

# The Impact of Leadership Style on Organizational Performance in Food Business Environments

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by

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## **Dedication**

To my parents, all my siblings, my family, and all those who inspired me in life to pursue my goals. This would never have been possible without the continued support from my family, my wife and kids. It would also certainly not have been possible without the guidance and support of my DBA supervisor Dr. Ron Fisher. Last, but not the least, I also dedicate this effort to those who discouraged and dissuaded me in my life in achieving my ambitions, since all their efforts eventually persuaded me to step back, re-analyze, refocus, and seize the opportunity to bounce back.

# The Impact of Leadership Style on Organizational Performance in Food Business Environments

## **Declaration of own work**

This is to certify that the work is entirely my own work and not that of any other person, unless explicitly acknowledged (including citations of published and unpublished sources). This work has not previously been submitted in any form to either University of Liverpool or any other institution for assessment or any other purpose.

Signed: *Muhammad Basit*

Date: March 29, 2020

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## Abbreviations

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**AL** – Action Learning

**AR** – Action Research

**BRC** – British Retail Consortium – A GFSI Benchmarked Food Safety Management System

**FIFO** – First in and First Out

**FSSC 22000** - The Food Safety System Certification - A GFSI Benchmarked Food Safety Management System

**GFSI** – Global Food Safety Initiative

**HACCP** – Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point

**IFS** - International Featured Standard (*IFS*) - A GFSI Benchmarked Food Safety Management System

**LS** – Learning Set

**PDCA** – **Plan Do Check and Act**

**PDSA** - **Plan Do Study and Act**

**SQF** – Safe Quality Systems - A GFSI Benchmarked Food Safety Management System



## Glossary of Terms

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**BRC** – British Retail Consortium (A UK based Global Standard for Food Safety Management). **BRC** Global Standards is a leading brand and consumer protection organization, used by over 26,000 certificated suppliers over 130 countries, with certification issued through a global network of accredited certification bodies. **BRC** Global Standards' guarantee the standardization of quality, safety and operational criteria.

**Food safety culture:** “the aggregation of the prevailing, relatively constant, learned, shared attitudes, values, and beliefs contributing to the hygiene behaviours used within a particular food handling environment” (Griffith et al. 2010a, p. 439).

**FSSC 22000** - The Food Safety System Certification provides a framework for effectively managing your organization's food safety responsibilities. **FSSC 22000** is fully recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) and is based on existing ISO Standards.

**GFSI** – Global Food Safety Initiative - The Global Food Safety Initiative is a private organization, established and managed by the international trade association, the Consumer Goods Forum under Belgian law in May 200. It's an industry-driven global collaboration to advance food safety.

**Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP):** “a systematic approach to food safety management based on recognized principles which aim to identify the hazards that are likely to occur at any stage in the food supply chain and put into place controls that will prevent them from happening” (Mortimore & Wallace, 2001, p. 2).

**IFS - International Featured Standard (IFS) Food** is a GFSI recognized standard for certifying the safety and quality of food products and production processes. The International Featured Standard (**IFS**) Food is a globally recognized certification which will enhance your brand image, build consumer confidence and open the way.

**Organizational culture:** “A pattern of basic assumptions- invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with the problems of external adaptation and internal integration - but that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 1985, p. 9).

**Safety culture:** “the product of individual and group values, attitudes and beliefs, competencies and patterns of behaviours that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organization's health and safety management” (Advisory Committee for Safety in Nuclear Installations [ACNSI], 1993 as cited by Cooper, 2000, p. 114).

**SQF** – Safe Quality Systems - **SQF** certification assures buyers and customers that food has been produced, processed and handled according to the highest standards. **SQF** is designed as a food safety program, but it also covers product quality (at level 3), a feature that is unique to a certification program of this type. The **SQF** program is recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) as a scheme that can offer a seamless 'field to fork' food safety and quality certification solution.

## **Abstract**

The impact of leadership style on organizational performance has been studied extensively in general; however, the literature has a limited number of studies concerning the impact of leadership style on organizational performance about food business environments. On further narrowing the topic of concern, we see that the research conducted in relation to the impact of shared leadership style on organizational performance in food business environments is even more limited. It is also challenging to find a conclusive link between any specific leadership style in various sub-attributes of organizational performance, such as employee retention and food safety culture in the food business operations domain. This research explores the link between leadership style and performance to offer insight into the way in which leadership style creates the distinction between making the food organization more efficient and enhancing organizational performance in food organizations. This action research (AR) project was planned to resolve the organizational performance issues associated with ABC Foods, Canada using multi-qualitative methods. Key data were sourced through the learning set and internal interview at ABC Foods, complemented by external interviews of food industry leaders, and seasoned food professionals. The impact on organizational performance was studied through the analysis of two core elements: employee retention and food safety culture. The interview data were tabulated, trended, and processed through coding and constant comparison in order to establish the interrelationships. The information obtained through interviews was later brought back to the learning set at ABC Foods, where the need arose. Besides being a researcher, I was head of the team at ABC Foods in this project. The findings were challenged by the knowledge available from earlier researchers, wherever applicable. The results indicate that there is a positive relationship between shared leadership style and organization performance. The results also reveal a positive relationship between shared leadership, employee retention, shared leadership, and food safety culture.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

As a result of worldwide economic turmoil in the recent past, business performance has become a key focus for organizations. ABC Foods, Canada, is no exception and faces challenges in its business environment. As identified in past research conducted by external consultants the main challenges confronting ABC Foods relate to leadership issues, which are manifest through poor employee retention and a weak food safety culture.

