Bachelor's Thesis in Retail Management

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"How do teams develop collective resilience when faced with adversity?"

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Abstract

Collective resilience is defined as a group's ability to withstand or recover quickly from challenging events through a high level of agency and adaptability. The following research investigated how teams may create collective resilience. We explored this phenomenon of collective resilience in management teams, more specifically, in a consulting business setting to understand how the team members may achieve collective resilience through their actions and roles. Further, it examined any mediating effects and behavioral traits and actions that affect the achievement of collective resilience. We conducted an abductive qualitative analysis containing two stages of interviews. In the first stage, 4 participants working closely pre, during, and post the adversity of the COVID-19 pandemic case were interviewed, followed by the second stage of interviews containing 7 participants. The team in the second stage had worked together but not as closely pre, during, and post the adversity compared to the first 4 participants who were members of the first stage's team. Our findings revealed several factors helping teams to achieve collective resilience and furthermore, an indication of general measures teams may undertake in their pursuit of collective resilience. The prominent themes found were leadership, social identity, flexibility, and communication and collaboration which were the factors that enabled resilience in order to reach the collective resilience. Therefore, the themes unfold what is significant regarding the generation of collective resilience in order for organizations to withstand adversities.

Keywords: Collective Resilience, Resilience, Teams, Consulting, Business

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

"A crisis is a change – either sudden or evolving – that results in an urgent problem that must be addressed immediately. For a business, a crisis is anything with the potential to cause sudden and serious damage to its employees, reputation, or bottom line.. "(Review 2004, p. xvi).

In a world of constant change, it becomes challenging for organizations and individuals to foresee all potential crises, and therefore the concept of resilience is gaining ground in crisis theory (Weick, Sutcliffe 2007, Somers 2009, Xiao, Cao 2017). For organizations and companies to face turbulent times, resilience has increasingly gained attention to create positive adjustments and guide people during uncertain times (Glynn 2021). Developing resilience to withstand crises is an interesting subject and the difference between life and death for many organizations (Bell 2019). This is why, a crisis should be an opportunity for companies to adapt and evolve to bring the disrupted system back into alignment (Sommer, Pearson 2007). However, the problem in research is limited to focusing mainly on individual resilience, but in reality, people experience and navigate crises collectively. In addition, the explorations of collective resilience are uncommon and remain unclear in business settings. (Ntontis, Drury, et al. 2021, Masten 2007).

Collective resilience is defined as *"...a group's ability, through a high level of agency and adaptability, to withstand or recover quickly from challenging events" (Lyons, Fletcher, et al. 2016, p.66).*

The collective resilience phenomenon allows the group to express and expect solidarity and cohesion and thereby coordinate and draw upon collective sources of support to deal with adversity (Drury, Cocking, et al. 2009, p. 502). The idea of "collective" refers to a group of people sharing a sense of community or identity transcending the individual level into coming together as a community (Glynn 2021). The factor of collective efficacy influences the amount of effort that each group member puts into overcoming a crisis (Vogus, Sutcliffe 2003). Moreover, it is highly relevant for companies and teams to work together in crisis management to proactively adapt and overcome adversities to mitigate the losses (Sommer, Pearson 2007). Nevertheless, the explorations of collective resilience are uncommon and

remain unclear in a business setting and on a team level. We would like to understand whether different characteristics and dynamics impact the team's collective resilience since resilience has a multifaceted and dynamic nature (Ishak, Williams 2018). In the following thesis, we will investigate both resilience and collective resilience within consulting, more specifically a business team, to understand how teams could develop collective resilience.

In previous research, some of the prominent mechanisms and factors that contribute to resilience are leadership, flexibility, social identity, and communication and collaboration (Ancona 2012, Barczak, Lassk, et al. 2010, Butler 2018, Drury, Carter, et al. 2019, Elcheroth, Drury 2020, Evans, Bahrami 2020, Dirani, Abadi, et al. 2020, Ntontis, Drury, et al. 2021a, Williams, Gruber, et al. 2017). Due to this, it is essential to understand resilience and its mechanisms in the pursuit of arriving at the collective in order to foster true collective resilience (Sousa 2013). By understanding resilience, employees and companies will recognize how to empower a culture of collective resilience (Hartwig 2020). In order to be able to find out what enables resilience, one must understand the environment and context of achieving resilience. In terms of business settings, resilience is the ability to cope with pressure and frustration and, ultimately, handle changed circumstances (van Breda 2018). As the existing literature regarding the subject is limited, the definition of the concept of collective resilience lacks consensus. Therefore, there is an opportunity to understand better what defines collective resilience and how to develop it in a business context and teams. The following research will find out how consulting groups were able to recover from turbulent times as a whole team and develop collective resilience where each one of the team members has a significant influence on the team's collective resilience.

Collective resilience has nowadays developed into a subject that poses significant challenges for business leaders and stakeholders and has developed from a not so prominent subject to a highly sought-out subject due to its fundamental contribution to the firm (Bell 2019). Any efforts should be sought to understand if there are any mediating factors and indirect actions to potentially foster collective resilience (Bell 2019).

1.2 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this report is to initiate a discussion surrounding the creation of collective resilience in a business context by investigating how a team may create it and identify the

mediating factors. Despite the need for literature in this area, the particular research surrounding collective resilience has played a less significant role in the general theory of organizations' performance and success (Williams, Gruber, et al. 2017). The research community calls for more research on this subject since previous research has an apparent gap. The research has been conceptually and methodologically inconsistent, thus creating a problem.

Resilience was previously studied as a psychological phenomenon regarding considerable personal adversities such as deaths of family members, wars, or traumatizing events. However, the research in the organizational and business context is lacking. Foremost, the research lacks capabilities that companies and management teams may undertake to enhance the collective resilience and, in turn, the company's performance since these are strongly correlated (Bell 2019). This is why, this paper hopes to join the theoretical discussion of organizations' efforts to become more successful by advocating collective resilience among the employee teams to withstand adversities appearing in increasingly turbulent business landscapes (Williams, Gruber, et al. 2017).

The purpose, thus, translates into initiating a discussion surrounding the following research question:

Q1: What factors affect employees' ability to generate resilience and collective resilience in teams to withstand adversities and thus mitigate the adversity's effect on the company's performance and success?

Q2: From the background and the answer to the aforementioned question, what actions and capabilities may management teams pursue to increase the probability of generating resilience in order to end up in the collective resilience?

1.3 Primary Focus and Delimitation

The report's participants are from a global consulting firm. This group is of interest to study since they have worked closely pre, during, and post the adversity in question, the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the study will only focus on a single firm in one business sector. This delimitation has been made since the subject of investigation is a new source of research and

incredibly broad. Limiting the research to a specific area will allow the authors to obtain an in-depth view of the subject in order to identify themes that then, later on, can be tested in other areas. The main focus of the research is to contribute to the initiation of a discussion of how teams may go about and create collective resilience in a business context.

1.4 Disposition

The report will follow the structure of five sections, with the first section being a literature review. Following the literature review is the method to obtain all the necessary research design information. The third section presents findings and results from the interviews conducted. The fourth section discusses the posed researched questions based on the findings and their discussion. Lastly, in the fifth section, future research and limitations of the study are presented in combination with suggestions for future research regarding the subject.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 History of Collective Resilience

In order to understand why the subject of collective resilience may appear of fundamental importance for organizations today, a historical view may shed some light. The word resilience dates back to the early 17th century when it was first introduced in the English vocabulary. Back then, it was defined as; "increasing our individual and collective ability to bounce back from adversity. It is what allows us to recover from change or hardship, whether in the workplace or life more generally" (Shean 2015). The foundation of the word resilience was not related to a business perspective at the beginning of its research. Dr. Norman Garmezy often is denoted as the founder of the research in resilience when he pursued the exploration of the phenomenon during the 1970s, however, in the field of mental illness (Shean 2015). It was not until later that the focus shifted towards researching resilience in a professional business manner and its collective aspect. As the business world developed and adversities appeared in the shape of changing business landscapes, pandemics, and economic crises, the world called for more research in regards to collective resilience (Bell 2019).

