports. Participant Three developed a competitive nature through participating in sports. This allowed the participants to develop resilience and challenge themselves to achieve more.

*“.... So, very **competitive upbringing**. I did martial arts for probably... So, very competitive. ...so I was incredibly, incredibly competitive...So, I've got that tendency to push and I try and **push boundaries** to try and get to the next level...”(P3)*

Participant Nine had a drive to compete and took the responsibility to challenge themselves. They took onus onto themselves to do better.

*“...And you think no, no. You **want to compete**. For me, I compete a lot. I **don't just sit back**. I wasn't taught that. So, I'm not going to do anything. I'm going to sit back. I'm not that kind of a person. I want to know, right...”(P9)*

Competition shaped the leader's identity and their aptitude to facing challenges. Resilience was evidenced in all the participants' narration, and helped the participants face the challenges presented. This creates a linkage of competitiveness to resilience, and the responsibility the participants took to better themselves.

Through the crucible moments, leaders narrated how they needed to change, and how they became stronger as they rose to overcome the challenges they faced. These changes were typically viewed as a journey through which the leaders discovered something new about themselves while dealing with difficulties. In the first theme, leader identity developed as a result of the experience and supported getting through the experience.

In theme two, motivation to overcome challenges consisted of five categories; determined, aspiration, inspiration and survival. The motivation to overcome challenges was narrated as the need to focus on the desired results and enabled leaders to act in alignment with them. Being competitive enabled the participants to challenge themselves to achieve more. This theme contributes towards to insights gained from the leader's narration of the crucible moments.

5.3.4 Key insights for research question one

Research question one asked how leaders narrate the crucible experiences in their lives that shaped them as leaders. The narration included the type of crucible experience and how the leader got through them. The finding of the results is presented in two themes, of leader identity development and motivation to overcome challenges.

The overall research question is, how crucible experiences in a leader's life journey influence the way they lead in a crisis. The analysis of the types of crucible experiences and getting through the crucible experiences, positions crucible experiences as an opportunity for learning, and the development of leader identity, as well as a catalyst for motivation to overcome these challenges.

5.4 Research question two

Research question two asked how leaders find meaning of their crucible experiences. Meaning refers to the way the participants make sense of their experience and the impact it has their leadership journey. The interview questions required the leaders to reflect on both the positive and negative influence of their crucible experiences.

The analysis of the positive and negative influences is interested on how the participants make meaning of their experiences, and how it contributed to them as leaders. The starting point of the analysis is classifying the different positive and negative influences. This is followed by more detailed analysis of the contribution it had on their leadership journey. The contribution is presented through categories and themes identified in the analysis. The section ends with key insights and the contribution towards answering the research question.

5.4.1 Positive and negative influences of crucible moments

The analysis of the positive and negative influences was carried out using the responses provided to the interview questions in section two of the interview guide. An analysis was done on the number of participants that had positive influences and negative influences. All 13 participants had positive influences and only 11 of the 13 participants had negative influences, as seen in the table below.

Although 11 participants encountered negative influences, seven of the 11 participants added that they learnt something positive from the negative influences. The detail of the positive and negative influences have been categorised.

Table 5: Positive and negative influences

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	Total
Positives	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	100%
Negatives	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	85%

5.4.1.1 Negative influences

The negative influences are categorised into work-life imbalance, learning bad management style, career setbacks, and compromise.

5.4.1.1.1 Work-life imbalance

Working through a crucible experience can cause neglect in other areas of the leader's life as they focusing on working through a difficult situation. Although this may be temporary while in a crucible, it could have lag effects on their work -life balance.

Self-neglect was observed from participant two while working through a crucible experience. The participant failed to take care of their health and it effected their work -life balance.

*"...I **neglected to look after myself**, vitamins, all of that jazz and I ended up dehydrated, and I spent two nights in hospital. So, I think for me that took a lot in terms of my family life. **My kids were unrooted, and I think I'm still paying for the over-commitment...**"(P2)*

Participant Nine felt an imbalance as their focus was shifted on working through the crucible experience. This had a possible impact on other areas in the participant's life.

"...I wouldn't say this impacted me negatively but I had a really tough time dealing with it and maybe some aspects of my life took a backseat which was maybe not appropriate..."(P9)

5.4.1.1.2 Learning bad leadership style

The participant had been exposed to others leadership styles and found themselves demonstrating the same leadership style. Sometimes during a crucible, leaders adapt behaviours that may not necessarily be deemed appropriate.

*"...I **also learnt the bad**. I feel like after those two years and after I moved on, at times, that kind of management style would come out from me as well. Fortunately, I was able to identify that trend, I found that at times where the*

pressure was high and when I felt that people were not listening, I would lose it, and I was like that for a while, that was the negative influence..."(P5)

5.4.1.1.3 Career setbacks

Crucible experiences can be presented as a setback based on the leaders' perception. Participant Six had experienced a career set back, although the change would ultimately result in a positive. The participant's experience felt like a setback in their development path.

"...it kind of felt like step backwards and what I didn't know was that I was actually, well I kind of did know but I never took anything for granted. I was actually there to be there for a short period of time to replace this individual..."(P6)

5.4.1.1.4 Compromise

Participants had observed some negative behaviours in situations they, and had to make a compromise. Participant Four made a decision that they believed was in the best interest to resolve a problem, however, others did not agree with the decision. The decision was not changed and the negative resulted with conflicting views.

"...you're supposed to support this localisation, they don't do this because it isn't in their interest but in reality, they should be doing this..."(P4)

Participant 11 found themselves in a position where they had to compromise what they believed was right, other than having a stronger influence on the decision making.

"...what it is, is you then have to compromise on process, you have to compromise on a procedure..."(P11)

Leaders have to make decisions that will enable them to work through crucible experiences, when these decisions are influenced by other, it may result in a negative influence. The negative influence creates a compromise against the leader's views, or it can create tension between themselves and others with opposing views.

Two of the participants indicated that they had no negative influences.

"...Negative influence..., I didn't think about that. Can we move onto another question so long?.."(P9)

*"...I can't, I'll be honest with you **I can't think of anything**, for me, maybe I've said in some point or time I may be angry, I may think of things but it doesn't at the end change the way I respond, I may go into my shell sometimes, I may become quiet, I may sometimes just obstinate but eventually I kick out of it, I default back to myself, so I don't know, I don't think there will be anything I would say that has had a negative impact..."(P12)*

5.4.1.2 Negative influence that led to learning

The participants below made reference to the positive influences that arose from the initial negative influence. It was initially positioned as a negative influence, but transformed as an opportunity for learning. The leader's self-awareness and reflection allowed them to gain learning from the negative influences.

*"...So, it's actually **quite a negative thing** not to speak out but at the same time, **I had to teach myself** again to speak out but speak out with, in a manner that you do not offend anybody. Speak out in a manner that comes across positively, speak out in a manner that shows humility not arrogance..."(P7)*

*"...I don't know, **is it ever negative**, if it's **probably learning**, because you'll learning from that negative item..."(P8)*

*"...I don't know, **is it ever negative**, if it's **probably learning**, because you'll learning from that negative item hey, so you know..."(P9)*

*"...So, I say it is almost like a timeline to these things, so I'd say immediately afterwards **there is an immediate negative influence** but further down the line with more perspective and more also reflection, **they convert themselves to positive influences...**"(P13)*

5.4.1.3 Positive influences

The positive influences were categorised into learning and validation of leader identity. The lessons learnt are different for each participant however contributes towards their ability as a leader.

5.4.1.3.1 Learning

The crucible experience provided the participants with an opportunity to learn. Participant One discovered the value of collaboration. It is possible they possessed the competence, however, the application of the competence allowed the participant to understand the value of the competence.

“...the lesson I learned through that whole thing is how important and how powerful collaboration can be...”(P1)

Participant Seven realised that they learned through the crucible experience when they had the opportunity to apply their learning.

*“...While it was the **toughest thing** being done and not realising the value of what I was achieving there, what **I was learning** there. The realisation for me only came after when I returned here...”(P7)*

5.4.1.3.2 Validation of leader identity

Through the crucible experience leaders have a moment where they realise the contribution and value they add. This contributes towards the self-awareness of the understanding of their capability.

In Participants One's experience they had a moment where they were able to realise the value they contributed toward getting through the crucible.

*“.... And when I went back to the hotel that night, it was like and it's probably maybe quite a childish moment, but the **people listened to me**. It was my idea and they listened to me...”(P1)*

Participants had a realisation that they had the ability to do more, and the experience allowed them to see themselves differently.

“...and that resonated with me because I was putting a cap on myself and someone else was actually seeing it differently to what I saw and that was another defining moment for me because it allowed me to reflect and look at my own career and think about where did I actually need to develop further and what areas did I actually have to learn and understand and develop more...”(P6)

Participant 12 was placed in an experience where they became aware of a gap, and as they focused on the area where they could contribute, and they developed sense of value.

“...So, eventually, it became, I became an integral part, from being on the outside of knowing and through the awareness campaign and my daily notes to the team, building my own confidence by now, playing that role, I started getting accepted into the team and to such an extent, people started coming, we have our caucus, okay, what should we do if we do this, if we do that. Now, the confidence comes in, okay I am starting to add value here...”(P12)

Participant 13 had a moment of realising the progress and improvements.

“...you know I am a better person for this and I like myself and I like who I am, I like the way I communicate with people and speak to them, I like myself better. That’s when I realised it had a positive influence, I like myself more now than I did then...”(P13)

The participant experienced both positive and negative influences from their crucible experiences. Although the participant identified a few negative influences, they related it back to something that was learnt through those experiences. There were instances where the participant’s experiences started with a negative influence, but overtime it was transformed into a positive influence.

To gain a better understanding of the meaning of the positive and negative influences of the crucibles experiences data was analysed, coded and clustered into various categories to develop themes. The analysis of both the positive and negative influences are presented through the themes identified.

5.4.2 Themes identified from the second research question

The analysis of the second research question responses focused on the meaning of the leader's experiences and the impact it had on their leadership journey. The categories which related to the themes are presented in a table format in the discussion of each theme. The codes that were used to formulate the categories are provided in appendix D.

5.4.2.1 Theme 3: Transformative Learning

The theme in research question two is transformative learning. The participants realised the value of the crucible experiences they encountered as a learning opportunity. They narrate their experiences including the value of the positive and negative influences on their present self. Theme Transformative Learning has five categories which are; change in thinking, active learning, self-management reframing and transition. The categories are presented in the table. Insights, supported by quotes are provide for each category.

Table 6: Theme 3 codes and categories

Categories	Theme
Change in thinking	Transformative Learning
Active learning	
Self-management	
Reframing events	
Transition	

5.4.2.1.1 Change in thinking

The participants made reference to a change in their thinking when considering different views in their decision-making process. Despite that it may be difficult to make decisions which will have a direct impact on the participants personal lives, it is needed to enable them to move forward pass the crucible.

Participant Four had an experience that change their thinking way.

"...that created a huge mindset change transformation change in such a way..."(P4)

Participant One had to make a decision during a crucible experience, and makes reference to it when considering to make another decision.

“...I then went back and this is post-91. 91 was when I made the decision. I went back and I revisited whether I wanted to be here and whether I didn't want to be here....”(P1)

Participant Six utilised what he had experienced through the crucible to inform the way they treat others.

“...I think it's also helped me in my leadership style because I don't put a cap on people. I think that everybody has the potential to do great things...”(P6)

5.4.2.1.2 Active learning

Participants became aware that they need to continue learning, this allowed them to engage in a learning opportunity. The crucible allowed the participants to understand the value of the learning, and they continue to see the need to learn.