### **Aim of the research**

This action orientated research explored the issues that underpin poor organizational performance at ABC Foods, with a particular focus on leadership. Leadership in the organization, as perceived by internal and external stakeholders, was investigated through the lenses of employee retention and food safety culture. This qualitative study employed an action research approach and proposed sustainable actions to improve performance at ABC Foods.

### **My Role in the Action Research Project**

In this action research project, I had various roles. The key role was as researcher for my DBA project though I was also a learning facilitator, learning set advisor and one of the members of ABC Foods learning set. In addition to these roles I was also a coach and trainer for the organization enabling members to understand concepts of action research, action learning and their implications. As a coach my primary role was to facilitate the group as it learned. In this capacity the focus was to enhance learning while not suggesting solutions. The perspective was to help the group understand the questioning and reflection processes, while assisting members to reflect on and learn from their actions and interactions. As a researcher, my interest was to keep the group on track while maintaining a learning climate.

At the beginning the intervention was more to keep the group on track in terms of focusing on the problem and on individuals. Since the group was not well versed with

the requirements of action research this kept me engaged in a different way. Once the group learned how to question and what to question, the value of appropriate and powerful questions, and how to engage in reflection this role reduced.

The role that remained throughout the project was being a learning set member, action research program facilitator and last but not the least as a researcher. Being a researcher, I had to monitor the project, its requirements and timeline. To understand and keep myself to my role in this research, I followed the advice and learning offered by Marquardt et al. (2013), and Pedler (2008), which was to learn through inquiry and reflection.

### **Background to the Organization**

ABC Foods is based in Toronto, ON, Canada. It is a family-owned company that incorporated in 1974. Currently, the organization has more than 200 employees working in two shifts (18 hours) in a 125,000 square feet facility. The operation has grown tremendously over the years. The company produces confectionary, savoury snacks, and dairy-based delicacies, which are distributed in Canada, the USA and other international destinations. The company is heavily involved with private label manufacturing and co-packing for various leading brands. The current ownership is the third acquisition of this operation since its inception. The operation is one of the largest confectionary co-manufacturing plants in Ontario, Canada. Sugar and dairy confectionary products are its strength and the facility has always remained a preferred private label and co-manufacturing choice for its customers. The plant produces more than 200 products under thirty-three brands. Over 80% of the total operation is confectionary and dairy products. The company is a member of the Toronto Board of Trade, Canadian Dairy Commission, Canadian Confectionary Group and the North American Confectionary Board. The company won the best food confectionary manufacturing plant award in 1991 and 1998. As a business, the operation's current worth is over 100 million dollars.

### **The Management Problem**

For many years, the company has been attempting to strengthen viability and sustainability while transitioning to a contemporary food safety compliant environment.

In 2013, the company embarked on a safe food quality initiative to achieve its goals. The outcomes of its efforts were not encouraging. Not just because the overall initiative failed to produce anticipated results, but it also had some detrimental effects. These effects included a lack of employee retention, poor employee engagement and a damaging impact on the organization's food safety and quality culture. The company did not just lose its focus but also started to resort to an ad hoc management style that changed almost on a day-to-day basis. Business results also started to reflect the lack of control and lack of success.

ABC Foods had a series of critical issues that threatened its viability and ultimately led to a change of ownership in 2012. I was contracted in the system through the new management as a Technical Advisor/Internal Management Consultant with a core responsibility to steer the business out of its current crisis. With other stakeholders, I endeavoured to learn the source of issues causing the organizational concern.

During the learning process I interviewed various stakeholders and experts and had three focus groups with employees. Through such interventions perceptions of ineffective leadership were highlighted as the prime reasons behind many dysfunctions. I also learned that it was not the first time that leadership had been linked with poor organizational performance. Archived consultation notes under previous management showed that the same issue of ineffective leadership was raised, but it appeared not to have been valued or acted upon.

Business environment analysis under the new management also supported the belief that it was leadership that was a major issue. For example, it emerged that under the previous ownership open discussions about perceived deficiencies in leadership were discouraged. New ownership came with a different vision, presenting the opportunity to provide leadership that could support local culture and could help the organization achieve its goals. That offered an opportunity to find reasons and examine whether or not leadership was the fundamental challenge.

