

**Exploring the role of middle managers
enabling leadership for organisational
adaptability**

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Abstract

In the context of a rapidly evolving and complex business environment, organisational adaptability has become a critical factor for sustainable success. This study explores the role of middle managers as a leader in fostering organisational adaptability within the highly complex mining sector. Drawing upon the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability, this study examines how middle managers influence adaptive spaces and the conditions that foster or inhibit organisational adaptability. Through a qualitative study analysis, the research investigates the practices employed by middle managers and the conditions to align organisational processes to be able to shift and adapt during market demands, technological advancements, and regulatory changes, which are examples of events of complexity in the business environment. The findings reveal that middle managers act as key enablers of adaptability by facilitating communication between senior leadership and operational teams, promoting innovation, and driving collaboration. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of cultivating adaptive spaces within the organisational structure to allow for decision-making, empowerment and continuous learning. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics in complex environments and offers practical insights into how the leadership positions in the hierarchical power of an organisation can be utilised to drive organisational adaptation, whilst facing high levels of complexity and volatility.

Keywords

organisational adaptability, middle managers, leadership, adaptive spaces, complexity, mining industry

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.

Liezel Van der Merwe

18 November 2024

Contents

Abstract	i
Keywords	i
Declaration	ii
List of Figures	v
List of Tables	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Problem	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Research Problem.....	1
1.3 Purpose Statement.....	3
1.3.1 Theoretical Significance of the Research.....	3
1.3.2 Research Significance for Business.....	4
1.3.3 Research Objectives	5
1.3.4 Summary.....	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Environment of Business.....	8
2.2.1 Complexity	8
2.2.2 Mining In South Africa.....	9
2.3 The Leadership role of Middle Managers	12
2.3.1 Role of the Middle Manager	12
2.3.2 Leadership Behaviour	13
2.4 Leadership for Organisational Adaptability	14
2.4.1 Leadership inference in Organisational Adaptability	14
2.4.2 Creating Adaptive Spaces.....	16
2.5 Conditions that foster Leadership for Organisational Adaptability.....	18
2.6 Integrated Discussion of the Literature.....	20
Chapter 3: Research Questions	22
Chapter 4: Research Methodology	24
4.1 Introduction	24
4.2 Research Design and Methodology	24
4.3 Philosophy	25
4.4 Approach Selected.....	25
4.5 Methodological choices	25
4.6 Strategy	26
4.7 Time horizon.....	26
4.8 Population.....	26

4.9 Unit of analysis.....	27
4.10 Sample Method and Size	27
4.11 Measurement Instrument and Data Collection.....	29
4.12 Data Gathering Process.....	29
4.13 Data Analysis approach	30
4.14 Quality controls.....	31
4.14.1 Dependability and Reliability	31
4.14.2 Confirmability.....	32
4.15 Research Ethics.....	32
4.16 Research Limitations.....	33
Chapter 5: Results	34
5.1 Introduction	34
5.2 Context and Interview Participants	34
5.3 Data Analysis	36
5.4 Results: Research Question 1.....	37
5.4.1 Organisational Structure.....	38
5.4.2 Innovation and Technology	40
5.4.3 Drivers for Change.....	41
5.4.4 Summary of Results to RQ1	42
5.5 Results: Research Question 2.....	43
5.5.1 Creating an Inclusive Environment.....	44
5.5.2 Exhibit good leader behaviour.....	49
5.5.3 Organisational Climate and Culture	54
5.5.4 Summary of Results to RQ2	56
Chapter 6: Discussion of the Results.....	57
6.1 Introduction	57
6.2 Discussion: Research Question 1.....	57
6.2.1 Organisational Structure.....	57
6.2.2 Innovation and Technology	59
6.2.3 Drivers for Change.....	60
6.2.4 Overview of Results Discussion to RQ1	61
6.3 Discussion: Research Question 2.....	62
6.3.1 Creating an Inclusive Environment.....	62
6.3.2 Exhibit Good Leader Behaviour	64
6.3.3 Organisational Climate and Culture	66
6.3.4 Overview of Results Discussion to RQ2	67
Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	69

7.1 Introduction	69
7.2 Outline of the study.....	69
7.3 Research Findings	70
7.3.1 Empowerment and Trust.....	70
7.3.2 Culture of Collaboration and Appreciation.....	70
7.3.3 Education and Development	71
7.3.4 Organisational Structure.....	71
7.3.5 Factors Inhibiting Adaptability.....	72
7.3.6 Leadership Styles and their Impact on Organisational Adaptability	72
7.4 Expansion proposal to the framework.....	73
7.5 Conclusion of the Findings.....	74
7.6 Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research	74
References	76
Appendix 1: Consistency Matrix.....	83
Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance.....	84
Appendix 3: Interview Guide.....	85
Appendix 4: Original model of Organisational Adaptability	88
Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form	89
Appendix 6: First Level codes from Thematic analysis	90

List of Figures

Figure 1: Location of 95 mining communities in South Africa (Cole & Broadhurst, 2021)....	9
Figure 2: Adapted model of leadership for organisation adaptability. Adapted from: (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Schulze & Pinkow, 2020).....	17
Figure 3: Research sample in the organisational hierarchy	35
Figure 4: First level codes created from Interviews	36
Figure 5: Adapted Leadership for Organisational Adaptability Model focused on middle management (Uhl-bien & Arena 2018).....	73

List of Tables

Table 1: Interview Participants	28
Table 2: Extraction of interview guide (Appendix 3)	35
Table 3: RQ1 Codes, Themes and Categories	37
Table 4: RQ2 Codes, Themes and Categories	43
Table 5: Extraction of interview guide (Appendix 3)	50
Table 6: Catalysts fostering or inhibiting Organisational Adaptability.....	61

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) found research dating back to the early 19th century by Barnard (1938) and Selznik (1957) revealed that it was already known that “for organisations to survive they must adapt in accordance with their environment” (p. 90). Similarly, Grass et al. (2020) iterates that a success factor in the current dynamic world of business, is the ability to adapt quickly to a changing environment and in unexpected circumstances. Moreover, adaptation to a changing environment is not a choice, but more of a necessity for organisations in all industries, if they want to survive (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). Although this has been known for decades, research around this topic is lagging (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Grass et al., 2020). Uhl-bien (2021b) theorised that the Covid-19 pandemic unearthed additional questions regarding complexity and adaptability and as such the need to understand how leaders and followers handle complex pressures.

Grass et al. (2020) points out that organisations are increasingly dependent on agile teams to foster adaptability. Considering this, Grass et al. (2020) acknowledges that previous research focused on agile practices and methods but neglected the impact of the human side and how that has contributed to the development of adaptability. Furthermore, Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) states that some of the greatest challenges for business leaders are positioning and enabling organisations to be adaptable amidst the fast pace and ever-changing environments. Kodama (2018) contends that the “necessity of organisational adaptability has become the most pressing issue for many companies to handle changing environments” (p. 365). Therefore, it is becoming increasingly important to understand all organisational capabilities and how organisations can leverage them to adapt and thrive.

1.2 Research Problem

The importance for business to adapt is evident, noting the increase in challenges companies face to survive. Drawing on Forbes’s list, Marr (2022) refers to four 2023 global challenges include: inflation and economic downturn, which caused businesses to stagnate or shrink; supply chain security problems and price increases on products and materials resulting from the Russian invasion into Ukraine;

accelerated digital transformation which includes technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT); speeding up of AI, blockchains and 5G as a challenge companies had to adapt to and finally the war for talent will intensify in 2023 going forward (Marr, 2022). Although this is known, businesses are still slow to adapt.

More recently, PWC (2024), released a South African perspective in their annual African Business Agenda, highlighting that the country faces significant challenges with sustainability, technological transformation and regulatory changes. This stance was influenced by a survey conducted on 48 CEO's working in South Africa and a further 380 CEOs from Sub-Saharan Africa (PWC, 2024). Said CEOs listed their concerns around the social inequality in the country, the operational influence of emerging technologies and "the role inflation and policy changes affect how they create and deliver value" (PWC, 2024, p. 3).

Conversely, when survival strategies to protect liquidity arise during dynamic and demanding times, middle managers are stuck between the proverbial 'rock and a hard place' (Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020). They are expected by top management to show adaptive leadership by still performing optimally and motivate teams to deliver operational efficiency (Tarakci et al., 2023). Examples of such challenges are right-sizing/restructuring and the Covid-19 pandemic (Uhl-bien, 2021b), in which middle managers are expected to continue with their jobs, leading their teams to adapt to the new reality, whilst executing strategy.

Tarakci et al. (2023) advocates for the relevance of middle management studies, because business and scholars alike are questioning the ranks of middle managers again. Moreover, Abdullah and Sofyan (2022) advise that it would be unwise to disregard middle management's views in organisational endeavours whilst considering the broader perspective of business. The unique challenges middle managers face, being able to be appreciative and helpful to subordinates, lead teams, and meeting performance pressures timeously places them in a "sandwich" position with close access to both levels (Abdullah & Sofyan, 2022, Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020). Unfortunately, these pressures occasionally led to health issues amongst middle managers, including burnout and stress (Abdullah & Sofyan, 2022; Blank et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2019). Employees suffering from burnout, normally harbour negative feelings for their work environment (Abdullah & Sofyan, 2022; Wu

et al., 2019). Therefore, the inconsideration of middle managers, poses a risk for failure in any strategy implementation or organisational adaptability plans.

Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) describes leadership for organisational adaptability as “a multi- faceted systems-level approach to designing adaptive organisational structures enabling networked interaction, nurturing innovation, and providing leadership development that fosters collaboration” (p. 89). Therefore, it is important to understand the involvement of all levels of leadership and how it contributes to the theory. However, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) indicate that distributed leadership has not been fully internalised by organisations.

1.3 Purpose Statement

1.3.1 Theoretical Significance of the Research

This study seeks to explore the paradoxical role of middle managers through the lens of leadership for organisational adaptability. This study is important, because of the newness of the concept. The framework of leadership for organisational adaptability is still in its infancy. Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) synthesised this concept by combining various literature across different fields of study to gain a better perspective from a leadership point of view. Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) presents evidence of the importance of the topic, based on the variety of literature available across different fields of study and through the lenses of these disciplinary perspectives. However, these studies were conducted outside the leadership field, therefore the leadership inferences are vague.

Given the scattered state of organisational adaptability literature, Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) specifically calls for additional studies in many and varied ways, on how leaders are enabled (or stifled) for the adaptive process in organisation. This call was heeded by Schulze and Pinkow (2020), who tested the framework, focusing on how enabled leadership create adaptive spaces in the consulting sector. They too emphasised the multiple theories underpinning the framework and therefore suggest future studies to focus on a single or subset of the integrated theories of the framework, and testing in other industries (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). The importance of this topic is intensified by Grass et. al (2020), highlighting that there is a “lack of proper theoretical grounding for explaining how the agile way of work fosters

adaptability” (p. 325). Responding to the call of Schulze and Pinkow, the researcher selected to explore the theory in a different context, mining.

The research purpose is to contribute to the body of knowledge and extend the understanding of the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability. Furthermore, it sought to test the theory in a different business setting, and therefore further gaining rich insights from the middle management level in the hierarchy of leadership to enable an adaptive space in the mining industry.

1.3.2 Research Significance for Business

The urgency to understand and develop this theory was amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, where companies burdened with layers of bureaucracy could not adapt quickly to the complex business environment the epidemic brought on (Uhl-Bien, 2021b). This is echoed by Huntsman et al. (2021) who contend that organisations with a hierarchical structure struggle to adapt when faced with the need to change. Conversely, organisations who responded to the complexities of the past decades, by becoming lean and agile, were able to pivot and execute adaptive solutions to dynamic problems. An example of such a response in business, was to apply and adapt to hybrid and remote working practices (Uhl-Bien, 2021b). Consequently, Uhl-bien (2021b) emphasises that research and practice should focus on enabling organisations and leaders to adapt more rapidly in the face of dynamic and complex pressures and challenges. Additionally, Tarakci et al. (2023) contend that management and scholars possess a love-hate relationship with middle managers. On one side middle managers are deemed as an unnecessary bureaucratic level in an organisational hierarchy, on the other they are regarded as key strategic partners who transform strategic content into operational realities (Tarakci et al., 2023).

In addition, Ramesh (2023) explains that the leader is the most essential element for organisational adaptability. This aligns with Abukalusa and Oosthuizen’s (2023) opinion that the three most important elements to consider in adaptive leadership are the leader, the followers, and the context. This, however, disregards the importance of the middle manager’s role in the process. Furthermore, Uhl-bien (2021b) acknowledges that the traditional top-down leadership model helps managers to

lead, motivate and inspire employees on an individual basis, and the importance of a CEO to position organisations advantageously. However, it does not “capture the lived experiences of navigating leadership in a complex world” (Uhl-Bien, 2021b, p.1400). This coincides with Do and Nuth’s (2020) views that there is a gap in research on the personal experiences of middle managers who display leadership behaviour. Echoed by Grass et al. (2020), who states that research for adaptability and innovation are mostly centred on the organisation level, revealing the gap on the leadership level.

Furthermore, Tarakci et al. (2023) describes middle managers as the nexus, and a pivotal intersection for strategy processes. Middle managers are identified as organisational connectors that create the linkage to empower the change between systems (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Taylor & Helfat, 2009). In addition, top management does not always have the knowledge of the appropriate linkage for implementation, therefore senior leaders need to support middle managers to engage in linking activities (Taylor & Helfat, 2009).

There is a lot of focus placed on the hierarchical level and position of the middle manager, however not much attention is given to the conditions enabling or inhibiting middle managers to lead, especially in times of complexity. Therefore, this study sets out to gain insights into how the leadership aspect is affected by the conditions needed for organisational adaptability, through the lived experiences of middle managers.

1.3.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to explore:

- Leadership for organisational adaptability in a different context, mining.
- How middle managers are enabled or hindered to lead during periods of complexity and crisis.
- The lived experiences and conditions middle managers face in creating adaptive workspaces.
- For business leaders to gain knowledge in understanding the importance of the role that the middle manager occupies to position business, by leading adaptively during challenging times.

- To add new knowledge to the theoretical framework of Leadership for organisational adaptability.

1.3.4 Summary

This chapter provided an introduction into the theoretical and business research problem of leadership of organisational adaptability with a focused view on the middle level leaders. It further highlights the research purpose, which is to extend the understanding of the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability, focusing on the middle level of leadership. It concludes with an outline of the key objectives. Sequentially, the next chapter summarises empirical literature around the topic to establish what is known and what is not known, and consequently identify gaps in the theory.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The chapter sets out to provide insights on the most recent literature published pertaining to the constructs of this study, in which only peer reviewed articles were considered. It is important to note that due to the newness of the theory on leadership for adaptability, not a lot of articles could be found on the topic. As the pioneers of the framework, Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) warn that the literature around this topic is scattered. This is confirmed by Grass et al. (2020), who refer to the literature around the topic as fragmented. Therefore, the researcher extended the literature search to related constructs to include adaptability, leadership, dynamic business environments, adaptive spaces, middle managers as leaders, adaptability in mining environments and ambidexterity.

The literature reviewed below provides an overview of what has been researched and what is missing around the topic of this research. The scholarly articles debate the factors that influence leadership for adaptability and why all levels of leadership, including middle managers are of importance to develop this theory. Moreover, the literature and gaps therein inform the need for this research. In addition, the literature gives a summary around the theoretical fundings around leadership for organisational adaptability and the conditions supporting and hindering it.

More recent literature linked different constructs to organisational adaptability like agility, empowerment and adaptive performance, which in turn informed the possible conditions to adaptability.

The literature justified the importance of the context and why the timing of this research is pertinent right now, as the chapter starts off dissecting the economic complexity of the business environment and the context the study is set in. The chapter concludes with an integrated discussion consistent with the research focus, followed by an illustrative outline of the findings from the academic articles reviewed, which in turn informed the research questions laid out in Chapter 3.

2.2 Environment of Business

2.2.1 Complexity

The status of the business environment is described as inherently systemic, complex, and volatile (Möller et al., 2020). Major trends such as digitalisation, globalisation, and environmental awareness have transformed the business context, consequently leading organisations are adopting dynamic and cooperative business ecosystems. Further causing high expectations from technology/science-based developments like Industry 4.0, robotics, and the Internet of Things (Möller et al., 2020). In essence, the business environment is dynamic, evolving, and influenced by various macro and micro-level factors (Möller et al., 2020). Moreover, Sutherland (2020) emphasises that the fourth industrial revolution is so important that the South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa incorporated it, into the country's economic policy.

Synchronously, the acronym VUCA, stands “for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity”, an invention by the social scientists in the U.S. Army War College, to explain the environment it's learners will need to do business in prospectively (Baran & Woznyj, 2020, p. 2). This term has been widely used by both industry and scholars to give context to the turbulent business and geopolitical environment we operate in (Baran & Woznyj, 2020).

Furthermore, Uhl-bien and Arena (2017) describes complexity as being about “rich interconnectivity”, emphasising that the “rich” refers to the inter-dependability of things, in which any interaction influences the other irreversibly and unexpectedly, (p. 10). One such incident was the Global Financial Crisis, which had far-reaching effects because of the underlying interactions of different factors that changed industries and economies (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2017). A more recent complexity event was the Covid-19 pandemic. Organisations had to re-access and be adaptive in the way they do business or perish. Moreover, the pandemic has highlighted how increasingly interconnected the world has become (Uhl-bien, 2021a). Therefore, it is important to understand how leaders are equipped to lead organisations to adapt and survive during trying times.

In support of these scholarly statements, real life examples can be observed of the Israel-Hamas conflict and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war that continuously fuel geopolitical tensions (South African Reserve Bank, 2024). According to the South African Reserve Bank (2024), geopolitical tension can influence capital flows and heighten risk aversion in the short term. It can further develop into a long-term problem, distorting allocations of resources and foreign direct investment, further contributing to a fragmented trading environment (South African Reserve Bank, 2024). This poses a huge challenge for an emerging economy like South Africa who is heavily reliant on exports of its natural mining resources.

2.2.2 Mining In South Africa

The African continent is naturally resource gifted, in which South Africa is generously endowed. Boasting with some of the world’s largest ore reserves in platinum group metals, manganese, gold, and chromite (University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, 2024). Fig.1 below, depicts the vast presence of mining activities in the nine provinces of the country (Cole & Broadhurst, 2021). Therefore, it is no surprise that South Africa ranks 5th in the world in terms of how much mining is contributing to the GDP of the country (University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg, 2024). Contribution to the GDP ranges from 6.2% in 2023 and 7.3% in 2022 respectively, as well as R104bn in royalties and taxes (Minerals Council South Africa, 2023b). In addition, mining is also responsible for thousands of job opportunities in the country and employed close to 480 000 people in 2023 (Minerals Council South Africa, 2023b). There is thus no doubt that this industry is vital for the economy of the country.

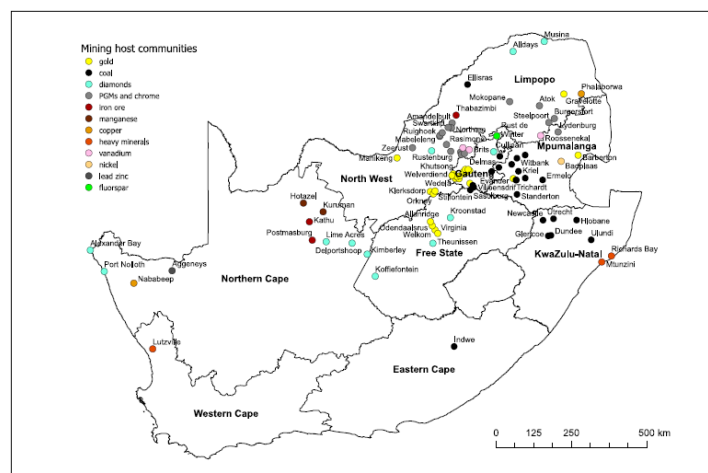


Figure 1: Location of 95 mining communities in South Africa (Cole & Broadhurst, 2021)

According to the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg (2024), the mining industry is facing a systemic crisis, which can be seen in the production collapse of gold, experiencing a margin squeeze due to cost increases in depth mining. Consequently, creating a complex system shows casting interconnectivity. As the pressures of cost cutting affects jobs, that affects livelihoods, that affects the quality of life, affecting the community the mine operates in, affecting the economy of the country. Other areas influenced and governed by law, which adds to the layers of complexity are environmental sustainability, social wellbeing of communities and safety of employees (Dunbar et al., 2020; Cole & Broadhurst, 2021). Further creating a knock-on effect within the organisation that should initiate change in strategy, organisational structure, and a change in culture. Arguably, with such complexity in the industry, more research should focus on how leaders are continuously trying to find innovative ways to adapt and remain profitable.

However, Dunbar et al. (2020) argues that the business model for mining is outdated and no longer fit-for-purpose. The concept of a "business model" refers to either directly or indirectly outlining a structure for how a business plans to generate, retain, and deliver value (Dunbar et al., 2020; Teece, 2010). According to Dunbar et al. (2020) the primary problem with the mining model is that it delivers disproportionate returns to the government and its shareholders, leaving communities on the back burner. In addition, the mining industry in South Africa is experiencing a decline in production, exploration capital and employment, consequences of rising operational costs and divestments because of regulatory instability (Cole & Broadhurst, 2021). This is putting immense pressure on mining companies, the leadership, and employees, to remain profitable and operational. Therefore, additional studies are required to gain insight in the support middle managers need, to be better enabled to lead organisational adaptability and create adaptive spaces for strategy implementation.