Collective resilience and its surrounding research have the fundamentals in studies of adversities and what impact the adverse experience may have on a personal level. Earlier studies, therefore, chose to start the research of collective resilience in the origin of illness, or

the studies undertook a "pathogenic focus" (Shean 2015). These earlier studies found that vulnerability appeared as a factor that contributed to later negative outcomes in terms of mental health and intellectual developmentfor some of the participants in the research. However, the correlation between vulnerability and the negative outcome was not coherent everywhere, meaning that some people appeared "invulnerable", as researchers called it (Shean 2015). The early findings of this research led to the term resilience and collective resilience being redefined to some extent, in the sense that being collectively resilient was achievable. Antonovsky (1979) built on this argument and researched how the outcome of adversity could differ and how one could distinguish the ones with better outcomes from the ones with poorer. The question of distinguishing was labeled the salutogenic question. Van Breda (2001) phrased the salutogenic question as "Why when people are exposed to the same stress, do some people excel and some not?".

2.2 Collective Resilience in Businesses

The definition of resilience and collective resilience are applied across various contexts. The common understanding is that it contains robustness or strength in that people or organizations either are good at withstanding adversities or can rapidly adapt when adversity occurs (Mokline, Ben Abdallah 2022). Adversities do not only happen on a personal level but also in the business landscape in the shape of financial crises, pandemics, and other catastrophes. Collective resilience in the business world has appeared as an essential dimension in the pursuit of companies' success and in earlier studies of resilience (Bell 2019). Businesses that are prepared and adapt to adversities rather than neglect and stay the same thrive and prosper through achieving collective resilience. However, the ones that fail to create collective resilience fall short (Bell 2019). Collective resilience appears when situations force companies to lose the collective sense because of the accumulation of incidents over time. Therefore, collective resilience is a phenomenon that emerges when intersubjective interactions over-take generic organizational interactions (Mokline, Ben Abdallah 2022).

Looking into previous research on the phenomenon of collective resilience in the context of business, the focus switches from a psychological approach to more organizational processes. The focus changes to traits and capabilities that foster collective resilience in a business context rather than individual psychological traits that enable resilience (Hartwig, Clarke, et

al. 2020). As adversities occur and the generic organizational interactions are put out of place, organizations are faced with the requirement of choosing a way of action, the mediating process. Based on the mediating process, collective resilience could be obtained depending on the organization's ability to utilize and exploit the mediating process. In the process, several aspects appear that organizations can embody to different extents. Existing research presents various mediating factors: shared representation, collective consciousness, collaboration, solidarity, leadership, flexibility, etc (Mokline, Ben Abdallah 2022). The authors proceed with the literature review by outlining the most prominent themes in previous research.

2.3 Leadership

Previous literature describes the importance of leadership in turbulent times. One study highlights leadership which allows the sensemaking process to reduce ambiguity and promote resilience through interactions between leaders and followers (Baran, Scott 2010). Previously it had been examined how leadership facilitates sensemaking in a threatening situation (Barton, M. A., Sutcliffe, et al. 2015). However, the previous research focuses on organizations surrounded by high levels of understanding ambiguity (HRO) (Weick, Sutcliffe, et al. 1999). The previous research lacks the examination of leadership and proactive sensemaking in a business context.

Collective resilience is a complex concept formed by several features leading to several different outcomes (Stead 2012). Moreover, it is a widely shared point of view in research regarding collective resilience that a significant feature is the aspect of leadership and how it may contribute to the achievement of collective resilience. Several types of research recognize the importance of understanding leadership and its origin (Lee 2017, Mumford, 2007). Adversities often are associated with drastic, forced changes and a move away from the "equilibrium". Additionally, important decisions appear that must be taken, which explains a part of what makes the leadership so crucial (Pearson and Clair, 1998). Boin et al (2013) underline critical aspects of the leadership's impact and role in the creation of collective resilience. Sensemaking plays a vital role in leadership and crisis in order to process the new information, action of decision-making, the quality of facilitating effective coordination, and meaning-making to provide an interpretation of the crisis. In this way,

leaders will restore trust, provide confidence, and give hope to employees to finally enable reflection and learning from the crisis (Leonard and Howitt, 2009).

The process of sensemaking is primarily viewed as a process of social construction that occurs when discrepant cues interrupt members' ongoing activities in turbulent times (Weick 1988, Weick 1993). One of the fundamental leadership activities in turbulent times is the act of sensemaking to understand what is going on and act collectively. Meaning-making and creating a sense of order having feelings of empathy and giving confidence to members are important when encouraging resilience within the team (Teo, Lee, et al. 2017). However, the research of Teo et al (2017) is limited to only the health sector, presenting a need for more theory in terms of exploring this in a consulting team setting.

Sensemaking in crisis conditions is made more difficult because the instrumental action to understand the crisis often intensifies the crisis. As a result, it becomes more challenging to enact and take action, and this problem is interpreted from the perspective that people enact the environments which constrain them (Weick 1988). Furthermore, it is argued that commitment, capacity, and expectations affect sensemaking during the crisis and its severity. At the very core of enactment may comprise an ideology that decreases the likelihood of crisis. Prior research outlines that the perspective of enactment which is central to where people act and bring events and structures into existence. The idea here involves managing threats and crises at a lower level of intensity, heightening the awareness and levels of skills by expanding perception (Weick 1988). However, Weick focuses on industrial crisis management, and there is a need to contribute to the understanding of crisis management in teams within a business context.

2.4 Social Identity

Another aspect that many researchers shine a light on when talking about collective resilience in business is the social feature (Stead 2012). Previous research shows that shared social identity is an important mediating mechanism between the perception of common fate and supportive actions where social identification caused by threats provides emotional, social support and participation altogether in supportive activities for the people and community (Drury 2018, Howe, Chauhan, et al. 2021, Drury, Brown, et al. 2016). The research of Drury (2018) argues that in the context of turbulent times, a shared social identity approach

underlines the explanation of resilience which leads to increased expectations and motivation to provide social support. This orients people facing a threat towards a common shared goal, enhancing the perception of collective efficacy and ability to respond collectively to the threatening event (Drury 2018). The research explicitly identifies that the feeling of a sense of unity and the emergent sense of togetherness was evident through participants' reference to "we" developing collective psychosocial resilience after facing the turbulent times (Drury 2018). However, the research is limited to only the emergency service context, which is why this could be further investigated on teams in a business setting.

The communication that appears if the company pursues the creation of social identities, relational connections appear that enable a shared meaning, relationships, and identities (Stead 2012). Understanding that organizational structures are networks and all employees, leaders, and C-levels are actors enables the members involved to identify cognitive, emotional, and social reserves aiding the achievement of collective resilience through the creation of a sense of togetherness. Simultaneously, it becomes critical for organizations to identify and mitigate social inequalities and the negative consequences they might bring (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). However, identifying the inequalities is not enough as it would appear as a reaction to a wrong action. The initial focus should be on creating positive social norms as people adapt their behavior to the reaction in the community in which the adversity appears. Therefore, fostering an open and caring culture is an important aspect of creating collective resilience (Elcheroth, Drury 2020).