“...since that incident, has been my learning course, to try to go through options and influence minds way before it gets to a crisis level...”(P9)

“...Those multiple challenges I think contributed positively to my abilities as a plant manager...”(P5)

Participant Four had to be proactive to change the mindset of others around them.

*“...So that's how I realised that I'm being **proactive** and not reactive to what they were doing, they still had to change their mind because they realised that I caught them...”(P4)*

5.4.2.1.3 Self-management

Through the crucible experience, leaders had a better sense of self-awareness, and this could provide the leaders with the opportunity to manage themselves better. Participant 12 learnt to manage their responses to situations, and rather focused on the outcome they intended to achieve.

“... it brings a bit of calmness, so it’s almost, you’ve got to understand and accept realisation, what can you control and what can’t you control, and if you know what you can control then how do you focus on it...”(P12)

5.4.2.1.4 Reframing events

Reframing occurs when there’s a change in perspective of a situation. Although the crucible experience can be associated with negative influence, Participant 13 noted that it transitioned into a positive over time.

*“...So, I say it is almost like a timeline to these things, so I’d say immediately afterwards there is an immediate negative influence but further down the line with **more perspective** and more also reflection, they convert themselves to positive influences...”(P13)*

Participant Eight added that it may not have appeared as positive initially, and that it contributed towards learning.

“...you don’t think it’s positive but in the end it was positive and you’ve overcome all those things...”(P8)

“...I don’t know, is it ever negative, if it’s probably learning, because you’ll learning from that negative item hey...”(P8)

Participant 10 encountered a crucible that was initially viewed negatively.

“...because it sounds like there’s a positive out of it, but, I think, that was a very— yeah, at the time I saw as a very big setback for me...”(P10)

5.4.2.1.5 Transitional

Crucible experience has allowed for a transition to occur. Through the narration, the participant described the changes they identified.

*“...**calmed me down, made me more approachable.** I’m doing a lot more coaching than I’ve probably ever done before and assisting people and giving some tips along the way...”(P3)*

Participant Six had understood the value others had on their experience, and this led them to start contributing towards others. In this transition, the participant was mindful of their experience and slightly changed their approach.

“...So, to me that was a critical moment in my career because I knew the same thing as the other people but I made sure that I had that conversation with them. I told them the reason at I’m going to push you harder, the reason why I’m going to maybe make your life a little bit more difficult is because I really believe that you have the potential to progress...”(P6)

Although some of the experiences may have been negative, the leaders learnt from the moment and its transition into positive overtime. This created room for change to occur as they discovered a need for something different. The leaders also identified their current situation might not lead toward their desired state and enable change. Through the process, they built confidence in who they were and their ability to manage difficult situations.

5.4.3 Key insights for research question two

Research question two asked how leaders make meaning of the crucible experience in their lives. Through the crucible moments, leaders reflected on the positive and negative influences that contributed towards their leadership journey. Although there were both positive and negative influences, the participants had positioned it as an opportunity to learn.

In theme three, transformative learning consisted of three categories, change in thinking, active learning and self-management. Transformative learning is interpreted as a learning opportunity that results in a change. This theme contributes towards the insights gained from the meaning extracted from the crucible experiences.

The overall research question is how crucible experiences in a leader's life journey influence the way they lead in a crisis. The analysis of the positive and negative influences of the crucible experience provides insights on how crucible experiences contributed towards leader's journey.

5.5 Research question three

Research question three is how leaders use lessons learnt from these challenging or difficult moments in the way they lead in a crisis. The participants were asked to describe their approach while leading in a crisis situation, while reflecting on how the approach was formed.

Understanding the participants' approach to manage crisis, that is used to gain insight of the outcomes which could be expected from leaders in a time of crisis. The participants' reflection on how their approach to leading in crisis was formed, will be analysed through the categories and themes identified. The section ends with key insights and the contribution towards answering the research question.

5.5.1 Crisis management framework

The participants' narration of their approach to manage a crisis was analysed using the literature review in section 2.4. Participants referred to points from the framework, and the graph below provides an indication of the number of participants that applied each task. This analysis created a base on which to evaluate the way the leaders approach managing through crisis.



Figure 3: Crisis framework applied by participants

5.5.1.1 Early recognition

Participant 13 displayed early recognition when dealing with a covid crisis in the workplace, she became aware of the anxiety of her staff when a manager tested positive, and this drove her into action. Early recognition was when she realised that

people were feeling anxious and that it was the response of the people that caused a crisis.

"...So, I think covid has been, I think this covid crisis has been a crisis for everyone, you know there just been the general anxiety around the lockdown, being able to see family, etc, which for me wasn't a crisis, but became sort of, the covid crisis,.."(P13)

5.5.1.2 Sense making

Eight of the 13 participants recounted the way they applied sense-making when leading a crisis. Leaders unpacked the information gathered through various ways and ultimately allowed them to understand the situation better.

*"...I go up **and I assess something** and I tend to go, okay— I didn't talk much. I just go up and I assess something as for what the crisis is and **start making judgments** in my head what has to happen..." (P3)*

*"...**take the information** that's available to you and take the different scenarios and decide on an approach and follow through..."(P7)*

5.5.1.3 Making critical decisions

During the interviews, when describing their approach to crisis management, only five participants mentioned decision making explicitly.

*"...managing the Covid-19 crisis for me was very important, to **take very quick, decisive decisions** early on and how to balance getting everybody involved and how to— need for quick decisions. Because if you don't make quick decisions in a crisis, you can create a lot of uncertainty and uneasiness..."(P10)*

*"...sometimes you can wait it out a bit, sometimes the, the end result is not going to be as bad as what you think, sometimes you've got to **make smaller decisions more frequently** and big, massive decisions at once because once you make those big massive decisions and it doesn't go the way you think..."(P8)*

5.5.1.4 Orchestrating vertical and horizontal coordination

Participants referred to having central control while leading a crisis, this includes understand the stakeholder involved, and creating alignment for action required.

"...And creating a control centre, creating a control room, creating a war room, creating a project room is key for any crisis. Because if you don't have a central control, where people can be leaders can come together, report, take back instruction you will not be able to overcome a crisis. You got to have that kind of structure..."(P7)

"...you have to lead your own organisation, your people, you have to lead those who are out striking, and you have to lead your customers and your suppliers. ...So, all the stakeholders, other stakeholders, which need to be managed and communicated with..."(P9)

5.5.1.5 Coupling and decoupling

Four participants had mentioned the element of understanding and creating a picture or connecting the dots. It is the key reason they ask questions because they wanted to understand what something means. This allows them to understand the situation and the linkage it has through the organisation.

"...it allows you to put things into perspective and to then say, "Okay. I've got five options available here. I've got five keys, but I'll only be able to open one door and then I've got to live with it. Which one?..."(P2)

"... I'm trying to understand and understand if I can connect dots. If I can't connect dots then there's something that I think is wrong and we need to go and look deep and maybe there's nothing wrong..."(P8)

5.5.1.6 Meaning-making

The process of meaning-making did not come through strongly, only two participants had displayed this in their crisis management approach. Although communication is aligned to meaning-making, there was not much mention of trying to interpret the situation so that they could communicate effectively, or navigate others through the crisis. The leaders were clear on the need to keep everyone informed, but there was

no mention of how to best explain the information in a way that could be understood by others.

Two participants allude to meaning-making, and this was presented in the way that the objectives needed to be clearly understood so they could be explained to others. When being questioned on it, there would be enough clarity to provide the answers.

"...I think what's very clear is in these crisis moments is that to understand what objective is and what your goal is and to ensure that that goal or objective is based on also what's the right thing to do so that you can ethically answer to it and is it for the best result of the organisation and shareholders and the employees and when I say ethically, I mean, is it the right thing to do by the employees as well as all the other stakeholders..." (P8)

"...you take control of a crisis in a crisis management situation and you do put down what your next steps are and you tabulate...(P3)

It described using the information to create a picture through making meaning of the information provided. This would then help to explain what needs to get done.

"...take all that knowledge that we do have from the network and I start compiling a picture, if you want to call it that, in terms of what the organisation needs to do from a response point of view..."(P11)

5.5.1.7 Communication

The importance of communication was expressed by participants in two ways. The first was focused on engaging with employees or stakeholders involved, to keep them informed. The other was informal discussions with employees to understand if they are okay, and gauge what their anxieties might be.

"...The second big building block for me in times of crisis was communication. So, needing to be decisive in terms of decisions, but needing to be very quick and transparent in terms of communication. And so, we set up all the T-talk videos and we sent out lots of communication, which we had never done

before. And even if we didn't know all the facts, say we don't know all the facts, but this is what we know..."(P10)

"...I mean the, the making sure that you talk to everybody you engage with them, you have smaller groups, talking to them, giving him a platform for their voice, explaining yourself as well. I'm not talking about formal communication of I'm talking about the informal communication that needs to happen because people have different fears to what you have and you wouldn't know what those fears are until you engage with them..."(P8)

5.5.1.8 Rendering accountability

Leaders rely on their team to take responsibility for the action items to agree to manage the crisis. Tasks are assigned, and control through the dashboards, or a visualisation created to address the situation.

"...It's how to understand what are those deliverables, what are those milestones, and what do you need to achieve through that crisis that you're currently faced with and then, try and assemble a team of individuals that'll support you, that'll work with you or work around you to deliver on that or deliver through that crisis..."(P7)

"...you need to rely on lots of ears on the ground and you need to rely on a lot of input. And you need to obviously let the areas that are experts run those areas themselves..."(P10)

5.5.1.9 Learning

Although learning is a theme that came through when leaders explained the crucible experience, only four participants mention it in their crisis management approach.

*"...I think **you should try this and then try this and try this.**" And as long as they're adaptable to listen and we don't step in and then take over from them again, they'll learn..."(P3)*

*“...So, what I would say is **that taking advantage of any type of crisis to learn and to learn** has always been a good opportunity, it’s always been a blessing in disguise...” (P6)*

There was also mention of doing a post mortem, which is a process where you reflect on the actions taken in the crisis, and that creates room for learning on how to handle or manage the next crisis.

*“...We often do a post mortem on any project on any item, I think **that’s a good learning exercise** for all of us because when everything has calmed down, now I’m going to explain what happened with the strike right, this is what we did, this is what caused it, this is how we are going to deal with it in the future...”(P12)*

“...sometimes you can reflect back on them afterwards and say, “That was a stupid decision. I shouldn’t have done that.” And you can look back afterwards and go, “I should have done this thing slightly differently. I could have a different result.”(P3)

5.5.1.10 Enhancing resilience

Participants made mention of being able to respond quickly, adapt, and being able to move swiftly. You have to make a decision, and at times it may not be the right decision, but you have to be able to quickly realise, that this might not have been the right decision and fix it quickly, and move on to the next decision.

“...And I think that’s where it comes from and I think it’s having that mind-set that crisis, if you manage it correctly, is a short space. You’ve just got to work through it very, very quickly and it will go away...”(P3)

“...If it’s the wrong decision, you’ve got to fix it very, very quickly, but you’ve got to understand what you have to do to at least take one step. The minute you’ve got a little bit of momentum, you can build on that momentum...”(P3)

*“...Being able to **go with the flow**, being able to go with what people are thinking, being able to go with the situation. It helps your processing of the*

situation to **be a little bit more responsive to what's happening at the time**. Don't be rigid. Yes, there'll be times when you need to be rigid but sometimes you've got to be like a chameleon. Make a deal so that you can move on. Be flexible. Be rigid when it calls for it..."(P2)

5.5.2 Additional points mention in crisis management

5.5.2.1 Remain calm

The ability to remain calm or separate yourself from the situation was mentioned in a few responses. It was mentioned that if you 'are anxious as a leader, everybody else will be anxious because everybody else is looking to the leader. It is important for leaders to be objective to separate their emotion from the situation and to remain calm. Participants raised the point that clear thinking happens when they are calm.