A key focus for all staff was to emerge from the crisis and focus our efforts on making the organization successful. As a critical premise of what we were trying to achieve we decided to embrace the same organizational goal of "safe food quality" that was initiated

by the old management. The core question was to find out why exactly we failed to achieve the goal in the past to avoid repeating the same mistakes. As a starting point, to determine the real reasons behind employee retention and advanced food safety culture requirements, an investigation through collaborative inquiry was needed. That became the starting point for this Action Research project.

When I had initial discussions with the executive management to understand their perspective, I was also provided with the last three years' KPIs and business consultation reports. Specific to the current study, the site had many KPIs which were underperformed but two of them stood out: 1) employee retention; and 2) food safety culture. In the same KPIs reports leadership was identified as a major issue.

As per Coghlan and Brannick (2014), Pedler (2008) and Marquardt et al. (2013) an organization must have a problem before an action learning project is started. The problem in action research must be real (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) and also be a concern for the organization. ABC food was struggling to induce change required for its performance enhancement initiative and leadership was a clearly identified problem in achieving its goals. Also, concerns that threatened ABC Foods in terms of organizational performance were employee retention, and food safety culture. In attempting to address employee retention and food safety culture ABC Foods had not resolved the leadership issues that underpinned these organizational problems.

Revans explains that issues with known solutions can be solved by programmed approaches while problems without known solutions require questioning and learning. Action research and action learning are approaches that are well suited to unprogrammed problems. The problem facing ABC foods appeared to meet the requirements of action research and action learning since it was a complicated problem that qualified as a “wicked problem” (Ritchey (2011). As outlined by Marquardt et al. (2013) the problem was required to: 1) be important to the organization and the group; 2) have a sense of urgency; and 3) have no existing solutions. The problem at ABC Foods qualified on all of the action research and action learning requirements.

### **Leadership, Leadership Style, and Organizational Performance**

Leadership has been described a means of influencing others to take action (Bhargavi1 and Yaseen, 2016). Leadership and leadership style have a role in explaining aspects related to organizational performance and employee behaviors (Bhargavi1 and Yaseen, 2016). Leadership, leadership style and leader behaviors have evolved over a period of time spawning a range of theories (e.g. transactional, transformational, situational leadership) many of which will be discussed later in this thesis. Of interest in this research is the relationship between leader and follower and the ways in which collaboration and participation may occur. Lewin et al. (1939, 1946) and Bass (2000) have presented similar views of democratized forms of leadership culminating in Raelin's (2010, 2011) later work. These will also be discussed in detail later in the thesis.

### **Employee Retention at ABC Foods**

Employee retention is defined as an ability of a business to retain an employee for an extended period of time (Arora et al. 2012; Rathi and Lee, 2015). Retaining competent employees should be a key objective in business environments (Eva et al. 2009). However, ABC Foods experienced serious issues retaining valuable employees. Over the years the rate of employee retention gradually decreased reaching less than 77% in 2016. This suggests employee retention is a major problem both in terms of: 1) the cost and time involved in recruiting and training new employees; and 2) the competitive disadvantage of bleeding competent employees to other businesses in the food industry.

### **Food Safety Culture at ABC Foods**

Food safety culture is defined as a system of shared beliefs held by owners, managers and employees in ensuring that the food they make or serve is consistently safe to eat (Griffith et al. 2010a, p. 439). Leadership has a role to play in advancing and maintaining an adaptive food safety culture with employee engagement and motivation being key ingredients of the culture (Yiannis, 2009). At ABC foods a previous study conducted by external consultants identified food safety culture as being weak due to ineffective leadership.

### **The Research Questions**

To address the management problem of leadership outlined above, the following research questions were proposed:

**RQ1 What leadership challenges does ABC Foods face?**

**RQ2 Why does ABC Foods face these challenges?**

**RQ3 How can ABC Food’s leadership challenges be addressed to enhance food safety culture and employee retention?**

In addressing the research questions, I investigated what leadership challenges existed at ABC Foods. After the issues were identified, attention was given to determine, “why ABC was facing these challenges”. Finally, the steps that the ABC could take to address its challenges were investigated through the lenses of two key concerns at ABC Foods, namely employee retention and food safety culture. A qualitative action research approach was adopted, with the aim of providing sustainable action learning outcomes at the organizational and individual (the researcher) levels.

**Why is it important to study leadership at ABC Foods?**

This research aimed to respond to ABC Foods problem concerning perceived leadership deficiencies. It was anticipated that addressing and resolving leadership issues could positively affect undesirable organizational outcomes. Action research was also vital to the researcher as a practitioner as this action research-based project provided an opportunity for me to learn through inquiry by living within the inquiry. The interaction being part of the learning set and during expert interviews were vital for me regarding learning. The research cycle made me a better researcher while the entire process enabled me to grow as a keen practitioner and an effective problem solver.

Apart from the fact that it helped me complete the research and requirements for the DBA, the research also allowed me to understand ABC Foods problems better through the lens of the leading practitioners of the food industry.

