A STUDY OF HOW A JAPANESE MANUFACTURING COMPANY RESPONDED TO THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC CRISIS

KOCHAPHAN POONSIRI

A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2021

Thematic paper
entitled

A STUDY OF HOW A JAPANESE MANUFACTURING
COMPANY RESPONDED TO THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC CRISIS

was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management
on
September 11, 2021

....
Miss Kochaphan Poonsiri
Candidate

....
Assoc. Prof. Winai Wongsurawat,   Assoc. Prof. Randall Shannon,
Ph.D.   Ph.D.
Advisor   Chairperson

....
Assoc. Prof. Vichita Ractham,   Asst. Prof. Pornkasem Kantamara,
Ph.D.   Ed.D.
Dean   Committee member
College of Management
Mahidol University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A STUDY OF HOW A JAPANESE MANUFACTURING COMPANY RESPONDED TO THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC CRISIS

KOCHAPHAN POONSIRI   6149110

M.M. (LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. WINAI WONGSURAWAT, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. RANDALL SHANNON., Ph.D., ASST. PROF. PORNKASEM KANTAMARA, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

At the beginning of 2020, businesses around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the term new normal was generated and introduced widely due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. In this context, the managers have faced a new challenge that they have never experienced before. So, they have difficulty anticipating risks and define the best alternatives for deciding or re-designing strategy.

The purpose of this research is to explore how the company was able to respond to the crisis and why the management team selected the alternatives of actions for crisis management. The qualitative research had been used for this research through interview management of the selected organization to gain their insight on how they recognize the company's goal and direction and to understand how they prioritize issues to solve the problem and make a decision.

My research findings indicate that The company can recover the business quickly during the crisis because of social responsibility mindset, Long-term perspective, Effective teamwork of management team.

KEY WORDS: Japanese Manufacturing Company/ Problem-Solving and Decision-Making/ Managing operations across the supply chain/ Crisis Management/ Covid 19 Pandemic Crisis

1 pages

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Many organizations have been threatened by external factors such as economic recession, trade barrier, financial crisis, political conflict, rapid change of customers' behavior, etc. At the beginning of 2020, businesses around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, the term new normal was generated and introduced widely due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. In this context, the managers have faced a new challenge that they have never experienced before. So, they have difficulty anticipating risks and define the best alternatives for deciding or re-designing strategy. Many organizations decide to use Work from Home to keep social distance and avoid infection. Many organizations need to lay off employees to maintain the business. And many organizations were closed because they cannot survive in this crisis whereas some organizations can recover better and faster than other businesses.

The automotive industry, which is one of major sector drive Thailand Economic, have been impacted by COVID 19 pandemic crisis severely. According to Thailand motorcycle sales in 2017-2018, the sales volume has shown that Thailand's motorcycle manufacturing industry is going to the situation of saturation soon (Shira & Associates, 2018). In 2020, the situation of the motorcycle industry become worse due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. MCD Team (2021) reported that Domestic motorcycle demand decreased 9.7%. Besides, motorcycle production was in trouble because it was affected by blocking production, shipment, and transportation nationwide during the lockdown period.

The purpose of this research is to study how a Japanese manufacturing company responded to the COVID-19 crisis. The selected company was established in 1965 with more than 9,000 employees including permanent employees approximately 40% and temporary employees 60% of whom are the majority group of the company operating in the production line. The number of temporary staff is variable on

production volume. At the beginning of the year 2020, the production volume decreased from 1.7 Million units to 1.4 Million units, and monthly production dramatically decreased about 50% during April 2020 – May 2020. As a result, the company coped with labor burden costs because there was a surplus temporary staff because they are variable costs depending on the production volume. Also, the company was in trouble with fixed costs, and its revenue severely decreased affecting cash flows. In terms of the supply chain, the production faced a shortage of material supply because its supplier was in trouble too.

Fortunately, many events turn the crisis to be an opportunity in the Motorcycle industry. The demand for motorcycles has been increased. Yongpisanphob (2019) an analyst at the research house of Krungsri Research said that domestic demand for motorcycles will grow because low-income people have more purchasing power due to the government welfare project. According to the Federation of Asian Motorcycle Industries (2020), the food delivery during the COVID-19 is flourished when the Thai government has declared a curfew, social distancing affects the growth of motorcycles in Thailand.

In terms of internal management of the selected company, the executives and managers team's making-decision is interesting during the low production period. The organization did not terminate labor in the production even there was surplus manpower over the production. In contrast, employees were assigned to learn and help to investigate quality with the quality management team, improve production line, machine maintenance, do self-development activity which associates gathered in a team to propose how to solve the problem and increase quality in their working area. Nowadays, sales and production have become normal situations, and the organization can recover business from the crisis rapidly. The company can maintain skilled labor, and production can operate at full capacity to promptly support the high demand of the market.