On the other hand, Yaschenko et al. (2021) found that most large companies have the same kind of organisational structure, and mining is no different. An organisation structure refers to the foundation in how work is divided, the proportioning of power and responsibility and where decisions are made and implemented throughout the organisation (Yaschenko et al., 2021). The relationship between the organisational

units is devised to perform functions like planning, motivation, and control (administration and managerial functions) and processes (executive functions). Due to legislative and regulatory requirements, mining has a very rigid top-down management structure. Yaschenko et al. (2021) explains that large mining companies often have formal divisional structures with a “variety of models at many levels of management” (p. 3). The researcher selected to focus this study on the middle level of mining management, due to the unique positioning of this level and the gap in literature around the conditions fostering leadership for adaptability.

In addition, Huntsman et al. (2021) states that hierarchical structures pose a hurdle in handling complex conditions when frequent change is required. This might be due to its inherent characteristics of specified centralised guidance and strict rules and procedures (Huntsman et al., 2021). This in return poses a hurdle for employees to adapt and improvise (Huntsman et al., 2021; Bigley & Roberts, 2001).

To add to the complexity of the hierarchical structure in mining is the labour dynamics that the industry inherited. Humby (2016) accounts migrant labour as an unresolved legacy issue that is responsible for unequal compensation and high levels of low skilled workers. This issue was cited as a contributing factor to the “Marikana massacre”, an event that took the lives of 50 mining workers during an unprotected strike at a mine in the North West Province (Humby, 2016). In addition, The Minerals Council of South Africa (2023a), previously known as the Chamber of Mines, laments that women still make up less than 6% of the mining workforce in any given time of surveying participating mines for the last two years. However, Brueckner et al. (2021) confer that the industry is making strides in becoming “more socially and environmentally conscious” and is showing improvements (p. 1). Furthermore, the government has intervened with legislation such as the Mining Charter and the Employment Equity Act, which require gender-inclusive transformation within companies (Kansake, 2021).

The reasons and the real challenges for the adaptive responses and readiness of the mining industry is up for debate. However, it does not negate the reality that the mining industry is too important for South Africa to fail. Therefore, it needs to adapt to thrive and survive (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). Consequently, it should utilise all its resources to achieve favourable outcomes, of which the hierarchy of leadership is

one of them. With the gap of research in different settings, around leadership for organisational adaptability, this research will add to insights on how the mining industry can exploit its hierarchical power and advance leadership for adaptability.

2.3 The Leadership role of Middle Managers

2.3.1 Role of the Middle Manager

Tarakci et al. (2023) describes middle managers as the nexus, and a pivotal intersection for strategy processes. Middle managers are identified as “organisational connectors” that create the linkage to empower the change between systems (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Taylor & Helfat, 2009). In addition, top management does not always have the knowledge of the appropriate linkage for implementation, therefore senior leaders need to support middle managers to engage in linking activities (Taylor & Helfat, 2009).

The role and position of middle management in the business environment has seen a proliferation of studies since the late 1950's, wherein literature was built on theory to understand the expectations and the importance of middle management in the hierarchy of a business (Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020). Mintzberg (1989) describes the level in the hierarchy as the layer “between the operating core and the apex” (p. 98). This suggests that middle managers act as sifts between top management's strategic intent and the lower levels who need to act out that strategy operationally (Tarakci et al., 2023; Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020). Wooldridge et al. (2008), describes middle managers as mediators, located beneath senior management and above first tier supervisors, implying that middle managers are both followers and leaders and have access to influence from both levels in the hierarchy.

Moreover, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) notes that leadership is often viewed as a top-down phenomenon, thereby stifling the potential for a more collaborative and innovative culture; therefore, they call for greater recognition of distributed leadership models that empower employees across all levels to engage in both exploring new innovations and exploiting existing capabilities. Further studies are needed on distributed leadership models that empower employees across all levels to engage in both exploring new innovations and exploiting existing capabilities (Schulze & Pinkow 2020).

2.3.2 Leadership Behaviour

Apart from their normal managerial duties like overseeing tasks and workflow, middle managers must adopt leadership behaviour, which include motivating, influencing and development of employees, collaborating with colleagues across the organisation, as well as creating a workplace culture (Do & Nuth, 2020). Research evidence suggests that there is a gap in research on the personal experiences of middle managers who display leadership behaviour (Do & Nuth, 2020). Therefore, this study sets out to extend the knowledge of the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability, through the eyes of the middle manager. In addition, Tarakci et al. (2023) notes a negative attribute of middle management is the added layer of bureaucracy that affects decision-making and adds to operational expenses. However, they also highlight the importance of the middle manager's role as a strategic partner who transforms strategic content into operational realities (Tarakci et al., 2023).

In the seminal work of Floyd and Wooldridge (1992), echoed by Wooldridge et al. (2008), middle managers are shown to have the potential to upward influence strategic alternatives and restructure senior management's perceptions of strategy (Splitter et al., 2023). This position allows middle managers to package, frame and sell strategic issues, allowing them to be strategists that control the timing, and which issues are brought to the top management's attention (Splitter et al., 2023). Balogun and Rouleau (2017) confer that this upwards influence is done through sense-giving and sense-making. This coincides with the dynamic managerial capabilities concept, which includes skills of sensing, seizing and transforming opportunities and resources (Greven et al., 2023). Greven et al. (2023) states that the dynamic managerial capabilities concept was originally developed to gather insights on strategic decision-making of top management. However, they are of the opinion that it can shed light on the functional contributions of middle managers (Greven et al., 2023).

Albeit Jaser (2024) deliberate that middle managers can be sidestepped when lower-level employees skip them directly to engage with the top, stifling their voice to upward influence. Such an example of confirmation in business, was when Mark

Zuckerberg the CEO of Meta justified cutting out managers managing managers in his organisation (Tarakci et al., 2023; Kelly, 2023). Alphabet also targeted its middle managers in their latest lay-off (Tarakci et al., 2023; Contantz & Love, 2023). If business can so easily discard middle management, it raises questions on the importance of middle managers.

Nevertheless, Tarakci et al. (2023) describes the downward role of middle managers, as a position of 'facilitating adaptability', in which creative spaces to unlock innovation are created. This is indicative of how the roles of middle managers contribute to strategic initiatives and what recent studies are focusing on (Tarakci et al., 2023). However, the researcher could not find studies on how middle managers are enabled to facilitate adaptability or what support is needed for them to be empowered in leadership for organisational adaptability.

2.4 Leadership for Organisational Adaptability

2.4.1 Leadership inference in Organisational Adaptability

The concept of adaptability is not new, nor is the construct of organisational adaptability. The latter refers to the ability of an organisation to react quickly by pivoting when faced with either opportunities or environmental market threats (Ramesh et al., 2023; Kodama, 2018). Similarly, leadership for organisational adaptability examines the "ways in which leaders enable people and organisations for adaptability" (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018, p. 90). The theory focuses on the activities employed by leadership, whether managerial or employee related, to better enable the organisation for adaptability.

Ramesh et al. (2023) synthesise that organisational adaptability can be achieved through transactional leadership and transformational leadership if there is intellectual presence. This is in contrast with Uhl-bien and Arena's (2018) conceptual model that contains two definite sets of leadership activities, which are operational leadership and entrepreneurial leadership. In addition, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) introduced a third leadership style, enabling leadership. Knowledge sharing and a learning culture that leads to change adaptability are strong connections shared between transformational leadership and innovation (Ramesh et al., 2023). Thus, transformative leadership style cannot be dismissed from the theory. Furthermore,

Ramesh et al. (2023) lists the benefits of transactional leadership as a method to reduce work anxiety, increase goal focus and enhances customer service, all because followers feel empowered to pursue self-interest.

Schulze and Pinkow (2020) theorise that enabling leadership is necessary to manage ambidexterity, which is a core element in the leadership for organisational adaptability model. Opening and closing behaviour underpins enabling leadership, because an enabled leader shows the ability to navigate the tension during idea generation (opening behaviour) and adhering to plans (closing behaviour) (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). Furthermore, opening leader behaviour promotes diversity and drives experimentation, whereas closing behaviour enforces regulation and routine compliance. However, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) also points out that 20 years of research on ambidextrous leadership could still not provide agreement “on how organisations can manage the balance between exploration and exploitation” (p. 4). Therefore, research should consider other factors or conditions that will assist leaders in balancing ambidexterity which is core to organisational adaptability.

In addition, Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) warns that one should be careful not to confuse leadership for organisational adaptability to be the same as leading change, in addition it also differs from traditional leadership. The latter has a top-down approach, whereas leadership for organisational adaptability focusses on how leaders can position employees and the organisation to be adaptive in an increasingly challenging and demanding environment (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018). It draws on the importance of organisational and individual response requirements, to be adaptive and agile in the face of volatility and unpredictability in the business environment (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018).

Based on the scholarly findings above, traditional leadership behaviour has proven to be a challenge in leading organisations to adapt. This leaves the mining industry with a problem, considering its organisational structure is top-down (Yaschenko et al., 2021). Therefore, this research seeks to understand from the lived experiences if leaders can lead their teams to be adaptable in the current business environment and if they are able to create adaptive spaces.

2.4.2 Creating Adaptive Spaces

Schulze and Pinkow (2020) suggests that a precursor for leadership for organisational adaptability is the creation of an adaptive space. As shown in Figure 2 below, an adaptive space is created when leaders capitalise from the tension created between the operational structure and entrepreneurial structure to optimise productivity and innovation (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2017). Tension arises when individuals with heterogeneous backgrounds are required to collaborate to develop a solution to an adaptive challenge (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). Thus, the most considered elements in enabling an adaptive space in complex systems are conflicting and linking up (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2017). The model in Figure 2 has been adapted to obtain answers of where middle managers fit into the original model created by (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018) and to gain a better understanding of their linking role in creating adaptive spaces. The original framework can be observed in Appendix 4.

Consequently, balancing the pressure between exploration and exploitation as found in the ambidexterity theory, is instrumental to the success of organisational adaptability (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996; Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018). The exploitation act is described as top-down information flow (creating of policies and behaviours of doing business) and exploration bottom-up information flow (stopping old behaviours and adopting a new line of action), see Figure 2 (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Lubatkin et al., 2006). Ambidexterity is regarded as an enabler of organisational adaptability, but also characterised as hard to bring together (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996).

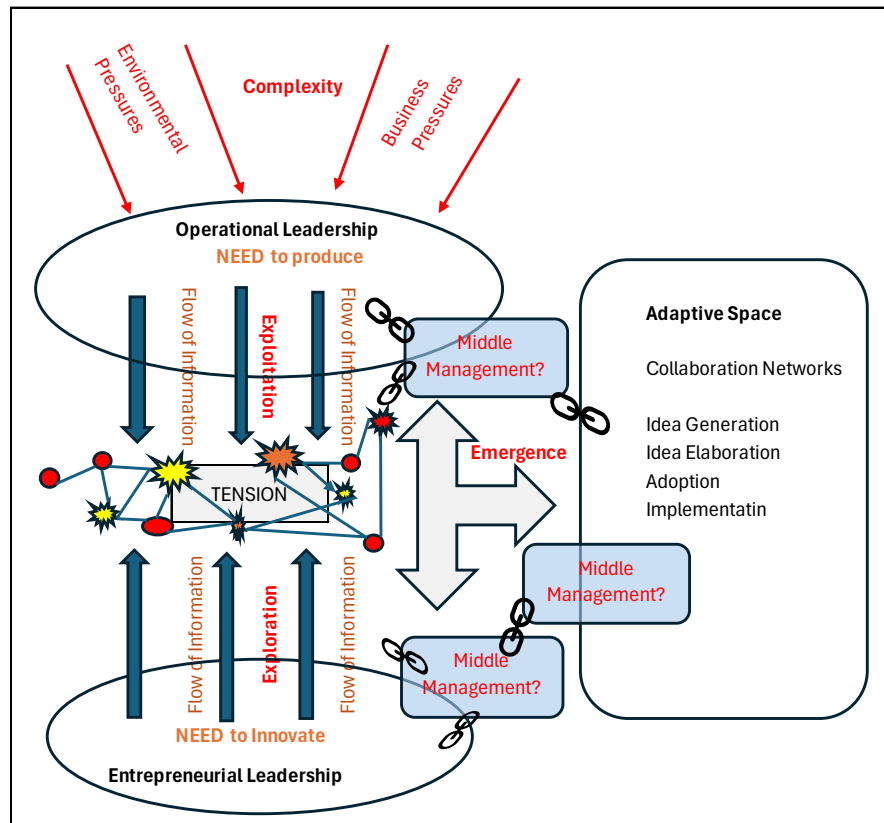


Figure 2: Adapted model of leadership for organisation adaptability. Adapted from: (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Schulze & Pinkow, 2020)

Therefore, if ambidexterity is not managed well, it might leave organisations in a worse off state than before (He & Wong, 2004; Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018). Thus, Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) contend that the leverage of linkages in an organisation is a necessity to enable adaptability. Taylor and Helfat (2009) describes organisational linkages as agents in the firm that connect individuals with diverse job responsibilities across organisational units, facilitated through coordination and communication. This coincides with Gjerde and Alvesson (2020) describing the role of middle managers being two directional, upwards to superiors and downwards to subordinates, linking the two levels.

Moreover, considering that research advocates that middle managers bring ambidexterity to the operations on a functional level (Greven et al., 2023; Taylor & Helfat, 2009), they should form an integral part of the concept for leadership of organisational adaptability.

Schulze and Pinkow (2020) emphasise the formation of a climate of trust and support is a critical aspect for successful adaptive spaces. Schulze and Pinkow (2020) note

that successful leaders adopt a 'fail fast' philosophy, embracing both successes and failures as learning opportunities that contribute to the overall growth and adaptability of the organisation. Leaders play a vital role in facilitating connections among team members through networking events and collaborative opportunities, fostering interdisciplinary exchanges that generate fresh ideas. This networked approach to idea generation is deemed advantageous, as it encourages knowledge sharing and nurtures creativity (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020).

2.5 Conditions that foster Leadership for Organisational Adaptability

Adaptive performance is a theory built on the premise that complex environments require a versatile workforce that has developed a tolerance to uncertainty, with the ability to adapt (Huntsman et al., 2021; Pulakos et al., 2000). This is in line with Grass et al. (2020), who argue that organisations are becoming more reliant on agile innovative teams to adapt. If this is indeed true, it is safe to theorise that it is important for teams to have the right leadership to be successful to reach such a state.

Conversely, Huntsman et al. (2021) reasons that a negating factor for organisational adaptability is the organisation's hierarchical structure. To remedy this shortfall, scholars recommend that employees need to be empowered to make decisions quickly during dynamic conditions (Huntsman et al., 2021; Bigley & Roberts, 2001). Additionally, employees' time should not be fully assigned to operational tasks, that they do not have time to explore alternative ways for solutioning (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). This in return equips employees with a specific skill set, increased commitment to the job, job satisfaction and adaptive capacity (Huntsman et al., 2021). Grass et al. (2020) found numerous studies linking empowerment with adaptability, and agility with adaptability. Which confirmed that leadership empowerment practices influence sales personnel's adaptive performance (Grass et al., 2020; Ahearne et al., 2005).

Zhu and Chen (2016) explore empowering leadership in R&D teams, highlighting its importance for fostering team effectiveness through two main components: group-focused empowering leadership and differentiated individual-focused empowering

leadership. Group-focused empowering leadership positively influences intra-team collaboration, which enhances both team innovativeness and performance (Zhu & Chen, 2016). In contrast, differentiated individual-focused empowering leadership, which involves treating team members differently, can lead to greater intra-team competition (Zhu & Chen, 2016). This competition, while potentially motivating at times, negatively impacts collaboration and ultimately diminishes team performance and innovation (Zhu & Chen, 2016). The research emphasises the role of leadership behaviours as contextual factors in empowerment that influence team processes and outcomes, revealing that collaboration fosters creativity, improves problem-solving, and encourages knowledge sharing, which are essential for innovation in knowledge-based work environments (Zhu & Chen, 2016).

Zhu and Chen (2016) assert that leaders should emphasise collaboration to cultivate a supportive atmosphere conducive to innovation. Furthermore, while encouraging self-development and individualised goal setting are beneficial, they should be approached carefully to avoid perceptions of favouritism, which can trigger unhealthy competition (Zhu & Chen, 2016).

Team empowerment can be reached through four dimensions, autonomy, effectiveness, meaningfulness and impact (Grass et al., 2020, Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). Scholarly research specifies structural empowerment (can be achieved through transition of authority) and psychological empowerment (can be achieved through effectiveness and autonomy) as the primary types of empowerments (Grass et al. 2020). Furthermore, Park and Park (2019) created a model for adaptive performance antecedents comprising 4 dimensions. Starting with individual characteristics (personality, prior experience, skills and abilities), following with job characteristics (decision making autonomy and uncertainty), thirdly group characteristics (support from supervisors and team learning climate) and lastly organisational characteristics (climate to innovate, clear vision and organisational support).

Park and Park (2021) use adaptive performance synonymously with adaptability and describe it as flexible work behaviour in adapting to change. Therefore, based on the correlating description of adaptability by the various researchers, we can deduce that similar antecedents need to be present to foster organisational adaptability. Noting that these conditions impact adaptive performance for teams, it is not clear how these

conditions impact the leadership aspect for organisational adaptability theory. The gap in literature necessitates additional studies to further develop the theory.

2.6 Integrated Discussion of the Literature

Schulze and Pinkow (2020) describes leadership for organisational adaptability, as a meta-theory, because it is a synthesis of numerous research streams into a consolidative conceptualisation. Uhl-bien and Arena (2018), defines this concept as the ability of entrepreneurial leaders to use the tension of the functioning system to create innovative ideas that can be scaled in the organisation to meet the adaptive requirements of the business and the environment, see Figure 2. This multifaceted concept uses a systems level method to design adaptive organisational structures, foster innovation, support networked collaboration and provide leadership development that enables interactions (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Uhl-bien & Arena, 2017).

In short, the fundamental essence of the adaptive process involves navigating the balance between the necessity for innovation and the need for productivity (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). Thus, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) deduce organisational adaptability as a dynamic capability, because it infers to the ability of an organisation to respond quickly and continuously to challenging environmental conditions to maintain or create competitive advantage, and ultimately survive in. Based on the empirical evidence above, adaptability is the key to survival for organisations, therefore both business and scholars need to have a clear understanding of all facets of this framework.

This research focuses on the middle layer of leadership to extend the framework and to better understand the theory. Furthermore, other theoretical frameworks like empowerment theory and adaptive performance model interlinks with adaptability. This poses additional questions on the conditions that enable leadership for organisational adaptability. Figure 3 illustrates how the literature fits into the business environment that necessitates leadership for organisational adaptability and the role of the middle manager balancing ambidexterity. As research suggests, the middle manager plays a vital role in linking and creating adaptive spaces. The literature review discussed in this chapter revealed that there is a gap in research in

understanding the conditions that foster organisational adaptability, as depicted by the yellow diagram in Figure 3 below.

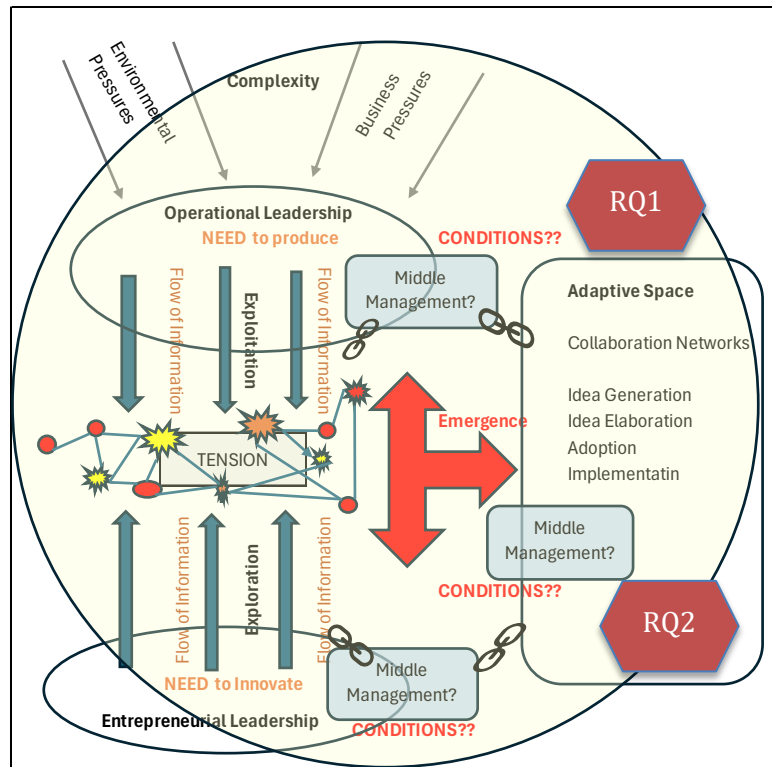


Figure 3: Illustration of the findings in the Literature review

Hence, grounded in the literature review, the next chapter discuss the research questions that emerged from the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Questions

The research questions emerge from the literature review and respond to Uhl-bien and Arena (2018)'s advocacy for further studies, to develop a unified theoretical framework for leadership for organisational adaptability and her call for studies on complexity and adaptability (Uhl-bien, 2021b). In addition, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) lobby for research on leadership for organisational adaptability in a different industry, other than consulting. Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) identifies the gap of leadership inferences in the theory and based on the literature review there are limited studies on the leadership role middle managers are performing during organisational adaptability, see Figure 2.