2.5 Flexibility

In the article by Holweg (2005), flexibility is defined as a generic ability to adapt to internal and external influences. Several research articles pursue efforts to try to make sense of the conceptual ambiguity associated with the concept of flexibility in the context of collective resilience. A unifying theme throughout the research is that flexibility historically appears important in times of crises and adversities (Mokline, Ben Abdallah 2022). The literature explains different dimensions of flexibility, becoming more or less prominent depending on what adversity is faced. The two main dimensions of flexibility are versatility and agility (Evans, Bahrami 2020). The versatility aspect of flexibility is the ability to switch focus and foresee early warnings, continue functioning, and work in changing environments. The agility approach instead explains how leaders and companies need to be flexible in making quick

decisions to mitigate negative consequences (Evans, Bahrami 2020). Agility and flexibility have common elements with resilience which is a success factor in dealing with unexpected threats. However, the research by Evan and Bahrami (2020) is limited to business leaders in a manufacturing company. However, this research primarily focuses on human resources (HR) systems, and thus, there is a need to explore the area in teams in a business consulting setting.

Furthermore, researchers Supardi and Syamsul Hadi (2020) mention in their article that organizations need to possess both dimensions of flexibility and agility in order to withstand adversity and create relevance within the business as a whole. The following researchers explain how organizations should embody flexibility in a proactive manner as well as a reactive manner (Supardi, Syamsul Hadi 2020). Additionally, Supardi and Syamsul Hadi (2020) explain that through resourcefulness, adaptability, and flexibility, resilience is achievable. In spite of this, it has only been explored in small-medium enterprise (SME) businesses, and it is still unclear in other contexts such as the consulting business. In line with this topic, Karman (2020) further elaborates and emphasizes the importance of a holistic perspective on all dimensions of flexibility (Karman 2020). This research proves that resilience can be viewed as a moderator of the relationship between coping capacity and flexibility ensuing firm performance. Despite that, this research in management and business focuses more on an organization level instead of a team and group level resilience.

2.6 Communication & Collaboration

Many previous research articles regarding collective resilience touch upon an overreaching subject of communication (Mokline, Ben Abdallah 2022, Drury, Carter, et al. 2019). In the article by Mokline and Ben Abdallah (2022), the authors underline the importance of understanding the communication's holistic view; internal communication between members, external communication to shareholders, and written communications such as guidelines and policies. Other research explains that communication is the starting point of collective resilience; in order to create resilience, a fundamental pillar is a communication network of dynamic nature (Ishak, Williams 2018). In the research of Ishak and Williams, they shed light on resilience, particularly in the US Forest Service, a high-reliability organization (HRO); however, resilience had not been investigated on a team level in a business setting. Buzzanell's (2010) research highlights the importance of the processes of communication to enact resilience. He argues that the communicative construction of resilience depends on

various processes: crafting normalcy which means crafting normalcy generated by talk-in-interaction; maintaining and using communication networks; putting alternative logic to work, and elaborating on a "triggering event" that leads to the enactment of these communication processes. He further argues that the fundamental construction of resilience is merely a collaborative exchange inviting the participation of workplace, community, and inter-organizational network members (Buzzanell 2010). However, the research focuses on human communication resilience rather than team-level collective resilience in a business context which we will further investigate.

In one of Remke's research in human services, he explains how teachers collaboratively build resilience through mundane talks and interactions (Remke 2006). Additionally, research by Raney (2014) mentions how creating an initial communication network that operates dynamically and allows open communication will set the organization in a beneficial position, enabling collective resilience in a clinical mental health center (Raney 2014).

In addition, SMEs often have an advantage over large firms by having rapid internal communications, thus making them more learning-oriented and facilitating resilience (Vossen 1998). However, this could be further explored in teams in a business setting. The turbulent moments most often bring some kind of tension; having the communication in place will allow the organizations to navigate such tensions and mitigate the proceeding negative consequences (Williams, Gruber, et al. 2017). Prior research proved that trust fosters communication and enables the emergence of new ideas leading to novelty creative decisions in a crisis context. Carlile (2004) found that trust demands shared understanding, and shared understanding demands trust. Moreover, trust is a necessary component for crisis management teams to achieve creative, valuable decisions (Ford 1996, Sommer, Pearson 2007).

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

To conclude, the literature review reveals that the concept of collective resilience is a broad and new source of research in the context of businesses, but is gaining attention. Since the concept consists of many factors, the range of different takes on its definition appears to make it increasingly ambiguous. However, from previous research, a definition was addressed, and the mechanisms contributing to sparking collective resilience can therefore be

sought after. Several features are widely talked about in existing literature, including leadership, social identity, flexibility, and communication and collaboration. On top of that, resilience is a phenomenon that has been defined and applied in a variety of different settings throughout literature, indicating a broad application of the concept where there is an opportunity of finding common ground to contribute to the theoretical discussion. Advancements in the discussion surrounding the subject will, therefore, most likely have their origins from joining findings across different contexts and levels.

3. Method

3.1 Nature of Context

The context in which the research was conducted is in a consulting business setting where projects are often done in teams. In such a business context, consultants usually work in two areas, for instance, in client activities like projects and internal group activities contributing to internal goals. This is why it is interesting to understand the complexity of how groups and teams work together and make decisions during adversity in a business setting. For the sake of this study, we will look into the case where consulting teams faced adversity, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The adversity caused a large-scale social and economic shock, and because of this, the emergence of attention to resilience and collective resilience took place when facing such challenges (Glynn 2021). Furthermore, this led to more demand for research to further understand and explore how teams in organizations could develop resilience and collective resilience when faced with adversity since the existing literature lacks consensus, more specifically in a business field. Due to this, it becomes crucial for individuals, teams, and businesses to make meaning and collectively work together on building resilience to combat the challenging uncertain times (Glynn 2021).

Moreover, we will investigate how the teams developed resilience, and collective resilience since the existing literature on resilience remains unclear in a business context and teams. Thus, we will initiate a discussion surrounding the creation of resilience and collective resilience in a business setting. In addition, search for any mediating factors of collective resilience in the two groups and understand if there are any differences or if all mediating factors of the smaller group apply to the larger group. The participants identified as having managed the adversity with success where the following consulting businesses are known to

have high adaptability, enabling clear-cut observations (Kipping, Clark 2012). In addition, the convenience sampling involves 4 participants who worked closely pre, during, and post adversity of the COVID-19 as the first stage. This will follow by the second stage of interviews containing 7 participants who worked together but not as closely pre, during, and post the adversity compared to the first 4 members of the first stage's team.

3.2 Research Source & Design

The data sources used to apprehend the necessary information were interviews and research articles. The conducted interviews were of the semi-structured type, meaning the interviewees were invited to a discussion rather than only answering questions. There are several advantages of using semi-structured interviews in comparison to structured interviews. The first reason is the nature of the studied subject; the pursuit of understanding a person's resilience requires a subjective approach, allowing the interviewees to speak more freely (Pratt 2009). Another reason is that semi-structured interviews allow the interviewers to further investigate subjects proving to be decisive factors, leading to increased effectiveness in the thoroughness of the analysis (Pratt 2009, Appendix 1).

Semi-structured interviews allow more direct access to the interview's own perfection by accessing either the conscious or unconscious mental world (Baumard, et al. 2003). Utilizing a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative fits the purpose of the research paper as the question to answer is of the "how"-type instead of the "how many"-type, which a quantitative approach would fit (Pratt 2009). Through the research, we will follow Gephart in that "Qualitative research starts from and returns to words, talk, and texts as meaningful representations of concepts".

The research used a cross-sectional research design where semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted at a specific point in time (Bryman, Bell 2011). The approach pursued was deemed appropriate to apprehend the understanding of the interviewees' perceptions of how collective resilience was created. In comparison, using a quantitative approach or case study would not have been appropriate as sufficiently detailed answers would not have been provided, or the subjective feelings would not have been considered.