1.2 Research Objective

To explore how the company was able to respond to the crisis and why the management team selected the alternatives of actions for crisis management.

1.3 Research Questions

    1.3.1 How was the organization able to respond to the crisis?

    1.3.2 What could be the factors affecting the organization's decision-making during the crisis?

1.4 Problem Statement

    The selected company's production decreased dramatically and impacted on revenue and morale of the employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in Apr-May'20. It was challenging the organization's performance and the management team's decision-making to respond to the crisis. Therefore, this research will emphasize the importance of managing operations across the supply chain, problem-solving and decision-making, and crisis management of managers who are leading role of the company during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

1.5 Research Scope

    The target of respondents for this research will be focused on the manager level of the selected organization by using the interview method to gain information in depth for data analysis.

1.6 Expected Benefit

    This research will be beneficial to understand organizational behavior through managers' decision-making during the COVID-19 crisis to recover the business and maintain competitiveness in the market.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to study related theories to support this research.The theories about operation management across the supply chain, problem-solving and decision-making, and crisis management will be described to identify the answers to respond to the two research questions.

2.1 Managing operations across the supply chain

The business's objective of big organization has a wide range which is the responsibility of managers including the achievement of personal goals, growth targets of the company such as market share, size of departments or size of the labour force, sales volume, interests of all stakeholders (Nellis and Parker, 2002). Hirschey (2009) stated that economic tools and techniques enable them to evaluate alternatives for managerial decision making which they are required to create value for the firm. And the managers will be able to create value through effective operations management which is their role and responsibilities.

Swink (2017) explained that operations management is the management of processes used to design, supply, produce, and deliver valuable goods and services to customers. The operations management should be managed across the supply chain to increase the value of the firm as below statement:

- Resources should be developed and used to achieve the business goal.

- Operations management is about how to design, execute and improve business processes.

- Because there are four vital parties including the firm, customers, suppliers, and stakeholders, an operation manager, the managers are required to manage operation through customers, suppliers, and stakeholders' points of view.

- Operation management must be aligned with the strategic goal.

- Due to changes in the business environment, the operations management should be flexible and rapidly adaptable to respond to the change.

Besides, operations managers will be able to make better decisions if they understand the fundamental concepts in supply chain operations management which are processes and capacity management, produce/ process innovation, manufacturing and service process structures, quality management, inventories management, and lean systems management.

2.2 Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

The executive and management team as leaders of the organization is the most significant factor towards the success and failure of the organization because they have a vital role in the problem-solving and decision-making affecting overall stakeholders and business in the long run. Even the organization has strength in financial resources, operation, system, etc., the organization may be in trouble due to inefficient or unproductive decision-making of managers. McCauley (2006) stated that problem-solving and decision-making is necessary competency for the effective leaders (as cited in The Society for Human Resource Management state's website). Because everything in this world is uncertain, the problem, change, or undesirable event can happen at any time. Therefore, as far as the organization assigns them to be leader, they must handle the problem which can challenge them to find the solution and make a decision all the time.

Problem-solving is a normal thing in every life (Popper, 1999). The way of problem-solving depends on an individual. Solving the problem of an individual is not the same even it is the same problem or event. Newton (2016) states that the problem of someone may not be the problem of someone else which depends on the knowledge and thinking skill of each person. Nevertheless, managers are expected to utilize their capability to overcome the high complexity of the problem.

In terms of organization, it is required to drive business in the same direction. So, shared vision and corporate culture are essential factors for shaping manager's thinking for problem-solving of each organization. Some organizations expect managers who perform based on logical thinking without using personal feeling

or experience whereas some organizations prefer managers who enable to think out of the boxes or creative thinking rather than strict to the norm or previous behaviors. However, intrinsic factors such as belief, attitude, guts, or biases are also possible to affect their problem solving and decision making.

Decision-making is to identify the best choices of actions. In terms of group decision-making, the selection of best choices comes from individual preferences, exchange, then oppose opinion to finalize the answer and making consensus among group members (Hudson, 2015). So, deciding at the organizational level prefers group rather than individual decision-making to prevent biases and make more secure in decision-making. For this reason, the existence of an organization depends on managers' groups who are expected to perform problem-solving and decision-making effectively to ensure the security of an organization and can surpass challenges.