*"...I think for me it's **mastering the ability to remain calm** and to realise that, as a leader, everyone's looking at you for the answers. And because everyone's looking at you for the answers, **I found that my best thinking I do it when I'm calm...**"(P2)*

All the participants made reference to some part of the crisis management framework, supporting its relevance. This creates a good base on which to further evaluate the way leaders can develop their ability to manage in crisis.

5.5.2.2 Be present

Being present was described as being accessible to employees during a time of crisis. The leader should be seen as leading the followers through the crisis. Their presence creates confidence in the leader and provides comfort to the team while navigating through the situation.

"...Because we're in a crisis at the moment. We're not through Covid and people need to see me at work. And you just see me in the offices and you see me on the shop floor, so they feel it's safe. How would it be if I were sitting at home every day, working from home and expecting them to go to work and work in the office or work in the plant? It's not right." It's something I learned there and then. I need to be with my people..."(P1)

5.5.2.3 Prioritise

To manage a crisis, it is essential to prioritise activity, a lot is expected, and there needs to be realisation that not everything can be done at once.

“...I was able to prioritise, you can’t do everything and you can’t fix everything, and so I made sure that my team understood what the priorities were...” (P5)

5.5.2.4 Motivating followers

There was mention of motivating individuals through crisis and sharing the understanding that the processes are hard, but you need people to work with you through the crisis. The leaders require support to navigate through the crisis, and motivation may be low when followers are not able to see the way through the crisis. Motivating the team through the crisis may assist the leaders in gaining the support required from the followers.

*“...What I’m learning more recently is getting the people to understand the significance of motivated people in the time of crisis, and understanding that **it’s my responsibility to make sure that people stay motivated**. The way I handle people during the crisis is changing, and I believe now more than ever that the **leadership style needs to be more people centric and motivational...**”(P5)*

5.5.2.6 People first

During a crisis, the leaders emphasised the importance of putting people first; five participants explicitly mentioned this while others made reference to the well-being of employees through their explanation of managing the crisis.

“... My default was first to worry about the people and that’s always my default...”(P1)

5.5.3 Themes identified from the third research question

Through the analysis of the third research question, there is a focus on the codes and categorising them into themes on the way participants adopted their approach to manage in crisis. Two themes were identified, step up in a crisis and applied learning. The insights from these themes are described below.

5.5.3.1 Theme 5: Step up

During a time of crisis, leaders are required to step up and take control of the situation. It showed up as the leaders take responsibility for the situation but also refer to the emergence of a different version of the leader. The leaders further explained that exposure to crisis is what allows an individual to learn how to manage a crisis.

Table 7: Theme 5 codes and categories

Categories	Theme
Responsive to emerging context	Step up to the crisis

“...And it’s only from making mistakes and thinking...”(P2)

“...I thrive on crisis management. It’s my make-up. It’s my adrenaline rush...”(P3)

“...So, I suppose, less past experience with more logical thinking and, yeah, just logically thinking through what are the steps or what needs to be done and actually making sure that— and a logical draw down, what are all the steps that could be followed and what are all the people that need to know? So, less from a past experience. More from logical thinking, I’d say...”(P11)

5.5.3.2 Theme 6: Applied experience

The participant had learned their approach to crisis management from previous experiences. These experiences are from the previous crisis or crucible moments. The leaders applied various skills and competencies from the crisis management framework. The experiences helped to shape the leader's way of thinking, relying on logical thinking. The leader draws on their past experience, and also create an opportunity from the current crisis in preparation for what could come next.

Table 8: Theme 6 codes and categories

Categories	Theme
Way of thinking	Applied experience
Experience	

5.5.3.2.1 Draw on past experiences

Through the interviews 11 participants agreed that they formed their approach of leading through crisis from their previous experiences in crises or through crucible moments. One participant advised that it is more about logical thinking than past experiences, as they have not previously encountered a crisis similar to the one explained.

One participant expressed that their approach to leading in crisis was more logical rather than by experiences.

“...So, I suppose, less past experience with more logical thinking and, yeah, just logically thinking through what are the steps or what needs to be done and actually making sure that— and a logical draw down, what are all the steps that could be followed and what are all the people that need to know? So, less from a past experience. More from logical thinking, I’d say...”(P11)

Participants also mentioned the importance of learning from past experience. If a leader was not exposed to a crisis before, they can understand whether others in the organisation have gone through a similar crisis and lean on that knowledge and understanding. This enables them to have confidence that they’re able to make it through.

“...So that’s what made me think in my mind that this is a crisis and I was able to draw a lot from my learning through other experiences and I think the results were okay, good in fact...”(P5)

“...When you have a crisis or you have a problem, every one of those is like the end of the world and now that’s not the way I look at them, now I’ve gone through so many of them that its more about the opportunity that they present. So, it’s

almost like I can now physically pull myself away from the problem and see it from above and then manage the crisis through that visual as opposed to being in the middle of it...”(P6)

“...first of all, because I've had a lot of challenging times, I think, unfortunately one can only be a good leader in the crisis if you've had many crises. [laughter] Unfortunately, we wish it wouldn't work like that, but unfortunately it does, and I've had a lot...”(P10)

5.5.3.2.2 Learning from others experience

Participants also made reference to learning from others experiences, specifically in instances where leader hadn't encountered crises before.

“...So, being able to draw from other people's experiences and maybe also some of mine, and also being able to say in a calm, rational, analytical way, what is the way forward here...”(P2)

“...I've learned it through watching other people. I think there are a number of people intuitive, that have developed some very good role models on how to deal with crisis....”(P10)

“...you get a role model like Dr van Zyl that walks you through those people and you watch how calm yet firm he can be, one, that's a lesson is invaluable...”(P7)

5.5.4 Key insights from research question three

Research question three asked how leaders use lessons learnt from the crucible experience in the way they manage a crisis situation. The participants narrated their approach to managing a crisis and how they developed their approach. Two themes were formulated; step up in a crisis and applied experiences. Majority of the participants approach to crisis management was formulated from their past experiences or by observing other leaders' approach. Two participants had an opposing view that they drew on logic to inform their approach to crisis management.

The overall research question is how crucible experiences in a leader's life journey influence the way they lead in a crisis. The analysis of how the participants resulted in two themes, step up in crisis and applied experience. This provides insights on how leader's crisis management approach was formed.

6. DISCUSSION

The findings presented in chapter (5) is interpreted and discussed using the literature review in chapter (2) as a lens. The data collected through the life stories interviews of the executives are analysed to gain insights from their lived experiences. The insights support existing literature by contributing towards it and confirms findings already presented by scholars.

The discussion focuses on the insights gained from the five themes identified from the findings. The finding of research resulted in the formulation of five themes that will be discussed in detail, making reference to literature in chapter (2). The five themes are; leader identity, motivation to overcome challenges, transformative learning, step-up in crisis, and applied experienced.

The conceptual model is then discussed with the aim of providing answers to the overall research question. How do crucible experience in a leader's life journey influence the way they lead in a crisis?

2.7 Research question one

Research question one is how do leaders narrate the crucible experience in their lives that shaped them as leaders. The findings from research question one started with the analysis of the type of research questions and getting through the crucible experiences. The insights from the finding are first discussed, followed by a discussion of the themes identified for research question one.

2.7.1 Type of crucible experiences

The crucible moments can be a variety of situations, from the research conducted the experiences were categorised into financial, work-related, new environment, accident and trauma, and death of close relative or friend crucible experiences. These experiences set the context but what was common is the personal impact on the participants. There were examples of the parent's financial struggles, or situations within their career that they had no control over. These experiences became personal as they affected the self through the need and realization that there is a misalignment between their aspirational and the current reality. Given their

misalignment in the present circumstances, it creates a moment of turmoil. Leaders critically reflect on the self and are confronted with the realisation that their present situation is insufficient to realise their desired reality (Byrne et al., 2018). It could be the reason why no matter the difficulties they encountered, the leader never stopped wanting more or positioning themselves for the opportunity to grow throughout the different phase of forming their leader identity.

The research findings found that the type of crucible experiences generally had no influence on the value derived from the experience. This supports the literature provided by Bennis and Thomas (2002), that the type of crucible experience merely provides a context for the crucible experience. In addition to this finding, the crucible experiences that occurred at a younger age still presented a sense of self-awareness, resilience, and an opportunity for learning. In crucible experiences that occurred later in, the leaders were able to draw on previous experiences as a sense of inner strength.

Literature has presented crucible experiences as an opportunity to develop resilience, and that resilience is required to get through the crucible (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). However, the findings suggest that at a younger age, leaders displayed resilience, it is not clear how the leaders would have developed resilience. Leader identity has been noted to develop from childhood (Miscenko et al., 2017), it could be that resilience is also developed from childhood, however, more research is required on this. Although development from childhood was not cover in the scope of this research, it could have implication for the development of the leaders. Authors agree that to some degree inner strength and resilience may already exist prior to going through the crucible experience (Thomas, 2008). However, resilience was also developed on the crucible experience, as also noted by Byrne et al,(2018) and Thomas (2008).

Leaders expressed the value from the crucible experience is the opportunity it presented for learning. Through their experience, they faced negative emotion but took responsibility to change their circumstance for the better. These experiences concurred with the already established defining of crucible experiences.

Crucible moments has be termed to be a defining moments, and many leaders have made reference to this in their narration of their crucible experiences. These defining moments differed in magnitude, and could change the trajectory of the leader's path or result in learning new behaviour that improve them as leaders. The findings do not provide clarity of what the drivers could be that determine the impact of the crucible experience.

In summary, the type of crucible experiences provides context of the challenges and difficulties the participants faced. Although the experiences were diverse in nature, they all contributed towards a learning experience for the participants, who displayed a level of self-awareness and resilience to transition out of crucible experience. All the leaders gained value from the challenging and yet significant experiences they described. The participants learned from the experiences and were better equipped to deal with future difficulties, this is in line with the research done by Byrne et al (2018).

2.7.2 Getting through the crucible experience

2.7.2.1 Resilience

In the findings of the type of crucible experience, resilience emerged as a common insight. The same sentiment was carried in the findings on how leaders got through the crucible. Leaders drew on resilience to get through their crucible experience. Resilience has been positioned as inner strength this as suggested by Bennis and Thomas (2002). Thomas (2008) also states that leaders develop resilience through crucible experiences, supporting the idea that resilience is developed through difficult lived experiences.

Resilience was positioned as a trigger as the leaders faced the realisation that they needed to take action to change the circumstance. It is in the moment in where they also realized that they have the responsibility to determine their future. In the leader's stories they have all identified moments in which they realized that this was not for them. Knowing what they did not want, propelled them into doing something different to get them to a place of something that they want. They began to seek out opportunities to get them out of the circumstance that they have identified. The crucible moment and emotions associated with it, inspired action.

Resilience is then associated with a need to change the current circumstances and engages survival instinct. This supports the Teo et al., (2017) that the development of resilience is based on context and it provides leaders with the ability to push through a difficult situation.

Through the crucible moments, the leaders often learnt the ability to separate themselves from the situation (Thomas, 2008). This was observed from the research findings, although the individuals have gone through some challenging times, they always worked on the next goal. Going through something difficult requires a moment of deep reflection, for true learning to happen. The leaders had experienced such turmoil that led to them having no other option but to learn how to put their emotions aside. It meant that they became aware of their emotions and became aware that they needed to make some objective decisions to get out of the process.