Organisational adaptability is particularly important in this fast-paced complex business environment we find ourselves in, therefore organisations should use all capabilities available to position themselves in the business setting. The hierarchy of leadership is one such capability, in which middle managers are overlooked. Therefore, the research questions seek to identify and explore the role middle managers play in leadership for organisational adaptability, and to explore the conditions enabling middle level leaders in hierarchical structures to adapt in complex and dynamic business environments. To achieve this purpose, two research questions guide the study.

Research Question 1 (RQ1):

What conditions foster or inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability?
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This research question seeks to examine the factors and conditions within the business environment that influence the way middle managers lead adaptability. According to Schulze and Pinkow (2020) leaders need to be enabled to create adaptive spaces, however research does not cover the conditions and factors leaders need to be enabled in. In addition, Park and Park (2021) discuss a model of antecedents that needs to present for teams to achieve adaptive performance, however it is unclear if the same conditions are present for leaders to lead teams in organisational adaptability.

Research Question 2 (RQ2):

How do middle managers influence adaptive processes within organisations?

This research question is underpinned by Uhl-bien (2021b) findings that dynamic events like the Covid-19 pandemic unearthed additional queries regarding complexity and adaptability and as such the need to understand how leaders and followers handle complex pressures. Schulze and Pinkow (2020) suggests that a precursor for leadership for organisational adaptability is the creation of an adaptive space. In addition, Huntsman et al. (2021) is of the opinion that hierarchical structures pose a hurdle in handling complex conditions when constant change is required. Therefore, a better understanding is needed, to comprehend the role of the middle managers in leadership for organisational adaptability and if they can influence adaptive processes. In addition, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) confer that adaptive spaces are created through enabling leadership, however it is not clear which level of leadership the scholars are referring to.

The following chapter seeks to explain the methodology and research design applied, to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the research design and the rationale of the chosen methodology that was undertaken to answer the research questions presented in Chapter 3. With the methodological choice being qualitative, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, by following an interpretivism philosophy to sought out the perspectives and experiences of middle managers who lead adaptively in the mining business environment.

This choice informed the research strategy. The researcher further discusses time horizon, chosen population and sampling method to gather data, as well as the data gathering instruments. Sequentially, the data gathering-, and analysis approaches are discussed. Next, the ethical elements were considered. Finally, the chapter concludes with the quality assurance steps taken and the limitations that the researcher encountered during the research journey.

4.2 Research Design and Methodology

Creswell et al. (2007), motivates that the research question should determine the type of research methodology and research design a study should undertake. Therefore, based on the research questions presented, a qualitative research method was followed. This is complementary to the study's exploratory nature, to uncover meaningful insights from leaders in the middle management level (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Zikmund (2000) further emphasises that qualitative methods are generally used for assessing emerging phenomena, like in this case of leadership organisational adaptability. Furthermore, this research seeks to extend the framework in the research done by (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018 and Schulze & Pinkow, 2020), who had also followed a qualitative methodology.

The Literature review drafted above informed the research questions, which in turn determined the research design. This sequence was followed, as suggested by Creswell et al. (2007). Furthermore, the research followed an exploratory design, with the purpose to discover insights from middle managers. Insights were drawn from 13 semi-structured interviews, which shed light on their adaptive leadership

styles that could add new knowledge to the theoretical framework (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). McCracken and McCracken (1988) are of the opinion that a qualitative research study is the most revealing instrument of inquiry, because this method takes you into the mind of individuals to gain understanding of the world through their eyes.

4.3 Philosophy

The research adopted an interpretivism philosophy since the study sought to draw an understanding of the personal perspectives and experiences adopted by middle managers who adapted to their environment of business. This confers with Saunders and Lewis (2018) who describes interpretivism as “the study of social phenomena in their natural environment” (p. 109). Moreover, interpretivism covers an extensive scope of phenomenological philosophical approaches with the objective to comprehend the social phenomena of those included (Edwards & Holland, 2013). This allows the knowledge gathered to obtain meaning from the interpretations made by others in their daily life and interactions (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Therefore, this philosophy was fitting for the study, as it addresses Uhl-Bien’s (2021b) concern that top-down management does not always “capture the lived experiences of navigating leadership in a complex world” (p. 1400).

4.4 Approach Selected

A ground-up inductive approach was applied to sought out themes that emerged from the study through the process of analysing data that was already collected in academic literature and then further build on scholarly understandings on the topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2018). This approach was in line with how Woo et al. (2017) describes inductive research, by taking said observations and looking for patterns in the data. They further motivate that an inductive approach the most suitable method is, when there is little knowledge regarding a phenomenon being studied (Woo et al., 2017).

4.5 Methodological choices

The mono-method qualitative study was adopted because one approach was used, which comprised semi-structured interviews, gathered in a social setting (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.6 Strategy

A narrative research strategy was applied because the mode of enquiry was based on the stories told by individuals, through an interview process (Creswell et al., 2007). According to Creswell et al. (2007) the process entails studying individuals, gathering data by collecting the narrations, documenting the individual experiences, and then chronologically arranging the meaning. This is echoed by Saunders and Lewis (2018) account of a narrative strategy being, a personal interpretation of an event.

Narrative research strategies can be divided into different forms, like an autobiography where a writer records and tells an individual personal story and experiences, a personal experience story, or it can have a specific contextual focus, such as experiences shared about organisations (Creswell et al., 2007). Additionally, Creswell et al. (2007) is of the opinion that it is the detailed stories that creates insight into the problem. Since the focus of this study will be informed by personal experiences in an organisation, a narrative strategy is the most suitable choice for this research.

4.7 Time horizon

This study was cross-sectional because data were collected from multiple sources at a particular point in time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). This approach was relevant considering the objectives of the study and taking the time constraints in consideration. Conversely, a longitudinal study was not possible, as it is done by observing participants over a period of time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.8 Population

Saunders and Lewis (2018) describe a research population as a “complete set of group members” (p. 138), of which amongst others can be organisations, people, or places. This constitutes a complete set of which a sample can be drawn from. A complete set for this research, will consist of all middle managers in the South African mining industry who need to make decisions for organisational adaptability in challenging business environments. Middle managers are described to be in a “sandwich” position between top management and lower-level subordinates, with close access to both levels (Abdullah & Sofyan, 2022).

4.9 Unit of analysis

The sample relevant to this study is managers that fall between the hierarchical levels of top management and first level supervisors in mining organisations, who had experienced restructuring or complexity within their organisation. Suitability of candidates was determined upon enquiry of availability of candidates for interviews.

4.10 Sample Method and Size

A sample is made up of a segment of all the group members in a population (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Obtaining a complete set of all middle managers in the mining industry was not possible, therefore a random sample selection was out of bounds. Therefore, the researcher made use of her own network, as well as fellow MBA students to gather interest from participants. This method is known as non-probability sampling. Saunders and Lewis (2018) propose this sampling method, in the absence of a sample frame.

A purposive sampling technique was followed as a subset of non-probability sampling, because the participants were selected based on their experiences and occupations in their respective organisations (Saunders & Lewis, 2018; Palinkas et al., 2015). Palinkas et al. (2015) recommends purposeful sampling in qualitative research where resources are limited, but individuals and groups are very knowledgeable about the topic of interest. A heterogeneous pool of middle managers within the mining industry with no relations to each other were selected, so that knowledge obtained on the topic studied is not occupation specific and to increase the comprehensiveness of the data obtained.

A minimum of 12 interviews with a time duration of 45 minutes each, was deemed sufficient for the purpose of the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2018; Guest et al. 2006), but due to the newness of the theory the sampling size was not fixed, nor did the interviewer limit the participants to an assigned time.

Consequently, a total of 13 participants were interviewed, occupying various middle management roles in different functional streams. Table 1 shows an overview of participants. To ensure the data gathered from interviews would be of breadth, variation and depth, managers had to have experience of more than three years. They had to be from various companies across different provinces and experience

different types of mining minerals, because this could influence organisational cultural experiences. It was important to obtain a heterogeneous sample, because previous research suggests that the tension needed for ambidexterity arises when individuals with diverse backgrounds or perspectives develop a solution to an adaptive challenge (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020).

Thus, the participants were spread over four South African provinces and six different mining organisations, who extract four different types of minerals. On average the interviews lasted 60 minutes, totalling 13h23m spent in session with participants. 77% of the interviewees had extensive middle management experience, ranging 10 years and up, in their related fields.

Unfortunately, Participant 4's interview had to be omitted, because of bad audio quality which led to an incoherent transcript. However, the study still fulfilled the requirement of 12 interviews in which the participants shared valuable and rich insights.

Table 1: Interview Participants

Participant ID	Occupation	Mining Minerals	Province	MM Years of Experience	Length of Interview
P1	Cost and Treasury Accountant	Ferrochrome	North West	10+	01:07
P2	Contracts Coordinator	Platinum	North West	10+	00:50
P3	Management Accounting Manager	Platinum	Limpopo	10+	01:43
P4	Bonusses Coordinator	Platinum	North West	5-	00:45
P5	Chief Ventilation Officer	Platinum	North West	10-	01:20
P6	Environmental Manager	Platinum	North West	10+	00:56
P7	HRD Manager	Platinum	North West	10+	01:22
P8	Projects Manager	Coal	Gauteng	10+	00:33
P9	Senior Engineer	Iron Ore	Northern Cape	10+	01:06
P10	Metallurgical Manager	Platinum	Limpopo	10+	01:00
P11	Systems Analyst	Platinum	Limpopo	5-	00:53
P12	Chief Surveyor	Platinum	Northern Cape	10+	00:50
P13	Business Improvement Manager	Iron Ore	Northern Cape	20+	00:58
					13:23

4.11 Measurement Instrument and Data Collection

Golafshani (2003) refers to the researcher as the instrument, because the integrity of the research is dependent on the effort and skill of the researcher. In addition, an interview guide (Appendix 3) was utilised as a viable measurement tool to facilitate a more focused study, while performing semi-structured one-on-one interviews (Fossey et al., 2002). This ensured that data was collected consistently between the various interviewees in each interview.

The research questions in the interview guide were mapped against the research objectives and research questions to ensure that the literature reviewed, and the questions asked in the interview are aligned. By using a consistency matrix (Appendix 1), the researcher could align the research purpose with the literature that informed the research questions. This added to the quality assurance of the research. The interview questions were informed by the findings of Schulze and Pinkow (2020)'s study, which focused on how enabling leaders create adaptive spaces.

The researcher initially relied on the video capabilities of Microsoft Teams to observe the interviewee as well as record and transcribe the sessions, whilst taking field notes. Back-up data was stored on Google Drive as a data protection method.

4.12 Data Gathering Process

With the research objectives in mind, i.e., to gain rich insights from middle managers, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher. This allowed the researcher to direct the conversation and to probe for further understanding. Microsoft teams video call was the technological platform of choice, because of its ability to record and transcribe meetings. This platform was also ideal for long distance interviews with participants situated in different provinces and cities. Audio data was recorded, after obtaining verbal permission from the interviewee.

The researcher initially started out with in person interviews (Participants 1, 2 and 4). However, this led to poor quality audio, because the microphones on the personal computers would cross pick up, and on instances incorrectly assign the comments of the interviewer and the participants, which complicated the transcription process.

This led to long hours of cleaning up of data and assigning the correct comments at the correct speaker, whilst listening to the audio. This led to Participant 4's interview being discarded, because the transcript could not be cleaned up with 100% surety of the correctness.

The interview with Participant 3, was the only interview recorded with video, because this method also had challenges. The interview was disrupted several times due to bad internet connection, whilst the participant was answering a question that interrupted the flow of the conversation. After interviewing Participant 5, the researcher made a conscious decision to only greet and introduce herself to the participants on video and switch to voice only, because the quality of the transcript and voice recording of this interview superseded the quality of all former interviews recorded at that point.

Field notes were taken and were used by the researcher to trace and track additional questions that arise during the interview and during the transcription process. This is in-line with how Creswell et al. (2007) explain how during a narrative strategy a researcher gathers raw data (stories), which is called field text and observe participants and record field notes.

The questions started off with the background of the participants, for them to relax and to confirm the qualification of the participants in the sample pool. Although the questions were numbered and divided into categories the sequence was not fixed. The researcher allowed the responses from the participants to guide the next question, and thus were able to reorder the sequence of the questions to ask. This allows for a smooth interview flow (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.13 Data Analysis approach

In the process flow for a narrative research strategy, chronological sorting and analysis were the next steps after data collection (Creswell et al., 2007). The sequencing of chronological analysis is what sets narrative research apart from other categories of research (Creswell et al., 2007; Cortazzi, 1994). Fossey et al. (2002) describes qualitative analysis as "a process of reviewing, synthesising and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena or social worlds being

studied” (p. 728). This accords with a thematic data analysis which requires examination of a data set to uncover, analyse and document repeat findings (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). A thematic analysis was appropriate for this study because it seeks to find understanding in experiences, thoughts, and actions within the data set (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

With Microsoft Teams being able to render recordings of the interviews, the researcher utilised the same software to transcribe said recordings, because this is secure cloud-based technology. The approach consisted of reading transcripts with the field notes, whilst listening to recordings, coding the data, and grouping into categories and themes. The researcher found that categories emerged from the data. This was in line with how Saunders and Lewis (2018) described an inductive approach. They further advised the researcher to expect to refine categories as patterns emerged from the data, to obtain meaningful results (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Emerging ideas and themes were identified and coded by using the software, ATLAS.ti. The goal was to collate identified themes in relation with each other and create a structural synthesis of the experiences communicated (Fossey et al., 2002). The researcher achieved this goal as per Table 3 and 4 in Chapter 5 of this document.

4.14 Quality controls

Data validity is determined by Saunders and Lewis (2018) in twofold, as the degree to which the methods of data collection accurately gauge their intended measurements, and whether the research findings genuinely reflect the claims they purport to address. In addition, data reliability is defined as the degree to which data collection methods and analysis procedures will yield results that are consistent (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). The researcher conducted a pretest interview with a third party to enable her to refine the interview guide and practise her skill. Saunders and Lewis (2018) advocates for pre-test interviews, because this allows for the researcher to make changes to improve the process.

4.14.1 Dependability and Reliability

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) reasons that “dependability” a more appropriate quality concept is to measure for in qualitative research than to prove for “reliability”,

which is a better concept for quantitative research. Stenbacka (2001, p.552) further emphasises that “the concept of reliability is even misleading in qualitative research.” As this can lead to mistrust in the value of the study. Therefore, the researcher set out to prove the dependability of the research data. One such measure is through an inquiry audit. This inquiry can be used to test the research process for constancy in how data was collected and organised. (Golafshani, 2003; Hoepfl, 1997). Consistency can be achieved by verifying the steps of the research by scrutinising raw data, research notes as well as data reductions items (Golafshani, 2003; Campbell, 1996). The researcher will keep a journal for notes in which key points will be handwritten to make sure that how I remembered it, is what I have transcribed.

4.14.2 Confirmability

Golafshani (2003) suggests that triangulation is a good strategy to improve the validity and reliability of qualitative research studies. Triangulation is the convergence of different methods to reflect the different views of the same occurrence (Golafshani, 2003). Both data triangulation and theory triangulation were conducted. Data triangulation was done through a heterogeneous sample for the data collected and theory triangulation by using more than one theory to substantiate the research produced.

4.15 Research Ethics

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Gordon Institute of Business Science Ethics Committee, which constitutes approval to gather data for research, see Appendix 2. The consent form provided in Appendix 5 was included in the Microsoft Teams meeting invitation, and it was read aloud to all participants before the interview started. Highlighting their right to withdraw at any time and assuring them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their information. Verbal consent was then obtained from the participants to record the meeting. The researcher emailed the consent form to all participants who signed and sent it back. The signed consent forms were uploaded to the GIBS research data repository folder, as part of the raw data requirements.

4.16 Research Limitations

The primary limitation to the study involves the sampling and sampling technique. Due to the size of mining operations and range of specialities and occupations, it was important to obtain a heterogeneous sample pool, however, the sample selected reflects only a limited number of views surrounding the topic. Although enough data was gathered to reach reasonable conclusions for the purpose of the research, more participants from more departments would have added to the robustness of the findings representing the mining industry. Furthermore, the research only focused on middle managers, thus the views of the team members oversee were not taken into consideration, nor will the views of senior management in the mining industry, pertaining to organisational adaptability be reflected.

The researcher as a measurement tool for collecting data had not received training to conduct interviews. In addition, the interpretation of the findings is based on the understanding of the researcher and there is a possibility that different conclusions could be reached by a different person. Furthermore, Saunders and Lewis (2018) are of the opinion that the researchers own views and assumptions poses the risk of researcher bias and therefore could influence the reliability of the research.

The research involves several theories that connect to organisational adaptability, however, not all interpretations could be investigated in depth. Therefore, there is an opportunity to further extend the research by focusing on a specific theory. This is consistent with Schulze and Pinkow (2020)'s finding that the newness of the theory impacts the vagueness of proposed types of leadership.

The study was of an explorative nature and as such could not be tested through a quantitative research methodology (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). In addition, due to the study being cross-sectional, the opinions and insights of the interviewees was captured at a certain point in time (Saunders & Lewis, 2018), which means that their opinions might have changed over time. A longitudinal study following middle managers during times of prosperity, as well as times of volatility; to compare actions and methods of adaptation would be more beneficial to develop the theory.

The following chapter discusses the results on the research questions, derived from the research methodology that was followed.

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to unearth additional knowledge and extend the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability, by focusing on how the middle management level of leadership contributes to the organisation's ability to adapt in a dynamic business environment. This was done by following the methodology explained in the previous chapter. This chapter provides an account of the results obtained.

Following a data gathering process through 13 semi structured interviews, the data was then analysed through thematic analysis, leading to key themes which were inductively formed.

The chapter begins by describing the research population and interview participants. This is followed by a qualitative analysis of the results to address the research questions tabled in Chapter 3. The researcher used a six-step thematic framework to arrive at third level themes. Furthermore, anonymised commentaries from the participants were shared supporting the key themes. Participants' real names were substituted with pseudonyms, i.e., P1 to P13, in honour of the confidentiality consent agreement with participants. In addition, where a company's name was mentioned, it was redacted with XxxXxx.

5.2 Context and Interview Participants

A total number of 13 interviews with the shortest interview lasting 33 minutes and the longest interview lasting 1 hour, and 43 minutes were conducted. All interviews were conducted over a period of 4 weeks, guided by the availability of the participants. The Interviewer made use of an interview guide (Appendix 3) to help direct the discussion and recorded all interviews through MS Teams. The interview guide was not shared with the participants beforehand. Field notes were taken during the interview.

Due to the size of the mining industry, and large range of specialities and occupations, it was important to obtain a heterogeneous sample pool because departments function differently. However, leadership of people remains the main

theme of this study and therefore the focus and the common denominator was middle level leaders. Observing the sample, the goal was to obtain a broad range of middle managers in the mining industry that applied varying states of adaptive leadership.

Participants were either known by the researcher or referred through the snowball effect. The qualifying criteria to form part of the sample was established early in the interview, through Questions 4,5 and 6 of the interview guides, see Table 2 below. Wherein the participants positioned themselves between the layers of subordinate reports and the senior management above them.

Table 2: Extraction of interview guide (Appendix 3)

Questions
4. Do you have people that report to you and how many people report to you?
5. How many levels are between you and senior management?
6. How many levels of reporting are below you?

Figure 3 below depicts where the sample pool is nestled between top management and supervisory levels. The participants ranged between upper middle management (D4 and D5) and lower middle management (D2 and D3).