Problem is defined as an undesirable or unwanted event which is a limitation of achieving target or having a gap between plan and actual action. According to Dostal and Kelment (2014), human's daily life must face barriers or difficulties to attain their goal. Therefore, we could not avoid problem-solving in our lives. Dewy's theory defined that there are 5 stages of the problem-solving process including suggestion, intellectualization, hypothesis, reasoning, and verification respectively (Soelberg, 1966). According to Negulescu (2014), the managers are required to make a decision which ranges from routine job, policy to a strategic decision which are affected by internal and external factors. Organizational behavior on problem-solving and decision-making have been influenced by many other individuals, group/team, and organizational level process (Kinicki and Fugate, 2018).

Kahneman (2011) explained that there are two ways of thinking called system 1 and system 2. System 1 is a thought process driven by emotion or intuition whereas system 2 is a thought process driven by logic or reason before making a decision. For managers, system 2 is preferred to perform as leader of the organization. Pretz, Naples & Sternberg (2003) stated the problem-solving cycle is recommended to encourage rational decision making and solve the problem correctly which there are seven steps including problem identification, problem clarification, strategy formulation, information arrangement, resources allocation, progress follow up and the outcome assessment.

Roberto (2005) introduced a conceptual framework for an effective decision-making process and four critical sets of choices as below figures.
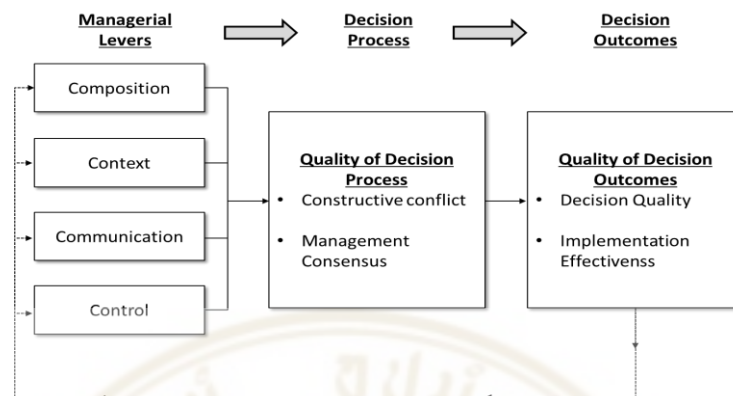

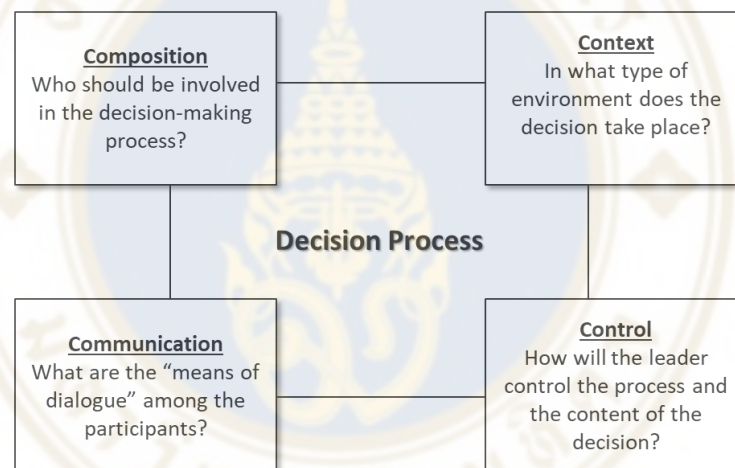**Figure 2.1 Shaping quality processes and outcomes**

Figure 2.2 Setting the stage: four critical sets of choices.

However, system 1 is evitable when managers decide on some occasions because they are constrained by the limitation of information for making a decision (Simon, 1959). Kinicki and Fugate (2018) described that decision-making styles base on value orientation and tolerance for ambiguity. Value orientation means which matter between task or relationship that an individual gives importance when deciding. In terms of a person's tolerance of ambiguity means the ability to have patience with vagueness. A person who prefers a lot of structure to avoid uncertainty will feel uncomfortable with ambiguity whereas others who do not seek structure or system can patient with ambiguity very well.

2.3 Crisis Management

According to Harvard Business Essentials (2004), a crisis is a change in terms of unsatisfied or unwanted occurrence which is urgent trouble and need to be prioritized for solving problem shortly. A business crisis is anything that leads to damage organization's existence. Therefore, many organizations give importance to crisis management which means anticipate any potential risk of each aspect such as economic and market, technology breakdowns, natural disaster, and so on, then the organization sets a plan to prevent failure from the crisis which called crisis management. And managers have the vital role to be the leader during a crisis because followers expect to gain direction or guidance from the leaders.