In some situations, the experience placed the participants in a position where they felt they had no other option but to survive. This supports Elkington and Breen (2015), argument that leaders have to be exposed to a situation that has a significant impact on them in order to require resilience. Through this experience they realized that there are times when one has to put all emotion aside and focus on an object objective that needs to be achieved, through an example, the participant had to take a leading role.

This could shape the leader's approach in dealing with difficult circumstances in their careers. When faced with the scenario in the workplace, the leaders are able to observe their emotions and place them aside to deal with the situation they are presented with. The value of the crucible is realised after reflection happens, it not surviving it but learning from it. Going through these difficult moments provides a reference for the individual when facing other difficulties. Learning to navigate emotions prepares individuals to separate themselves from the situation and apply an objective, systematic approach to managing the situation.

2.7.2.2 Reflection

Reflection is required to make sense of the learning and cement the change that occurred (Byrne et al., 2018). To get through the crucible experience leaders often have to reflect. The reflection allows the leaders to have a better sense of self-

awareness. Understanding of their current situation and their own ability create room for change to happen. This was observed from the leader's narrations of their crucible experience. Self-efficacy is the confidence the leaders has in their own ability (Hadley et al., 2011). Better sense of self-awareness could thus be an enabler to develop self-efficacy.

The finding found that leaders needed to make decisions and take action to get through the crucible experience, and to this they need to be aware of the situation, their ability and what they need to change the situation. From the literature the crucible has been described to be a personal journey, requiring action from the person in crucible experience to change the circumstance (Thomas, 2008). This could then place importance on developing self-efficacy.

Leader development programmes often includes reflection as a means to help leaders to evaluate themselves and become aware of behaviours and thought patterns that may need change (Byrne et al., 2018).

Reflection after the crucible experience allowed the leaders an opportunity to recall the lesson they learnt from the crucible experience. This included making sense of the experience, and Ensher et al. (2017), added that leaders allow leaders to gain new insights. To make sense of the experience, the leaders had to recall the event and they were able to identify what actions they took to change the situation. Through the narration it was not always clear what action changed the circumstance, but all the leaders had to make a change. The value of crucible experience is as leaders narrate their experiences, they recall what they learnt as if it occurred recently. This support Thomas (2008) literature on crucible experience, as leaders recall lessons taught afresh as if it was recently experienced.

2.7.2.3 Help from others

In the analysis, eight of the participants received help from others who assisted them in getting through the crucible experience. The leaders need reflection and resilience to get through the crucible experience. This was common across all the participants, however, from the study not all the participants received helped from others. There is no clear indication of why some participant did not make reference to receiving help. In the instance where help was received, it was both solicited, and unsolicited.

Solicited help means the leader would have an understanding that they needed assistance. It is possible that other leaders felt equipped to deal with the crucible. Unsolicited help could also require a need for understanding that help was required, that could possibly only be understood after they received help. Leaders have also found that they learn from the lesson of the previous crucible experience. It could be that the leader learnt to seek for assistance in the process.

Receiving help from others provided an alternative view that either, the participant was not able to see, or they used the guidance to check their decision making. Delk (2016), suggested that the assistance of a coach assist the leader in reframing the event or guiding them to understand their own strength. This assistance did not always come from a coach or in formal structure. It arose from conversation with a friend or a leader. Thomas (2008), positioned receiving help informally from the assistance of friend or family. From the findings the assistance does not necessarily have to be provided in a formal approach, but rather should allow an opportunity for the leaders to see the situation from a different lens.

In summary to get through crucible experience the participant required resilience, reflection and help from others. The help received could be informal in nature, but allows an opportunity for the leaders to see the situation differently. Although not all participants made reference to receiving help, it contributed to the leaders approach to get through the crucible.

2.7.3 Theme 1: Leader Identity development

Two of the themes identified in the model are arising from the first research question. The leaders reflected on the significant moments that shaped their leadership journey. The leader identity development theme consisted of five categories; potential, decisive, self-awareness, change and learning, all of which contributed to the development of the leader's identity through their life journey. The findings presented through the themes are discussed in detail against existing literature.

2.7.3.1 Potential

Through the narration, the participants reflected on the moments they identified the potential to achieve something higher. It occurs through others expressing the potential they saw in them or through a moment when they realised, they are able to

achieve more than previously thought. Throughout the life stories, there were multiple moments when the participants had discovering their potential. There were two common moments of identity, and it started with the realisation that the participant could achieve more and had potential. This potential was either discovered by someone else or in a moment when the participant achieved something more than they previous thought they were capable of achieving. The second was leading by example, and understanding the responsibility associated with being in the front line pushes the individual to do more.

It was interesting to observe that the participants realised that they had the potential to do more. The realisation of this potential could be what motivates individuals to focus on their development. The participants found themselves in position where they knew, that this is not where they want to be. It propelled them into action and more toward something different. A few participants had goals with an idea of what they wanted to achieve, but most participants were focused on moving forward.

Identity from the research analysis can be described as the process when the participants realised something about themselves through self-awareness and thus support (Miscenko et al., 2017) view that leader's identity evolves from self-awareness.

2.7.3.2 Self-aware

The leaders had a sense of self-awareness through knowing what they wanted, and did not want. Self-awareness can evolve into leader's identity (Epitropaki et al., 2017). Through the finding it appears that one's self-identity is formed through a life journey, and all the experiences help to form the identity. The process of forming this identity evolves along the journey of shaping identity. These moments occurred early in their journey, in the young adult phase of their life. Self-awareness and learning that occurs through the crucible could contribute towards leaders shaping their identity as a leader. Miscenk et al (2017) suggested leader's identity is shaped through evaluation of the collection of knowledge and perceived behaviour against the perceived role of leader (Miscenko et al., 2017). As the leader gain self-awareness and improve on their capability they contribute towards developing their leader identity.

The identity was not necessarily that they saw themselves as leaders, but rather that they had these needs and want to achieve something. They wanted to explore this potential they discovered. This propelled the participants in the study to focus on academics and pursue education opportunities. They pursued opportunities to gain exposure and took on others responsibilities. The actions of the leaders lead then to exposure and growth on the corporate ladder. Thomas and Bennis (2002), contributed that leaders seek out opportunity to get through the crucible. This supports the work of Steel and Day (2018) that leaders who identified as leader would often seek out opportunity to develop themselves.

Self-awareness has been positioned as an enabler of change through the findings of the research. It enables leaders to make a decision that could change the direction they were heading towards. Barge (2018), suggested that to grow as a leader, change is needed, in this way the crucible experience could contribute towards the development of leader identity.

2.7.3.3 Decisive

When facing difficulties and challenging moments, the participants were expected to make a decision. These decisions enabled change from their current norms of life. Thomas (2008) stated that resilience enabled leaders to make decisions when faced with difficulties. The find revealed that leaders have to make decisions to enable to move pass the crucible experience.

Throughout the narration of the crucible experience, the participants made reference to their emotions and it became clear that they need to have a clear picture of the situation's context to make decisions. Kapucu and Ustun (2018), stated that a leader's emotional state can affect their decision making. The crucible experience create need for change and triggered decision making. Crucibles could be position as an opportunity to develop decision skills. Leaders reflected to gain self-awareness and their understanding of the situation enabled them to make decisions. Through self-awareness and focus on the change that need to happen, it is possible that leaders manage to be objective of their decision making. Developing the skill to make decision can then also be considered as a contributor to developing leader's identity.

2.7.3.4 Change

The participants underwent change that was triggered by their crucible experiences. The change resulted in the participants becoming better, and embracing the difficulties they faced. Crucible experience has been known to change leaders as they emerge as a different or stronger version of themselves (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). In the findings, the leaders were also resistant to change, however, they overcame their resistance through challenging their views. Crucible position was thus a driver for change to occur.

2.7.3.5 Learning

The participants have all experienced a form of learning through their crucible experience. Megheirkouni (2016) agreed that difficult experiences contribute towards the leader's development. Leaders also contributed that the value of the crucible moments is the lesson learnt through. Theme three is transformational learning and include further discussion on learning is cover in section 2.7.1.

2.7.4 Theme 2: Motivation

Motivation is a driver that allows leaders not to back down from the crucible, and it rather learn through their experiences. The motivation includes being determined, having an aspiration, following inspiration and driven by the need for survival. Determination allows for focus on achieving the result, it is a driver to continue moving forward despite any difficulty that they may experience. Although the nature of the results that they hope to achieve is different, all the leaders that expressed determination had something to achieve.

The leaders has a set goal that they intend on achieving, this was related to a role, or the type of experience that they want to achieve. This could give the leaders motivation as they had a clear end in mind. Inspiration drove the leaders based on the value they could add, this inspiration was created through a gap they identified, through some view of their capability or through the ability that the achieved, and belief can contribute towards others. It is positioned as a driver, as the leader would work towards fulfilling the contribution they have to make.

The instinct of survival becomes prevalent when going through the crucible as the participant felt that they had no other option. This could be driven by the motivation to achieve more, or by the circumstances that created a need for something different to emerge. Motivation linked to the aspiration to reach a higher version of self, or it is linked to understanding the need to survive. They had to come out on the other side of this moment.

Competition shaped the leader's identity and their aptitude to facing challenges. This could contribute towards building resilience as the leaders challenge themselves to do better in as they compete against others. Self-efficacy was described as the confidence the leaders have in their own ability (Hadley et al., 2011). Through sport the leaders have developed their skills and their confidence in their ability to compete. Leader development from childhood was not covered in the scope for this research, however, it could contribute to understand on how leaders developed resilience to overcome crucibles.

This difference acts as a motivation to do something different. When the participants find themselves in a difficult situation, they are still focused on progressing forward.

The motivation to continue is formed internally and could be related to the resilience that is developed within the individuals that progress through crucible moments. It forms an inner strength that allows the individual to manage through the crucible moment (Thomas, 2008).

Through the research, all of the participants displayed a form motivation. It could be through focusing on a goal, working towards achieving an aspiration, being inspired to achieve more through circumstances, or being driven by the need to survive through something. Crucible provides an environment for this change to occur. The motivation has to be central to the person to trigger a change to happen. Change is hard, and crucibles force changes to happen because you have no other option but to do something different and get out of the situation. Guillén, Mayo, & Korotov further suggests that leaders require motivation to lead to face challenges that may be presented. The motivation to lead is measured based on leaders' eagerness to assume leadership roles and pursue leadership development opportunities (Guillén, Mayo, & Korotov, 2015).

Motivation is then related back to the ability to develop as leaders. This was present through the crucible and could also be a contributor to why leaders are able to learn through difficult situations. Hadley et al (ref), suggest that efficacy could be linked to leader's motivation, and is a better predictor of a leader's behaviour in a crisis (Hadley et al).

2.7.5 Summary

The crucible experience has provided an opportunity for leaders learn, although crucibles differ in nature, they contributed to the leader's journey. The finding from the research corresponds with the literature on crucible experiences. The leaders draw on reflections, resilience, and help from others to get through the crucible experience.

Both literature and findings of the research found that leaders need resilience to get through the crucible experience, and that they created an opportunity to develop resilience. Tracing back to the earliest crucible experience described by the leaders, suggests that resilience exist back in leader's younger days. The scope of the

research did not cover development at childhood phase, however, this could provide more insight to how resilience is developed.

Leader identity, development and motivation are themes identified from the analysis of the research. Reflection, self-awareness, and potential has played a role in leader identity and contributes toward its development. Leaders had to make decisions through the crucible experience, and experienced change which further contributed towards leader's identity development.

Motivation is a drive to keep the leaders going on their path despite the challenges that they may encounter. The presence of the motivation contributes to leader's ability to survive through the crucible, and grow, and develop further as a leader.