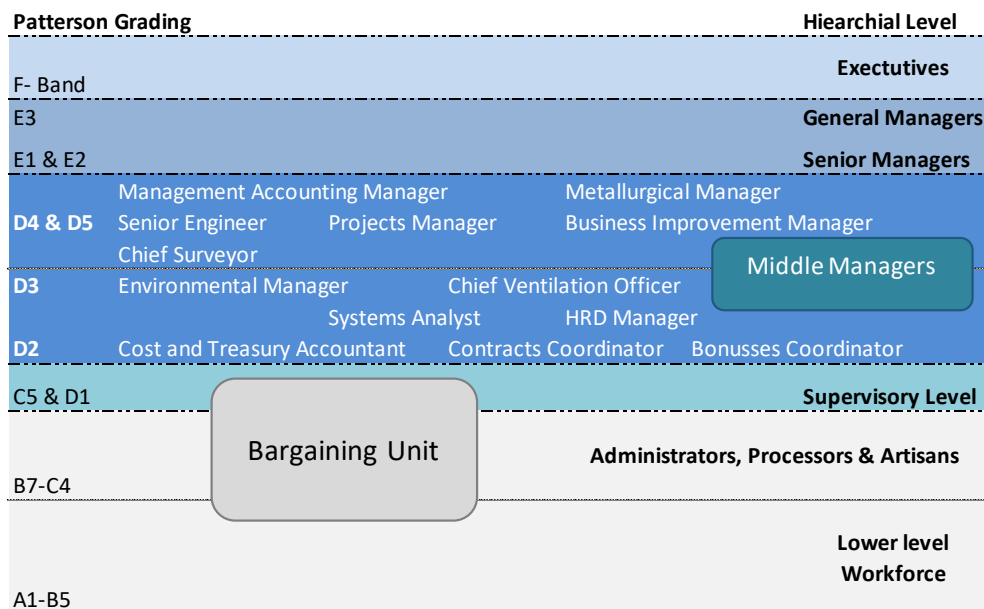


Figure 3: Research sample in the organisational hierarchy

5.3 Data Analysis

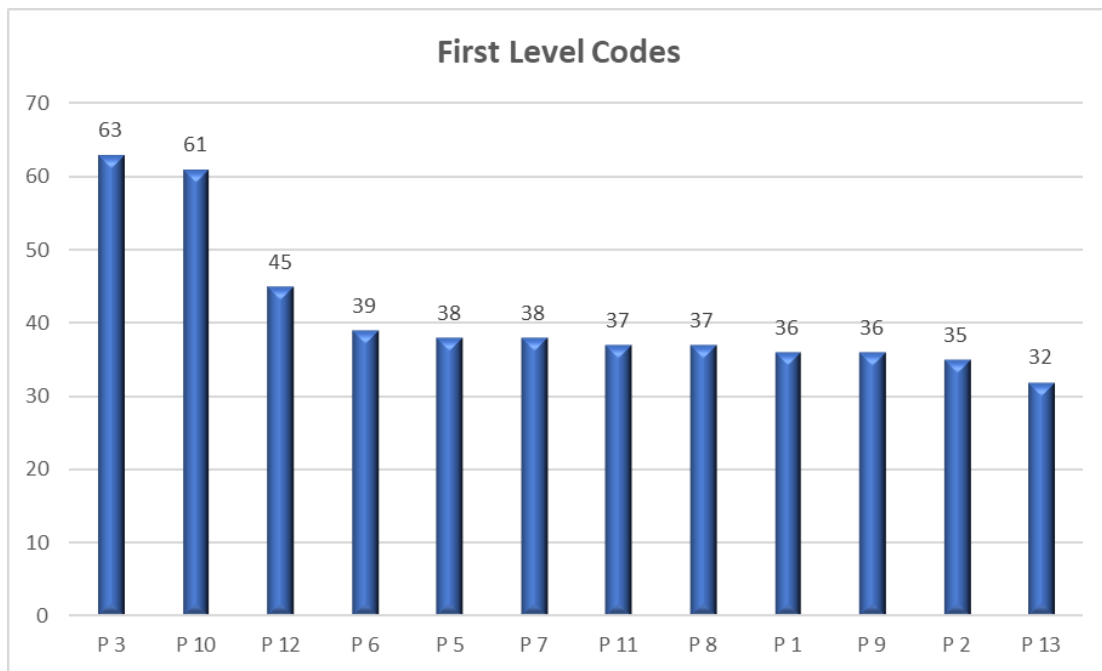


Figure 4: First level codes created from Interviews

The researcher made use of Microsoft Teams software to transcribe the audio, as the interview took place. However, due to the South African accent and pronunciation of some words, some sentences were out of context. This meant that the researcher had to listen to all the audio recordings and verify if the transcription is indeed a true version of the interview. Corrections were made in line with the recording and the field notes taken during the interview process. This is when the researcher discovered that Participant 4's interview could not be used, because the audio of the recording was unclear, and thus the interview was disregarded.

The interview transcripts were subsequently loaded into ATLAS.ti software, a qualitative research tool used for data analysis. Each interview was coded, by dissecting the responses for comments relevant to the study and interesting discoveries. Participant 3's interview was coded first, because it was the longest interview, lasting 1 hour and 43 minutes. This interview also rendered the most codes at 63. The total codes for the 12 participants equated to 497. The codes gradually decreased, with the last interview coded at 50% less than the first interview see Figure 4. The researcher could further deduce that any further data collection will not produce more discoveries. And thus, enough value-added insights were collected to fulfil the research purpose.

ATLAS.ti was further utilised to create categories from the related codes. Thereafter the researcher transferred the data to Microsoft Excel in which data was further sorted into Themes. Themes could be tied back to the research questions as discussed in Chapter 3.

The next section will discuss the study findings per research question.

5.4 Results: Research Question 1

What conditions foster or inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability?

Table 3 below shows the categories and themes for Research question 1, that were derived from and inductive analysis, using the software ATLAS.ti. Breakdown of first level codes that condense into second level categories can be viewed in Appendix 6.

Table 3: RQ1 Codes, Themes and Categories

Research Question	Frequency of First level Codes	2nd Level: Category	3rd Level: Theme
RQ1: What conditions foster or inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability?	81	Team Composition Gr=81; GS=23	Organisational Structure
	35	Operational Model Gr=35; GS=31	
	12	Governed by Law, Policies and Procedures Gr=12; GS=10	
	6	Bureaucracy Gr=6; GS=3	
	134		
	49	Innovation Gr=49; GS=17	Innovation and Technology
	22	Technology Gr=22; GS=15	
	7	Industry Benchmarking Gr=7; GS=3	
	78		
	27	Financial Impact Gr=27; GS=10	Drivers for Change
	27	Resistance to Change Gr=27; GS=7	
	11	Need for Change Gr=11; GS=7	
	4	Reputational Damage Gr=4; GS=4	
	69		
Total	281		

Abbreviations

Gr
GS

Groundedness of codes (number of quotations coded by a code) or documents (quotations created in a document)
Number of documents in a document group or number of codes in a code group

As seen in Table 3, there were three main themes that emerged from the categories, namely Organisational structure, Innovation and technology and Drivers for change.

5.4.1 Organisational Structure

The theme Organisational structure obtained the most first level codes, at 134. The 2nd level categories under organisational structure are team composition, operational model, governed by law, policies and procedures and bureaucracy. The last three categories mentioned mostly exhibited inhibiting properties that middle managers need to overcome.

The category with the most responses in this theme was on their team's composition with 81 first level codes, see Table 3. Amongst other factors, participants had strong opinions on understanding, managing and embracing diversity within their teams.

"We are in South Africa and chances that you are in a team where there are at least 3-4 different types of backgrounds is 110% guaranteed." (Participant 1)

"What I have noticed with teams most of the time, is understanding the background of the people that will let you fail. Because if you do not know the people and you come up with something, quite often, you not understanding the context and the situation and how the people work; you will quite often struggle to get through to people." (Participant 5)

"I think we are diverse people and we've got different ways of raising our views. Without sounding academic, I think that diversity is important." (Participant 7)

The operating model category under the Organisational structure theme, had 35 codes, in which participants alluded that they find the operating model inhibiting.

"It should definitely change, yes. My department is so overworked. We push quantity and not really quality." (Participant 2)

"We're centralised, so you need to take into consideration what is happening in Group, and what is happening at your sister sites. You can't just run off and do things by yourself. You need to kind of do it as a bigger company basically." (Participant 11)

"You will never find a lot of research in my company, there is no research, we are reacting to situations. We are reactors, we are not takers because of what is happening in the industry." (Participant 5)

In addition, there were two other inhibiting conditions middle managers need to navigate around, one is that the mining industry is governed by strict laws, policies and procedures, however managers are using this to their advantage,

“We highlighted the facts that if we get a directive from government, it does not only stop your own operation, your own business unit. But it has impacts on others who are doing well. So ultimately now there is the risk of government withdrawing the licence and if they withdraw the licence, the other operations are also affected.”

(Participant 6)

“We are custodians of our policies to effect those changes on the procedure. So, then I can change my training and to enhance that change because some of this change, remember it's as a result of accidents that happens in other mines.”

(Participant 7)

“So somehow as much as I have authority to take decisions, I must still follow certain procedures and standards. Sometimes there is room for improvement on a certain condition, but due to procedures and standards it becomes impossible to implement certain things or even make decision based on what can possibly be done.”

(Participant 5)

...and secondly bureaucracy:

“You know, I feel like our committees are full of people who have been in the organisation for too long, people who haven't seen what is done out there and who are not willing. And it is mostly people who have a fear of making a decision, I think they feel like if I make this decision and tomorrow things don't work out, then it will come back to me, so they don't trust us basically.” **(Participant 8)**

“because of the procurement processes, it takes forever to change a standard item, so if something is new in the market and it can save water, it can save time. Unfortunately, we have standard items you must go through a committee and to go through that before you are able to say, OK, this can replace the standard items, this results in them missing out opportunities.” **(Participant 6)**

5.4.2 Innovation and Technology

The second theme that emerged, Innovation and Technology had 78 first level codes, of which Innovation dominated. Participants are of the opinion that the teams working below them is hindered by external factors to be innovative.

“Now you will end up spending on things that it doesn't even add value. I said to them, there's an opportunity for us to add more value to the business. And you know, I can get the resources for us and people started to become creative.” (Participant 7)

“No, they are not. Unfortunately, we are heavily legislated, so you don't have much room to be innovative.” (Participant 6)

“And every contract is different. You need to think out-of-the-box. You need to adapt to that specific service offering. My team is not innovative. Some people are so fixated on this is how we do it, and that's it.” (Participant 2)

“So, you are able to really be innovative and add value because you get the support from the management.” (Participant 12)

Conversely, most participants indicated that the technological curve is a condition that can improve their ability to lead the organisation to be adaptive, with the capability and the willingness of the people in the organisation at hand.

“We have technologies, but we don't know how to use them. So, I think firstly is to make sure that people are aware of those technologies, take them to training.” (Participant 8)

“And because we are so behind with the technology curve, a lot of our processes are manual and that takes time. If I take tenders for example, it's also a manual process. I think now that XxxXxx has come in, them being on SAP ARIBA might be a benefit for us. It will eliminate a lot of errors. Human errors. Let's just say, evaluating a tender being one.” (Participant 2)

“In terms of improving ourselves, we are living in a very technology savvy world, most of our workforce is young people. So, you do not have to worry about terms of they will embrace technology. They love technology.” (Participant 3)

In addition, some participants felt that benchmarking and collaboration with other mining companies is a condition that can enhance their need and propensity to adapt in terms of innovation and technology.

“And also making them realise that if we don't adapt to the use of technology, we're actually, we're lagging behind. And I think also doing research comparing ourselves with the best in the industry like the likes of Rio Tinto and seeing how they operate in terms of technology, how far they the likes of England, America like the big mining houses in the world. If you can benchmark ourselves with those.” (Participant 8)

“And to evaluate and to come up with new ways of doing things and looking what other mines and maybe other processes have been successful in and seeing whether that could fit for us.” (Participant 13)

“So, I started doing some market research and pulling in guys from our corporate side, from the IM departments to kind of put out feelers for other developers. Just benchmark the costs against and realise that these guys were charging us ridiculous amounts. Up to about R4 million against what their competitors benchmarked at R1.5m for very similar development.” (Participant 11)

5.4.3 Drivers for Change

With so many challenges plaguing the business environment, the researcher prompted questions to understand what it will take to initiate change in their organisation and lead the organisation to adapt and reposition the business.

Financial impact and reputation damage emerged as conditions that initiate change.

“Our industry is going through a tough time; market prices are very low. So, we need to initiate cost savings, support the different departments in their cost saving initiatives and monitor it and report on that.” (Participant 1)

“You know sometimes I find it difficult if that happens, you don't deal with the problem while it's still at its infant stage. You wait for it to be at a more mature stage where it might cost even more to fix that particular issue.” (Participant 8)

“The company was in the news for senior management that was involved in a bribery matter. The company had to pay a tremendous fine on the fraudulent or bribery case that was reported.” (Participant 1)

“I mean therefore this project that I'm telling you about, it's a very serious compliance project that if we don't do it, we'll soon be in the media, we'll be in trouble.” (Participant 8)

In addition, the participants also shared their view on resistance to change and the need to change, which in turn informed the theme Drivers for Change.

“Resistance to change basically comes from people's fear of the unknown or fearing that that change makes them kind of redundant, you know.” (Participant 11)

“I think many times people don't want to change because they don't see the reason why should they change? I mean this is how we've been doing things all these years and it's been working. Why? Why should we change? What is that reason? Why? Why do you want us to change now?” (Participant 9)

“We definitely need change in terms of our way of thinking. We've come from a time where the prices were high, meaning that you have enough capability financially and capital to implement and to test equipment and different ways of thinking.” (Participant 13)

5.4.4 Summary of Results to RQ1

Organisational structure emerged as a key condition fostering organisational adaptability, in which team composition emerged as the strongest category, where participants especially highlighted the importance of managing and embracing diversity as key enabling conditions in this category. Although governed by law, policies and procedures exhibited inhibiting properties, middle managers have been using this to their advantage, because they can use this to enforce compliance from operations, as this is a requirement that is not going away. Opposed to categories like the operating model and bureaucracy that appear as inhibiting conditions to foster adaptation. Managers must find ways to be innovative whilst adhering to legislation and the bureaucracy of dealing with layers of management levels and approval committees.

Participants acknowledge that innovation and technology can improve their ability to lead the organisation to be adaptive, that is if you have the support of management and the willingness of the subordinates. Various responses indicated that this condition can be enhanced through benchmarking and collaboration with other mines.

The last theme that emerged from the data, answering the RQ1, was drivers for change. Participants highlighted that the need for change in the mining industry is high, however they do meet a high proclivity of resistance to change. Results from the research shows that conditions that have a high drive for change, usually involve financial impact and reputational damage.

5.5 Results: Research Question 2

How do middle managers influence adaptive processes within organisations?

Following the 6-step process of Thematic analysis, six overall themes emerged of which three answered Research question 2. Breakdown of first level codes that condense into second level categories can be viewed in Appendix 6. The themes that emerged will be discussed in more detail below.

Table 4: RQ2 Codes, Themes and Categories

Research Question	Frequency of First Level Codes	Second Level: Category	Third Level: Theme
RQ2: How do middle managers influence adaptive processes within organisations?	60	Communication Gr=60; GS=19	Creating an Inclusive Environment
	34	Psychological Safe Space for Voice Gr=34; GS=27	
	24	Consultative Engagement Approach Gr=24; GS=10	
	24	Creating Urgency for Adaptive Spaces Gr=24; GS=10	
	20	Brain Storming Sessions Gr=20; GS=16	
	18	Skills of Middle Managers Gr=18; GS=17	
	17	Stakeholders Engagement Gr=17; GS=15	
	14	Gender imbalance Gr=14; GS=6	
	12	Different Generations Gr=12; GS=9	
	4	Open and Honest Discussions Gr=4; GS=4	
	227		

Table 4: RQ2 Codes, Themes and Categories (continue)

Research Question	Frequency of First Level Codes	Second Level: Category	Third Level: Theme
RQ2: How do middle managers influence adaptive processes within organisations?	38	Autonomy to Take and Action Decisions Gr=38; GS=8	Exhibit good Leader Behaviour
	38	Leadership Practices Gr=38; GS=33	
	28	Training and Education Gr=28; GS=23	
	26	Leadership Styles Gr=26; GS=22	
	26	Management Support Gr=26; GS=19	
	18	Role of Middle Managers Gr=18; GS=8	
	14	Autocratic Leadership Required in Some Circumstances Gr=14; GS=8	
	11	Empowerment Gr=11; GS=9	
	10	Leadership Experience Gr=10; GS=6	
	5	Performance and KPI's Gr=5; GS=4	
	214		
	18	Organisational Culture Gr=18; GS=10	Organisational Climate and Culture
	15	Teambuilding and Team Cohesion Gr=15; GS=13	
	15	Mining Working Environment Gr=15; GS=12	
	8	Organisational Fit Gr=8; GS=5	
56			
Total	497		

Abbreviations

Gr

GS

Groundedness of codes (number of quotations coded by a code) or documents (quotations created in a document)

Number of documents in a document group or number of codes in a code group

5.5.1 Creating an Inclusive Environment

Creating an inclusive environment emerged as an important theme in how middle managers influence adaptive processes in their organisations. This theme was underscored by 11 different categories and 255 first level codes, see Table 4.

The second level category with the most first order codes assigned (60), was the importance of communication, see Table 4. Notably, the findings revealed that communication must be both ways, for it to be successful. Managers also showed cognisance of methods of communication, i.e., electronic and verbal communications.

“When there's anything that I want to implement, I sit down with them because I want their buy in and we go through it and I even give them an opportunity to tell me how best they if we can do it, because at the end of the day, I wanted to look like it's how they want it, even though it's my idea.” (Participant 12)

“Sometimes emails are cold, emails don't have emotions and emails don't have a face. So, when I receive an email, it depends on how I feel. I read it the way I feel. So, because now we are in the same complex, sometimes taking a break from my desk and I want to communicate something, I walk to the person and then we have a chat. I might follow it up with an e-mail if it's important.” (Participant 7)

“Giving continuous feedback is also something middle managers need to have, because sometimes you would find that you are talking alone and not getting the desired results that you need, simply because you are not properly communicating or articulating and preparing.” (Participant 3)

Going hand in hand with communication is creating a psychological safe place for employees to voice their opinions, ideas and concerns, which emerged as a second order category that contributes to an inclusive environment. Managers also seem to encounter problems where they themselves do not feel safe to voice their opinions.

“Setting an environment that everybody feels comfortable to talk and share thoughts, even though it won't be considered immediately, but if you feel you have something to add you must create that space for that individual to feel that he can raise his voice and say what he wants to say. It is important to have the skill to gain the trust of your employees and create a sense that they can trust you and they can share with you without being implicated with whatever they share with you and as a leader or a manager.” (Participant 1)

“But if my senior management can have an open ear and open eye to see the fuller picture, the person who deals with that information or the person who deals with that kind of work give them a platform to say, let me present fully. Let me take you into what is happening, what we are experiencing, what are the challenges. I think sometimes they brush through the information that they get to lose some of the opportunities that can be implemented.” (Participant 3)

“There is never a situation where they say OK, we took this approach, then it fails. Then we come back and say OK. Let us say the senior managers we acknowledge that we tried 1234 and, it is never like that. It will go in silent.” (Participant 5)

Adjacent to the previous two categories, open and honest discussion, coupled with a consultative engagement process, takes high rankings in the ability of middle managers to create adaptive working places, see Table 4.

“We experienced 189, Section 189 is when the company decides to retrench due to business needs. This brought about, anxiety and panic. So, I believe in having open discussion with people it will help me in a sense of trying to alleviate. you cannot take away their entire anxiety, but I believe it helped my team when I had frank discussions with them of what was happening, what it meant for our department and being able to open up my office for them to come and maybe vent out their anxieties.”
(Participant 6)

“But then also to answer the other group of complaints, you know this is what you guys have mentioned. So, here's some feedback or we are waiting for feedback, or it has been escalated to the mining, the mining manager and we're waiting for a response. The risk is always that you don't.” **(Participant 13)**

“Set up a session there, sit with all the stakeholders in one room, and ensure that you know it's collaborative. We all work, you know, just so that we all see the bigger picture and we all see what the value the project will bring to the organisation.”
(Participant 8)

Eventually all above-mentioned categories involve stakeholders. The managers interviewed were passionate about the importance of all stakeholders and the importance of stakeholder buy-in. Stakeholders were also mentioned in conjunction with brainstorming which emerged as a separate category in the theme.

“I will call all the stakeholders. I'm a big fan of engaging all the stakeholders and when I say all the stakeholders, I mean all you know from the onset, and tell them that listen, this is what we're planning to do. This is how it's going to happen.”
(Participant 10)

“And what we do after that we've done the brainstorming; we package everything nicely to say what are their roles and responsibilities. Who are the key stakeholders? What enablers do we need from the bottom or from the top?” **(Participant 9)**

“Oh, yes, quite often it's kind of part of the job right to do kind of stakeholder analysis and requirement gathering and brainstorming sessions is quite a lot of what I do, yeah.” (Participant 11)

However, managers mentioned that the brainstorming sessions does not usually go without strife or tension and that it is an important step in the innovation process. Although some managers try to avoid conflict, most agreed that it is necessary, but that it needs to be controlled. Participant 9 was the only manager who prefers to get a third party to facilitate so he can be part of the session and not focus on being the mediator or go into premature solution mode.

“Is that situation where there is a discussion and argument and we quite often come up with a solution that fits everybody opposed to somebody just coming up with an idea and we all just agree to it, you might find somebody in the room that has to compromise for such an idea because they are just agreeing to whatever.” (Participant 5)

“Yes, I think if we all agree on one thing, we may be missing opportunities, so sometimes a different idea or a different way of doing things is good to unlock, maybe it's a blind spot. We all agreed. But if there is a different view, a contentious view then it makes us stop and think, then when you evaluate, we may find that, OK that was a better or a good idea.” (Participant 6)

“But as soon as there is an argument and then we propose new things then this one comes up with this. This one comes up, then we end up coming up with a solution that really fits everybody. It becomes painful at that point in time. But the solution that comes after that for me, I believe are one of the best solutions.” (Participant 5)

“Mainly our brainstorming session I use a facilitator, I don't facilitate myself. I use a facilitator from business improvement. Because now I'm not the one that is facilitating it, it helps me to think a little bit different because you see some of the sessions that have facilitated before. I realised that I become too quick to run into a solution mode, whereas when we get an independent facilitator, this person is neutral.” (Participant 9)

The following categories different generations, gender imbalance, and creating urgency for adaptive spaces, require great care and attention in creating an inclusive

environment. Employees pick up on unspoken innuendos concerning gender, furthermore balancing gender and different generations are tricky and leaders need to be skilled to handle these situations.