In 2020, societies and economics worldwide have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which is a severe unpredictable crisis that anyone has been never experienced before. Therefore, it is important to study how leaders manage and lead their organizations during this crisis (Northouse, 2021). According to Dirani et al. (2020), 7 competencies that will support leaders' success during COVID-19 includes demonstrating strong roles and clear purposes, being shared leaders, having effective communication, ensuring employees' access to technology, taking care of employees' emotional stability, maintaining organizational financial stability, and encouraging organizational flexibility. Kaul, Shah, and El-Serag,(2020) stated that core leadership principles during a crisis.

Communication

Leaders' communication must be unambiguous and adaptable. They should visualize the current situation base on reality with having a positive view of the future.

Core Values

During the crisis, it is an opportunity for leaders to underline the organization's core values to motivate all followers for achieving the common goal.

Decision Making

Since COVID-19 is very new, information is scarce and unknown. So, leaders should be able to make effective decision-making even it is under ambiguous situations. And successful leaders during the crisis should think out of the box or be adaptive to be able to cope with unpredictable occurrences.

Plan for the Long and Short Term

Leaders should consider the appropriate measure in the short-term for maintaining long-term purposes such as hiring freeze, canceling unnecessary action, procedure, stopping investment, etc.

Engage with Purpose and Humility

Leaders should demonstrate caring and empathy towards employees through encourage activities to promote engagement and a sense of team.

Horizontal Leadership

During a crisis, rapid decision-making is necessary to reduce risk and cope with unpredictable events. And leaders should be able to motivate followers to accept change and adapt themselves to the changes.

Progressive/ Forward Thinking

Leaders should think progressively in all aspects and stakeholders to enable better decision-making.
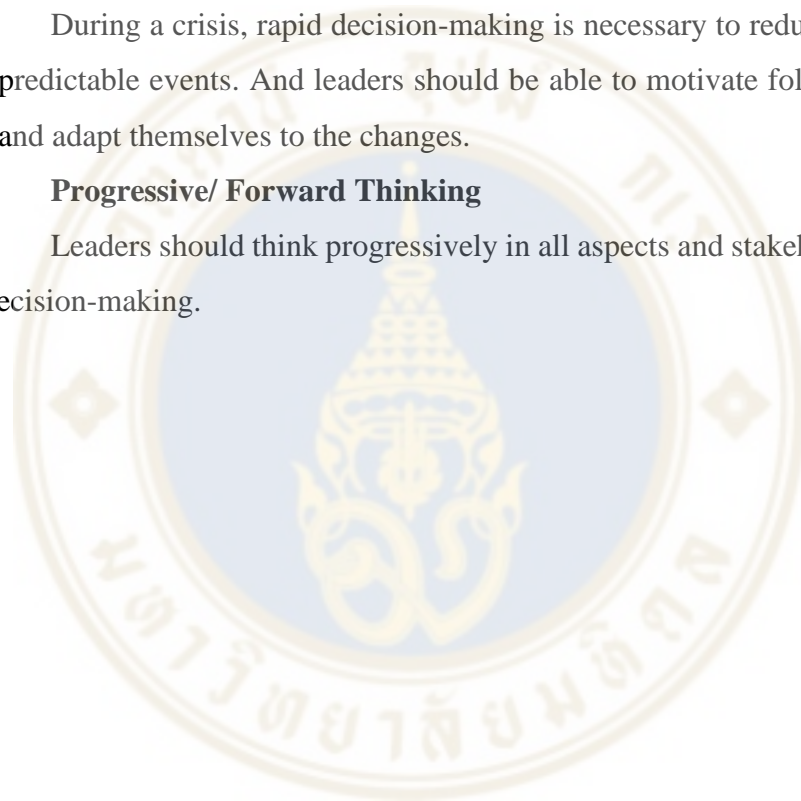
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design, Sample Size, and Method

The main purpose of this research is to identify how and why the selected company was able to maintain business operations effectively and recover the business quickly. The qualitative research approach is proper to respond to the research questions because it can ask the questions and use probing questions to interview respondents to gain and gain answers in-depth for data analysis.

So, qualitative research had been used for this research through interview management of the selected organization to gain their insight on how they recognize the company's goal and direction and to understand how they prioritize issues to solve the problem and make a decision. Then, their responses were analyzed to identify what factors affecting the organization's decision-making during the crisis, and how was the organization able to respond to the crisis effectively which are the research questions for this study. Also, studying through the organization's information was done to confirm and be evidence for this research.

This research is to focus on a Japanese Motorcycle Manufacturing company's business performance. This organization has been managed by and Thai executives and managers have a vital role in deciding in operational and business level.

3.2 Interview Question Development

The respondents were interviewed with open-ended questions which they could demonstrate their opinion freely. The questions are divided into 2 aspects: in terms of business' strength and opportunity during the COVID-19 crisis and terms of management's performance through problem-solving and decision-making of managers.

Question 1: How was the company's situation and what the company has been impacted during COVID-19 last year? How is the current situation of the company now?