2.8 Research question two

Research question two asked how leaders find meaning of their crucible experiences. Meaning refers to the way the participants make sense of their experience and the impact it has their leadership journey. The interview questions required the leaders to reflect on both the positive and negative influences of their crucible experiences.

2.8.1 Theme 3: Transformation learning

The participants further reflected on various lesson learnt, drawing from the positive and negative influences in results section 5.3.2. Through the crucible, the participants learnt to separate themselves from the situation. This allowed them to manage the situation objectively, and remove the emotions associated with it. The reflection happens after the crucible experience and helps prepare for the next phase of the crucible. The awareness of self allows for the framing of the situation to enable action that will allow the individual to move out of it, as suggested by Thomas (2008). Being aware of the current situation, and where the leader's desire to create an opportunity for learning to occur, the leaders have to make decisions that will change their current situation. To make the decision, the leaders first need to see it objectively. This requires that they see the situation outside if their emotions. When reflecting on this, the leaders learnt how to better manage their emotions and how to make better decision while in difficult situations.

In their life stories, the participants felt like they had no reason but to change. The need for change is linked to the theme of identity and motivation. The participants felt like they had no other option but to change and could not ignore the pressure within themselves. They had to place their emotions and view of self aside in order to analyse and understand the situation that they were in. It enables them to make a decision that changed the current reality and do something different from their current behaviours. This process of transformation that leads to a change of behaviour is similar to the definition of transformative learning. Transformative learning is the process that enables change in behaviour to occur from reflective learning through personal experience (Christie et al., 2015). This links learning to the transformative nature of the crucible moments.

Understanding the pain associated with the circumstances and the decisions made, then creates room for transformative learning to occur. It could be seen that the pain associated with the experience, creates an opportunity for transformation, as no individual would like to repeat the pain they experienced. The individual has to realise the role they played in the process to allow them to process change within them. So, pain with self-awareness creates a trigger that enables learning to happen. The trigger of pain cannot be in isolation from the individual's journey. A lot of leadership courses also incorporate a reflective journey. It is through going through this reflective process that leaders have to be able to better understand themselves and their leadership style. Leaders reflect and identify the positives and negatives of the current behaviour. It does not always trigger that change, meaning that awareness in itself, is not sufficient to create the desired change. What could be missing is the internal turmoil required to create a change (Orr, 2020).

Although the leadership journey is classified as an individual journey, leaders have often drawn on the assistance of family, friends and mentors to assist them when dealing with a crucible. The outside support has helped the individual to view the situation from inside and outside (Thomas, 2008). The leaders enlisted the support of mentors, families and others when dealing with a crisis situation. Although the journey is personal, the assistance from others helped the leaders to deal with the situation objectively.

There is a trigger that enables change to occur, creating an urgency for change. The crucible moments has been presented as a trigger to change, and it is brought about by the tension experienced (Byrne et al., 2018). The theory argues that an individual is resistant to change and require a need or urgency for change to occur (Nohl, 2015). This could be the reason why crucibles has been effective in bringing about transformation. It creates a need for change to occur.

It is not always clear how the transformation occurs, through the interviews, the participants realised something was different when they reflected on the journey. The moments that were described to be negative has transitioned into positive learning. As the leaders relate their learnings to their current reality, it could be assumed that the change is sustainable. The ability for this change to be sustainable could be related to the leader's identity and the tension experienced or the time

period associated with the experienced. The interviews revealed the time-lapse that occurred, however, there was no evidence in the interview to the time period it took for the change to occur. Although it is not clear how this transformation happened, some participants became more aware of the change and focused on creating a similar experience for others.

Through the process of the crucible moments and the transformation that occurs, emotions are present as a trigger for change. The events that lead to change, triggered emotions, and although tension has been described to be present, it is possible that other negative emotions were present for the participants to experience this tension (Byrne et al., 2018). Through the experience of the crucible moments, the leaders had to learn to put their emotions aside for the change to happen. This allowed for logic and the application of practical steps that allowed for the change in the participant's experience. The transformation was brought about by emotions, but learning to manage the emotion and apply logic, allowed for the change in behaviour now observed by the participants.

2.8.2 Summary

The findings of the research support the idea that the crucible experience contributes towards transformational learning. The crucible is a trigger for change to occur, and the impact of the crucible is seen as opportunity to learn. The leader also experienced a transformation that occurs as they were able to grow and apply their learning.

2.9 Research question three

Research question three is, how leaders use lessons learnt from these challenging or difficult moments, in the way they lead in a crisis. The participants were asked to describe their approach while leading in a crisis situation, while reflecting on how the approach was formed.

2.9.1 Crisis management framework

Through the research the leaders applied different behaviour found through the research in section 2.4. The leaders contribute additional points through their description of their approach in managing crisis. The additional points included, remaining calm through a crisis, as it assists the leaders in making objective decisions, and creating calmness for the followers. Being present to ensure that followers had access to the leader, it also contributed towards leader's credibility with the followers. The ability to prioritise so that the leaders were able to take action towards resolving the crisis. Motivation follows as they play a role in supporting the leaders to address the crisis.

As the research question is concerned with how the leaders developed their approach to leading in a crisis, the analysis contributed towards gain, and understanding of how the leaders approached crisis. The detail of the crisis framework will thus not be discussed in this chapter. It is important to note that leaders experienced crucible and also made reference to the crisis framework with being provided to it. Through the discussion of the finding, the research explored how and if the crucible experience contributed towards the development of leaders approach to crisis management.

2.9.2 Theme 5: Step up

Through the analysis it seems that difficult experiences created a platform for leaders to emerge. The emergence has been found in the way the leaders presented themselves through a crisis. Leaders drew on logic as they managed their way through a crisis. Although one leader indicated that they relied more on logic thinking than past experience, the leader did encounter crucible experiences on their journey.

2.9.3 Theme 6: Applied experience

The leaders had applied different elements of crisis management skills and competencies when describing their approach to crisis management. Through the combination of all the participants approaches, all the elements of the crisis framework for evaluating leaders were applied—further skills from the other crisis management frameworks were applied with mention of additional points. The details of the behaviours are covered in results section 5.5.3.

Active learning has been considered as an approach for leadership development through exposure to a challenging situation. It is a change from knowledge-based learning to the potential for transformative learning. The approach considers the context in which learning occurs, and the action-orientated learning allows for a mental shift, and creates new perspectives and models. The use of structured reflection, a demonstration in public, and facing challenges in real-life contexts, contributes to the leader's development. The benefit of action-based development is that leaders can develop skills in a simulated environment. The shortcoming is that it still differs from real-time experiences (Orr, 2020).

Many leadership development programs are delivered with high intensity, and it could be that it is designed in this manner to allow the individuals to experience this emotional turmoil that could create room for the transformative learning process to occur. However, the context in which this creator is crafted in circumstances and individuals, that this is something that they need to achieve rather than something that they need to overcome. In a personal experience, there is no escape or alternative environment. It could be what sets learning from a natural experience, different from a designed experience through a leadership development course. The learning becomes more sustainable and grounded, as it transforms from one to achieving the outcome. We need leadership to be the cause. There was always an alternative presented (Byrne et al., 2018).

When looking at some of the life stories have been examples of leaders who have gone through some struggles but with the approach to crisis management. It did not incorporate learning strategies, but rather, lessons learnt on the journey from exposure to crisis. The crucibles experience prepares one better for the next crisis because it was experienced, they had to learn that. These are ways out, knowing

that this has been experienced before gives you better confidence to make decisions because you are happy that you are able to get through this.

When exploring how leaders developed their approach to managing a crisis, they reflect back on past experiences and agree that experiences in crises enabled them to learn how to form this approach of leading in a crisis. They were able to understand what they could do to get through the crisis. Some have explained that drawing on their own experience, or the experience of others, gave them a sense of peace and confidence because they were able to survive a crisis before, then they will be able to survive this crisis as well. From the 13 interviews, the participants have mentioned the use of logical thinking that helps inform the way of leading to a crisis. To be able to draw on your logical thinking, one has to put aside the emotion and the anxieties associated with being in a crisis. This was the same concept. There is a common theme that one has to be emotionally intelligent when going through challenges, so one is able to put aside your emotions. So that one could apply the practical steps of leading through a crisis.

Leaders understood that followers would look to them in these difficult moments, and if they show any sense of anxiety, it would create panic within the followers. They also agreed that one is able to think better when emotions are put aside. When we look at crisis, it is often defined by unfavourable circumstances or could lead to an unfavourable situation if nothing is done.

This could be similar to what the leaders experienced through their crucibles, where circumstances were different from aspirations, and it created turmoil within the individual. The turmoil could be associated with different forms of emotions, depending on the circumstances and the individual. It would seem that having gone through these crucibles allows them to manage their emotions better and apply the practical steps required to overcome the situation.

It would seem that one needs to have a desire or self-awareness to identify the situation faced is not ideal. It is only when leaders are able to identify this is not where they want to be that it triggers or drives them to apply something different. That allows them to move forward to a situation that is more favourable. Learning

to lead in crisis could be associated with one's own identity, goals and one's ability to separate emotions from the situation and apply the practical steps.

It would be interesting to note that knowing the practical steps might not necessarily allow leaders to sufficiently manage through a crisis. Because the failure to manage oneself could prevent you from showing up in the right form and being in the right mind-set to apply these decisions. It also relates back to context because leaders have experienced crucible moments, and they have learned to make some practical decisions while being in turmoil. When a context appears again, not necessarily the same situation, but the context of feeling this anxiety or turmoil between knowing that your identity, or what the situation is right now is not favourable, allows them to apply the practical learnings that they would have from the previous experiences.

The participants also mentioned that it is a journey and not a once-off encounter. It could be this that also creates sustainable change in the crucible moments. Some participants shared that they observed a trend that occurred in their lives that although the crucible experiences themselves were different, they had carried a similar category. It is probably a repeat of these experiences that enable change to happen after several reflections, one would probably connect the dots and identify that this is the outcome.

The approach to crisis leaders agree that one forms a base and learns from mistakes, meaning that it is an iterative process. We want experiences, something different every time, we go through this process that although there might be some positives and negatives. One grows and learns from these negatives, which could also be the mistakes that have been made in the process could then assume that the negatives in each experience reduces, or because they understand that this negative does get transformed into a positive, that the approach could be deemed negative is not seen as a negative, but rather as an opportunity to learn. Many leaders expressed that they view a crisis as an opportunity to learn. Leaders are intentional in their development and do so even in a time of great difficulty, and it is their ability to surrender to the purpose that allows this transition to happen (Koehn, 2019).

Individuals with a humanistic approach, drawing on their life experiences, have been found to achieve great success when leading through a crisis (Koehn, 2019)

2.10 Diagram representing the conceptual model from the themes

Themes were identified through the overall analysis of the interviews. The diagram below presents a conceptual flow of the identified themes. It represents a transformative learning process which starts from identity to applying learning from life's experiences.