The study investigated a consulting company. More specifically, a convenience sampling contains of 4 people in a leadership group that worked closely pre, during, and after the adversity was studied and interviewed. After the initial four interviews were conducted, another 7 interviews were conducted with randomly picked people from a working group of 20 people, working together but not as close as the four initial people. The interviews were conducted to understand how resilience and collective resilience fosters and how it affects the team positively. In order to understand the aspects promoting resilience and collective resilience and its importance, coding in a thematic way was used to perform several analyses to explain the most fundamental foundational parts and their importance.
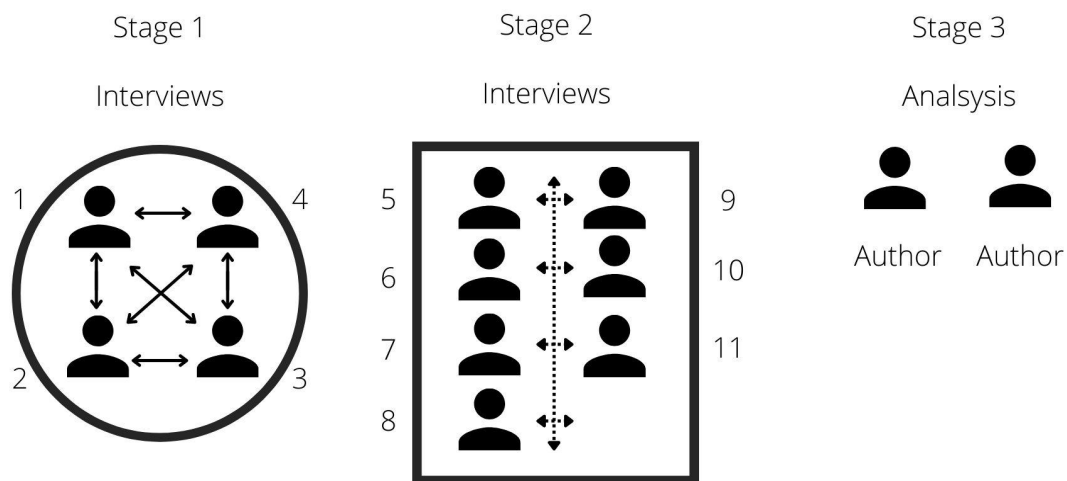

Figure 1 "Methodology": In the first step of interviews, 4 people who all worked closely together pre, during, and post the adversity were interviewed. In the second step, 7 people were interviewed who worked together pre, during, and post adversity, but not as close as the initial 4 people. Lastly, the authors anaylsed the recorded answers through a thematic analysis.

3.3 An Abductive and Qualitative Study

The study conducted is based on an interpretive qualitative research method, meaning that the answers recorded from the interviewees are not an entirely correct depiction of reality. Rather, the participant's answers are subjective perceptions of their sense of the achievement of creating a collective resilience. This approach was recognized as appropriate as it provided a deep understanding of the participant's interpretation of the creation of collective resilience. Furthermore, since the theoretical discussions are not extensive in any way and to enable the

interviewees to speak as freely as possible, semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually. This enabled the participants to structure their answers subjectively and allowed the researchers to explore further issues particularly relevant to the person being interviewed. The interview method also welcomed follow-up and clarifying questions which enhanced the interview further in terms of reliability and empirical findings. Utilizing another approach, such as a structured interview, would not have enabled the enhancement since that approach requires standardization (Bryman, Bell 2011).

Furthermore, the approach for the research is of abductive manner, meaning that a best prediction is sought out after from incomplete observations (Taylor 2002). This approach is advised when research is performed in a rather new phenomena such as resilience and collective resilience in a business context. The research process starts with surprising facts which emerged when econuntering the resilience phenomena where researchers can develop and adjust the research seeking to choose the best explanation among many other alternatives in order to explain the surprising facts (Flick 2009). As this approach was applied to this research, theory and data, have been collected and worked in harmony to form the best outcome and conclusion. The data collection process consisted of two stages, followed by the last stage, where the data was analyzed. Two rounds of interviews were conducted, and the first round consisted of interviews with 4 participants working closely pre-, during, and post-adversity. The first round was followed by a second where interviews were conducted with 7 participants, working not as closely during pre-, during, and post-adversity. All interviews were conducted through Teams since the company in question did not allow any other medium. However, the digitally conducted meetings enabled the authors to still analyze the interview's facial expressions and interpret the data as if the interviews were conducted physically.

3.4 Study

The primary source of data collection was interviews with two different groups of participants working closely together to different extents pre-, during, and post-adversity at a large-cap listed consulting firm. In the first stage and the first group of participants was 4 people working closely together in a management team. The second group consisted of 7 participants working together but to some extent more on and off. The interviews were conducted virtually with the first interview being held 3rd of April, 2022, and the last on the

15th of April, 2022. The interviews lasted from 42 minutes to 58 minutes, indicating the extensiveness of the interviews and the usefulness of the semi-structured approach allowing a discussion and follow-up questions. The same interview template was used in all interviews conducted to ensure consistency and reliability in the way that all interviews touched all the important key areas. However, as the length of the interviews indicates, the template worked as a guide and follow-up discussions were encouraged. As the semi-structured format allows for an increased open discussion, needed direction appeared at specific points where the interviewer carefully utilized an open language, steering the interview in the right direction without falling short of researcher bias (Pratt 2009, Saunders, et al. 2000).

3.5 Data Analysis

All interviews were conducted in English as using a unifying language allowed the authors to analyze the answers as a pair, as well as any linguistic or cultural differences, were avoided since the participants were international. As the validity of the interviews is of the highest importance, both authors were present where one was leading the interview with questions and discussion while the other one carefully focused on taking notes comprehensively (Silverman 2010). All interviews were recorded and given permission to enable the authors to return and actively listen to "how" the participants were expressing themselves and not only what they were saying, thus focusing on non-verbal cues too. In connection to the interviews, when done, all interviews were transcribed to allow an extensive analysis of keywords, and concerns regarding misses of important points were avoided (Leete 2013, Appendix 2).

When the data and answers had been collected, the analysis was performed using a thematic method, thus enabling the authors to observe patterns and recurring themes among the interviewee's answers. The initial step was to organize the data into groups to identify the themes. The differentiation made by the authors of the categories had its foundation in similarities in the answers from the interviewees to be able to group the data into initial codes (Vaismoradi 2013, Rowley 2012). When the initial step was done and the grouping was conducted, a regular comparison of similarities and themes as well as differences were done in order to find key components. All the key components identified were "coded" into the themes found and this was done multiple times to reduce uncertainty and increase precision.

4. Results & Analysis

Participants	Age	Gender	Current role
1	26	Female	1 year and 7 months
2	29	Female	3 years
3	31	Female	2 years and 10 months
4	29	Female	2 and 3 months
5	30	Female	2 years and 10 months
6	30	Female	5 months
7	26	Male	9 months
8	29	Female	2 years and 9 months
9	32	Female	2 years and 6 months
10	30	Male	2 years 4 months
11	29	Female	2 years and 10 months

Figure 2 "Respondents": Research participant's age, gender and time in current role

4.1 Results from the first stage of interviews

The first round of interviews provided the authors with reference to how groups created collective resilience and outlined the reasons for how they reacted to the adversity. From this stage, the key aspects found in creating collective resilience in a smaller setting were summarized into four themes giving some foundation of guidelines used when evaluating the remaining 7 people. The themes identified were leadership, social identity, flexibility, communication & collaboration.