Different generations:

“You know, I feel like our committees are full of people who have been in the organisation for too long, people who haven’t seen what is done out there and who are not willing everything that they want to do is, you know, they will always refer you to the policy, even if the policy doesn’t say that.” (Participant 8)

“Especially if you look at technology, you know the fear is not as much there anymore. The fear hangs on the 50 plus year olds. Now I would say where it’s difficult to change those minds and to show them that this computer programme is going to change the way you do things. You know the way you’ve been doing things for 10 years they don’t want to hear it.” (Participant 11)

Gender imbalance:

“There are still not enough of us to have one strong voice, so you would find yourself out of males in the HOD team, there is only two out of 12 women. So, it shows that there is no balance.” (Participant 3)

“You’ll go to a place and there’ll be certain innuendos that are thrown you away and you will know that I’m a woman. You know I’ve just been told exactly that I’m a woman you know.” (Participant 10)

“I must say there was in 2019 and I remember walking into a meeting. It was for D bands and above, and I looked around and there was only one black lady, and she was the OPS manager and I felt lost because I even when they said I must introduce myself, the first thing I wanted to say to them was. guys I feel, I feel so lost.” (Participant 12)

Creating urgency for adaptive spaces

“There were so many changes I would have liked to bring in, but as time went on based on the amount of work. Just let it be. Leave it like it was.” (Participant 2)

Nevertheless, most of the participants felt that the skills that they've acquired over the years had assisted them in creating an inclusive environment and named a few skills they believe middle managers need to possess to be adaptive.

"I think based on my experience and the case studies that I had in my personal career. I would have managed to convince them, you know, because it's unfortunately experience is experience. You cannot buy it. You cannot even make it up. It's something that you must go through and something that you acquire."
(Participant 9)

"Because if what you communicate is lost in translation you are not able to listen to what the subordinates or senior manager is saying, you will not be able to affect adaptability. So, communication skills and influential skills, because sometimes you need to influence people. Your influential skills need to be able to influence for the greater good."
(Participant 6)

"Our technical skills get us here. You need the technical skills, but you also need forward thinking skills, you know, long term. I'm not a now-person. If I do something, I have the future and I mean the long-term future in mind."
(Participant 10)

5.5.2 Exhibit good leader behaviour

Good leader behaviour as an aggregated third level theme that has had the second largest congruent of first level codes, at 186. Of this, Leadership practices and Autonomy to make decisions carried the biggest weight in how middle managers influence adaptive processes within the organisations they serve.

Participants reflected on the different leadership practices that a good leader displays and shared their experiences. Amongst others, are honesty and admitting your mistakes, the impact of visible leadership and learning from their previous managers,

"You must be honest with people. I mean, if you cannot help them, you must tell them. You cannot help them. Or if you have not helped them, you must be able to say, "Look, I dropped the ball and I did not do what I was supposed to be doing."
(Participant 13)

“I exercise a lot of management by walking around. I went underground almost at least once a week to ensure that I'm there and I work with the guys, and I showed them that this is where we need to go.” (Participant 7)

“Some of my best mentors didn't even know they were mentoring me, because I was observing and learning from a distance. I don't know if it makes sense. You know, if there's such. So, from a distance, I would see it and observe. I mean, I had a manager whom I learned how not to be a good manager from.” (Participant 10)

Out of the 12 coded interviews, only two participants felt that they limited autonomy to make decisions. The rest of the participants felt empowered and therefore you could sense the accountability they assumed for the position they held. The researcher asked the following questions from the Interview Guide.

Table 5: Extraction of interview guide (Appendix 3)

Question

7. How much autonomy or authority do you have in making decisions that affect organisational improvement and implementation processes?

“Well, in my section I have all the authority because I'm the one who knows what is needed, so I do have authority to make decisions and to implement whatever that I deem necessary.” (Participant 12)

“And it was so when it comes to machinery, I've got full authority because my I've I hold a legal appointment.” (Participant 9)

“Moderate in a sense that you have analysed certain information for example if you want to scrap certain machinery. You can decide what can be done before scraping the machinery because you will need capital to scrap the machinery.” (Participant 3)

“Quite a lot, I would say with regards to my world, to my realm, it's, it's quite a lot, a lot, a lot of what I have to do with is, you know, investigating new technologies that we can implement and use to better our service to our mining guys. I'm given quite a lot of freedom and leeway to explore.” (Participant 11)

In return these participants also felt supported by their managers and therefore were the recipients of good leader behaviour. Participant 3 exhibited some frustration in the management support she received, which coincided with her feeling of moderate autonomy to make decisions.

“Here at XxxXxx when you ask for something you get it and then makes it so much easier. So, you are able to really be innovative and add value because you get the support from the management.” (Participant 12)

“When I request maintenance, they knew it was not for fun, they know it was necessary. You know, there were no complaints when I needed my requested my time, you know, I took the time that I requested and delivered on the time that I requested.” (Participant 9)

“You will get some direction from the executive, but I find it very stifling at that point because if he's not passionate about a certain topic or setting, he will simply say just put it on File 13. (Participant 3)

“And if I do not feel comfortable then I would consult with my manager. I feel comfortable up to a certain level to make decisions, But the minute I feel uncomfortable, that's when I consult with my manager. I feel in the department I'm currently working with they do allow middle management to use their discretion and experience to make certain decisions. If you feel comfortable and have backup and you did your research on which you base your decisions, you can back up yourself.” (Participant 1)

“You know, if you plead your case and there's value in whatever idea you have is valued, you know the support will always be there. But I'm talking about financial support. I'm talking about the emotional support because it can be strenuous depending on the nature of the project to run with it.” (Participant 10)

Other management support included the opportunity to develop themselves and their teams further.

“Yes, definitely. It's one of the probably biggest aspects of why I'm still where I am. Development is a big thing in the team that I'm part of right now, both from levels above me and levels below me. So yeah, no, definitely.” (Participant 11)

“Yes, I am, last year December I completed my master’s in mining engineering and today my manager approved my MBA studies so yeah. So, and even the short course is if I wanted to do anything.” (Participant 12)

In addition, the need for training and education also emerged as a strong category with 28 first level codes, in which managers revealed how important continuous self-development is.

“I have done my MBA that I have paid myself and did it on my own time. It was not the company I was working for at the time. They did not select individuals to go on these types of courses. I took the initiative to embark myself for that qualification. The company I'm currently working at had a middle management course even though you were selected, you still had the opportunity to say no, it was a tough time in my life but took the opportunity. I feel that it was also an individual decision that I could make to enhance my skills and my abilities to improve my skills.” (Participant 1)

“I did Toastmasters to make sure that I can ensure that my voice is heard and also part of it is also doing my MBA. I decided to do something.” (Participant 8)

“You know I did attend an executive leadership development programme with WITS at some point. I'm currently busy doing my MBA with Potch. So, I've done many qualifications within the EDP, the ODETDP like, your occupationally directed education and training development space. So, each year I've got something new that I'm learning and that deepens my understanding, that deepens my view and the way I do things.” (Participant 7)

This seems to have a knock-on effect to middle managers in return empowering their subordinates. Empowerment as such emerged as a second level category under good leader behaviour. However, participants also clearly state that there is a limit, and that autocratic leadership is sometimes necessary.

“So, I'm very, yeah, I'm consultative. That means that I engage. But yeah, I consult. I'm not autocratic. I'm also not democratic if I need to put my foot down and say this is how it's going to happen, it will happen. But I don't, I'm not power hungry. I believe people have brains and people need to be consulted, especially because you would be saying, I want to work with the best team so you can work with the best team and

know everything. If you want to get the best out of people, you must give them opportunities.” (Participant 12)

“So, you need to let people be their own leaders if you want them to change. But if you are coming up with forcing things on people and then it becomes, especially with the underground crews and everything, you must make them believe that they are doing it themselves.” (Participant 5)

“There are instance that you must be autocratic, especially in an emergency we once had our, in my previous employment, water supplier switching off our supply, Without communicating with us, so I had to be autocratic in the direction on how we are using water because at that time the hostels were affected and at that stage you really don't have much time to sit around and discuss because it's becoming a health issue.” (Participant 6)

Interestingly, several participants felt it necessary to mention numerous times that they are not micro-managers, when the researcher enquired about their leadership styles. Similarly to the empowerment category, it seems that managers must balance this behaviour carefully to achieve the goal of creating an adaptive workplace.

“You need to communicate daily what is important for this day. For this week, for this month and daily follow up without micromanaging, follow up.” (Participant 1)

“I think that that would describe my leadership style. To me, it's about pushing the work first and then the friendship follows. But I am also not a micro, I am not going to micromanage you.” (Participant 2)

“I do have a serious problem with micromanaging when you micromanage it means you do not have confidence in your team, team members or your leaders.” (Participant 3)

“I wouldn't know how to describe my leadership style. As I said it before, I'm a situation leader and yeah, I don't treat everyone the same. There are people that must be micromanaged. I don't like micromanagement, but I wouldn't just let you be because I don't micromanage.” (Participant 12)

5.5.3 Organisational Climate and Culture

The final theme that emerged was Organisational climate and culture, which had 56 first level codes, divided into four second level categories, mining working environment, organisational culture, organisational fit and teambuilding and team cohesion.

Some participants indicated that they are still contending with legacy issues from the mining industry lingering in the culture and this also has an impact on organisational fit. The mining environment is also harsh, and incivility is something that managers had started to normalise.

“Look, I think the mining industry here we're dealing with the hardcore it's not a head office-based lifestyle or culture. So yeah, it's the F... word. It's hardcore but it's not personal.” (Participant 2)

“The mine has been operating for many decades, and some people have been with the mine for 15,20,30 years, and they have been doing things linearly. One way they have been doing things in their way and refuse to change ways because they have been doing it that way for many years and they have a negative attitude with newer people coming into the system, and because they've been doing it for many decades, they are not receptive to newer people or newer ideas or new ways of doing things.” (Participant 6)

“So, I think in terms of encouraging the culture that will make the guys on the floor to feel they are part of the organisation even more. I think that is where a bit of change can help the organisation to move forward.” (Participant 9)

“Now with our business being labour intensive, and not just labour intensive. Very unsafe because we are an underground mine and people you know, just working underground that's unsafe on its own because that's why we put on PPE the hard hats and all that.” (Participant 7).

However, other participants indicated that they were working towards creating an appreciative culture and an inclusive culture.

“So, it's also giving people a chance. It's also sitting back and saying but why? What do you think? How can you best improve this? So that's number one. It's just creating that environment where everyone has got a chance. So then you don't also have a

domineering perspective, or domineering individuals who are dominating their conversations and all that.” (Participant 7)

“But over the years I got to change a lot in terms of realising that it is not as cutthroat, yes or no, black and white. You are leading different generations to start with, the other X generation will probably do things themselves. They won't ask much why, But the newer generation, they will ask you a lot of why. I needed to transform in that sense to say you need to have an open-door policy. It is not that you must be authoritative all the time. It does not work. You must let people express themselves.” (Participant 3)

“You know, I often tell people there if you want to change something, let's change our department. Let's do things differently. And then the rest will follow us. (Participant 12)

The researcher probed to hear how the participants create team cohesion and if team building is an appropriate tool. Participants exhibited mixed feelings around team building, where some are very prone and see it an opportunity and others do not see the point, some felt that team cohesion can be created with something as simple as coffee dates.

“Every now and then, maybe once a quarter teambuilding that gets arranged where we go as a multidisciplinary team. Almost like a catch-up session to say this is where we want to be. How far away from where we want to be. What are the challenges? What are the things that? We need to do each department to make sure that we move together for what is a collective. So, we've got different platforms that are there that we currently use and so far, they have yielded quite positive results. It also builds relationships with different departments.” (Participant 9)

“It sorts of gave us a sense of people outside of their work, their normal work personas. If I can call it that way. So, you sort of understand them better If I can say that you understand them better. Out of their workspace, and then sometimes during the team building, some will share their personal or private matters and then, so you get a good idea of where one is coming from, and it helps in my understanding of that person.” (Participant 6)

“People don't always see that as a good thing to force them to go and do something with people that they work with outside of a working environment, a lot of people are

in the mindset that, you know, I'm here to work. I'm not here to make friends.”
(Participant 11)

“Sometimes I even you know, I will have a coffee with someone from another department, just to check on them like for example, I work closely with the Environmental Department team.” **(Participant 8)**

5.5.4 Summary of Results to RQ2

The first theme that emerged from the data, answering RQ2, was the importance of creating an inclusive environment. The importance of communication was strongly highlighted in creating an inclusive environment, considering that it emerged as the category with the most first level codes. Based on the experiences of the participants interviewed, clear and honest communication will ensure buy-in from the relevant stakeholders which emerged as a category on its own. Participants also highlighted the importance of feedback under communication, whether it is good or bad.

However, communication is ineffective if employees do not have psychological safety to voice their opinions. Participants comprehend their roles are important in developing a safe environment, which leads to an inclusive environment. However, some middle managers indicated that they do not have psychological safety to speak their minds themselves.

In addition, creating a collaborative environment with key stakeholders, by making them believe that they are part of the ideas has also been a key contributor in how the participants influenced innovative and adaptive processes. Participants further shared their leadership styles and behaviours and how they applied this knowledge to create adaptive processes within their organisations. They also state that leadership styles and behaviours were cultivated in their years of experience in the mining environment and continuously developing themselves through further studies and mentoring and coaching programmes.

The participants are cognisant of the harsh mining legacy and as such are focusing their energy on creating an appreciative culture by listening to people and respecting different generations.

Following, the research findings from this chapter is discussed in relation to the academic literature in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion of the Results

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion related to the research questions in Chapter 3 and the existing literature in Chapter 2. By laying out the similarities, contradictions, connections and differences between the findings, with the purpose to extend the body of knowledge. By drawing from 12 semi-structured interviews, the researcher conducted a qualitative research study and analysed the data through a six-step thematic analysis, in which data was assembled in first level open codes, aggregated into categories and summated into themes. The discussion is presented in sequence of the two research questions and the findings related to each.

6.2 Discussion: Research Question 1

What conditions foster or inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability?

This research question sought to identify factors and conditions within the business environment that impacts or influence the way middle managers lead organisational adaptability, during periods of complexity and crisis. According to Schulze and Pinkow (2020) leaders should be enabled to create adaptive spaces. Additionally, Park and Park (2021) theorised a model of antecedents that needs to present for teams to achieve adaptive performance. Moreover, Research Question 1 sought to understand what conditions are present for leaders to lead teams to reach a state of adaptive performance.

Chapter 5 captured the responses from middle managers, who shared their lived experiences working and leading teams in the mining industry. Three overarching themes emerged from the data, the categories under these themes will be discussed below, in relation to the existing literature.

6.2.1 Organisational Structure

As discovered in the literature review, South African mines have a complicated history leading to a dynamic and diverse workforce. This was evident in the results

of the study, because team composition emerged as a strong category. It was particularly evident in middle managers being very conscientious in managing diversity, because they emphasised it as a condition that can lead to failure, if not managed with care and attention. This is an important condition to manage, as previous research indicates that the tension needed for the innovative process arises when individuals with diverse backgrounds or perspectives are required to collaborate to develop a solution to an adaptive challenge (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). Conversely (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020) also mentioned scholarly research going back 20 years, still indicating that managers find it hard to balance this ambidextrous tension.

The operating model emerged as being restrictive for adaptive actions in that centralised decision-making is being prioritised for conformity across all mining sites. This is further emphasised by a participant referring to the organisation as being reactive, due to lack of research done. These findings relate to Dunbar et al. (2020), who is of the opinion that the business model for mining is outdated and not fit-for-purpose. Dunbar et al. (2020) confer that the mining model erodes profits from stakeholders.

In addition, the study revealed that managers want the operating model to change, because it is causing employees to be reactive, pushing quantity and not quality, due to workload. According to Schulze and Pinkow's (2020) findings, this is an inhibiting factor for the innovation process, because employees need free time to focus their attention on innovative ideas and not just drive tasks that generate immediate sales. Thus, a balance between driving profits and allowing for innovation should be maintained for the operating model to be conducive for organisational adaptability.

Furthermore, the research results indicate that the government plays a vital role in governing the mining industry with policies and regulations, therefore yielding the power to stop operations and thus it is an unavoidable condition for maintaining a mining licence. The results indicated that managers use this to their advantage, as the custodians for compliance for these regulations, they can adjust their plans and enforce compliance from operations. Huntsman et al. (2021) states a rigid organisational structure is a possible hurdle. However, experiences from these managers recognise policies and procedures as a factor that can balance ambidexterity, considering balancing exploration and exploitation is a continuous challenge for managers (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Schulze & Pinkow, 2020).

An unexpected result is that middle managers are inhibited by organisational structure bureaucracy brought on by approval committees, considering that studies indicate that the middle manager role is an added layer to bureaucracy that affects decision-making (Tarakci et al., 2023).

In summary, categories that foster leadership for adaptability under the theme organisational structure are team composition and governed by policies and regulations. Under team composition it is important managing diversity, is an important condition to consider for organisational adaptability. Similarly, positioning policies and procedures correctly can lead to calming the ambidexterity process, which is vital to organisational adaptability (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018). Categories that inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability are the operating model and bureaucracy in decision-making structures.

6.2.2 Innovation and Technology

Innovation and Technology emerged as the second theme from the data that answered Research Question 1. This was not surprising considering the importance of the fourth industrial revolution for economic growth (Sutherland, 2020). However, participants were not optimistic about their teams being innovative. According to the findings, legislation is one of the reasons that employees have restricted thinking. They further revealed that lack of resources dampens innovation and that manual processes are time consuming. Furthermore, lack of training and organisations not investing in new technology, impedes in fostering the right conditions for organisational adaptability. This concern is not only amongst middle managers, but also senior management. 48 CEO's working in South Africa noted their concerns around operational influence of emerging technologies (PWC, 2024), emphasising the importance of this condition to foster organisational adaptability. This is in line with Park and Park's (2020) Adaptive Performance Model, in which organisational characteristics appears as the fourth dimension and climate to innovate is a category thereof.

Results indicate with the right management support teams can add value through innovation. Moreover, employees from the younger generations are technologically savvy and are eager to embrace new technologies. In addition, participants are of

the opinion that this condition can be enhanced and improved through benchmarking and collaboration with other mining companies which in turn can enhance their propensity to adapt in terms of innovation and technology. Current literature indicate that digitalisation, globalisation, and environmental awareness have transformed the business context (Möller et al., 2020). However, based on the results the mining industry is lagging.

6.2.3 Drivers for Change

The research results revealed that certain factors drive the need for change, which in turn acts as catalysts for the need to adapt. Financial impact and reputation damage emerged as conditions that initiate change. The results indicate that the mining industry is currently experiencing a low metal price cycle, as such the need for organisational adaptability is high to drive down operational cost. According to Möller et al. (2020) this state of business signifies as being volatile and complex. Uhl-bien and Arena (2018), explains that this is the most crucial time for leadership for organisational adaptability, because it impacts the survival of the organisation.

Furthermore, participating responses indicate that senior management interventions are much more urgent when there is potential reputational damage to the brand or financial losses, this indicates that a form of urgency is needed as a catalyst for organisational adaptability. In addition, participants shared that problems are not addressed when it starts or gets flagged, and that senior management only reacts when damage is done, in which negative financial repercussions are exacerbated.

Consequently, with change, dealing with resistance to change is inevitable. Middle managers have a clear grasp of why their subordinates resist change and therefore, have found ways in managing change. Conversely, Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) contest that leadership for organisational adaptability and change management are the same thing. This is because organisational adaptability is a proactive measure and change management is reactive, after a change has been identified Uhl-bien & Arena,2018). However, the results indicate that employees see organisational adaptability as a change that people are afraid of. Therefore, it is important to always understand the “why” adaptation or change is needed. Further results indicate that complacency sets in when the pricing cycle is at a high and cash flow is in

abundance. This is contrary to how Huntsman et al. (2021) describe a versatile workforce has developed a tolerance to uncertainty, because agile teams are prone to achieve adaptive performance.

6.2.4 Overview of Results Discussion to RQ1

Table 6: Catalysts Fostering or Inhibiting Organisational Adaptability

Theme	Conditions for Organisational Adaptability	
	Catalysts Fostering	Inhibitors
Organisational Structure	Team Composition	Centralised Operating Model
	Rules and Regulations	Bureaucracy of approval framework
Innovation and Technology	Embracing new technologies	Lack of Resources & Manual processes suppresses innovation
	Benchmarking and collaboration	
Drivers for change	Financial Impact	Resistance to change
	Reputational Damage	

The analysis reveals three overarching themes than consist of Organisational Structure, Innovation and Technology, and Drivers for change. These themes all encompass elements that either foster or inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability. Table 6 presents an overview of the results' discussion, portraying which conditions foster or inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability. The results of the study indicate that an organisation should be set-up in such a way that it is possible for leaders to lead organisations to adapt.