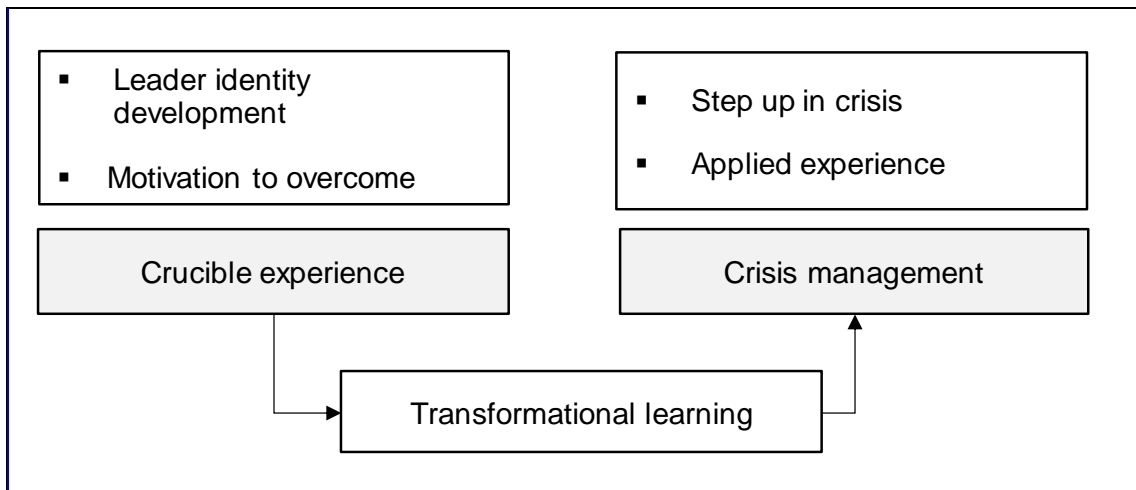


Figure 4: Conceptual model of themes

The process is not a straight line. It is an evolution of experiences that form the process. There is a moment where identity is discovered, and it creates a motivation for the individual to learn and grow. This leads to learning that can transform the individual. Through this learning, the individual has gained some insights that can be applied in a crisis situation. The experiences also give the individual confidence to take the lead when a crisis situation is presented. Further learning may take place through the crisis situation that may continue to shape the leader's identity, allowing for learning and transformation to take place.

The conceptual model consolidated the findings and the discussion in the attempt to answer the overall research question. It shows the linkage of the themes between the three research questions. Insights from the participant's crucible experiences and how their approach to managing crisis was formed, allows for an opportunity to evaluate the contribution of crucible experience towards developing leaders for crisis management.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Findings

The aim of the study was to understand how crucible experiences can contribute towards developing leaders for crisis management, by asking whether there is something to be gained from understanding leaders' crucible moments. To explore how they could contribute to the development of leaders' ability to manage crises. Studies have already presented the need for further research in the area of leadership development with context (ref), and especially extreme context (Hanna). Through this study the findings presented the....

The finding from research question one suggests that crucible experiences has contributed towards shaping leaders. The narration of the leaders crucible experience coincides with narrations described through the work of Thomas (2008). The type of crucible experiences is regarded as a context (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Through the research it was found that leaders derived the same value from their crucible experience that is the learning they acquired through it. The findings also alludes to a nuance in the magnitude and timing of the crucible could have an influence on the outcome.

The themes identified through research question one is leader identity development and motivation to overcome challenges. The leaders had better sense of self awareness, and their potential, and self-awareness is a starting point for leader identity development (Byrne et al., 2018; Epitropaki et al., 2017). The leaders had to make decision to overcome the crucible experiences, they experienced and change learned through it. These are contributors to the development of leader identity (Byrne et al., 2018) . The findings suggest that leaders identity is develop through the leaders life journey (Day & Sin, 2011; McCain & Matkin, 2019; Miscenko et al., 2017), and the crucible experience contributes towards this. This is in line with research already done on leader identity develop from scholars (Byrne et al., 2018; Kwok et al., 2018; Miscenko et al., 2017).

Motivation has also been deemed as a requirement for leaders to pursue leadership opportunities literature also found that leaders often position himself for opportunity

to develop once to have identified as a leader (Guillén et al., 2015). The Crucible experience, the leaders recognize that they have a responsibility to act. This action would allow them to overcome the crucible.

Research question two found that the positive and negative influences experienced in the crucible contributed to transformational learning. The findings suggests that crucible is positioned as a transformative process creates a trigger for the leader to change (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Nohl, 2015). The learning has also been explained as an opportunity to apply what the leaders already know, understanding the value they contribute towards resolving the experience possible the need of confidence in pursuing boy country, that makes crucible experience.

Lastly through the analysis of the leaders approach to crisis management the framework discussed in the literature review (2.4) was applied to understand the leader's approaches to crisis. The findings supports the stream work as all of the leaders had applied some of these behaviours identified the framework, leaders and contributed by adding additional points that they deemed as important. When managing through a crisis.

Findings presented two themes, step up in crisis and applied experience. Crisis was position as an opportunity for leaders to emerge and opportunity to develop leaders for crisis management. As there are nuances between crucible and crisis, this could contribute to Bell (2018) that leaders are better prepared for crisis when they have experienced crisis. Both crucible and a crisis is that both required decisions to be made, and actions are being taken to get through the situation.

These finding can contributes towards developing a framework for leadership development in the context of crisis. Providing an opportunity to gain further knowledge to the body of research and insights to organisations.

7.2 Implications for management

The research has practical implication that could contribute towards organisation, leaders and human resource development practitioners concerned with the field of leader development for crisis management.

7.2.1 Organisation and management

Organisation investment allot of resources towards developing current and further leaders. Considering the current business context that's described complex and continuously changing (Megheirkouni, 2016) , it is important to prepare leaders for managing through crises. These crisis can occur in the day to day operation of the organisation or brought about by external forces (Boin et al., 2013). Regardless of the nature of the crisis leaders are expected to lead through it (Holmberg et al., 2016), and they influence the outcome of the crisis. Through the research it was found that crucible moments can contribute towards the development of leaders when managing through crisis.

Leaders develop resilience to overcome challenges and develop their identity as leaders through crucible experiences. This prepares leaders to either step up in a time of crisis or applied what they learnt through their crucible in a time of crisis. Leaders who identify as

The effectiveness of leader development needs to be inline with the business context. The requirement may differ, this suggests that there are expectations from leaders in a time of crisis. The Boin et al (2013), framework for evaluating leaders in crisis presented ten task for managing through crisis. The finding of the research support the suggested ten task, however not all participants made reference to all ten of the task. Organisation could still again from developing a set of outcomes for the leaders during crisis. The outcome will support on measuring the effectiveness of leaders and support in a framework to develop leaders for managing crisis.

The findings can contribute towards developing a framework for leader's development in crisis management. This should be added to crisis managements procedure that may already exist in research.

7.2.2 Human resource development

Furthermore, leaders also implication for human resource development, human resource development is concerned with leadership development programs and different ways and method for developing leaders. Considering the importance of understanding leadership in context. The findings to suggest that leader identity and motivation are important when considering crucible experiences. These are

important points to note when considering leadership development opportunities, understanding of leader identity could help identify those individuals, most suited for future leadership opportunities.

Furthermore, although a lot of leadership programs have already implemented experiential development, and included the elements of reflection. What sets crucible experience apart is the trigger that it creates for leaders to change and to learn something. Although, leadership development programs cannot replicate a crucible experience. Some thought should be given into the findings and learnings of a crucible experience. To better shape leadership development, moving forward, as well as to understand what the key role players are in developing leaders for the future. Implication for leaders. Leaders have already agreed that they would experience more crucible.

Using both experience as opportunity for development and considering leadership development in line with context, it is recommended that more research is done on best leadership development in practice. This should align with how the effectiveness of leadership development is assessed. If development is focused in line with context, the effect of leadership could possibly only be developed within a context. Providing an opportunity for both organisation and training and development to invest in designing context specific development programmes.

7.3 Limitation

7.3.1 Researcher bias

The researcher is currently employed in the automotive industry and has thus been exposed to leaders' approaches in crisis management. Her role includes sourcing and developing a healthy pipeline for future leadership positions within the organisation. Throughout the journey, thus far, she has experienced personal crucible experiences that have changed her view of leadership. This would thus influence the leaders' view on the three dimensions of the study, crucible experience, leader's development and crisis management.

The research also had a frame of reference of the crisis and narrated by the leaders. Using the literature for the analysis helps to navigate the researcher's bias.

7.3.2 Participants position

The researcher approached executive in their current place of employments, as well those in their network. The relationship to the research may have influenced the way the executive's responded to the interview questions. The researcher did include other participants through recommendations.

The topic of crucible experience may be difficult to share as the participants draw on experience that may have association with negative emotions. This could affect the level of depth share on the experience and the selection of experiences share. The research reached a diverse sample of participants, this included different races, gender, age and type of experiences. These factor could also contribute towards the way the executive expressed their stories.

7.4 Future research

The finding of the research confirm the literature that exists on crucible experience. Although the type of crucible experience was fond to inly create a context form which the meaning of the crucible experience was evaluated. There are some nuances that the timing of when the crucibles occurred and the magnitude of the crucible may have an influence on the outcomes of the crucible experience. Thus further research on the types of the crucible could contribute towards gaining insights on how it influences the outcome of the crucible.

Resilience allowed the participant to get through the crucible experience, and was developed through it. Literature also suggests that crucible experience creates and requirement for leaders to have resilience. Through the understanding of childhood development could contribute towards gaining more insights on the emergence of resilience and its relationship to crucible experience.

Crucible experience has been positioned as a transformational learning, and the finding of the study support that idea. Future research can contribute towards elaborating on transformational learning through the lens of crucible experience. This can support in gaining better understand of how crucibles can be used to developmental approach for adult learning.

There seems to be nuance between leader's crucible experiences and crisis management, and through this study leaders made reference to crisis when narrating their stories. Future research can explore the relationship between crucible experiences to against understand of which elements of the crucible experience contributes towards behaviours defined in crisis management approach.

7.5 Concluding statement

The purpose of the research was to explore leaders' life stories and understand how crucible experiences have contributed to their development as leaders, specifically in relation to their ability to lead at times of crisis. Thus, the overall research question is how do crucible experiences in a leader's life journey influence the way they manage a crisis. Three research questions have been posed to answer the overall research question:

- 1) Research question one: How do leaders narrate the crucible experiences in their lives that shaped them as leaders?
- 2) Research question two: How do leaders make meaning of the crucible experiences in their lives?
- 3) Research question three: How do leaders use lessons learnt from the crucible experiences in the way they managed a crisis?

The research found that crucible experience have contributed towards developing leaders identity through self-awareness and discovering their potential. That learned decision making and allowed for change to occur. Crucible experience is also related to transformational learning as it provided a trigger for learning. Leaders developed their approach for crisis management through applied experience and stepping up in a crisis. This crucible experience has found to contribute towards the leaders approach for crisis management.

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Appendix A: Interview guide and interview consent form

Introduction

The researcher will introduce themselves to the participants and will ask the participants to introduce themselves briefly and their leadership role in the organisation to establish rapport before beginning the interview.

The researcher will remind the participant of the aim of the research study, will thank them for their time and confirm that the interview will take approximately 2 hours.

Overall research question

"How do crucible moments in a leader's life journey influence the way they manage in a crisis?"

Research question one

How do leaders narrate the crucible moments in their lives that shaped them as leaders?

Interview question:

- 1) Describe your life journey, drawing on your past and most recent experiences. Please describe the phases in your life and the challenging yet significant experiences that impacted you and made you become the leader that you are today.

Research question two

How do leaders make meaning of the crucible moments in their lives?

Interview Question:

- 2) Please think of a moment in your life when you faced multiple challenges or difficulties that have had a positive influence on your life. The challenge or difficulty could be in any area of your life.

- a. What was the significance of this moment that led to a positive influence in your life?
- b. Can you describe the moment that you realised that the experience influenced you positively?

3) Now think of a challenging or difficult moment in your life that has had a negative influence.

- a. What was the significance of the crucible moment that led to a negative influence in your life?
- b. Can you describe the moment that you realised that the experience influenced you negatively?

Research question three

How do leaders use lessons learnt from these challenging or difficult moments in the way they lead in a crisis?

Interview Questions

4) I want you to describe an experience where you had to lead in a crisis situation. How did you lead through the crisis?

- a. What experiences did you draw on to assist you in leading the crisis?
- b. How do you think the challenging moments you have experienced has shaped your approach to leading through a crisis?