4.2 Results from the first and second stages of interviews

After conducting all the interviews from both the first and second stages where all results were gathered. We identified the most common themes brought up overall by all the participants, thus indicating the most successful factors mediating the collective resilience for both the smaller and larger group which were leadership, social identity, flexibility,

communication & collaboration (see figure 3). As the questions were based on previous literature, the essence of the questions was to identify the "what" and the "how".
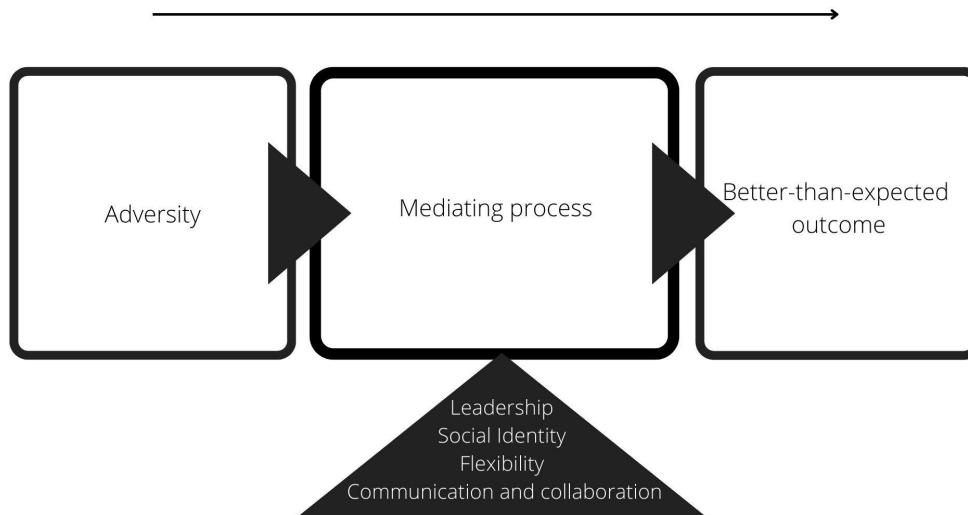

Figure 3 "Findings": From the exposure of adversity, the overall most prominent themes identified in aiding the creation of collective resilience for both groups were leadership, social identity, flexibility, communication & collaboration, therefore resulting in a better outcome.

4.2.1 Leadership

4.2.1.1 Loss of Sensemaking

As the crisis hit, the team members experienced mixed negative feelings indicating a loss of sensemaking. Sensemaking means that there is a need to connect cues and frames to create an account of what was going on and make sense of the crisis situation (Maitlis, Sonenshein 2010). Due to the sudden turbulent event, the employees were unable to understand what was going on. The collapse of sensemaking is similar to Weick's study, where the team suddenly lost meaning and was confused, negatively impacting the collective resilience of the team.

"At the beginning of the crisis, I experienced a lot of shaming because we did not know how bad it was. If anyone left the house and went to the office, there was a huge amount of guilt from groups and people since we did not know what made sense and what did not." - Participant 2

"As a lot of the negative feelings appearing because of the pandemic could be boiled down into uncertainty." - Participant 3

"I felt the fear of the unknown, and we didn't know how it was going to transpire." - Participant 4

"I don't think it was an ideal situation, and it was out of control." - Participant 5

4.2.1.2 Leaders

Furthermore, through interactions between leaders and followers, the members were able to create an account of what was going on and make sense of the odds. The participants were asked what kind of sense did you make of the crisis. The results showed that the leadership became a building block in reducing the uncertainty and enabling the sensemaking processes fostering resilience within the team (Baran, Scott 2010). The participants were asked about whom they turned to during the adversity, they answered their superior/project leader.

"Our leadership team took action before the rest of the company did. The leadership for sustainability said; "Heads-up, I think the office is going to be closed from next week, so I am asking all of you to work from home and make sure you have everything you need."" - Participant 3

"The uncertainty, however, became clearer as my project leader took the initiative of regularly informing us (the group) of what management talked about." - Participant 4

Furthermore, when team members were asked about whom they turned to for guidance and what support the participants got in order to form a new set of behaviors and routines, people responded positively saying the leadership team. This shows that the leadership team was indeed like "heroes," taking action and being there for the team. The leaders brought the threatening event into perspective and structures into existence, setting them into motion (Weick 1988).

Moreover, it showed that the leaders engaged and interacted jointly constructing meanings to produce understandings and outcomes. This led to high engagement and a great amount of support, maintaining the sense of the team collectively. The leaders met the employees' needs

by helping contribute to the achievement of collective resilience (Teo, Lee, et al. 2017, Dirani, Abadi, et al. 2020). In addition, the members indicated that the safety feeling and the team spirit were maintained through the help of the leader. Therefore, the major feature of leadership created a great sense of team uplifting the group in order to build collective resilience from within.

"The leader really created a sense of team effort and sense of we are in this together early on. We have a really great mentor and leader that, for one thing, she is very receptive if there is a sense of stress in the group." - Participant 2

"We had a very connected leadership team who made it as good as possible, looking after everybody's needs and encouraging open communication. The ones in charge reached out and called asking how you were actually doing more than just 'let us talk about business'." - Participant 5

4.2.1.3 Sensemaking & Talks

The groups had many talks and reflections during meetings to make sense of the turbulent situation and to further understand since it was out of their control. The members comprehend explicitly with words and through their ongoing talks and chats that the team gives meaning to their collective experiences. In addition, they tried to rationalize what they could do (Weick, Sutcliffe, et al. 2005). As a result, this further accelerates their sensemaking process.

"We started to brainstorm on what we could actually do to socialize and we spent the first 10 min talking about the pandemic and taking time to reflect on every aspect of the situation." - Participant 2

"We spoke with each other, and it got easier because everybody shared the same kind of feelings." - Participant 5

They came up with plausible understandings and meanings of the new circumstances by brainstorming and talking with each other, serving as a springboard into action (Ancona 2012, Weick, Sutcliffe, et al. 2005). The open culture allowed them to foster sensemaking and clarity to structure the unknown since they were in the same turbulent storm. In such times,

sensemaking is most needed under threat, acting as a mechanism for engaging with the crisis as a whole team. Therefore, at the same time, the check-ins at the start of the meetings became increasingly important too since those were sources of clarity, and comprehension and thus further improving the process of sensemaking.

"I'd say that, for me, the most critical factor making me feel that we achieved collective resilience was the social aspect of work. We kept on emphasizing the small talks and coffee breaks, even on zoom, which made everything feel less stressful." - Participant 11

4.2.2 Social Identity

From the interviews conducted, it became evident that the aspect of social identity played a significant role in the achievement of collective resilience for all participants. Social identity falls in between the perception of common fate and supportive actions providing emotional as well as social support (Drury 2018). The sense of coming closer as a team was achievable due to sharing experiences with each other (Drury 2018). They helped each other by taking part in activities and interacting through various social events such as coffee breaks, going to each other's place, etc in order to be on the same wavelength. In this way, they were there for each other during the difficult times enabling shared social identity by having shared goals and purposes and responding to the crisis collectively as a team (Drury 2018). Due to this, they had a common fate because of the threatening situation, they were able to handle it together by sharing their weakness and strengths and thereby reinforcing the team feeling.

Moreover, through supporting each other, they maintained the connection regardless of the instability of the crisis. As a result, these supportive actions gave them a positive view of their identity within the groups as they were related to each other and they naturally became more united. Therefore, there was a sense of coming closer as a team which was achievable due to sharing experiences with each other throughout the social interactions (Drury 2018). Moreover, the employees were able to create an atmosphere of helping and supporting each other during the challenging moments because of the crisis as they built stronger bonds with each other (Ancona 2012, Drury, Carter, et al. 2019). In a learning environment, encouraging openness and enthusiasm in groups was very helpful. The team shared both failures and successes, which is essential and thus created resilience within the team (Edmondson, Amy C. 2011). This allowed having a positive attitude by discussing what went wrong and how to

make it better as a group thriving as a cohesive team. Thus, it became apparent that the aspect of social identity was necessary for the team to enable a reflective and learning process from the crisis (Leonard and Howitt, 2009).