Question 2: How did the company act urgently, and create a preventive plan in short and long-term plans?

Question 3: What are the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that encourage your company's performance to enable it to recover quickly during COVID-19? And How the company takes advantage of this opportunity?

Question 4: As a leader, how did you decide to respond urgently and long-term preventive plan?

Question 5: When you make a decision, what is your criteria or principle?

Question 6: What is the most significant of making decisions and management during the COVID-19 crisis?

3.3 Data Collection

The data was gathered through interviews with key people of the selected company. There are 7 respondents include 1 director who is one of the top management members deciding the business level, 3 division managers who are the manager of the manager deciding at the divisional level, and 3 managers who are responsible for deciding at the departmental level. The appointment for the interview session was arranged individually at a meeting room in the company.

Respondent 1: Mr. A has been working at this organization for 31 years. Presently, his position is Director of Administration. He is one of the executive committees including the President, Vice President, Director of Quality, and Director of Finance who are Japanese expatriates, Director of Production and Administration. So, he is a key decision-maker during the crisis.

Respondent 2: Mrs. B has been working at this organization for 31 years. Presently her position is Production Support Management who is a direct report of Mr. B. The departments under her responsibility include Accounting & Finance, Administration, Human Resources Management, Legal Management, Environment and

Facilities Management, Safety and Health. She has a vital role in deciding to support production to be able to operate smoothly during the COVID-19 crisis.

Respondent 3: Mr. C has been working at this organization for 26 years. Presently his position is Division manager of Die-Casting Factory. His role and responsibility are to manage the operation of Die-Casting to supply motorcycle and power equipment's production line. So, he has a vital role in deciding the overall operation of the company.

Respondent 4: Ms. D has been working at this organization for 21 years. Presently her position is Division Manager of Business Strategic Management. She has a vital role in terms of strategic planning and control the overall business plan of the company.

Respondent 5: Ms. E has been working at this organization for 25 years. Presently her position is Human Resource Management Manager. She has a vital role in manpower control, rule and regulation of the company, training, and development.

Respondent 6: Ms. F has been working at this organization for 13 years. Presently her position is Power Equipment Planning Manager. She has a vital role in the production planning of power equipment products.

Respondent 7: Mr. G has been working at this organization for 10 years. Presently his position is Legal Management Manager. He has a vital role as a secretary of the risk management committee.

3.4 Data Analysis and Measures

The data from the company's information such as the history of production's volume, policy, and actions during the COVID-19 crisis, corporate culture, and insight of the management team was collected and analyzed to respond to the research questions.

CHAPTER IV
FINDING (DATA ANALYSIS)

The interview sessions were held during 15 - 19 February 2021 at the meeting room of the selected organization which took about 30 minutes per respondent. The appointment schedule was set depending on the availability of each respondent. There is interesting information that was founded and discussed during the interview. The below is the result of the finding and data analysis.

Research Question 1: How was the organization able to respond to the crisis?

Managing operations across the supply chain
1. Managing Process

According to Swink (2017), processes are defined into 3 terms which are activities (Operation, Transportation, Inspection, Delay and Storage), flow (Input, Process, and Output), structure and management policies. Operation Managers should think logically and strategically to eliminate the waste of processes. As the respondents mentioned the below statements, it was shown that the company prioritizes process improvement and waste elimination during the low production period.

Respondent Quote
"We took this opportunity to review loss or unnecessary cost in production. And we had more time to focus on quality management and improve the problem of daily management.". Mr. A, Mr. C, Ms. D, and Ms. F said.
"Cash flows are important because our revenue decreased. So, we demand all subordinates to review the budget to cut unnecessary expenses or slow down investment." Mr. A and Mrs. B said.

> *"Safety, Morale, Quality, Cost are control items of production control, so managers must aware and act on how to proceed production smoothly during the crisis."* Ms. D and Ms. F said.

Operators and staff in the production were encouraged to expand their knowledge through on-the-job training beyond their responsibility such as quality inspection, production line improvement (5S activities), machine maintenance which is quite difficult to do during the normal situation (Mass production). *"Even we are cultivated to have senses of loss elimination during Kaizen and QCC activities regularly, we have more time to review operation process and deeply more analyze to identify loss and also and difficulty of operators more during this crisis."* An operator said. According to employees' competencies of this company, the ability of problem identification and problem-solving is one of the necessary skills of all levels. So, the employees could understand how to reduce loss and unnecessary costs immediately.

2. Processes-Related Competitive Priorities

According to Swink (2017), managers should be concerned about long-term perspectives such as flexibility, innovation, and sustainability, and risk management. As the respondents mentioned the below statements, it was shown that the company placed priority on long-term perspectives during the COVID-19 crisis.