5) Is there anything else you want to tell me about leading in a crisis and how your life story has influenced this?

Appendix B: Participant consent letter

I am currently a student at the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science and completing my research in partial fulfilment of an MBA. I am conducting research on how crucible moments can contribute to developing leaders for crisis management. Our interview is expected to last about two hours and will help us understand how crucible moments can contribute towards leaders approach in leading through crises.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be reported without identifiers. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher

Samantha Visagie

Email: 194XXXXXXXXXX

Phone: 07XXXXXXXX

Research Supervisor Signature

Lisa Kinnear

Head of academics

Toyota Wessels institute of Manufacturing

Email: lisaXXXXXXXX

Phone: 03XXXXXXXX

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Research analysis codes

Research question one codes

Codes	Categories	Theme
someone identified the potential in me saw potential in self saw own potential identified own potential	Potential	Leadership Identity Development
bold decisions difficult personal decision quick decisions results driven	Decisive	
knew what I wanted know what he didn't want this is not me took responsibility felt there's something lacking wasn't a nice person work-life balance example to others autonomy trust your instincts	Self-aware	
became better / stronger reflective / sense-making embrace differences/difficulties uncomfortable moments rise to the occasion wanted to quit / gave up a goal realise there's more to life it's a journey became better / stronger	Change	

Codes	Categories	Theme
intentional learning mind-set questioned everything never accept second best results-driven hard work stand up for what's right need for independence	Determined	Motivation to Overcome Challenges
ambitious hunger for more realise there's more to life create experience desire to know more personal aspiration had to learn want to contribute/help	Aspiration	
took guidance parental influence/inspiration support from other strict upbringing parental support /drive parental teaching draw power of inspiration	Inspiration	
survival instinct had to step up show up had no choice purpose face fears	Survival	
competitive upbringing like challenge sports	Competitive	

Research question two codes

Codes	Categories	Theme
honour decisions think quickly different views different thinking life-changing decision questioned management style	Change in thinking	Transformative Learning
learned to listen being proactive proactive thinking learning mind-set realise he had to speak up	Active learning	
separate emotions see value after reflection bigger picture no such thing as leadership failure interact at an emotional level preserve	Self-management	
negative led to positive learn from negative use crisis to learn/develop overcome difficulties moment of weakness then slip back to default	Reframing events	
need to adapt need something else challenged others consistency foresight building for the next build confidence	Transition	

Research question three codes

Codes	Categories	Theme
step-up everyday life emerges in emerge from crisis exposure to crisis provide opportunities for exposure make mistakes thrive on it	Responsive to emerging context	Step up to the crisis

Codes	Categories	Theme
management style logical thinking survival skills	Way of thinking	Applied experience
draw from experiences draw on past experiences experience helps to deal with the next situation learn from experiences used past experiences learn from crisis learn from post mortem	Experience	

Appendix D: Research analysis additional quotes

Research question one additional quotes

Theme one: Leader identity development

Potential

"...I can really think of a consistent theme in my life where I think other people saw the potential in me before I saw it in myself..."(P6)

"...But I think that the director saw great potential in me and within a very short space of time, I've managed to get human capital development in the organization stable..."(P2)

"...I was intelligent, I could do, I could just go to school and do..."(P4)

"...I think you're capable of doing this next level", it never dawned on me. So, to me that was a critical moment in my career because I knew the same thing as the other people but I made sure that I had that conversation with them..."(P6)

"...that was really a turning point for me at school because then I realised, "Woah hang on, why am I messing around..."(P5)

Decisive

"...here's 119 people looking at me to show their leadership and I need to make quick decisions, otherwise we ain't all going home..."(P1)

"...realised that baseball was probably not going to be my future and that it was going to be more todays education and towards the goal I was going to progress in. So, I gave up my dream of playing professional baseball and stayed with the studies and because of that I had the opportunity to internship with a company..."(P6)

“...it was a good experience in terms of me having to take decisive decisions without too much information...”(P10)

“...I had another kind of life changing point there, because I was offered to stay in America and offered a green card and took the decision to come back to South Africa for my family, which was a tough one...”(P10)

Self-aware

“...there are events that define people’s lives and the way that they behave. That’s the key....”(P1)

*“...I came back and I realised then in the airplane that **I actually wasn't** a nice person. I was ruling like a tyrant in my very autocratic management style, and I wasn't involving people. And it was a **big change** for me and I started to refocus...”(P1)*

*“...I never accepted second best. I **had to be in a leadership role**, no matter what I did. I'd be the captain of the karate team. **I got into** the air force...”(P3)*

“...I'm not an artisan in any way. So, I decided I want to go to manufacturing and I want to go study...”(P3)

“...I had the capacity to do a lot more and this job wasn't the real...”(P5)

*“...I'm impatient, and working on the line as a team member **isn't what I imagined for myself**, it's a monotonous job, it's something that is not me, but I looked around and could **see a lot of opportunities**...”(P5)*

*“...but certainly there were some experiences that **shaped my hunger** for wanting to do better and wanting to change my situation because I realised that **this is not me** and this is not where I should be...”(P5)*

*“...I **didn't want to** get back to what I am **comfortable** with a lot. It's easy to get back into that and I feel that I could excel in it....”(P9)*

“...So, even though I had done that, I didn’t want to work for parts operations...”(P10)

“...And I ended up taking a lot of responsibility for my siblings and so learnt to be and always felt extremely accountable...”(P10)

“...I did feel I was lacking something...”(P13)

Change

“...I’ve committed in 1991 I’m going to be at Toyota. Let’s embrace these Japanese...”(P1)

“...so I think there’s going to be a lot more crucible moments from a leadership point of view at least...”(P5)

“...I think you could be director of one of these companies in the future and I don’t even think that’s the limit for you.”, and that resonated with me because I was putting a cap on myself and someone else was actually seeing it differently to what “...I saw and that was another defining moment for me because it allowed me to reflect and look at my own career and think about where did I actually need to develop further and what areas did I actually have to learn and understand and develop more...”(P6)

“...I loved the finance and I wanted to learn a bit more...”(P9)

“...So, that kind of early discipline was what drives one to start to learn, to earn things, that things don’t come to you for free. You’ve got to earn them. So, I started to learn that from a young age. Yeah. So, she was disciplined like that...”(P9)

“...a lot of personal learnings along the way privately, but also career-wise...”(P10)

“...Again, dealing with that type of crisis was very good for me in the end...”(P10)

“...that was the other defining moment, I think it broadened my world a bit, it gave me a broader perspective and I think that helped me in my career journey...”(P12)

Learning

*“...I will **never, ever stop learning**. It doesn't matter how old I get...”(P1)*

*“...What I would say for me and my personality is that **it's more about learning** than it was about the opportunities that presented itself...”(P6)*

*“...I'm **still learning** and I think that's probably I think for any leader is you cannot afford to slow down. You **cannot afford to stop** and say “okay, I know.” You have to continuously learn...”(P7)*

*“...I was comfortable and then I **moved out of that comfort zone into a new zone**, which I knew nothing about. Yeah. So, I **had to then catch up** with the readings and the **learnings** after that to compensate for that skill gap...”(P9)*

*“...I think I **learned** a lot about the **value of** positional authority, but also the value of not using your position at all to influence and in making a contribution...”(P10)*

Theme two: Motivation of overcome challenges

Determined

*“...But to me, it’s all about **results-driven**. So, sometimes I’ll break some financial accounting rules to get something to happen...”(P3)*

“...very specific phases in my life that have resulted in where I sit today and it didn't just come by chance...”(P1)

*...“want.” So, now I’m here three and a half years. I’m going to be the next president And now I’m either going to go away for two years or I’ve got to leave the country and I can’t work And **it was a huge problem for me** and what do I do?..”(P1)*

“...I had this goal, “I wanted to be this and that's what I did to get there’ and so my whole life was around work...”(P8)

“...I think what shaped me was need for financial independence that if I was independent financially...”(P13)

Aspiration

“..., I started to understand and started to make a contribution. And then within a year, they started adding more responsibilities to me, so that was good...”(P10)

“...wanting to make an input and wanting to make a contribution and wanting to learn about that area. And, I think, that's all that drove me...(P10)

*“...whatever I do in my life and wherever the journey takes me, even if I’m not a leader, but I’ve always had this **inherent longing to help people** and I **wanted to help** people I’ve got to voice out the voiceless concerns...”(P3)*

“...If you don’t get that right, you’re going to get nothing. You’re just going to disappear into the masses. It’s what you do to differentiate yourself. It’s he who talks loudest...”(P3)

“... It’s kind of contributed in me wanting to achieve more and it’s kind of, in some way, formed my aspirations and my attitude at wanting to be better, wanting to be more and wanting to achieve...”(P5)

Inspiration

“...my father said to me, “You know what, I wish you followed your brother’s footsteps... my father, my father was enjoying his work and that motivated me a lot, I had to become something in life...” (P4)

“...I thrive on adrenalin, only manage on adrenalin, I love crises, I don’t like boring management...”(P3)

“...If I’m not in there making a decision, participating in the decision-making, you’d find you’d be out and the minute you’re out, you’re not part of that decision-making process...”(P3)

“...is the discipline and vision my mother had for us, myself and my sister. She was relentless and unforgiving when it came to educational aspects. I didn’t have a lot of time to mess around and do whatever. Yeah. I had to deliver educationally and that was not a choice...”(P9)

“...I’ve grown the most when I’ve had the toughest times. And I think that’s natural, but I think we forget that. So, when you’ve seriously got your back against the wall and you think this is never going to work, that’s when you probably develop most as a person...”(P10)

Survival

“...I had kids quite young. So, I had to step up. I had to step up and make sure that I provide for them and I look after my parents...”(P2)

*“...but in these **tough leadership situations**, you’ve got to draw from— if you don’t have experiences, you’re basically drawing from logic...”(P2)*

“...Got a big wake up call. Suddenly, I had this company... you’re running this place and you don’t have a clue what’s going on. Hit the wall and I realized I’d better start showing up, because I’m not going to survive if I don’t do something...”(P3)

*“...but **I realised leaders need to know when to step up**. And even in a very, very volatile situation how to make the judgement, responsibly take action and from that point in time that’s another lesson that we learnt that there are times where you have to step up and you have to stand up as a person...”(P7)*

Competitive

“...sport was one of the items that motivated...”(P4)

“...Reflecting back. I would say that sports were very instrumental in kind of starting out my leadership style...”(P6)

“...I think I always ended up in kind of the leadership roles even in the early days in sporting events, whether you were captain of the team or something like that...”(P6)

Research question two additional quotes

Theme three: Motivation of overcome challenges

Change in thinking

“...but in hindsight, there was a lot of wisdom behind it and I had to suck up my pride and support it as best I could and it did work out...”(P1)

“...I think I used to make decisions from too much of an emotional point of view. In that situation, emotions, they don't count. You need solution-based thinking. So, that's when I actually grew and I originally said I lead from the heart, but I quickly learnt that at times you need to adapt, because the situation calls for a different kind of thinking...”(P2)

“...And I think that's when I realized that life is tough, but you've got to rise to the occasion. You've got to accept the challenge and you've got try and think of “How I am going to wiggle myself out of this one?...”(P2)

“...you need to be consistent in what you do, and that's part of the key, and you need to bring yourself down to the people that you're trying to lead so that you understand their difficulties, and one of the most vital is also to respect people...”(P4)

“...But if I look back it was probably the best 18 months I've ever had whilst it was the most painful then, so you know, you talk about a journey...”(P7)

“...when you are in that crucible moment and you are in that challenge and difficulty it is hard to see how it's going to have a positive impact, or how is it going to influence it positively and that was certainly the case for me...(P13)