The project did not just resolve ABC Foods problems, but the outcome of this intensive research also provided insights and solutions to other food business environments and operations. Besides providing solutions to the food industries common issues of



employee retention and food safety cultures, using action research had been a new facet of learning to be used as an approach for problem-solving in the organization.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis has six chapters in total. Chapter one is the Introduction that familiarises the reader with the project and its various implications. Chapter two is a Literature Review that encompasses the insight gained from literature in understanding the subject under study and managing this action research project. The third chapter is Research Methods that outlines the research framework, methodology and methods to manage this research. Chapter four Results and Discussion is about data collection, data management, data analysis and discussion on observed facts. Next chapter is about Reflections associated with this AR project and covers all the steps and processes that were followed right through from the beginning of this AR project until the learning was implemented at ABC Foods. Chapter six is the last chapter providing a Conclusion to the research and summarizing the outcomes. In addition to these chapters, the thesis has an abstract at the beginning and appendices at the very end. All the references used in this thesis are also provided before appendices to the thesis.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews and reflects on the current literature concerning the underlying conceptual and theoretical understandings that provide the framework to this thesis. The key subjects under discussion are leadership, leadership style, and organizational performance and their interrelationship in the food business environment. In this research, Organizational performance linked to food business environment is reviewed in two sub-categories: employee retention, and food-safety culture.

These two indicators have been selected for specific reasons. The rationale behind selecting these performance indicators is embedded in the problems confronting ABC Foods. These concerns challenge ABC Foods and this study seeks to offer a resolution to its problem. The executive management suggested these indicators during my meeting with the company before I started my research project. As explained, these were the key performance indicators in which the organization was consistently struggling and failed to make real inroads in finding real reasons.

#### **Review Process**

To avoid mistakes in my review process, I embraced the review frameworks advocated by renowned researchers (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012; Zorn and Campbell, 2006; and Hart, 1998). They prescribed some essential rules to be followed during the literature review to avoid pitfalls. The key pitfalls included a limited extent of generalization, weak context, and lack of relevance. The above researchers encouraged the establishment of keywords for search at the beginning of the review and emphasized the necessity for relevance and concentration on empirical evidence.

The outcome of this review was expected to be helpful not just in solving the problem surrounding Organizational performance but also anticipated to offer valuable insights to the researcher and ABC Foods learning set in their problem-solving endeavours. In this literature review, the critical terminology identified and employed within this perspective

was leadership, leadership styles, organizational performance, employee retention, food safety management, food safety culture, action research, and action learning.

In this literature review, wherever possible, efforts were made to find the relevant and the most recent work about the subject. The selection criteria were peer-reviewed research studies and high-quality journals, where knowledge creation was ensured through rigorous design, empirical sense-making, clear context, and rich intention. As an outcome of the literature review, to create orderliness, the selected work was assembled into groups according to the subject and subcategories. This process educated me in understanding the evolution and development in the subject over time. It also helped in understanding possible interrelationship among various aspects linked to my study.

The focus of the review was to build on the most current knowledge to establish the evidence from supportive and contrasting viewpoints regarding the research subject. In this effort, various research works and relevant articles were identified and categorized. To enhance the relevance to this work, the search findings were first sorted as per the application and relevance, and then re-arranged according to the most current work. Preference was given to the most relevant and current work. In this literature review process, over 670 articles were sorted, and finally, around 200 were shortlisted. In this process, where available, research papers were explored where action research as a mode of inquiry was employed to solve the practical problem.

Later in the review, relevant articles both in favor of and against the main subject of the thesis were comprehensively and critically examined and appraised (Seuring and Gold, 2012). The goal was to build the base for my work in my actual action research project. Also, I discussed some articles and papers where the core concepts were indirectly linked and where additional support was acquired to clarify concepts and their application. This entire approach offered me a theoretical framework for the research in this thesis.

Moreover, this process offered an opportunity to acquire insights into and appraise the available literature on the subject and identify any possible gaps in the current practice.

To authenticate the study, where possible, I tried to shortlist the latest research work, and preferably research published within the last 20 years. I selected articles from reputable researchers. A few of these articles were by scholar-practitioners with a pure researcher's

background. I tried to blend the input from both scientific inquiry and application.

### **Basic Concepts Associated with this Research**

The section below explains the fundamental concepts in my research, their implications and their corresponding insight gained through my literature review. The later sections offer further insight including their inter-relationship among key performance indicators, however, in order to establish the framework I have outlined the fundamental concepts below. My strategy was to look at the basic definitions and general details of the concepts, as presented in the literature, before exploring then discussing their interrelationship. This section will explain the concepts of shared leadership and organizational performance and my chosen indicators. Also, part of this section will also explicate the rationale behind the selection of these indicators in my research.