Catalysts fostering adaptability

The results indicate that the workforce team composition is an important element that enables organisational adaptability, the diverse elements that members bring to an organisation is an important factor for innovation. Although rules and regulations have a restrictive element to it, because members need to operate within their boundaries, middle managers use them as an enforcement tool, to ensure teams comply and adapt organisational standards, therefore it can be used as a catalyst for

adaptability. In addition, embracing new technologies coupled with benchmarking and collaborating with industry experts emerged as a positive factor for organisational adaptability. Finally, research found that management is forced to act if there are drivers for change present, two examples that were mentioned were financial impact and reputational damage.

Factors inhibiting adaptability

On the other hand, the operational model and bureaucracy in the approval framework constitute barriers to adaptability. Due to the size of mining organisations, they are mostly centralised, therefore, driving change in multiple organisational sites, can be difficult. Huntsman et al. (2021) notes that is a general problem in organisations with hierarchical structures, that are centrally governed with strict rules and procedures. In addition, lack of resources and manual processes are time consuming, which stifle innovation. Lastly, resistance to change can inhibit organisational adaptation if people do not understand the reason why the change is required.

6.3 Discussion: Research Question 2

<p><i>RQ2: How do middle managers influence adaptive processes within organisations?</i></p>

RQ2 sought to investigate how middle managers lead organisations to create adaptive working spaces and how their roles enable them to influence adaptive processes within the organisation. The research question was informed by Uhl-bien and Arena's (2018) emphasis on the importance of organisational adaptability in a complex business environment and the need for organisations to use all capabilities to position themselves to be able to pivot the organisation if necessary. Based on the results section- Chapter 5, this section will discuss the findings pertaining to Research Question 2.

6.3.1 Creating an Inclusive Environment

Communication and psychological safe space to voice emerged as the most popular category under the theme, Creating an Inclusive Environment. The results show that

middle managers take time out to listen to employees and give them freedom to voice their ideas, as the primary method in creating a psychological safe space. Schulze and Pinkow (2020) agrees that the formation of a climate of trust and support is a critical aspect for successful adaptive spaces. The importance of being prepared when addressing employees was highlighted, because they do pick up if managers are not sincere, which risks communication flowing one way and non-participation from the team. Participants were mindful of the perceptions' electronic communication can create and therefore made efforts to leave their desks and communicate face to face as a follow-up on e-mail communication as a method of building and fostering relationships. Previous studies on middle management, described these managers as organisational linkages that connects individuals with diverse job responsibilities, across organisational units through coordination and communication (Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020). This show casts the importance of proper communication and the results show that the participants took this responsibility seriously.

In addition, communication goes two ways and feedback, whether positive or negative, should always be part of communication. Participants see creating a safe space, where employees are free to share ideas, as part of their roles as leaders. This extends on Schulze and Pinkow's (2020) findings that the manager is responsible for balancing the tension between exploration and exploitation. However, Shulze and Pinkow (2020) admit that managers still find it hard to balance ambidexterity after 20 years.

Adjacent to the previous two categories, are open and honest discussion, coupled with a consultative engagement process, takes high rankings in the ability of middle managers to create adaptive working places. The results of the study indicate that the goal for open and honest communication and managers following a consultative engagement process, is to ensure that they obtain buy-in from the stakeholders. Open and honest discussions is a technique in creating a psychological safe space and therefore an inclusive environment.

In addition, complex business environments go hand in hand with anxiety and panic, as experienced by participants whose organisations underwent restructuring. Open and honest conversations were also cited as a method used to create an inclusive work environment.

In conclusion, an inclusive environment can only be created, when all stakeholders have been consulted and included in decision-making. Participants indicated that it is wise to know all the key stakeholders and to ensure that roles and responsibilities are made clear from the get-go.

Furthermore, adaptive processes include brainstorming sessions. Results obtained indicate that middle managers have different ways of dealing with strife during the process. A unique view one manager adopted was to always have a facilitator acting as an independent agent. This allows the middle manager to engage as one of the team members and harness his own innovation and therefore motivate his team to participate. This was an interesting view, because the manager is thus not responsible to balance ambidexterity as a requirement indicated by Schulze and Pinkow (2020). Furthermore, strife during team buildings produces better results, because people are challenging one another. However, managers warn that this should only be allowed when arguments are factual and not emotional. This process is in line with how Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) explain, ambidexterity should be managed.

6.3.2 Exhibit Good Leader Behaviour

Zhu and Chen (2016) notes that the role of leadership behaviours as contextual factors in empowerment, influence team processes and outcomes. Based on the results obtained in Chapter 5, one of the most significant behaviours that contribute to effective leadership at the middle management level is the autonomy to make decisions. The middle managers who participated in this study expressed that their autonomy for decision-making arises from them being specialists in their fields and holding legal responsibility. This autonomy not only increases responsiveness but also fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, which are essential for maintaining high levels of operational efficiency and team morale. Grass et al. (2020) explains that autonomy is one of four dimensions that leads to team empowerment. Moreover, Grass et al. (2020) reviews that numerous research studies link empowerment to adaptability. Existing research has shown that middle managers who have the authority to make decisions are more likely to implement innovative solutions, manage crisis' effectively, and align their teams with organisational goals (Zhu & Chen, 2016).

Furthermore, the findings portray reflections of the different leadership practices that the participants shared from their experiences. Best practices amongst others include honesty and admitting your mistakes, providing constructive feedback, setting clear expectations, and creating an inclusive environment where employees feel valued. Conversely, to portray good leadership practices, participating middle managers were also receiving financial and emotional support from their managers. They regard their managers as mentors without a formal agreement and tend to mirror their behaviour, additionally also learn what behaviour to avoid through observations. Coincidentally, middle managers who felt that they were not supported by their leadership also felt that they do not have autonomy to make decisions. Ramesh et al. (2023) confers that transactional leadership lifts moral if followers are empowered. Thus, the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability cannot be limited to entrepreneurial leadership, operational leadership and enabling leadership, as suggested in previous studies (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Schulze & Pinkow, 2020).

In addition, the leadership styles employed by middle managers plays a critical role in their effectiveness. With the mining industry being so diverse, different situations call for different leadership approaches. Participants referred to themselves as situational leaders, consultative leaders, and characteristics of transformational leadership style, which focuses on inspiring and motivating employees toward shared goals and self-efficacy. Conversely, transactional leadership styles also emerged, through emphasising task completion and performance monitoring. Managers sounded comfortable in being adaptable to shift between leadership styles as required by the situation and maintain a balance between achieving results and fostering positive relationships within their teams. These actions enable middle managers to package, frame and sell strategic issues (Splitter et al., 2023).

However, strong emphasis was placed on how autocratic leadership is necessary sometimes, this is because of mining being a high-risk environment where safety and operational efficiency are paramount. In the ambidexterity theory this is categorised as the operational leadership aspect of the adaptability model (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018; Schulze & Pinkow, 2020). The findings to this research show cast the interconnectedness of the middle manager in the process.

The need for training and education also emerged as a strong category under creating leadership behaviour. By practising self-development, managers can refine, update and remain effective in leading adaptive processes. Most of the participants hold a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree or were studying towards the qualification. The results revealed that due to the support these managers received from the organisation they are more likely to retain their employment, improve performance, and find ways to enhance adaptive processes. This is consistent with current literature. Huntsman et al. (2021) confer that empowerment does not only equip employees with new skills, but increases job commitment, job satisfaction and their adaptive capacity. Moreover, the proactive engagement of middle managers in ongoing training programs for themselves and their teams enhances the organisation's ability to adapt to new challenges as they arise.

In the Adaptive Performance Model created by Park and Park (2019), individual characteristics (personality, prior experience, skills and abilities) appears as the first dimension that drives adaptive performance. Based on the results, middle managers who had substantial experience in the field were better equipped to understand the challenges faced by their teams, anticipate potential issues, and make informed decisions. Moreover, experienced leaders were better positioned to mentor and support less experienced employees as well as employees who showed resistance to change, contributing to the development of a skilled workforce and the promotion of safety culture.

As such leaders are displaying behaviour of empowering their subordinates. Empowerment as such emerged as a second level category under good leader behaviour. Managers use consultation with stakeholders as a method to empower their teams to have a voice and believe they can make decisions for themselves. Several participants felt it necessary to mention that they are not micro-managers, however, if need be, they will override decisions.

6.3.3 Organisational Climate and Culture

Previous research informs that managers must adopt leadership behaviour which include motivating, influencing and development of employees, collaborating with colleagues across the organisation, as well as creating a workplace culture (Do & Nuth, 2020). Results under this theme indicated managers are still contending with legacy issues from the mining industry lingering in the culture and this also has an

impact on organisational fit, as some managers are still normalising incivility. This corresponds to Humby (2016) who refer to the lingering labour problems as unresolved legacy issues. In addition, navigating between different generations is something middle managers in the mining industry must deal with daily, managing these dynamics was only possible through transformation of the mind and leading by example. Moreover, managers are focusing their energy on creating an appreciative culture by listening to people and respecting different generations' ways of work.

Furthermore, managers indicated that team building is a good way to enhance team cohesion, however the activity as an occasion should not be the substance, but more the action, because team building can happen in something as simple as a coffee date. Managers who did not believe in team building activities were usually restricted by budget constraints. The participants who were allowed to host and attend team buildings, view this, a method to get to know your team on a different level and setting and therefore advise it as a good method to build team cohesion, which is a category that emerged in the analysis section. It is confirmed by Schulze and Pinkow (2020) that leaders play a vital role in facilitating connections among team members through networking events and collaborative opportunities, fostering interdisciplinary exchanges that generate fresh ideas. This networked approach to idea generation is deemed advantageous, as it encourages knowledge sharing and nurtures creativity.

The research also found that middle managers' ability to manage conflict and facilitate constructive dialogue within teams significantly contributed to team cohesion. By addressing interpersonal issues early and encouraging an inclusive culture, middle managers help maintain team stability, even during periods of uncertainty. This is in line with Zhu and Chen (2016) view, revealing that collaborative leadership behaviour fosters creativity, improves problem-solving, and encourages knowledge sharing, which are essential for innovation in knowledge-based work environments.

6.3.4 Overview of Results Discussion to RQ2

The results to this question underscore the importance of leadership practices and behaviours grounded in the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability in the mining industry. Empowering employees through autonomy, collaboration, open and

honest communication, trust, skill development, team cohesion and culture enable mining organisations to respond effectively to challenges and changes in a complex and dynamic environment.

However, for empowerment to be fully realised, it required leaders to overcome challenges such as hierarchical resistance, traditional management practices, and legacy issues. The application of adaptive and consultative leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, along with a commitment to empowerment, can significantly enhance an organisation's capacity to adapt, innovate, and thrive in the ever-evolving business environment.

In some cases, there was resistance to leadership and organisation change, particularly from older generation employees who are accustomed to more traditional command-and-control leadership. These employees were often less willing to embrace technology and were more comfortable with being told what to do from their leadership. Overcoming this resistance requires targeted change management efforts, including effective communication and demonstrating the benefits of empowerment for both individuals and the organisation.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research and focuses on outlining the findings from Chapter 1 to 6. This is followed by an expansion proposal to the framework, limitations to the study and recommendations for future research.

7.2 Outline of the study

This study sought to explore the paradoxical role of middle managers through the lens of leadership for organisational adaptability. The framework of leadership for organisational adaptability is still in its infancy, therefore varied and additional studies were called for to extend the theory (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2018). Hence, this study was set in the mining industry, which is a different context from the previous studies. The objectives were to capture the lived experiences and conditions middle managers face in creating adaptive work spaces. In addition, business leaders could gain knowledge in understanding the importance of the role that the middle manager occupies to position business, by leading adaptively during challenging times. Moreover, the research purpose of this study was to add new knowledge to the theoretical framework of Leadership for organisational adaptability.

Based on the literature review as set out in Chapter 2, the following research questions emerged:

RQ1: What conditions foster or inhibit leadership for organisational adaptability?

RQ2: How do middle managers influence adaptive processes within organisations?

The researcher endeavoured to answer the questions by employing a qualitative research methodology, as done by previous scholars who studied this topic. The research was exploratory in nature, because the concept of leadership for organisational adaptability is still novel. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, by following an interpretivism philosophy to sought out the perspectives and experiences of middle managers who lead adaptively in the mining business environment.

The data that was collected through the interview process, was analysed through a six-step thematic analysis process in which twenty-five categories emerged from the coding. This informed the six themes that answered the research questions. These themes were further discussed in Chapter 6 and compared to the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7 is the concluding chapter of the report and accounts the final findings, limitations to the study and recommendations for future research.

7.3 Research Findings

7.3.1 Empowerment and Trust

The findings of the research indicate that middle management leadership in the mining industry is crucial in empowering employees, which has been the key mechanism through which leaders can foster more agile, resilient, and innovative teams in the organisation. The findings also highlighted the importance of trust in leadership, both from below middle managers and upwards from middle managers to senior managers. When leaders exhibited high levels of trust in their teams and communicated confidence in their abilities, employees felt psychologically safe to voice their ideas and feelings. This finding is thus not surprising because, Tarakci et al. (2023) describes the downward role of middle managers, as a position of 'facilitating adaptability', in which creative spaces to unlock innovation, are created.

7.3.2 Culture of Collaboration and Appreciation

Leaders who promoted collaboration with different stakeholders and across hierarchical levels were found to improve the adaptability of the organisation. A collaborative culture was seen to facilitate the exchange of ideas, resources, and best practices, which was obtained by getting the buy-in from stakeholders. Employees felt more willing to suggest innovative solutions and experiment with new approaches when they knew they had the support of their leaders. Similarly, middle managers felt empowered and accountable, knowing that their managers trusted them with resources and supported their endeavours. Zhu and Chen (2016) found that collaborative leadership behaviour fosters creativity, improves problem-solving,

and encourages knowledge sharing, which are essential for innovation in knowledge-based work environments.

7.3.3 Education and Development

Education and skill development emerged as another key condition in promoting adaptive spaces. The findings show that leaders who prioritised continuous learning and professional development are always trying to find new ways to improve their skills, so that they can be equipped to lead better. Participants who felt that they had the tools and resources to grow professionally, showed job commitment and organisational satisfaction. Furthermore, middle managers who had substantial experience in the field were better equipped to understand the challenges faced by their teams, anticipate potential issues, and make informed decisions. Moreover, experienced leaders were better positioned to mentor and support less experienced employees as well as employees who showed resistance to change.

7.3.4 Organisational Structure

The larger mining organisations have rigid hierarchical structures, especially the ones that use a centralised operating model, this created barriers for autonomy and empowerment. This is because conformity on different mining sites is implemented through procedures, policies and legislation. This top-down approach can stifle employee initiatives and reduce the speed with which the organisation can adapt to changes. On the contrary, findings also indicate that once these procedures and policies are available, leaders can use it as a catalyst for change. In some cases, there was resistance from employees, particularly from long-standing employees who were accustomed to more traditional, autocratic leadership. These employees were often less willing to embrace autonomy and were more comfortable with clear, direct instructions from leadership. Overcoming this resistance required targeted change management efforts, including effective communication and demonstrating the benefits of empowerment for both individuals and the organisation.

Workforce team composition is an important element that enables organisational adaptability, the diverse elements that members bring to an organisation is an important factor for innovation. Although rules and regulations have a restrictive

element to it, because members need to operate within their boundaries, middle managers use them as an enforcement tool, to ensure teams comply and adapt organisational standards, therefore it can be used as a catalyst for adaptability. In addition, embracing new technologies coupled with benchmarking and collaborating with industry experts emerged as a positive factor for organisational adaptability. Finally, research found that the management act, if there are drivers for change present, two examples that were mentioned, was financial impact and reputational damage. However, usually damage is already done.

7.3.5 Factors Inhibiting Adaptability

On the other hand, lack of resources for technological improvements, the operational model and bureaucracy in the approval framework constitute barriers to adaptability. Due to the size of mining organisations, they are mostly centralised, therefore, driving change in multiple organisational sites, can be difficult. In addition, lack of resources and manual processes are time consuming, which stifle innovation. Lastly, resistance to change can inhibit organisational adaptation if people do not understand the reason why the change is required.

7.3.6 Leadership Styles and their Impact on Organisational Adaptability

Based on the findings above, leadership is instrumental in steering the organisation through volatile and complex environments. As such, participants practised different styles of leadership, which was not just confined to entrepreneurial leaders, operational leadership and enabling leadership, as alluded to in previous studies (Uhl-bien and Arena, 2018; Schulze and Pinkow, 2020). Contrary the findings revealed practising a cumulation of different elements from different leadership styles guide middle managers to lead adaptively.

Participants were found practising elements of transformational leadership. These leaders encourage innovation and foster a culture of appreciation. Leaders who demonstrated a clear vision were more successful in guiding their teams through disruptive changes. Leaders who adopted a participative style, where decision-making was shared with employees, is an approach that fosters a culture of inclusivity, where workers feel their opinions are valued, and their expertise is

leveraged. Participative leaders facilitate a sense of ownership and accountability among team members, which in turn supports a more adaptable organisational culture. Moreover, given the dynamic nature of the mining industry, leaders employ situational leadership, in which leadership styles are adjusted based on the specific needs of the situation and the development level of their team. These leaders can assess the context of a problem or challenge and select the most appropriate leadership approach. Situational leaders adapt their behaviours to ensure the organisation remains responsive to both internal and external challenges.

7.4 Expansion proposal to the framework

This study contributes to the body of knowledge, through the understanding where middle managers fit into the operational model of leadership for organisational adaptability and to gain a better understanding of their linking role in creating adaptive spaces. The pioneers of the framework, Uhl-bien and Arena (2018) requested for additional studies on the topic in various ways to extend the research. In addition, Schulze and Pinkow (2020) identified a gap in the research to cover all levels of leadership and in different industries.

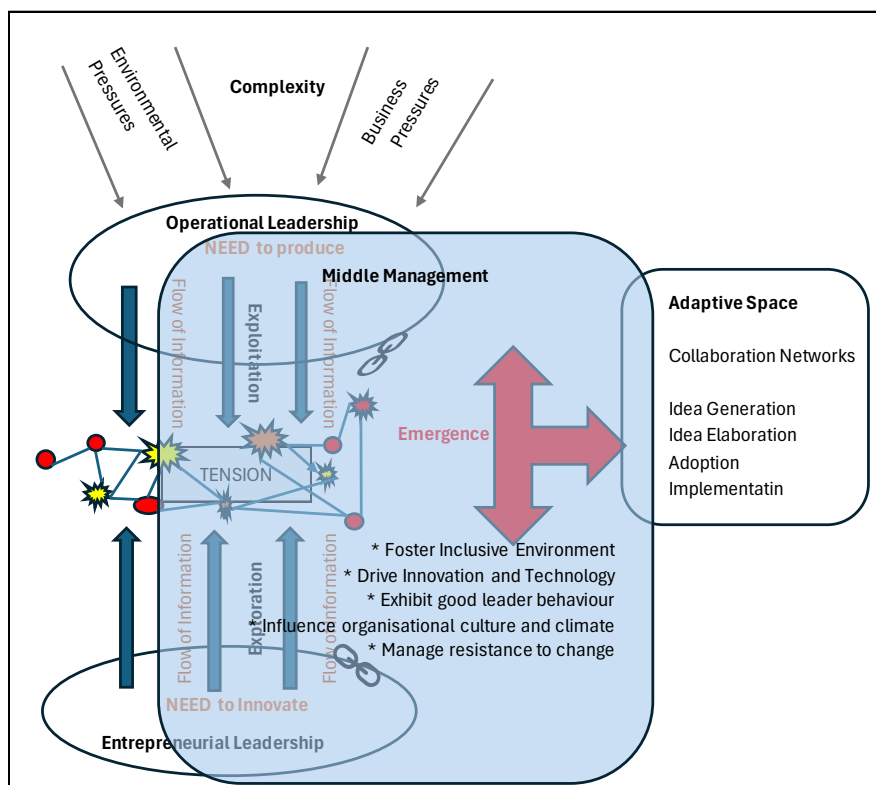


Figure 5: Adapted Leadership for Organisational Adaptability Model focused on middle management (Uhl-bien & Arena 2018)

Figure 5 gives a visual depiction of the findings of where the middle manager makes a difference in the model of Leadership for Organisational Adaptability. According to the findings, middle managers are centred and instrumental in creating the right conditions to facilitate the ambidextrous process of exploration and exploitation to become conducive as adaptive spaces.

7.5 Conclusion of the Findings

In conclusion, the findings of Research Questions 1 and 2 indicated that certain conditions had to be set by managers to foster an environment where middle managers can lead their teams and be ready for organisational adaptability. Amongst others is to create an inclusive environment for diverse teams to work together. This work environment is also referred to as adaptive space by previous research (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2017; Schulze & Pinkow 2020). Therefore, it is important to know how middle managers influence adaptive spaces. The research findings conclude that middle managers must show good leadership behaviours to foster the condition set out in section 6.2 of this report and find ways to manage the inhibitors identified in the same section. Moreover, practising a cumulation of different elements from different leadership styles, can assist middle managers in creating an inclusive environment with a conducive organisational climate and culture that is fertile for adaptability practices. However, the middle manager needs to be empowered.