Respondent Quote
"Measures of the COVID-19 infection prevention was prioritized to implemented rapidly because it would impact on the production to close factory which would become the severe problem of all stakeholders." Mrs. B and Mr. G said.
"Since it is difficult to import parts from overseas, our purchasing management team find local suppliers instead to help domestic business and also prevent the COVID-19 infection." Mr. A and Ms. D said.
"Closely monitor and share information with Sales, Suppliers, and Makers to analyze motorcycle market's situation, then revise production plan according to the change." Mr. A, Mr. C, and Mr. G said.

> *"We were not only concerned about our business, but we also help suppliers to surpass the difficulty together. For example, we paid them before payment term to help them about cash flow management."* Mr. A said.
>
> *"Termination of employees would be the final measure of the company. Since we are a big company where have vital a role to drive the Thai economy, we were concerned about social responsibility. So, we need to cope with the burden of loss and put effort to solve the internal problems by cost reduction such as cutting overtime, cancel afternoon and night shifts, work off with pay 90% for temporary staff, freeze manpower by stopping the recruitment of temporary staff."* All the respondents said.

The company can respond to the change quickly because the crisis management committee closely monitors the situation and continually share information. So, all management can know the situation of overall business altogether. Then, each function is responsible to review operations management to identify which process can be reduced loss, freeze unnecessary expenses or investment, find appropriate local suppliers, and give financial aids to prevent a shortage of parts. Besides, the company put a lot of effort to utilize human resources that surplus manpower in the production to avoid termination of employees as the company's values on social responsibility. This is the long-term perspective of this company to maintain the brand image and sustainability of business in Thailand.

3. Forecasting

Smith (2002) stated that long-term forecasts are necessary for running a business which is used for resource planning for production. As the respondents mentioned the below statements, it was shown that the company analyzes the situation of the business and determines the business plan base on the analysis of historical data for forecasting the demand pattern.

Respondent Quote
"According to our business' history, our production is seasonal movement. The production volume has normally decreased in the first quarter (April – June) during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it will increase in the second quarter that the COVID-19 pandemic was better. So, we decided to preserve manpower who are skilled labor

> *to be ready for support production when the crisis turned to normal situation."*
> Mr. A and Mr. C said.

The company values statistical data and facts for planning and making a decision. Because they anticipated that the situation of demand will turn to a normal situation as the past pattern. The company chose to improve internal processes, keep skilled manpower, and develop the skill of employees instead of cost reduction by employee termination. And their forecasts were correct, it could recover and respond to the demand quickly.

Research Question 2: What could be the factors affecting the organization's decision-making during the crisis?

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Kinicki and Fugate (2018) described that decision-making styles base on value orientation and tolerance for ambiguity. The person who prefers a lot of structure to avoid uncertainty will feel uncomfortable with ambiguity whereas others who do not seek structure or system can patient with ambiguity very well.

Respondent Quote
"Set a committee which is special for COVID 19 pandemic crisis management. This committee's responsibility is to determine directions and countermeasures to respond to COVID-19 pandemic" Mrs. B, Ms. E, and Mr. G said.

There are many committees in this company such as the HR committee, Welfare Committee, Wage Committee, Safety & Health Committee, Kaizen Committee, Corporate Governance Committee, Risk Management Committee, etc. It can be said that that this company gives importance to structure for decision-making. They prefer to work as a team with a clear structure of working to avoid uncertainty and ensure the decision making from a consensus of the team which corresponds to Hudsun (2015) stated that deciding at the organizational level prefers group rather than individual decision-making to prevent biases and make more secure in decision making.

Kahneman (2011) explained that system 2 is a thought process driven by logic or reason before making a decision. For managers, system 2 is preferred to perform

as leader of the organization. According to the below statement, the managers are assumed that they use system 2 for problem-solving and decision-making. Because they manage and perform based on logic and facts rather than feeling.

Respondent Quote
"Managers as leaders, we had been developed to have the agility of senses of problem awareness. Before we make a decision, we must consider base on facts and various information in dept-analysis." Ms. D said.

Even, it is in crisis which required urgent making decision, managers decide base on depth data analysis. So, they need a lot of information from highly skilled employees to support them for effective problem-solving. According to this company's way of working, respect for the individual is a fundamental belief of leaders.

Crisis Management

According to Dirani et al. (2020), 7 competencies that will support leaders' success during COVID-19 includes demonstrating strong roles and clear purposes, being shared leaders, having effective communication, ensuring employees' access to technology, taking care of employees' emotional stability, maintaining organizational financial stability, and encouraging organizational flexibility.