### **How Literature Review was Approached**

In addition to the explanation about the literature review procedure that is outlined earlier at the beginning of the chapter I used a step by step process in this review wherever possible. Knowing the fact that the research was about leadership styles and their impact, I explored leadership and its implications first to understand the attributes of leadership and links with leadership styles. The idea was to educate me first about the concepts of leadership before their styles were explored. In this process, I explored history and evolution in the subject of leadership. Various leadership styles were explored to understand their strengths and weaknesses. The key idea was to see how shared leadership style was compared to other leadership styles. As I was to studying the impact of a leadership style on organizational performance I also explored how earlier researchers perceived this. Understanding organizational performance in this research involved the lenses of employee retention and food safety culture, so I also explored these attributes individually in order to determine whether leadership styles had some inter-relationship with these indicators. In doing this I tried to narrow down my work to food business operations related to the research work

### **Organizational performance**

In literature, the concept of Organizational Performance dominantly seem to revolve around “economics, finance, accounting and sales but it’s not it unchallenged” (Richard et al. 2009, p. 722). Researchers and practitioners have different views on defining organizational performance and what could be part of the performance. It may be expanded to total quality (Cua et al. 2001; Douglas and Judge, 2001; Chakravarthy, 1986) and employee performance and quality (Adam, 1990), quality culture (Yiannas, 2009, Kandula, 2006, Shaheen, 2003, Lim, 1995; Kotter, 1992), customer employee satisfaction (Lakhal et al. 2006, Chandrasekar, 2011), and operational excellence or productivity (Wentland, 2009). It seems that economic performance is embedded in organizational internal practices and objectives.

Organizational performance is not “one-dimensional theoretical construct nor is it likely to be characterizable with a single operational measure” (Richard et al. 2009, p. 722). Performance constitutes a set of financial and nonfinancial indicators that offer information regarding the degree of achievement of objectives and results (Ushie et al. 2010). There might be a different view on including non-financial attributes in organizational effectiveness than performance but “performance (on the other hand) is an indicator of effectiveness” (Richard et al. 2009, p. 722). Leaders, and employee make important contribution to organizational culture (Schein, 2010) and the culture may hurt or help or firm’s performance (Kotter and Heskett, 1992).

Organization performance relates to how successfully an organized group of people with a particular purpose perform a function. organizational performance, which means its ability to effectively implement strategies to achieve institutional objectives (Randeree and Al Youha, 2009). According to Zammuto (1982), one measure of organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). It is a broad construct that captures what organizations do, produce, and accomplish for the various constituencies with which they interact.

Chakravarthy (1986) distinguished the different performance indicators and concepts such as profitability, financial outlook, multi-stakeholder satisfaction and interest, and the quality of firms’ transformations. Organizational performance is a reflection of the

analysis of a company's performance as related to its goals, targets, and objectives (Chakravarthy, 1986). In addition, Chandrasekar (2011) found that individual employee dissatisfaction caused by poor workplace environmental conditions can also contribute toward substantial reduction in individual employee productivity, thereby leading to worsened organizational performance.

As outlined above in this section, the performance indicator could be any organizational goal or objective. The goal could be relating to productivity, efficiency, efforts to achieve business excellence, compliance with quality standards, financial targets, market performance, organizational resilience, social compliance achievements, employee retention, employee satisfaction, and other attributes (Ushie et al. 2010; Griffith, 2010; Yiannas, 2009 and Chakravarthy, 1986) that could ensure the stability and prosperity of an organization.

Employee retention has been researched as an indicator of organizational performance by many researchers (e.g. Nair and Malewar, 2013; Pascal et al. 2011; Iheriohanma, 2009; Eva et al. 2009; Milliken et al. 2003; Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967 and 1987). Among these, similarities were found regardless of the underlying causes of employee retention and possible remedies and a high rate of employee turnover was found to be detrimental to corporations' growth and performance.

Wilcock et al. (2011), Griffith (2010), Griffith et al. (2010a); Griffith et al. (2010b); Yiannas (2009), and Hinsz et al. (2007) have considered food safety systems and culture as an indicator of organizational performance for food companies. All these studies revolved around organizational efforts to achieve food safety system and culture requirements and questions associated with troubleshooting its challenges. They were convinced that success in food safety system management was among the key indicators of organizational performance in food business operations.

### **Employee Retention**

In this study the first key indicator of organizational performance was employee retention. The primary purpose and key focus of retention is to prevent the loss of competent employees for the long term (Chaminade, 2007). Employee retention could be

an indicator of an organizational environment that offers a culture of employee engagement and development and encourage employees to stay at the organization (Sandhya and Kumar, 2014). In organizations employees could be performing or not performing and in understanding the impact of retention a distinction should be drawn between high and low performing employees (Applebaum et al. 2000). For an organization it is imperative to invest in retaining valuable, contributing and performing employees. Employees who are committed to do their work are likely to stay in their organization (Appelbaum et al. 2000).

To understand employee retention issues it is imperative to comprehend employee turnover and its implications. Employee turnover refers to the number or percentage of workers who leave an organization and are replaced by new employees (Nair and Malewar, 2013; Pascal et al. 2011). In this process, companies may lose trained members of the workforce. Employees have always been considered as assets in organizations (Arora, 2012). Most companies spend a lot of resources in employee development (Shakira et al. 2013) to enhance competitiveness and compatibility.