7.6 Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research

Considering that the research involves several theories that connect to organisational adaptability, not all inferences could be investigated in depth. Empowerment emerged as the most prominent construct from the study that influences the ability for middle managers to lead organisational adaptability and create adaptive spaces. Therefore, future studies could examine the aspects through which empowerment theory influences leadership for organisational adaptability. Research could explore how group-focused empowering leadership influences organisational adaptability from both the leader and the teams' point of view.

Furthermore, this study was cross-sectional and due to time constraints, insights and experiences were captured at a certain point in time as recalled by the participant. A

longitudinal study will give the study more credibility, through prolonged engagement with middle managers and their teams. Which can track actions during times of prosperity, as well as times of volatility; to compare actions and methods of adaptation.

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Appendix 1: Consistency Matrix

Theory / Business Purpose	Theory / Business Research Objective	Key Research Construct and author	Research questions an author recommending this question	Data Collection Tool & Analysis
Study sets out to gain insights into how the leadership aspect is affected by the conditions needed for organisational adaptability, through the lived experiences of middle managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lived experiences of the middle manager during crisis and complexity. Conditions needed to lead organisational adaptability and create adaptive spaces for strategy implementation 	Complexity and the mining environment (Dunbar et al., 2020; Yaschenko et al., 2021) Middle managers Tarakci et al., 2023), Park & Park (2019)	What conditions foster or hinder leadership for organisational adaptability?	Interview Guide & Thematic Content Analysis
To contribute to the body of knowledge and extend the understanding of the theory of leadership for organisational adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do middle managers influence leadership for organisational adaptability in a mining context. 	Organisational adaptability (Uhl-bien and Arena, 2018) Leader behaviour and Adaptive spaces (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020); (Huntsman et al., 2021)	How do middle managers influence the adaptive processes within organisations?	Interview Guide & Thematic Content Analysis

Appendix 2: Ethical Clearance

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

Liezel Van Der Merwe <18275452@mygibs.co.za>

Ethical Clearance Approved

1 message

Masters Research <MastersResearch@gibs.co.za>
To: "18275452@mygibs.co.za" <18275452@mygibs.co.za>
Cc: Masters Research <MastersResearch@gibs.co.za>

26 August 2024 at 15:04

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

Ethical Clearance
Approved

Dear Liezel Van der Merwe,

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 3: Interview Guide

General Section

1. Tell me more about your role in the business and what it entails and how long you've been a middle manager.? Age?
2. What is the core business of the organization you work for?
3. How is your role instrumental to the core business of the organization?
4. Do you have people that report to you and how many people report to you?
5. How many levels are between you and senior management?
6. How many levels of reporting are below you?
7. How much autonomy or authority do you have in making decisions that affect organisational improvement and implementation processes?
8. In what way is your role instrumental in adapting strategy for implementation in the organisation?
9. Can you describe a situation where you had to make a decision that impacted the organisation's/ (department portion of business) ability to adapt? What factors influenced your decision? *Did you ever feel the need to use threads with legislation.*
10. How do you perceive your role in contributing to organisational adaptability amidst rapid and dynamic changes in the environment?

Linking Activities: Engaging Tension (Idea generation) & Fostering Cohesion (Adaptive Space)

11. If you think about your team, are they innovative in the way they work?
Probe- do they do their daily tasks, or do they come up with ways to work better to improve processes?
12. Are they required to be innovative?
13. In your section do ever have brainstorming sessions? And can you take me through a typical session? *Is there any conflict in those sessions? Strife or contention?*
14. General feeling of generation resistance.
15. Do you think you are more entrepreneurial (innovative) or more operational (get the job done)?
16. Are you required to be innovative when introducing new strategies from management?

17. Do you think there is a need for change in your organisation? Or do you think processes should remain the way it is, *Probe- because it is working?*
18. How does the leadership in your organization communicate the need to change and innovate?
19. How is urgency created in your organisation and how do you communicate it to your team?
20. How does your organisation drive innovation?
21. Where does most new ideas come from, in terms of business improvement?
22. Are you or your teams involved in any business improvement initiatives? If so, can share around it?
23. Do you feel empowered to introduce and implement business improvement initiatives in your organisation?
24. Approximately how long does it take your organisation to implement and adapt to a new strategy or initiative?
25. What type of exchange medium do you use in to connect with other colleagues/ subordinates? *Probe- Do you attend meetings with other departments, work trips, team buildings, coming together outside working hours?* How do you foster belonging?
26. How do you collaborate or communicate with other departments to foster and implement new ideas?

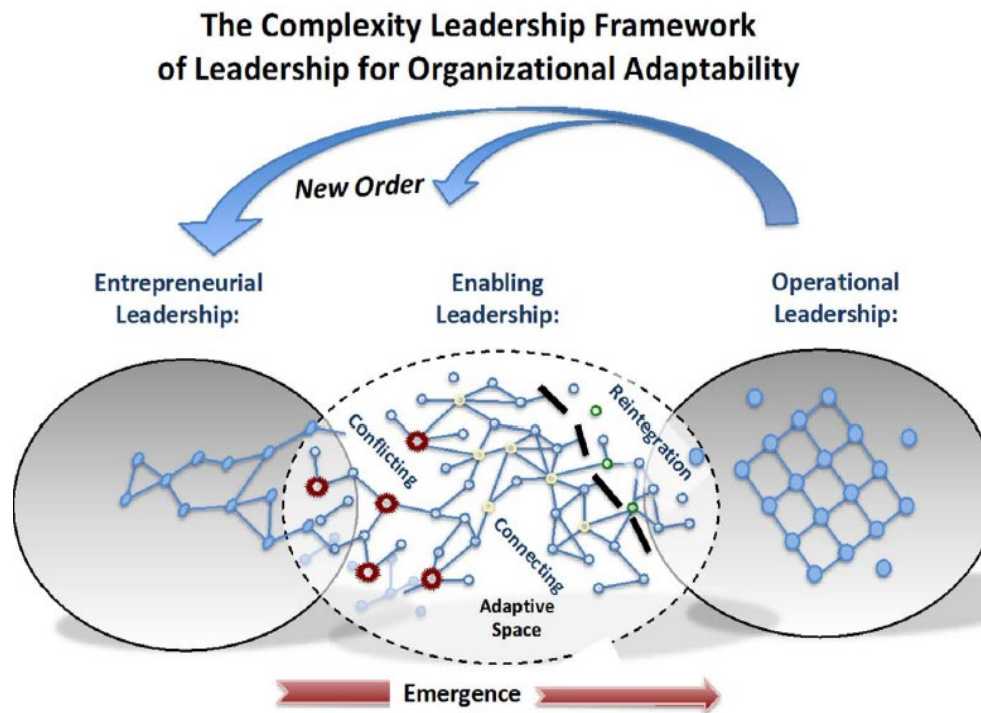
Leading Change

27. Can you provide examples of specific situations where your leadership practices have helped the team adapt to rapid changes effectively?
28. How do you navigate resistance to change when leading your team through periods of organizational adaptation?
29. How does the organisation/ management support or hinder your efforts in promoting adaptability?
30. What resources or support do you think middle managers need, to effectively lead business improvement and adaptive processes?
31. What initiatives or strategies do you think the organization could implement to enhance its adaptive capacity?
32. Can you think of a specific instance where the organization successfully adapted to a change or challenge? What factors contributed to that success?
33. Conversely, are there situations where the organization struggled to adapt? What were the reasons behind those challenges?

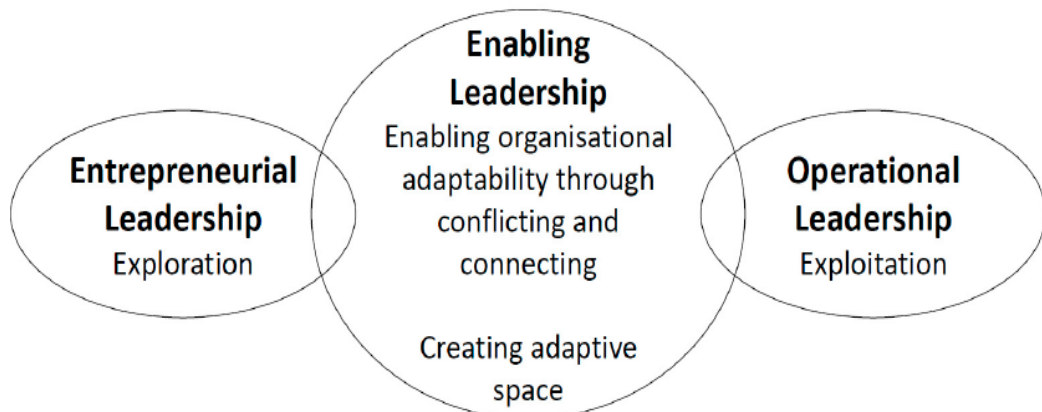
Leadership for organisational adaptability

34. Please describe your leadership style.
35. What is it like to be a leader in the mining industry.
36. Does your role require leadership qualities or is it managerial in nature?
37. What skills or competencies do you believe are most important for middle managers in fostering adaptability within their teams or departments?
38. How have you developed your own leadership capabilities to better enable organizational adaptability?
39. Do you feel you are supported by your management in developing yourself?
40. Can you think of a specific instance where your leadership contributed significantly to enhancing organizational adaptability? What were the key factors behind that success?
41. Conversely, are there instances where your efforts to enhance adaptability failed as expected? What were the lessons learned?
42. Dear participant, thank you for your time and the insights you had shared into the topic. Do you have any questions for me?
43. Do you have any final thoughts on how to improve adaptability in the mining industry?

Appendix 4: Original model of Organisational Adaptability



The complexity leadership framework of leadership for organizational adaptability (Uhl-Bien & Arena 2018).



The model of leadership for organisational adaptability. Adapted from: (Uhl-Bien & Arena 2018) by (Schulze & Pinkow, 2020)

Appendix 5: Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I am a student at the University of Pretoria's, Gordon Institute for Business Science. As a partial requirement for the Master of Business Administration, I am doing interviews on the leadership styles of middle managers and how they are enabled/disabled during dynamic business changes as part of my research project. The expected duration of the interview is estimated to be between 60 to 90 minutes.

Please note that your participation is completely voluntary and involves no risk, therefore you can withdraw at any time. Data will be reported without identifiers, i.e. not your name nor your organisation will be mentioned to maintain confidentiality. If you have any concerns, you can contact my research supervisor or myself on details provided below. As a requirement of research, I need to analyse your answers later, will you allow me to record our conversation (YES / NO)?

Researcher name:

Research Supervisor:

Email:

Email:

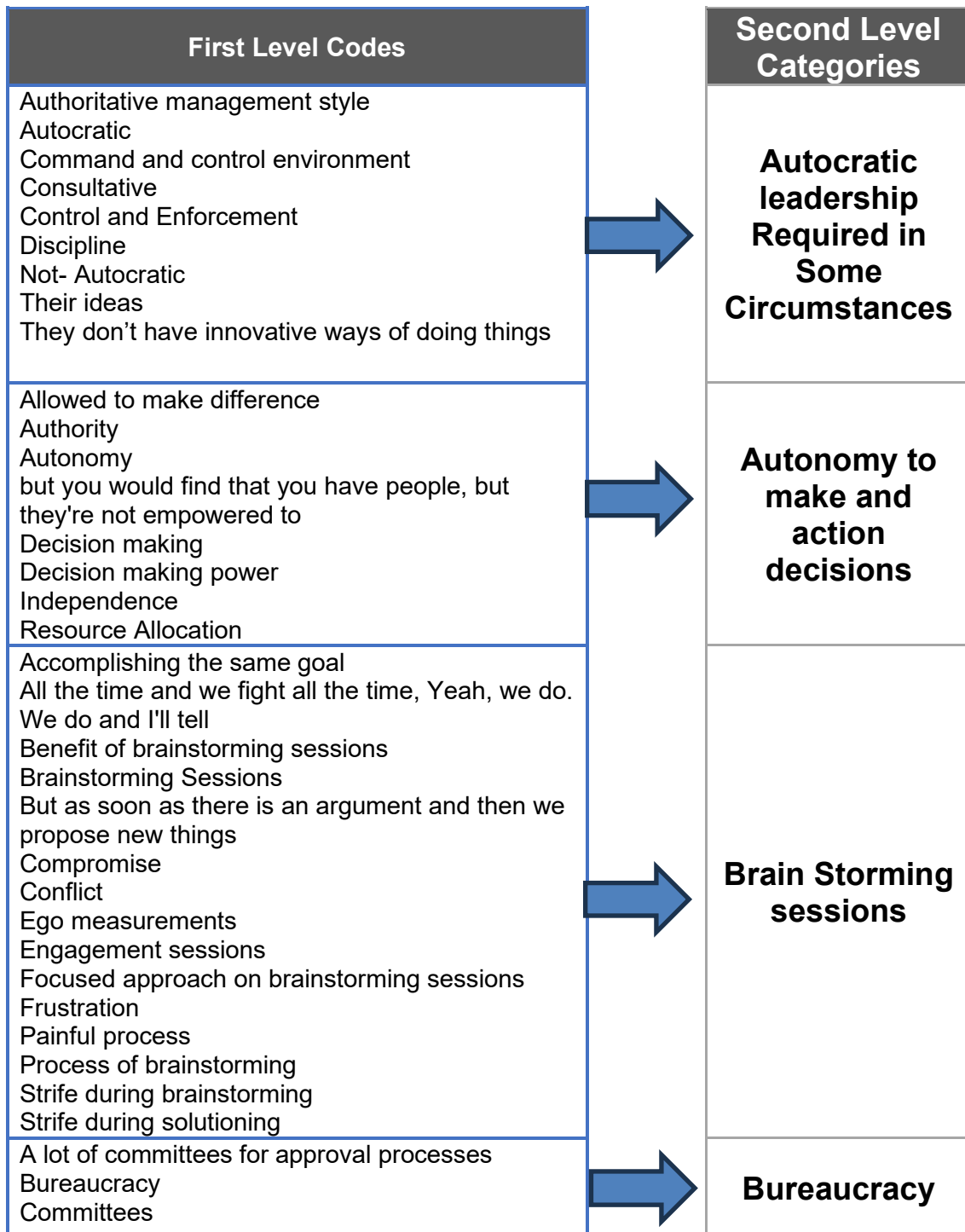
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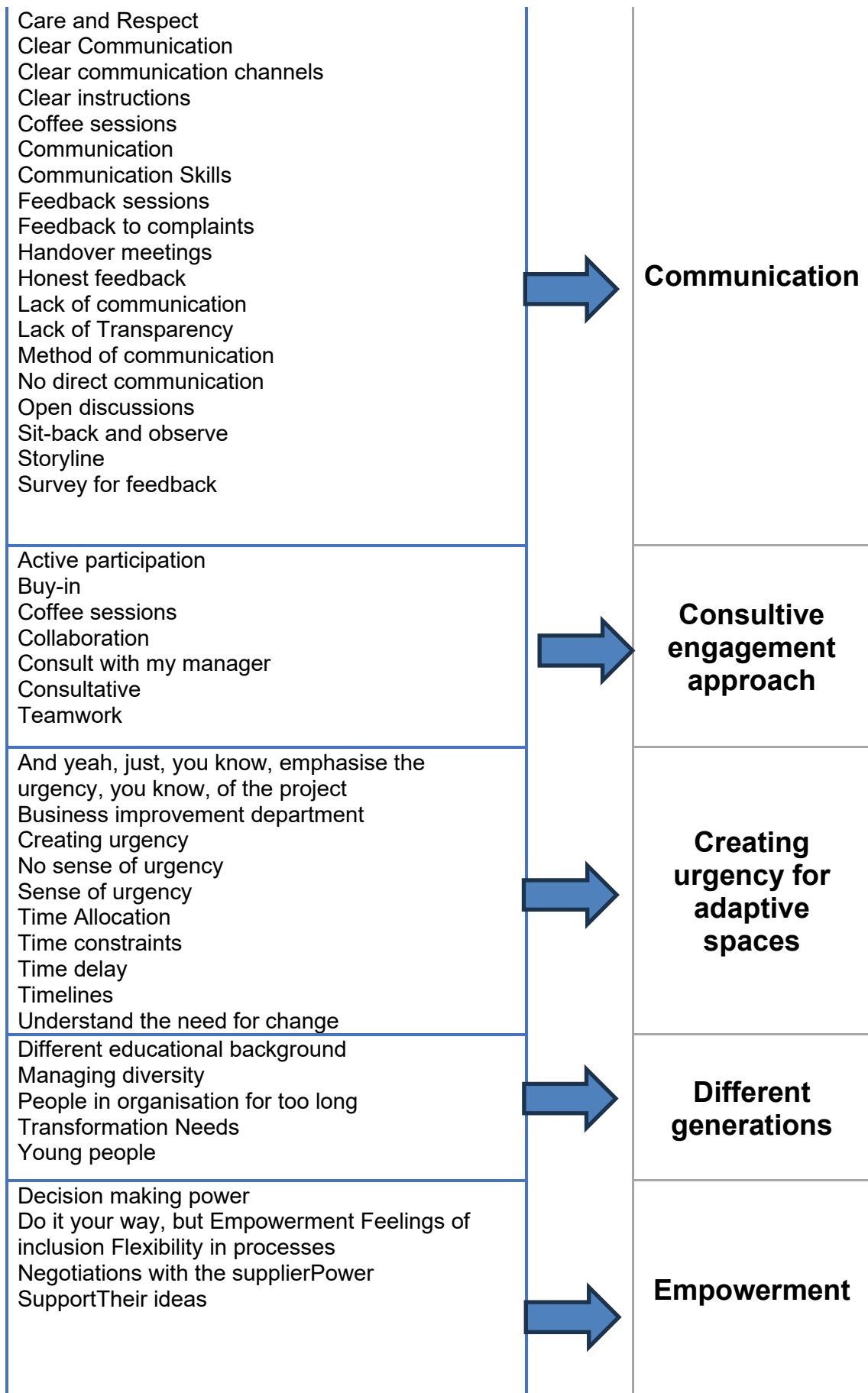
Phone:

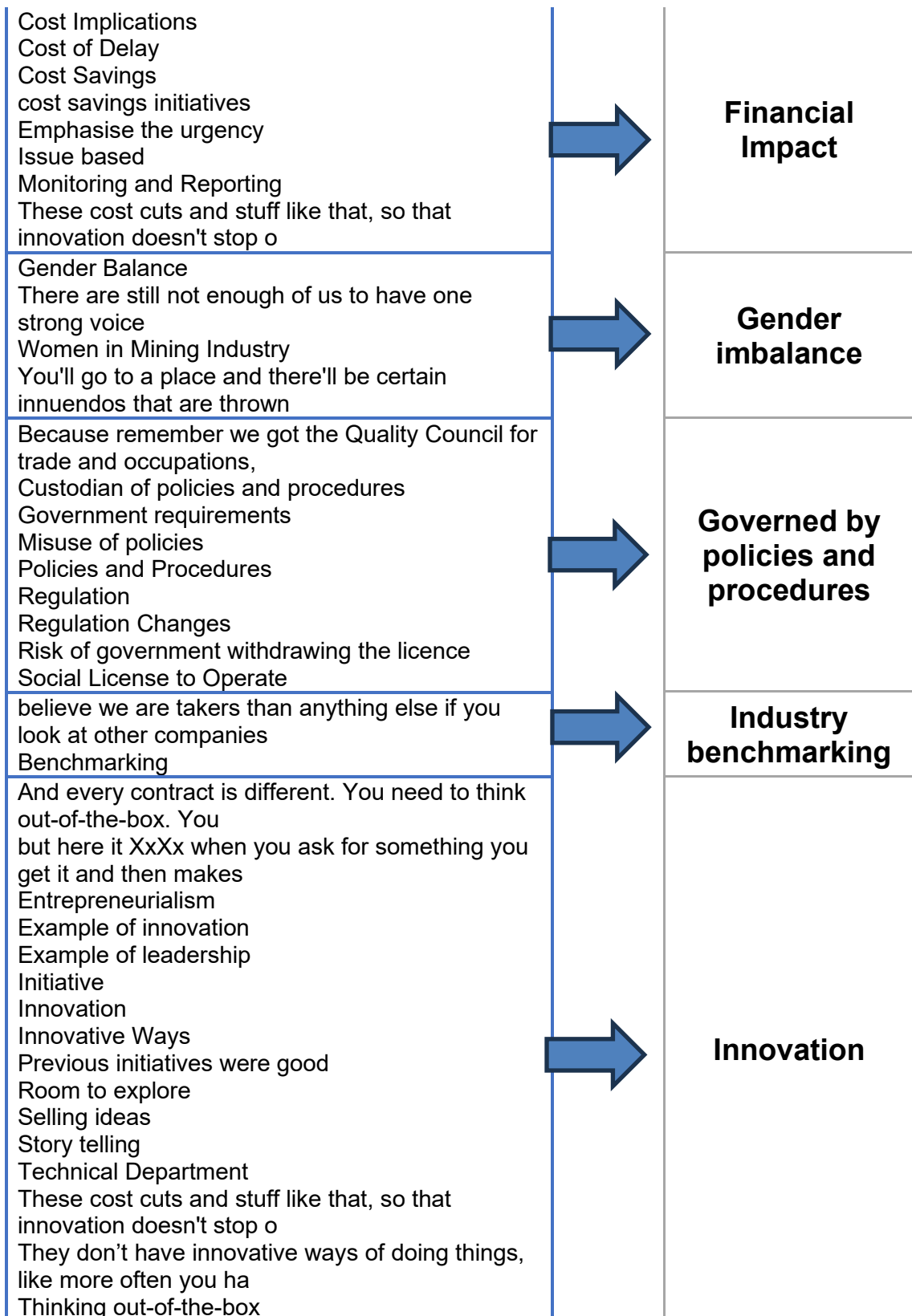
Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