“...I think for me, my learning point has been two ways. That a simple misunderstanding can cripple your trajectory of where you think you are going to learn moving forward...”(P9)

Active learning

“...it's actually quite a negative thing not to speak out but at the same time, I had to teach myself again to speak out but speak out with, in a manner that you do not offend anybody. Speak out in a manner that comes across positively, speak out in a manner that shows humility not arrogance...”(P7)

Self-management

“...So, the negative experience for me, although it was character building, has always been what is now a strong resistance to a country club mindset, ... when people are making decisions based on their ..So, I think, I'm not sure if it's negative or not, but it was a very bad experience for me, because it happened quite a lot where a decision's taken, which apart from the fact that they weren't the right decisions, it was the way it happened. And, I think, I've always been very sensitive about that...”(P10)

“...So, this was quite a big defining moment, a moment for me with the, with the team in terms of bringing us closer because there was all that, that, that, I don't want to say emotional connection but there was that emotional connection...’(P8)

“...So, the big learning which I derived from the interaction with them....,yeah, was to interact at an emotional level with people...(P9)

“..., you get to a point when you got realise what can I do and what can't I do...”(P12)

“..., I wouldn't have had that empathy developed to the extent it's now developed. So, I think looking back at those career setbacks was great for my leadership development because I could talk to people, knowing that we, you know the positives and the negatives, the good and the bad with our professional journey...”(P13)

Reframing

“...So, something that was negative, I actually over time, I was able to turn it into a positive thing, so that it made me a better person. And again, I question these moments...”(P1)

“...I don't know, is it ever negative, if it's probably learning, because you'll learning from that negative item...”(P8)

“...that just came much later on in life and I think what helped me transition from using those moments as something negative to using those moments to something positive...”(P13)

Transition

“...I learned very quickly to be very careful about how I express myself and to really try and listen, because the importance was not whether we made the right decision. The important point was whether everybody bought into that decision. And that was a hard lesson for me...”(P10)

“...Those multiple challenges I think contributed positively to my abilities as a plant manager...”(P5)

“...Those multiple challenges I think contributed positively to my abilities as a plant manager...”(P5)

“...I think for me gave me the sort of confidence, it's starting to change now, I can, I do have a role to play, I can make a contribution,..”(P13)

“...So, that Alabama experience for me was very negative initially but it also resulted in me being very passionate, confident in my own management style and leadership. I won't change that ever...”(P6)

“...Now when I look back, it was in terms of learning how the manufacturing function works and how to get things done in the manufacturing environment, how to have the foresight to see a problem before you make the first step,

how to work, how to work cross functionally and how to understand how things can escalate...”(P5)

“...I learnt probably a lot in terms of conflict management at the time and I think for the rest of the 30 years, that probably put me in a good space where I understood conflict management pretty well and what to do in conflict management and what not to do..”(P11)

Theme 4: Step up

*“...It’s in your make up. It’s just in there and I think some people **thrive on it...**”(P3)*

“...I think the only time people pop out in a crisis, is when there’s a crisis. You know, to me, that’s when your leaders come out...”

Theme 6: Applied experience

“...And so, a lot of my journey and references are about putting other people first and it’s important... My journey has taught me that..”(P1)

“...I feel as if I have this kind of hunger built in that’s a constant remind that you can lose it all and when you don’t have it then you won’t be in a good place, so take care of it and do more than you should...”(P5)

“...I think you have to create crisis and I think I recognise now that at the level that I’m at. People get motivated to deal with crisis, so I think that if you can develop people’s skill and knowledge by creating crisis. It sounds cliché that we’re creating crisis, but I think that the world is getting so competitive that people have to continuously develop their skills and knowledge in order to compete in a global world...”(P6)

“...I don’t think there’s any structured development of the crisis. I think it needs to be put into situations to face crisis and within any organisation, any area of any business then there’s crisis management plans that would’ve been developed. You always have a reference point you must always learn from history...”(P7)

“...There’s strengths I grew from really, where the previous experience I’ve shared with you, ...and the exposure I had obtained through Yeah. It was just drawing from that experienced place and then being able to apply some of the learnings through the strike...”(P9)

“...And I was fortunate in that, prior to Covid-19, I had many crises, but two very big ones that stood out for me. One was the earthquake in Japan and the other was the flooding we had in October 2017. As a result of that, I had established in my mind a very clear sense of priorities and how we should be very people focused during times of crisis...”(P10)

“...But I think, again, because of those previous experiences and many others, I was confident enough to put a lot of focus on just listening and asking questions...”(P10)

“...first of all, because I've had a lot of challenging times, I think, unfortunately one can only be a good leader in the crisis if you've had many crises. [laughter] Unfortunately, we wish it wouldn't work like that, but unfortunately it does, and I've had a lot...”(P10)

Appendix E: Ethical clearance

Ethical Clearance Approved Inbox x

MastersResearch2020 <MastersResearch2020@gibs.co.za>
to me, MastersResearch2020 ▾

**Gordon Institute
of Business Science**
University of Pretoria

**Ethical Clearance
Approved**

Dear Samantha Visagie,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.
You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.
We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

[Ethical Clearance Form](#)

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.

Appendix F: Copyright declaration

Student details			
Surname:	Visagie	Initials:	SA
Student number:	19401672		
Email:	19401672@mygibs.co.za		
Phone:	07X XXX XXXX		
Qualification details			
Degree:	MBA	Year completed:	2021
Title of research	The contribution of crucible experiences to the development of leaders for crisis management		
Supervisor:	Lisa Kinnear		
Supervisor email:	LisaXXXXXXXX		
Access			
Please select			
A.			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	My research is not confidential and may be made available in the GIBS Information Centre and on UPSpace.		
I give permission to display my email address on the UPSpace website			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B.			
<input type="checkbox"/>	My research is confidential and may NOT be made available in the GIBS Information Centre nor on UPSpace.		
Please indicate embargo period requested			
Two years		Please attach a letter of motivation to substantiate your request. Without a letter embargo will not be granted.	
Permanent		Permission from the Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Studies at UP is required for permanent embargo. Please attach a copy permission letter. Without a letter permanent embargo will not be granted.	
Copyright declaration			
<p>I hereby declare that I have not used unethical research practices nor gained material dishonesty in this electronic version of my research submitted. Where appropriate, written permission statement(s) were obtained from the owner(s) of third-party copyrighted matter included in my research, allowing distribution as specified below.</p> <p>I hereby assign, transfer and make over to the University of Pretoria my rights of copyright in the submitted work to the extent that it has not already been affected in terms of the contract I entered into at registration. I understand that all rights with regard to the intellectual property of my research, vest in the University who has the right to reproduce, distribute and/or publish the work in any manner it may deem fit.</p>			
Signature:		Date:	
Supervisor signature:		Date:	

Appedix G : MBA student / supervisor agreement

This document must be read in conjunction with the following GIBS policy documents:

The GIBS MBA Student Regulations

The GIBS MBA Integrative Business Research Regulations – i.e. Green Pages

Any grievances, personal problems or disagreements that may arise between a postgraduate candidate and the supervisor must be referred to the GIBS MBA Research Management team, care of the Research Manager, Jennifer Theodoridis – theodoridisj@gibs.co.za (as well as the Research Officer, Rembu Mulaudzi – mulaudzir@gibs.co.za)

Name of student: Samantha Visagie

Student number: 19401672

Student email address:

Name of Supervisor: Lisa Kinnear

Supervisor email address:

Agreement undertaken by THE STUDENT

Samantha Visagie

..... (insert name)

accepts and undertakes the following roles and responsibilities:

1. Abiding by the relevant rules and regulations of the Gordon Institute of Business Science.
2. Ensure that all interactions with the Supervisor – either written or in person, always remains cordial.
3. Working independently under the guidance of the supervisor and ensuring that she or he stays abreast of the latest developments in the field of study.
4. Agreeing with the supervisor, and abiding by, a time schedule which outlines the expected completion dates of various stages of the research work, i.e. prepare and submit a detailed project plan (See Supervisor section, #5 below).
5. Attending pre-scheduled meetings with the supervisor and being adequately prepared for these consultation sessions (See Supervisor section, #6 below).
6. Submitting written work at times agreed upon by the student and the supervisor.
7. Taking account of the feedback provided by the supervisor before subsequent submission of written work.
8. Undertaking to submit the proposal and final report within the prescribed time for the completion of the degree and to plan accordingly.
9. Accepting responsibility for the overall coherent structure of the final dissertation or report and, as far as possible, submitting written work that is free of spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and incorrect punctuation.
10. Informing the supervisor of any absence or circumstances that may affect the research progress and time line.

Agreement undertaken by THE SUPERVISOR

Lisa Kinnear

..... (insert name)

accepts and undertakes the following roles and responsibilities:

1. Abiding by the relevant rules and regulations of the University.
2. Ensure that all interactions with the Student – either written or in person, remains cordial at all times.
3. Assisting the student in building knowledge and research skills in the specific area of postgraduate study and relevant to the level of the degree.
4. Ensuring that the proposed research project is feasible, of an appropriate level for the degree under consideration, and that the necessary resources and facilities will be available to enable the student to complete the research timeously.
5. Providing information on the conditions to be met in order to achieve satisfactory progress/performance and assisting with the construction of a written time schedule which outlines the expected completion dates of various stages of the research work.
6. Being accessible to the student by attending meetings in line with a schedule agreed upon in advance by the supervisor and the student and being prepared for the meetings.
7. Implementing an arrangement for student supervision in cases where the supervisor is away from the University e.g. sick leave, sabbatical leave, or leaves the employ of the University, and communicating these arrangements to the student timeously.
8. Accepting submission of written work at intervals agreed on by the student and supervisor, providing constructive comment and criticism within a time frame jointly agreed on at the start of the research, and informing the student, in writing, of any inadequacy relating to progress or work, in relation to the expectations previously agreed on by the student and supervisor.
9. Assisting the student with the production of the dissertation or report, providing guidance on technical aspects of writing including discipline-specific requirements.
10. Meet all assessment and pre-arranged feedback deadlines.

THE STUDENT AND THE SUPERVISOR:

Confirm that we have read and understood this Memorandum of Agreement and agree to accept its content for the duration of the period of study in respect of the degree as specified below.

Name of student: Samantha

Student number: 19401672

Signed at On (date)

Student's signature

.....

Name of supervisor:

.....

Supervisor's signature:

.....

Signed at on (date)

Appendix H: Certification of additional support

(Additional support retained or not - to be **completed by all students**)

Please note that failure to comply and report on this honestly will result in disciplinary action

I hereby certify that (please indicate which statement applies):

• ***I DID NOT RECEIVE*** any additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, and/or editorial services) on my research report:

.....

• ***I RECEIVED*** additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, and/or editorial services) on my research report

.....

If any additional services were retained— ***please indicate below which:***

- Statistician***
- ***Transcriber***
- ***Editor***
- Other (please specify:.....)***

Please provide the name(s) and contact details of all retained:

NAME: Amanda Bessick

EMAIL ADDRESS: amanda@adminjunkies.co.za

CONTACT NUMBER: 07XXXXXXX

TYPE OF SERVICE: Transcription

NAME: Tracy Kemp

EMAIL ADDRESS: tracyattkhrc@gmail.com

CONTACT NUMBER: 07XXXXXXX

TYPE OF SERVICE: transcription and proof reading.

I hereby declare that all *statistical write-ups and thematic interpretations of the results for my study were completed by myself without outside assistance*

NAME OF STUDENT: Samantha Visagie

SIGNATURE:

STUDENT NUMBER: 19401672

STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS: 19401672@mygibs.co.za