In practice, turnover is the act of replacing an employee with a new one (Boxall et al. 2003). This act may happen as a result of the termination, interagency transfers, resignations, retirement, and death. In the literature and practice there are four types of turnovers (Nair and Malewar, 2013; Iqbal, 2010 and Boxall et al. 2003): voluntary, involuntary, functional, and dysfunctional. Voluntary turnover is when an employee opts to quit and resign from the organization of his/her own volition. There could be various factors responsible for this, including another job opportunity somewhere else, staff conflicts, or stress due to the lack of career growth and lack of opportunities for advancement in the current workplace. In involuntary turnover, the employer decides to dismiss an employee and the employee unwillingly accepts this. This could be a result of internal conflicts, poor performance, or other conflicts (Shakira et al. 2013 p. 35: Iqbal 2010, pp. 275-276).

The third type is functional turnover, which refers to the scenario in which a low-performing employee leaves the organization. It may reduce the overall load of job function and can reduce the administrative burden too. At times, rather than asking an

employee to leave, the organization respects the employee's own decision to quit. The fourth and last turnover type refers to a situation when a productive and high-performing employee leaves the company. Dysfunctional turnover could be potentially costly and detrimental to the company. It could be due to a more appealing and career-oriented job offer or the lack of advancement and growth opportunities in the current organization. This type of turnover is not only costly but capable of affecting organizational reputation. Dysfunctional turnover is a disadvantage for organizations since they lose valuable and skilled workforce as a result of it (Iqbal 2010, pp. 275-276) and this is the type of turnover that this research is mainly concerned with.

Lack of employees' retention is detrimental to organizations, their functions, and stability (Iqbal, 2010, pp. 275). Failure to retain valuable employees is not only damaging but can also be costly (Shakira et al. 2013). Therefore, effective organizations seek to avoid situations that could potentially trigger employee retention problems. Lack of retention of valuable employee mostly affects organizational balance and performance and has always caused problems for organizations (Nair and Malewar, 2013). However, employee retention is not an absolute and may not be destructive in all aspects, but it inevitably incurs a financial cost in retraining and loss of reputation.

In previous research (e.g. Balakrishnan et al. 2013; Milliken et al. 2003) numerous aspects which could cause retention issues in organizations were outlined. But for my research the key question explored was the impact of leadership style on employees' retention. Therefore, employee retention interrelationships with various leadership styles were also explored.

### **Food Safety culture**

The second performance indicator for this research was food safety culture, another KPI in which ABC Foods was unsuccessful. To understand food safety culture, that became a new field of study in the last 20-25 years, researchers and practitioners (Griffith et al. 2010a and Yiannas 2009) has employed concepts from organizational culture and safety culture to explain food safety culture. So, in researching food safety culture, it is important to understand that it is underpinned by organizational culture and safety



culture (Yiannas, 2009, p. 15).

To Schein (2010, p. 17), culture is pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

The culture of an organization is a concept that explicates how organizational stakeholders, especially employees, perceive their organization and its environment. Researchers (e.g. Chatman et al. 1998; Sheridan, 1992) have identified some of the key features as risk-taking, attention to detail, team orientation, outcome orientation, and aggressiveness.

To other researchers an individual's perception about organizational environment that formulates organizational culture may also include management style, leadership and communication (James and McIntyre, 1996) or perception about the safety culture (Flin, 2007; Guldenmund, 2007), innovation culture or customer service culture (Schneider et al. 1992). The concept of safety culture is aggregated in a broad spectrum of manufacturing operations to explain an organization's "state of safety" (Mearns and Flin, 1999, p. 5). Based on these concepts, culture has been described as "the product of individual and group values, attitudes and belief, competencies to, and the style and proficiency of, an organization's health and safety management" (Advisory Committee for Safety in Nuclear Installations [ACNSI], 1993 as cited by Cooper, 2000, p. 114).

In food business operations the same kind of safety culture described above exists. In a food organization, it represents the way an organization treats food safety, and has been conceptualized as "the aggregation of the prevailing, relatively constant, learned, shared attitudes, values, and beliefs contributing to the hygiene behavior used within a particular food handling environment" (Griffith et al. 2017a, p. 12). Food safety culture has been progressively acknowledged as a remedy to manage emerging risks associated with foodborne illness and outbreaks (Griffith et al. 2010a) and its importance is evident.

In many studies, food safety culture has been suggested as a solution to resolve food safety issues, and manage food safety management challenges. In these studies (e.g. Powell et al. 2011; Griffith et al. 2010b; Yiannas, 2009), the success of a food safety

culture in food business operations has been based on food safety leadership, management commitment, organizational priority and support, and communication policy. In addition, these researchers suggest that among the key issues in food safety problems in the food industry are behavioral issues including those involving organizational culture.