"We were very supportive of each other and shared successes and learnings." - Participant 5

"Helping each other helped us build this safety which was best for everybody and everyone was navigating it together and at the same time, so unifying, and it felt like we got each other's back." - Participant 3

The results prove that social identity was important for the team to keep the unity and solidary across the groups. The results indicate that the participants had respect and a sense of unification among each other (Drury, Brown, et al. 2016, Weick 1993). In this way, the team collectively dealt and coped with the situation on a team level instead of an individual level sparking the collective resilience (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). The element of harmony showed the feeling of all being "in the same boat", giving rise to a sense of common identity (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). As a result, the teams were motivated and made it possible to have mutual social and emotional support during the crisis.

4.2.2.1 Division

"I mean, since I was a part of a smaller group, I became closer friends with my co-workers, and we are now even better friends than before. But, I feel like the ones who maintained in the larger forum felt much more isolated and had a harder time managing." - Participant 3

"We got so close to each other where it became 'us' who worked closely together against 'them' (other employees)." - Participant 5

The feeling of togetherness is a strong source of energy in times of crisis, but at the same time, it is a fragile resource (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). Because they worked closely together during the pandemic, it caused them to become "too close", where the phenomenon of coming together as a group could potentially become an obstacle by instead dividing people (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). This shows an unequal distribution of risks and burdens where the feeling of all being in the same boat decreases. As a result, a sense of grouping started appearing between teams. Several respondents highlighted the problem of the natural forming

of groups as they elaborate on a sense of us vs. them (company/other employees) which is a natural consequence of the grouping catalyzed by the adversity in the shape of the pandemic.

"It became kind of apparent that the ones who maybe we're closer friends before or who more actively tried engaging themselves in social happenings became closer friends and achieved a feeling of being in it together. In comparison, the ones who were more distant became cut off from the smaller bubble, and some of them even now have left the company." - Participant 10

4.2.3 Flexibility

The concept of flexibility was identified as a prominent theme when participants asked how they interacted and coped as a team. Flexibility refers to the ability to switch focus and foresee early warnings and work in changing environments where there is a need to be flexible and make quick decisions to mitigate any negative results (Evans, Bahrami 2020). Several participants touched upon the subject as the company's structure was flexible even before the crisis. The switch was easy, as various team members mentioned that flexibility is one of the elements of resilience. The agile structure allowed the team to be able to cope and adapt during and after the crisis (Evans, Bahrami 2020). The teams worked together and aligned their schedules to cope and adjust proactively. The participants pointed out that the culture was initially flexible and that the crisis increased the flexibility structure even further, indicating that the different types of flexibility appearing go hand in hand. Therefore, the company was successful in covering both the versatility- and agility aspects of flexibility (Evans, Bahrami 2020, Weick, Sutcliffe 2007).

"The kind of flexibility was already established, which made the actual switch easy. We always usually had meetings online, both with clients and fellow workers." - Participant 6

"It was good to have some flexibility and not force people to be in the office and just align it with what works with everybody's life." - Participant 5

"Having that flexibility in our team helped in avoiding tensions and conflicts." - Participant 7

4.2.4 Communication & Collaboration

After asking the participant how they maintained a strong sense of us, most members of the groups mentioned that the interactive communication aided in keeping the group's ability to work together. As a result, almost all participants agreed that maintaining constant communication was crucial for enabling the team to adapt to uncertain and changed circumstances. The participants mentioned the importance of collaboration and the communication process, which are fundamental for constructing resilience (Buzzanell 2010). It was evident that the team members proactively worked on mitigating any potential risks by collaborating. This indicated constant communication and touchpoints, maintaining continuous interaction and collaborations across the whole team (Remke 2006). Additionally, there was an informal structure and setting of interaction (Andersson, Cäker, et al. 2019), and communication in small groups helped the team maintain communication throughout the process. In the consulting team, the collaborative spirit and the strong communication between all were apparent, emphasizing being open and responsive to ideas and suggestions (Engebø, Klakegg, et al. 2020). It allowed them to feel a strong sense of us as a community, enabling collective resilience.

In addition, there were many community boosters, as some mentioned, where the engaging and interactive environment maintained an open and close connection through various activities. Communication and collaboration were attainable through the various interactive activities during and post the crisis.

"The strongest motivator to develop a sense of 'us' is that we need to work and interact with each other. We need to work together and collaborate in order to maintain our jobs and business." - Participant 2

"In this type of work, communication is very important. When building a relationship, being able to help each other out where everybody has clear roles within the team typically is a strategy for success and being able to make time to be helpful to your teammates." - Participant 3

"In order to sustain the team feeling there was a strong need for an informal structure of interactions as well where we had informal meetings in small groups in the teams and in between teams." - Participant 5

"I think having transparent communication is what worked for us." - Participant 9

4.2.4.1 Psychological Safety, Trust and Vulnerability
"Psychological safety and vulnerability allowed us to have a strong sense of us and a shared understanding." - Participant 4

"Vulnerability is really powerful in strategy consulting firms and not pretending you have all the answers. Let's collaborate and try to come up with an answer." - Participant 3

"In goal sessions, you immediately share what you are good at and what you are not good at, and that brings the human aspect into the equation. Trust has come over time and sharing failure and success. I trust the team with everything, we are so supportive of each other." - Participant 1

"We opened up, managed and grew as a team and got closer together." - Participant 12

When the participant was asked how they developed shared understanding and trust among each of them, they actually realized that psychological safety and vulnerability was the key for the consulting team. Due to the positive team climate, psychological safety was created where they have a shared belief that the team is safe in regards to interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, Amy 1999). In this way, they are able to feel safe and comfortable speaking up and challenging the status quo without fear. Additionally, the team's psychological safety is very closely related to trust (Johnson, Lee, et al. 2007). These two attributes will positively contribute to the resilience of the team (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, et al. 2011).

Therefore, having an open, vulnerable, and trusting environment are crucial to increasing the team's resilience (Pavez, Gómez, et al. 2021). This strengthened the relationship between team members as they became more honest and open. Some participants elaborated on a specific goal session where the team members talked and shared openly with each other. As a result, all actions enabled a healthy and positive space open for constant growth and

improvement (Edmondson 1999). Therefore, it is essential when building resilience to have strong bonds and trust, allowing vulnerability into the picture. Moreover, this further enhanced the social connections and affiliations, thus, increasing the group's resilience (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, et al. 2011).

5. Discussion

Our findings show that all the participants in both groups, the first stage and second stage, found that they achieved collective resilience. The participants all answered that they believed they were more collectively resilient after the adversity, therefore bouncing back and moving further beyond alignment and status quo (Williams, Gruber, et al. 2017).

5.1 Leadership

5.1.1 Sensemaking

At the beginning of the crisis, our findings indicated a loss of sensemaking manifested into mixed feelings of uncertainty, frustration, and isolation. Therefore, there was a need to connect cues and frames to create an account of what was going on and make sense of the crisis (Maitlis, Sonenshein 2010). However, our findings showed similar to Weick's literature, where there was a collapse of sensemaking in the very beginning, and the team members lost the ability to temporarily make sense of the situation, referring to the inability of actors to understand and integrate the unfolding threatening events (Weick 1993). The collapse of meaning in times of crisis leads to differentiation which is because of the disintegration of boundaries that usually allow the individual to have the ability to differentiate things leaving the member with an unbearable sense of confusion and difficulty in interpreting the disastrous event (Turner 1976, Girard 1982).

5.1.2 Leaders

In terms of leadership, the leaders were put in a position where they had never been put before, enabling new meanings to their actions. From this perspective, our findings, similar to the literature, showed a surge of meaning in actions where the leaders employed retrospective sensemaking through confronting the unanticipated and threatening event as well as aiming to bring flux to order through interpretation and explanation (Einola, Kohtamäki, et al. 2017,

Roux-Dufort 2007, Weick 1993). Therefore, our findings similar to the research showed a 360-degree data that sensemaking was because of the effective leadership (Ancona 2012).