The managers can perform effective communication, maintain employees' morale, keep the company's cash flow, and adapt operations management to respond to the change as the theory except ensuring employees' access to technology because of the confidential policy of the company. So, internet and social network access have been restricted inside the company.

Respondent Quote
"Since it needs to prudently make a decision based on dept-analysis of production planning, experienced staff having high skill gathered and brainstorm to propose ideas to manager for decision-making." Ms. F said

> *"Communicated all employees about the measures of COVID-19 and cost reduction to convey the message with showing necessary to get collaboration."* Mrs. B and Ms. F said.

The managers show that they give importance to work in team and trust subordinates who have experience and expert to participate in decision-making. Even, the organizational structure of this company is a horizontal structure with a complex chain of command, they can adapt management style to be easier for making-decision during the crisis. Managers show their senses of problem awareness by creating various measures to reduce loss and keep cash flows which are short-term action plans. Besides, they turn a crisis to be an opportunity to improve their management and solve the problem that could not act during mass production. This event shows leaders' perspective towards human resource utilization maximization during the crisis.
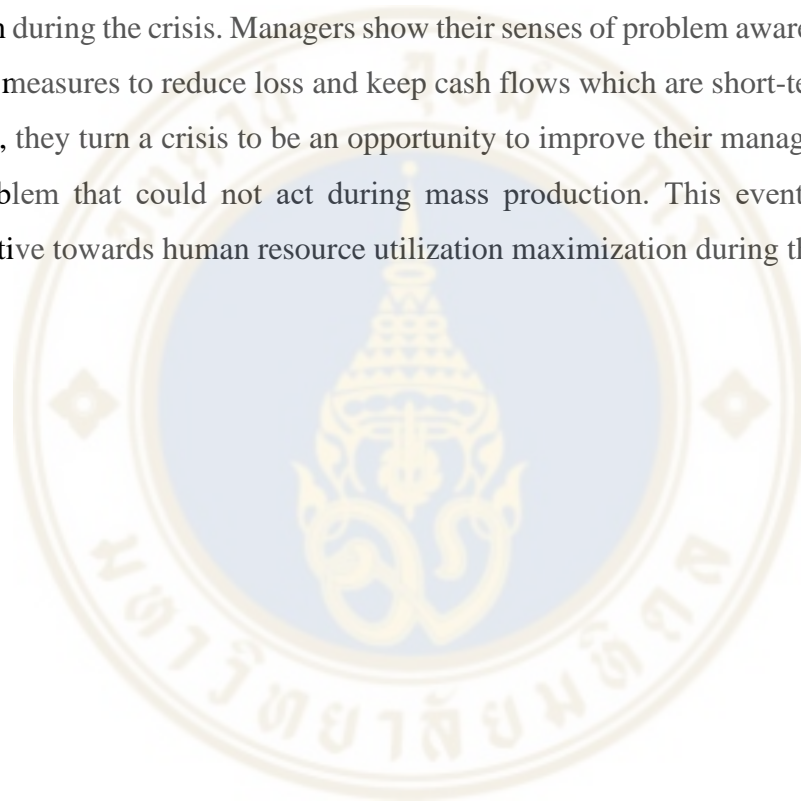
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides the conclusion of findings from this research, recommendation, limitation of the study, and suggestion for future research.

5.1 Conclusion

Based on data collection through interview executives and managers, and study from the company's information, this company make the decision based on social responsibility and business preservation. The company faced a dilemma to select alternatives during the crisis. And they chose to put efforts into the internal problem - solving which is a long-term perspective towards social responsibility and brand reputation. And this organization has a strong management team that plays a vital role in leading subordinates to adapt the operations management according to the low production. And they value effective communication to gain collaboration from the overall organization. Managers have high engagement and show strong enthusiasm to solve the problem together. In summary, senses of social responsibility, teamwork, and adaptive management with effective communication are factors that enable the company was successful in recovering from the crisis.

A key success factor is teamwork setting to encourage all managers to share information and brainstorm to solve the problem together. Because this company's size is quite a big organizational structure with 45 departments to control more than 9,000 employees, managers are required to work as a team to share information and brainstorm for problem-solving and decision-making. Besides, teamwork is strong here because all managers have experienced working together for a long time. According to the company's data indicates that average service year of managers here is more than 20 years.

Sharing information and communication with all stakeholders is also important due to the scarcity and ambiguity of information during the crisis. Collaboration with sales function, suppliers, and makers enables them to adjust their business according to the change quickly.

Besides, communication is also important to ask for all employees to collaborate for the COVID-19 infection prevention. It is difficult to control more than 9,000 people but the company was able to do very well due to effective communication. Since the company demonstrated high intention that the company would put high effort to maintain business and all employees, the employees understood and followed every measure of the company as a good follower.