The field of food safety culture is new and has received limited research attention. However, Griffith et al. (2010b, p. 435) reviewed the literature in the organizational safety sciences field to ascertain components of food safety culture and finally proposed six components: 1) leadership; 2) management systems, and style; 3) communication; 4) commitment; 5) environment; and 6) risk. Griffith (2010a, p. 451) argues that employees' perceptions towards management system and style are influenced by the "coordinated activities to direct or control food safety," documented procedures and practices and management involvement in daily operations. In other research involving 65 leading US corporations exploring the basis of their safety culture, Yiannas (2009, p. 15) pinpointed pertinent aspects of a food safety culture. Based on the review, he suggests five core components of food safety culture: 1) leadership; 2) employee confidence; 3) management support; 4) accountability and sharing of knowledge; and 5) information. In both of these studies (i.e. Griffith and Yiannas) leaders were highlighted as essentials in their food safety culture models. Yiannas (2009) further distinguished food safety management from food safety leadership and emphasized the role of leaders in influencing others and leading the way to safe food operations. In explaining the leader-follower link, he highlighted the importance of gaining employee confidence and stated that it should be earned through "walk the talk" (p. 16).

Some other researchers (e.g. Tayler 2011 and Ball et al. 2010) adopted a different view in understanding dimensions of food safety culture. They viewed food safety culture as a broad and multidimensional concept, which could be outspread to a multicultural environment. Tayler (2011) extracted his concepts on food safety culture from the fields of management, international business and psychology and proposed a model of food safety culture that was influenced by 20 elements in four broad factor categories: 1) knowledge factors; 2) attitudinal/psychological factors; 3) external factors; and 4)

behavioral factors. He stated these factors were inter-connected within and between different categories and should not be viewed separately. In a similar way, Ball et al. (2010) in their research in the meat industry also embraced food safety behavior as a key pillar in food safety culture. Another study (Neal et al. 2012) also highlighted two key factors: management commitment and worker food safety behavior among the key essentials of food safety culture.

Yiannas (2009, p. 8) outlined two dimensions of food safety management implementation. One is a system-based approach and the other is a behavior-based approach. The real aim of both approaches is to produce and deliver consumer safety. Griffith et al. (2010a, p. 441) also asserted a need for an advance food safety and quality system to ensure consumer safety. His work on the assessment of food safety culture elaborated various aspects of developing a mindset towards the attainment of this focus. Culture is a phenomenon that is associated with groups, working groups, organizations and societies (Schein, 2010). These teams or working groups can be classified as unstructured congregations of individuals or those that are influenced and directed by managerial structures where the leadership is typically the driving force (Schein, 2010, p. 22). According to Hirschhorn (1990) culture is to the group what defence mechanisms are to the individual. Though practitioners and the industry at times appear to promote the belief that culture revolves around individual initiatives or protocols rather than interdisciplinary practices, several researchers (e.g. Hinsz et al. 2007; Wilcock et al. 2011) have argued that food safety culture *is* an interdisciplinary challenge, and its resolution lies in the employment of tools from cognitive and social sciences to offer further insights and add to the knowledge base.

Griffith et al. (2010a, p. 441) research into the assessment of food safety culture suggested a possible link between food safety management and food safety culture. There are different models of food safety management and successful compliance with these models that may be set as objectives or goals for organizations. Among these models (Griffith, 2010; Yiannas, 2009) are Codex Hazards Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), Global Food Safety Initiative's (GFSI) benchmark schemes, British Retail Consortium (BRC), Safe Quality Food (SQF) from Safe Quality Food Institute

(SQFI) and Food Marketing Institute (FMI), International Featured Standards (IFS Food), and Food Safety System Certification 22000 (FSSC 22000). Yiannas and Griffith both agreed that successful transformation of food operations with a food safety management system is not possible without the right mind set and cultural shift. Successful implementation of a food safety management is not possible without a strong food safety culture (Griffith, 2010 & Yiannas, 2009, Robinson and Heidolph, 2009).

## **Leadership, Leadership Styles, and Organizational Performance**

This section discusses various concepts associated with my research and their interrelationship. Since the key issues under discussion in this research pertain to leadership, leadership style and their impact on organizational performance it is essential to comprehend the concept of management, leadership, attributes of successful leaders and leadership, social and psychological concepts behind leadership and leadership styles. Also, and most importantly, the possible impact of these styles on organizational performance. This section elaborates on these concepts so that their impact can be understood. The latter part of this section sheds light on how specific attributes could be correlated to leadership styles.

### **Leadership and Leadership Styles**

#### **Management and Leadership**

Management as defined by Bovée et al. (1993, p. 5) is “the process of achieving organizational goals through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the human, physical, financial, and information resources of the organization in an effective and efficient manner.” To Aldag and Stearns (1991, p. 13), “it’s a process of planning, organizing and staffing, directing, and controlling activities in an organization in a systematic way to achieve a common goal.” The process of achieving desired results through efficient utilization of human and material resources” (Bedeian 1993, p. 4).