The data illuminate the concept of enactment, as prior research mentions that "the initial reaction to the crisis sets the tone for the rest of the effort" (Weick 1988). From the standpoint of enactment, initial responses do more than set the tone; they determine the trajectory of the crisis. Furthermore, our findings highlight the idea of the enactment perspective that was taken by the leadership and the employees affected by the crisis management. The enactment approach enables more psychological control and safety, causing lower stress levels. (Weick 1988). As the crisis event occurred and they took action following the point of view of enactment, increasing the perceptual control and thereby reducing the intensity of the crisis (Weick 1988).

The leadership team integrated an adaptive mindset where they opened a safe place for communication and an interactive atmosphere. At the same time, they met their employees' accelerated needs, similar to the literature of Dirani et al (2020). Our findings proved that the leadership team quickly made sense of the situation and responded by adjusting to the new circumstances. In line with the literature, the findings confirm that the leadership team promoted resilience within the team leading through the crisis through an agile approach in order to adapt and absorb the adversity (Dirani, Abadi, et al. 2020). In regards to crisis management, our findings highlight what the literature has agreed upon, that leadership becomes a crucial factor in actively facilitating resilience. The leaders and team members engaged in making meticulous efforts to cope and deal with unforeseen situations (James, Wooten, et al. 2011, Wildavsky 1988).

Our findings proved that the role of the leader flourished through prioritizing employees' emotional stability and needs in order to promote collective resilience within the team, in accordance, with previous research. As a result, the findings showed that the leader facilitated effective coordination and promoted a collective understanding among the team members to bring about hope and confidence and restore trust within the team (Teo, Lee, et al. 2017). The results were clear about how the leadership team played a significant role. The team was able to absorb the adversity and improve responsiveness by coming up with creative and novel ways to maintain the team synergy. An integral part of our findings proved that, in terms of crisis management, the leader allowed an increased frequent communication indicating high

adaptability and empathy towards the employee's needs and well-being (Wooten, James 2008). To conclude, the findings adhere to the literature as the leadership team positively influenced and boosted the team's commitment by quickly applying reflections and actions by putting methods into practice (Eraut 1995).

5.2 Social Identity

The findings in regards to social identity are in line with existing literature. Several researchers have a common ground in perceiving social identity's importance when achieving collective resilience. A shared social identity mediates and aligns perceptions creating emotional support and supportive activities (Drury 2018, Howe, Chauhan, et al. 2021, Drury, Brown, et al. 2016). The findings showed that the participants had created a shared understanding and shared identity, thus enabling the perception of "we're all in this together". It became evident that the organization had imposed a sense of togetherness, placing the team in a good position for creating resilience (Elcheroth, Drury 2020, Ntontis, Drury, et al. 2021b). Due to this, relationships between team members have been strengthened and therefore increasing the sense of belonging by generating a sense of comfort and security (Ntontis, Drury, et al. 2020, Scannell, Gifford 2017). This facilitated personal growth and a sense of belonging and enhanced well-being which reflected positively on the team (Scannell, Gifford 2017).

In accordance with the study of Ntontis et al (2021), social identity played a crucial role in facilitating well-being and collective efficacy, thereby sparking collective resilience within the team (Ntontis, Drury, et al. 2021). In line with previous literature, and as the findings showed, the sense of togetherness allowed the groups to understand and form an organizational network where all actors contributed to achieving collective resilience (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). Additionally, similar to the research of Drury (2018), shared social identity could potentially lead to relational transformations such as an increase in expectations of support from fellow group members and motivation to provide social support (Drury 2018). As a result, they came out of the adversity more resilient, using the powerful source of motivation of social support and the sense of unity mirroring the collective resilience of the team.

5.2.1 Division

Several participants in the larger group who worked less closely and participants in the smaller group who worked more closely caused the division in the organization of the "us (groups) vs them (company)". Our findings outline what previous research mentions that the momentum of solidarity can be fragile when crisis management creates inequalities and this is due to the formation of groups that could reinforce inequalities (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). Therefore, our findings add to earlier research by observing the aspect of social inequalities resulting in negative consequences (Elcheroth, Drury 2020). In addition to this, our analysis expands on previous research where the adversity could potentially directly deteriorate mental health due to personal losses, as well as indirectly through people's experiences of deterioration of social support and sense of community which could have been plausible in this case due to the pandemic (Kaniasty, Norris 1993). As a result, the wave of spontaneous solidarity could potentially fail to be materialized because of the crisis since people got divided into groups (Drury, Carter, et al. 2019). Sometimes, the unity and solidarity could decline when the majority is striving to return to a state of normality and leaving those still affected by the adversity increasingly isolated (Kaniasty, Norris 2008).

5.3 Flexibility

Our findings demonstrated that flexibility within the team enabled them to become more resilient. As previous research states, organizations that embed a versatility and agile culture will bring about open communication and safe places to perform strategic planning and therefore handle the adversity productively (Raney 2014). Moreover, the flexible atmosphere will allow a better understanding of the situation to create efficient measures and, as a result, make the correct, appropriate decisions to tackle the challenging crises (Caminiti 2006). In addition, the findings aligned with the literature to prove that tension between the teams was successfully navigated by the leaders and other team members, implying greater response and adaptation to challenges faced by the team (Williams, Gruber, et al. 2017). The literature states that a resilient system must be adaptive and flexible for the emergence of resilience (Normandin, Therrien 2016). In alignment with the literature, it was evident through our data that the team empowered flexible decision-making processes, which are crucial when facing adversities where less disruptive outcomes are generated and losses for both individuals as well as the firm (Bonanno, Brewin, et al. 2010, Hobfoll 2011, Rahmandad, Repenning 2016).

5.4 Communication and Collaboration

Our findings revealed, as previous literature explains, that the crisis provided an opportunity for communication and interaction within the management team (Barton, L. 1993, Simpson, Clegg, et al. 2013). Our data adhered to the literature by effectively responding to the crisis and establishing adequate communication and coordination in the team (Dynes 2003, Wenger, Quarantelli, et al. 1987). The teams embraced collective resilience through having interactive, coordinative, and synergistic team processes, and as a result, these behaviors were utilized to cope with the adversity (Hartmann, Weiss, et al. 2020). Similar to the literature, the team maintained a close network conveying open communication and countless meetings altogether, both formal and informal, translating into greater levels of trust and more widely shared norms sparking collective resilience within the group (Shepherd, Williams 2014, Coleman 1994). Moreover, our findings proved that the team encouraged a respectful interaction and collaboration, maintaining the social connection to strengthen the resilience of the team since any negative interaction would rather hinder resilience (Weick 1993, Paulus, Nijstad 2003, van der Vegt, Gerben S, Essens, et al. 2015).

In line with the literature, one of the key findings was that having a shared understanding and mutual collaboration provides a stronger team culture (Carlile 2004, Engebø, Klakegg, et al. 2020). The team coordinated decision-making and collaborated by understanding each other's requirements and constraints and having confidence in each other's commitment to accomplish the common goals (Austin, Newton, et al. 2002). In line with the research of Jennie Perzon at the Stockholm School of Economics, a collaborative culture enabled the team to collectively thrive, allowing the nature of harmony (Perzon 2021). Moreover, the team members had a collaborative mindset, shared values, and a pertaining mindset of generosity towards the success of others (Perzon 2021). Therefore, the team managed to become collectively resilient and our analysis showed that they achieved a collaborative team culture through coordination and cooperation (Chiocchio, Forgues, et al. 2011, Barczak, Lassk, et al. 2010).