5.2 Recommendation

Interestingly, managers took the opportunity from low production and surplus manpower for quality improvement and human resource development. And it is recommended that they should also review organization structure, tasks, operation standards at the same time to increase more productivity. Moreover, re-skill training and job rotation should be conducted to enhance human resource' capability also.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The limitation of this study is the sample size. It would be more reliable if there are more respondents to interview to gain more information and concerning points for data analysis. Besides, the data collection is only from the production context. It would be more interesting if the information of sales and purchasing function are also analyzed.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

The research should collect data of a larger sample size from both manufacturing and sales functions to gain more data for depth analysis.

REFERENCES

Dirani, K. M., Abadi, M., Alizadeh, A., Barhate, B., Garza, R. C., Gunasekara, N., Majzun, Z. (2020). *Leadership competencies and the essential role of human resource development in times of crisis: a response to Covid-19 pandemic. Human Resource Development International,* 23(4), 380-394. DOI: 10.1080/13678868.2020.1780078

Dostal, J. & Klement M. (2014). Procedia - *Social and Behavioral Sciences* 171 (2015) 648 – 653. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.173

Harvard Business Essentials. (2004). *Crisis Management*: *Master the Skills to Prevent Disasters*. Boston, USA: Harvard Business School Press.

Hirschey, M. (2009). Managerial Economics (12th ed.). Toronto, Canada: Cengage Learning.

Hudsun, R. (Ed.). (2015). *Decision Making: Processes, Behavioral Influences and Role in Business Management.* New York, USA: Novinka.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York, USA: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Kaul, V., Shah, V. H., & El-Serag, H. (2020). Leadership during crisis: Lessons and applications from the COVID-19 pandemic. Gastroenterology. 159(3): 809–812. DOI: 10.1053/j.gastro.2020.04.076

Kinicki, A., & Fugate, M. (2018). *Organizational Behavior: A Practical, Problem-Solving Approach* (2nd ed.). New York, USA: McGraw-Hill Education.

McCauley, C. (2006). *Developmental assignments: Creating learning experiences without changing jobs.* Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/leadership-and navigation/Pages/ leadershipcompetencies.aspx

MCD Team. (2021, January 19). *Thailand 2020. Two-wheeler market lost 9.7%.* Retrieved from https://www.motorcyclesdata.com/2021/01/19/thailand-motorcycles/

Negulescu, O.-H. (2014). *Review of General Management: Using a decision-making process model in strategic management,* 19(1). Retrieved from http://www.managementgeneral.ro/pdf/1_2014_10.pdf

Newton, C. (Ed.). (2016). *Problem-Solving strategies, Challenge and Outcomes.*UK: Nova Science Pub Inc.

Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice (9th Ed.).* Sage Publications.

Nellis, J. G. and Parker, D. (2002). *Principles of Business Economics.* Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

Popper, K. (1999). *All life is problem solving.* New York, USA: Routledge

Pretz, J., Naples, A., & Sternberg, R. (2003). *Recognizing, Defining, and Representing Problems. In J. Davidson & R. Sternberg (Eds.), The Psychology of Problem Solving* (pp. 3-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI:10.1017/CBO9780511615771.002

Roberto, M. A. (2005). *Why great leaders don't take Yes for an answer*. New Jersey: Wharton School Publishing.

Shira & Associates (2018, July 12). *Thailand's Motorcycle Market Shows Sign of Saturation.* Retrieved from https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/thailands-motorcycle-market-shows-signs-saturation/

Simon, A. H. (1959). Theories of Decision-Making in Economics and Behavioral Science. *The American Economic Review*, 49(3), 253-283. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1809901

Smith, M. J. (2002). Manufacturing Engineering Modular Series: *Logistics & the Outbound Supply Chain.* London: Penton Press.

Soelberg, P. (1966). Theories of problem solving and decision making. Pt. A. Retrieved from https://dspace.mit.edu/bitstream/handle/1721.1/49232/theoriesofproble00soel.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Swink, M. (2017). *Manaing Operations Across the Supply Chain* (3rd Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

The Federation of Asian Motorcycle Industries. (2020, April 20). *Thailand's Food Delivery Service is Booming During Covid-19.* Retrieved from http://fami-motorcycle.org/news/detail/read/thailands-food-delivery-service-is-booming-during-covid-19/

Yongpisanphob, W. (2019, May 29). *Industry Outlook 2019-2021: Motorcycle*. Retrieved from https://www.krungsri.com/en/research/industry/industry-outlook/Hi-tech-Industries/Motorcycles/IO/io-motorcycles 20#:~:text=It%20is%20thus%20expected%20that,units%20in%20these%20two%20years.