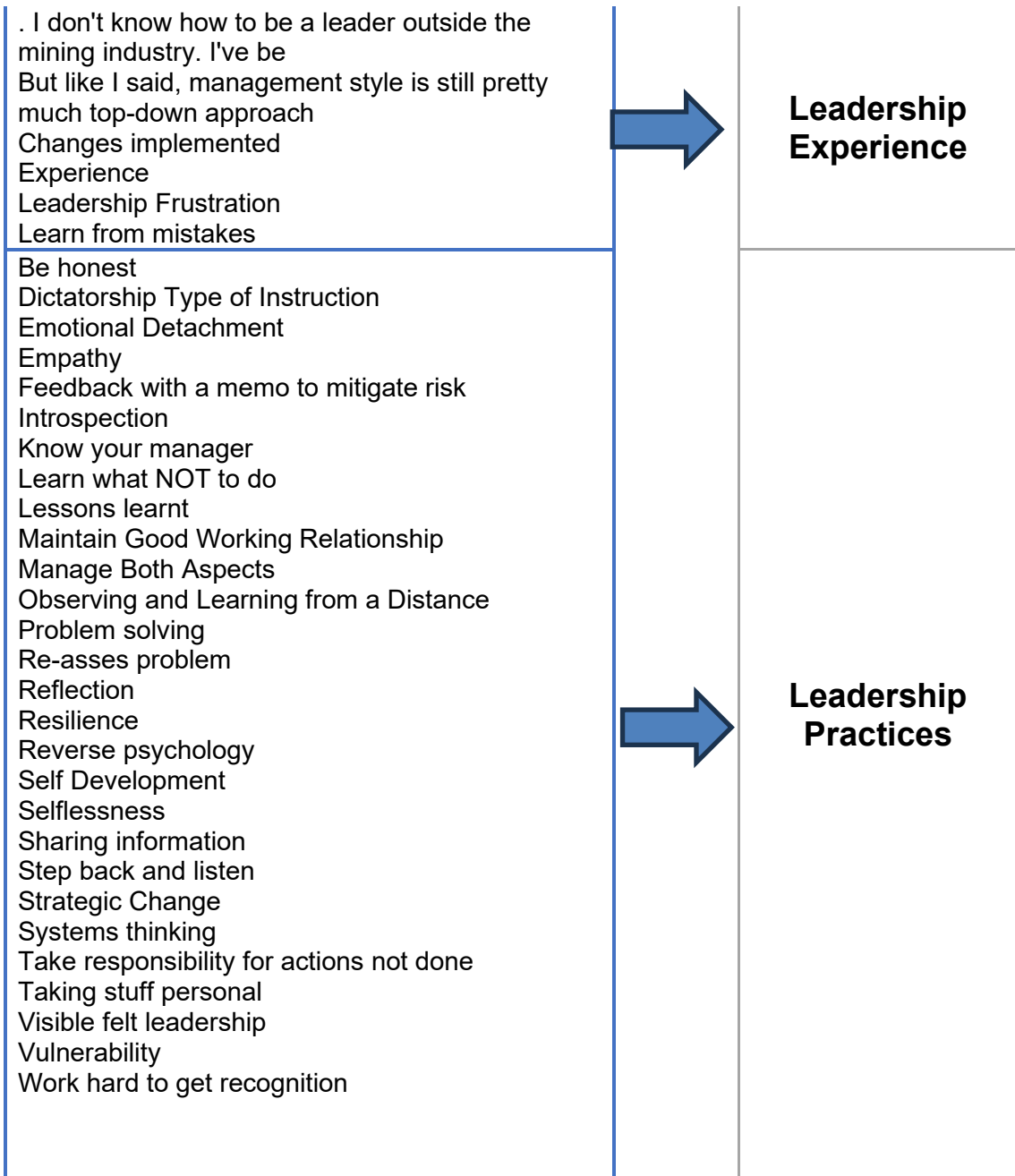
Signature of researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 6: First Level codes from Thematic analysis

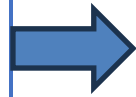






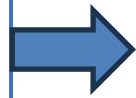


As I said that I'm I think I said it before that I'm a situation leader
 Authentic Leadership But influenced by principles of authentic leadership and emotional
 intCommunity InfluenceConsultative
 Democratic Leadership
 Emotional Intelligence
 Enabling People to Grow
 Encouraging Change
 Knowledge SharingLeadership Styles
 Micromanaging Motivationalo if you if you are clearly maybe transactional in your leadership
 youRisk-averse
 Situational leadership
 Stretching beyond
 StructuredTeaching and SharingTransactional leadership not goodTransformational

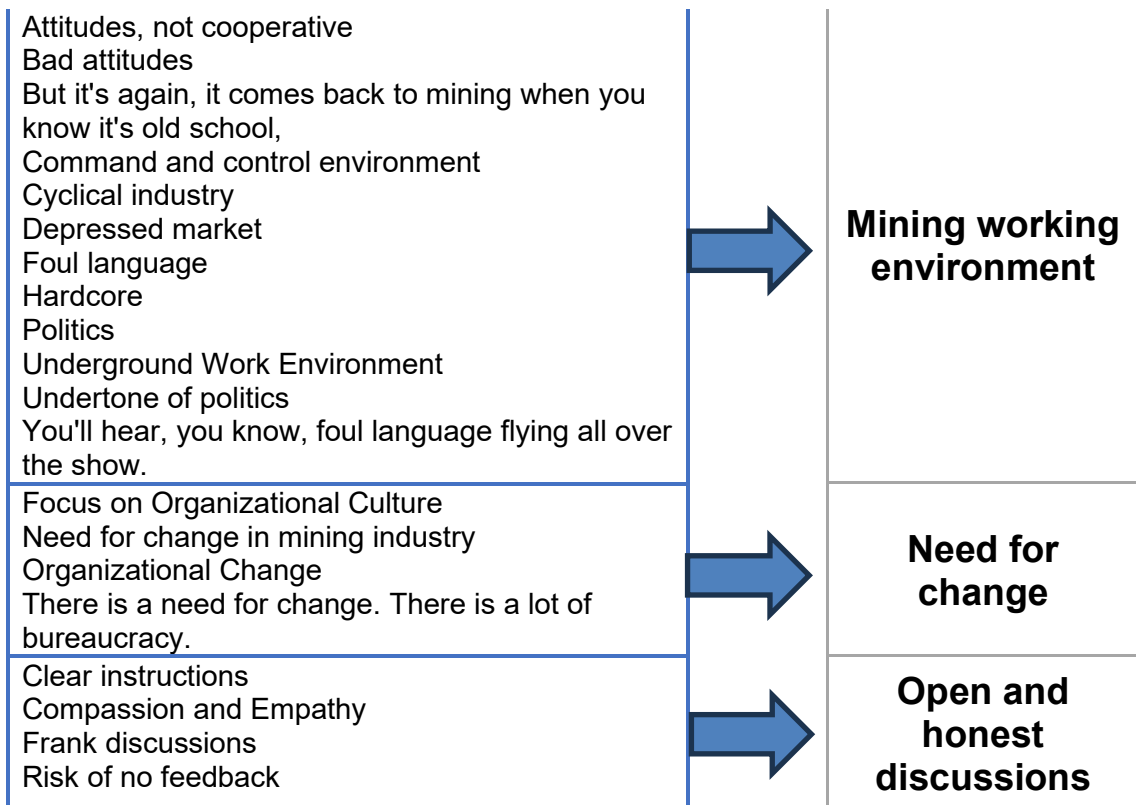


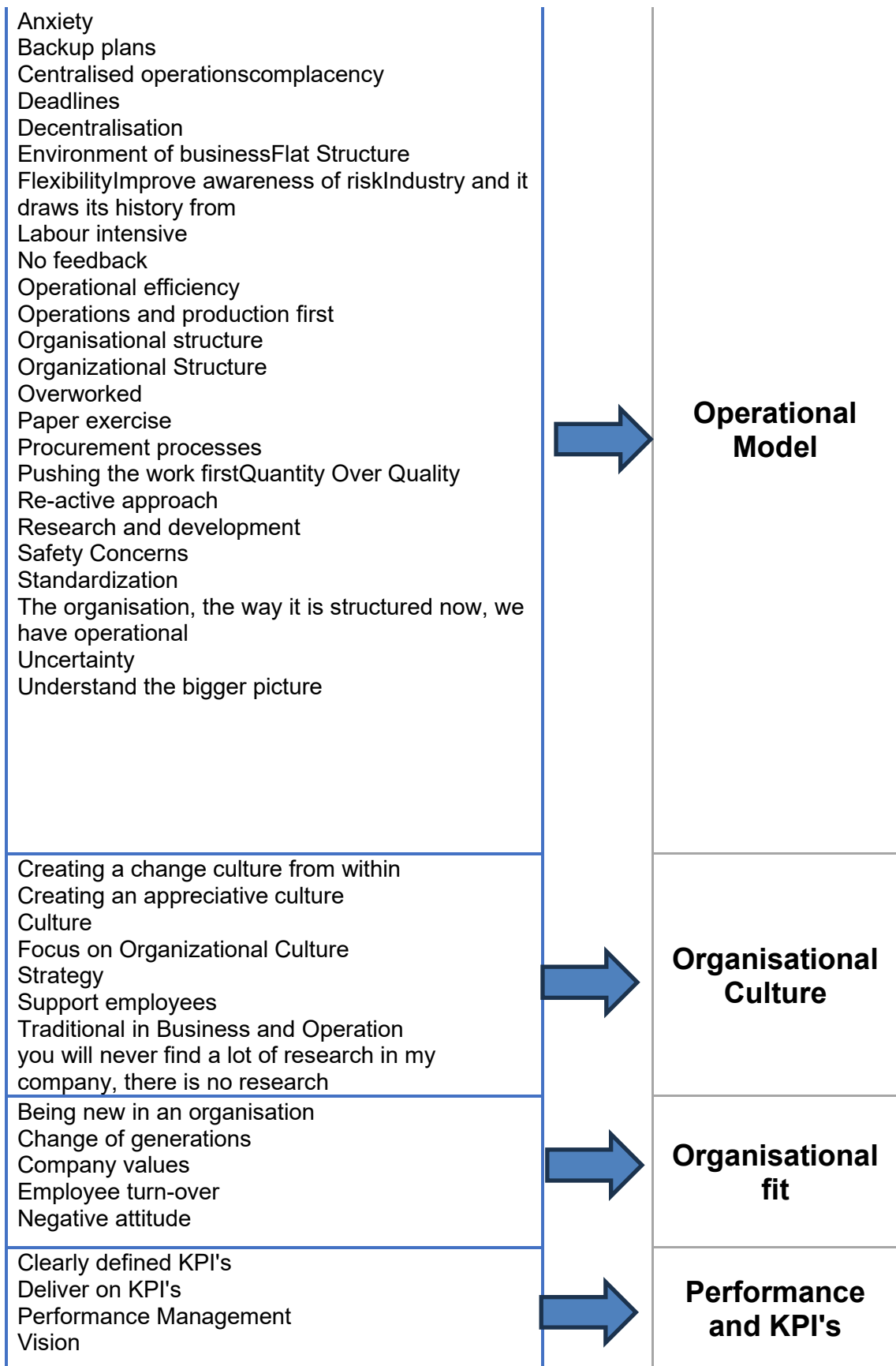
Leadership Styles

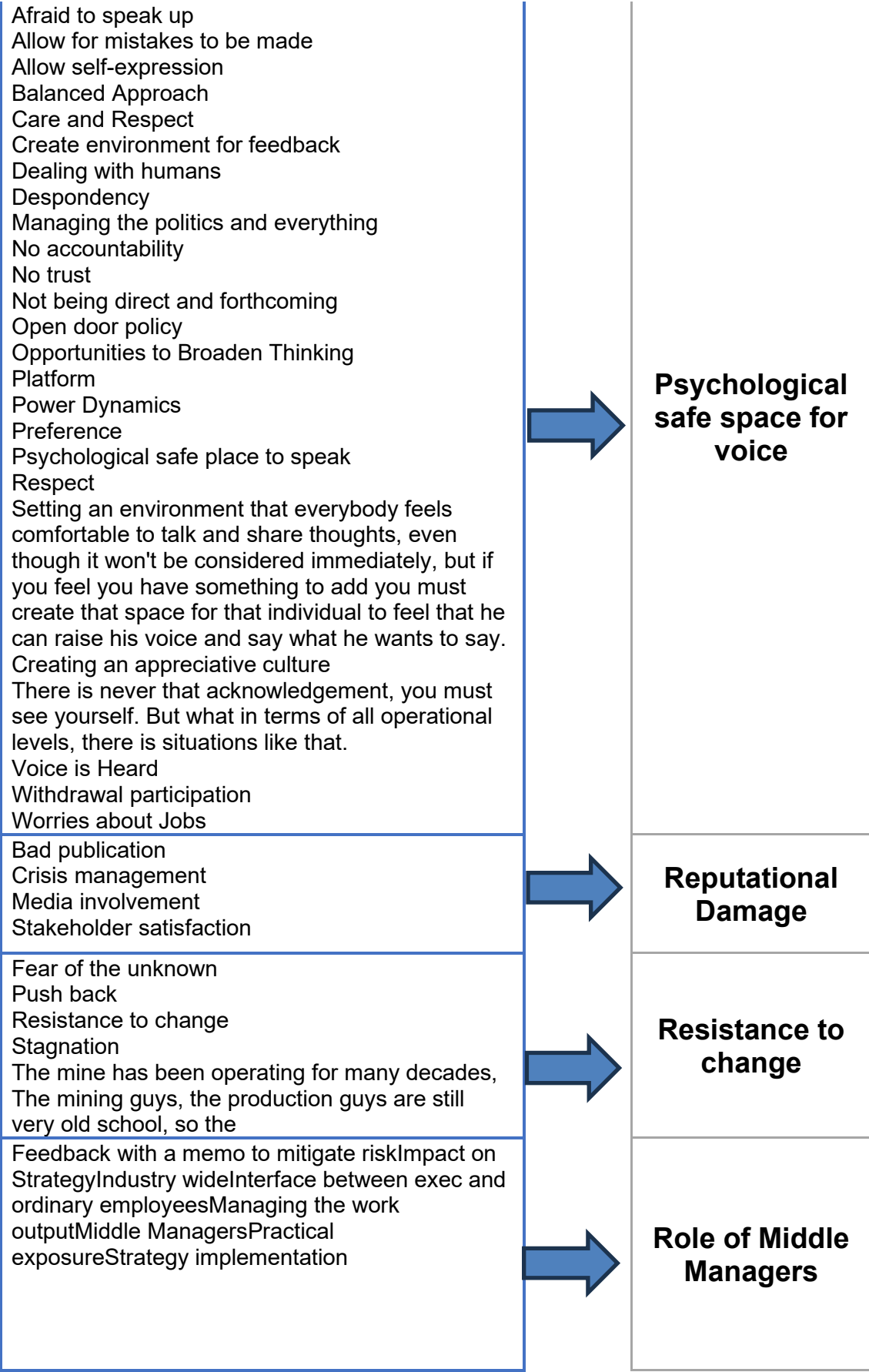
Deep side
 Depends who issues the instruction
 Emotional support
 Financial support
 Get buy-in from senior management
 Involvement of Senior Management
 Leadership Support
 Management instruction
 Management involvement
 Management support
 Openminded
 Repercussions
 Senior Management
 Success Factors
 Support from the management
 Supportive Environment
 They had they had this machineries that they used to map cavities und
 Type of manager reporting to
 You will get some direction to from the executive, but I find it very

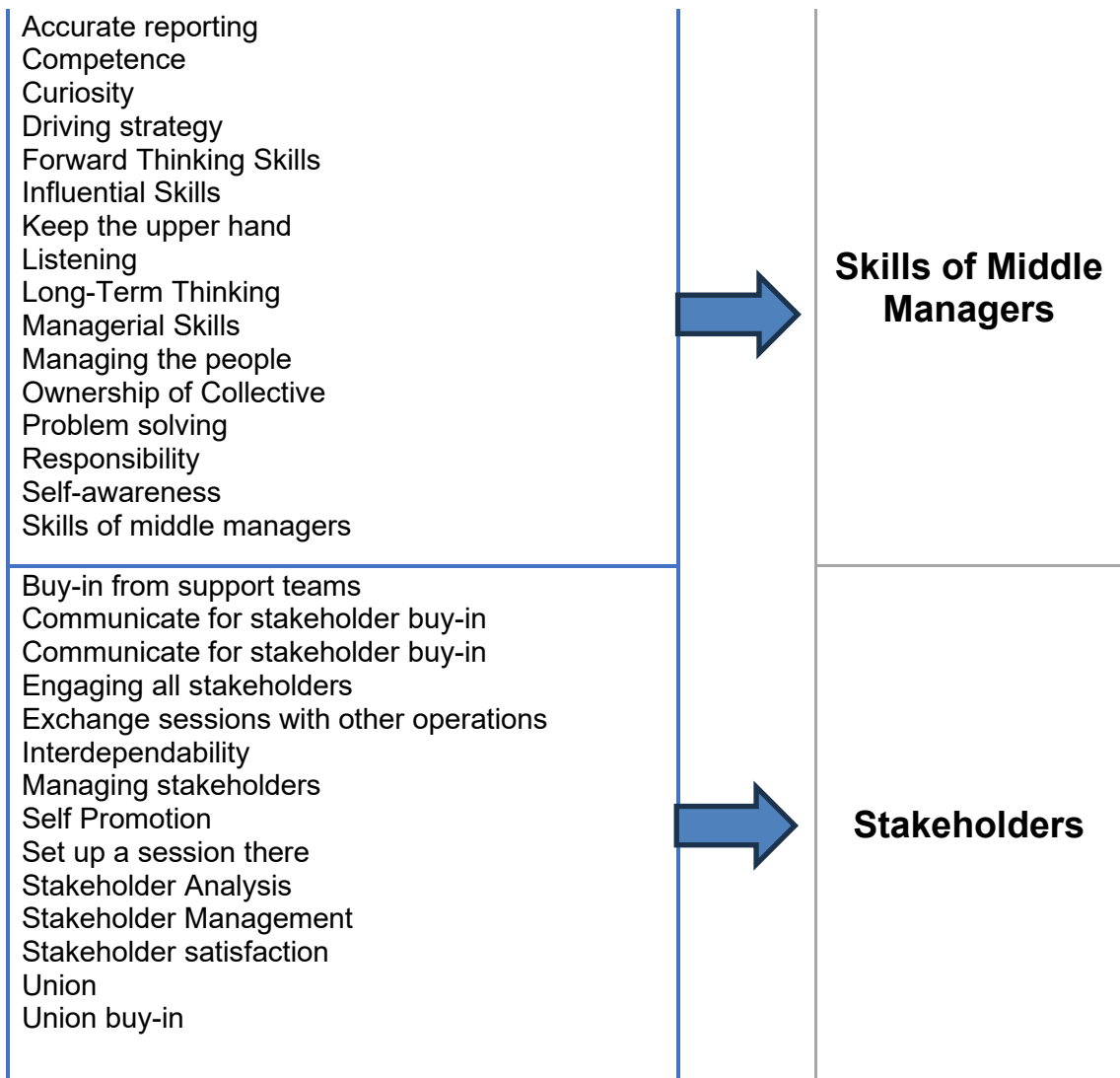


Management Support

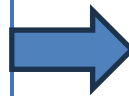






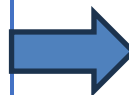


Cross functional team meetings
Demographics
Difficult People
Diversity
Eagerness to learn
Factors Hindering leadership for adaptability
Gender imbalance
Introversion
Job Requirements
Know your team
Locked in command and control
Meetings
Old experiences
Old school
Older people
Over 50 year old's
Personal Connection
Sit down and plan
Team Composition
Team strengths
Then yeah, and like with our age group, between 35 and I would say 45,
Understanding Each Person
Understanding the background of the people
Unfortunately, they give have attitudes to deal with that. They don't
What benefits derived from
WhatsApp Group
Women in Mining Industry
Wrong appointments
Young people



**Team
Composition**

Budget for team building
But if you're talking about team building in the department, there has
Connect after hours
Face to face sessions
Informal Gatherings
Interaction with Everyone
Recreation Club
Reward by chipping in
Small Celebrations
Team building



**Teambuilding
and team
cohesion**