5.4.1 Psychological Safety, Trust, and Vulnerability

Furthermore, the findings highlighted the attribute of psychological safety promoting interpersonal connections and interactions to quickly act and utilize the resources sustaining the team's resilience (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, et al. 2011). As a result, our findings proved

similar to the literature in the way that individuals felt comfortable speaking up and asking for help when it came to challenging crises and constantly seeking improvement. This boosted their problem-solving skills and thereby enabled teamwork, and greater collective resilience (Clark 2020, Mary E Peterman 2019, Lyons, Fletcher, et al. 2016, Glynn 2021). On the other hand, the findings revealed tension a few times due to the high complexity of the environment caused by the crisis. In line with the literature, the tension across the team was successfully managed and navigated through underlying resilience and preventing any escalation of these conflicts into major crises (Battiliana, Lee, et al. 2012, Review 2021). In line with the literature, one of our key findings was having a shared understanding and trust that enabled a team culture that enhanced the team's collective resilience (Carlile 2004, Engebø, Klakegg, et al. 2020). Our data is similar to the research where trust refers to the willingness to accept vulnerability and enables the team members to develop interpersonal relations, making them feel comfortable and safe in the group (McAllister 2008, Mathieu, Maynard, et al. 2008). The behaviors of asking for help, being vulnerable, and openly discussing conflicts are key to building the support needed to deal with adversity (Edmondson 2018, Hobfoll 2010). Therefore, as a result, our data showed that the participants acquired social resources that fostered collective resilience within teams (Stoverink, Kirkman et al. 2020).

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, a problem of the current research is that it is limited to focusing mainly on individual resilience rather than the collective, where the exploration of collective resilience remains unclear and uncommon in business settings. We hope to contribute to the discourse on bridging the gap of lacking research in regards to the collective aspect of resilience in a business setting since it is essential for an organization's survival (Bell 2019).

Our purpose was to explore how collective resilience may be achieved in a team, more specifically in a business consulting firm, and what actions were undertaken to create collective resilience. In order to achieve this purpose, two research questions were asked to guide:

Q1: What factors affect employees' ability to generate resilience and collective resilience in teams to withstand adversities and thus mitigate the adversity's effect on the company's performance and success?

Q2: From the background and the answer to the aforementioned question, what actions and capabilities may management teams pursue to increase the probability of generating resilience in order to end up in the collective resilience?

For the first question about the factors driving the generation of collective resilience, several factors were found, which then could be summarized into four themes; leadership, social identity, flexibility, and communication and collaboration. By uncovering and unfolding what the participants said, these themes were found to be a prominent, common ground.

In regards to the second question, prior research and the findings agreed with the literature review. It was revealed that the research surrounding capabilities and actions to generate collective resilience and ensure the firm's success is limited. As a result of the findings in this study, we found that a way for organizations to achieve collective resilience is to strive toward the aspects found. For instance, increasing meeting points and transparency and building personal connections through vulnerability and honesty. Develop a shared understanding and pursue informality between the formality and growing solidarity. Companies need to glorify the company culture by hiring employees contributing to improved resilient company culture in combination with educating current employees further through transformative activities in line with the research (Van Breda 2018). Therefore, the thesis research clarifies and unfolds what factors appear significant in the generation of collective resilience, ending up in possible development routes that firms can utilize to achieve collective resilience.

In conclusion, our findings align with the literature saying that turbulent, surprising, and continuously evolving marketplace environments force organizations to be flexible, agile, and relentlessly dynamic in order to thrive. Therefore, teams must be able to efficiently and effectively alter their resources, competencies, and capabilities to move beyond only bouncing back to the status quo and instead flourish in the shifting conditions (Lengnick-Hall, Beck, et al. 2011).

6.1 Managerial Implications

Based on our findings and the research conducted in the business consulting team, we as authors suggest that assessing the company's ability to withstand adversities, the collective resilience, is of great importance in a company's pursuit of continuous development. In the company's assessment, it is essential to understand *what* factors contribute to the collective resilience's creation and *how* they can achieve it. In the research conducted, the authors outline four aspects that have proven to play a significant role in creating collective resilience in the consulting sector and how organizations may go about and use them in practice. However, as collective resilience applies to many contexts, organizations need to understand their own context. Organizations need to account for their own capabilities, resources, and the adversity in question to understand the trade-off that needs to be done in the allocation of resources (Williams, Gruber, et al. 2017).

6.2 Limitations

The research design used and the research conducted come with inherent limitations. To begin with, as the undertaken study is based on an interpretive approach, the empirical data is presented based on the author's ability to present all findings unbiased and justly. Furthermore, all the participants are from Europe, therefore, it may not represent crisis sensemaking in other countries due to cultural differences. The participants included in the research should also be differentiated in terms of gender as 83 percent of the participants identified themselves as women and since women and men differ in perceptions in business contexts (Franke, Crown, et al. 1997).

The research conducted was limited to the consulting business's setting to receive valuable, in-depth insights. Only observing a consulting company may risk biased answers only applicable in the consulting business. However, since the purpose of the research was to understand how collective resilience may be achieved through roles and actions, it was considered reasonable to limit the sample and, in turn, be able to deepen the research further. To conclude, the purpose of the research study was not to present a conclusion in the shape of a framework of how to achieve collective resilience but rather a qualitative understanding of how management teams may go about achieving collective resilience. In order to strengthen the research surrounding the subject and the theoretical discussion, the perspectives of other industries and business sectors through qualitative and quantitative analyses are needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of what factors affect the achievement of collective resilience.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Part 1: General
- Name
- Age
- Gender

Part 2: Daily work
- What does your daily work routine look like?
- Could you tell us how you work and interact with your team mostly?

Part 3: Crisis Management

How did you manage/deal with the COVID-19 pandemic (crisis)?

Whom did you talk to when COVID-19 happened? What advice did you get?
- What emotions do you associate with the crisis?
- How did you adjust to the new norm both during and post covid?
- How do you as an individual cope with a work crisis vs as a team?
- How did you vs your team experience and respond to the change in work procedures due to the pandemic?
- How did you proactively adapt, deal & recover from the pandemic?
    - What specific measures have proven to be extra useful for you as an individual vs your team?
    - What support did they get to form a new set of behaviors?

Part 4: Collective Resilience
- How does the team maintain a strong sense of 'us' in your team?
    - How do you deal with tensions during the crisis, any work problems/conflicts as an individual or as a team?
- How do you develop a shared understanding among each other from your perspective?
- How do you build trust within the team?
- What resources do you utilize to enable the team to become more resilient pre vs post the covid crises?
    - Do you do anything in particular individually?
    - Anything inparticular regarding the team?
- What kind of sense can you make of these changed circumstances as the pandemic and does that affect the group versus your ability to work?
- Do you believe you have managed to create "collective resilience" in your team?
    - If yes, what do you believe is the main reason for that from your perspective?
    - If not, what do you believe is the main reason for that from your perspective?

Appendix 2: Consent form

Consent to participation in student's survey / interview

The student's project. As an integral part of the educational program at the Stockholm School of Economics, enrolled students complete an individual thesis. This work is sometimes based upon surveys and interviews connected to the subject. Participation is naturally entirely voluntary, and this text is intended to provide you with necessary information about that may concern your participation in the study or interview. You can at any time withdraw your consent and your data will thereafter be permanently erased.

Confidentiality. Anything you say or state in the survey or to the interviewers will be held strictly confidential and will only be made available to supervisors, tutors and the course management team.

No personal data will be published. The thesis written by the students will not contain any information that may identify you as participant to the survey or interview subject.

Secured storage of data. All data will be stored and processed safely by the SSE and will be permanently deleted when the projected is completed.

Your rights under GDPR. You are welcome to visit https://www.hhs.se/en/about-us/data-protection/ in order read more and obtain information on your rights related to personal data.

Project title	Year and semester

Aim of the study

Students responsible for the study or interview

Supervisors and department at SSE	Supervisor e-mail address

Type of personal data about you to be processed

I have taken part of the information provided above and consent to take part in this study:

Signature	Place and date
Name	

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