In a very simple way, management is getting work done through others (Williams 2018, p. 3). It’s the pursuit of organizational goals efficiently and effectively by integrating the work of people through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the organization’s resources (Kinicki & Williams 2018, p. 5). It is working with and through other people

to accomplish the objectives of both the organization and its members.” (Montana & Charnov 2008, p. 2)

Cole & Kelly (2015, p. 20) further elaborated management and the manager’s job associating it with coordinating activities. To them, “there is no generally accepted definition of ‘management’ but we consider it to be coordinated activities (forecasting, planning, organizing, deciding, commanding) to direct and control an organization.”

Northouse (2007, p. 10) defined management as a process by which definite set objectives are achieved through the efficient use of resources. Managers work on achieving organizational goals, formal direction, and control of their subordinates and assistants, resources, structures, and systems under their control. To Schermerhorn (2005, p. 19), “it is the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling the use of resources to accomplish performance goals.” However, good managers must have the ability to deal with the complexity (Kotter 1990, p. 86) as “the management is about coping with complexity.”

Kotterman (2006, p. 15-16) suggested that compared to leadership management is a relatively new phenomenon, Kotterman argued that emergence of management owes much to the development of large and complex organizations in the last century where the focus was to regulate work and deal with authority and control issues. To Kotterman, in today's business environment, managers are expected to reduce internal and external chaos, and are expected to induce order and consistency to the multitude of workplace processes. Bass and Bass (2008, p. 264) suggested that the term manager often suggests an individual who holds a directive post in a company, a person who organizes functions, allocates resources, and makes the best use of people. Managers plan, organize, and arrange systems of administration and control. They hold positions of formal authority.

On the other hand, Leadership is one of the world's oldest preoccupations, serving as both a hot topic and an important driver of innovation for thousands of years (Bass, 1990). To Wren (1995) the concept of effective leadership remained one of the most misunderstood human phenomena and comprised one of the most fundamental aspects of the human condition. In academic literature leadership has been explained as a position, personality, responsibility, influence, process and an instrument to achieve a goal

(Limsila and Ogunlana, 2008).

Leadership may be explained in many ways and one definition is as "a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2007, p. 03). Leadership has also been explained as a behaviour, style, skill, process, responsibility, experience, function of management, position of authority, influencing relationship, characteristic and an ability (Northouse, 2007, p. 10). Kotter (1990, pp. 86-87) stated that "Leadership is the capacity for collective action to vitalize." However, some theorists believe that leadership involves social influence processes (House and Aditya, 1997).

Leadership and leaders concentrate on motivation, and inspiration (Kotter, 1990, p. 87-88) and aim to create a passion for following their vision, to reach long term goals, take risks to accomplish common goals, and challenge the current status quo (Bennis and Nanus, 1997). Among the critical characteristics that leaders are expected to possess are integrity, vision, toughness, decisiveness, trustworthiness, commitment, selflessness, creativity, risk-taking ability, toughness, communication ability, and visibility (Capowski, 1994). Leaders should have charisma, a sense of mission, an ability to influence people in a positive environment and ability to solve problems (House & Howell, 1992).

At its core leadership has always been concerned with influencing others to take action (Kotter, 1990). With relation to the definition of leadership, most of the on-hand delineations revolve around the common theme of guiding and directing teams or groups towards a common goal or objective. The majority of definitions center on two key components: 1) the process of influencing a group of individuals to obtain a common goal; and 2) developing and articulating a vision.

Therefore, leadership can broadly be regarded as the bond and association between an individual and a team or group, built around some common themes and interests, wherein the group behaves and follows a leader's direction (Zaccaro and Klimoski, 2001). Indeed, leadership is a complicated process, which encompasses many subcategories and gradations. At its soul, it is generally regarded as the process utilized by leaders to impact followers to contribute to mutual goals (Kaiser et al. 2012).

As leaders are drivers of organizational processes and people, they can influence the behaviors of their followers through the use of different styles or approaches. Over the years, experts have believed that leadership, and the way leadership is managed, play vital roles in organizational dynamics (Raelin, 2010). As also outlined above, leadership is a vital component of organizational operations and performance. Over the past few decades leadership has gained considerable prominence in scholarly literature (e.g. Latham, 2014; Kovjanic et al. 2012; Fleming, 2011).

Direction, command, control, governance, and top-down managerial power and authority tend to feature as classical interpretations of “leadership” (Berg et al. 2012; Fleming, 2011). The classical school of thought tends to emphasize task proficiency or the ability of subordinates to comply with the formal requirements of their job responsibilities. Traditional conceptions of leadership tend to rely heavily on the concept of contingent rewards and punishment for the motivation of followers (Martin et al. 2013; Bass, 2000).

As a practice, leadership has evolved significantly over time (Houglum, 2012; Groves and LaRocca, 2011). A reward and consequences system were once believed to be the best mode available to produce motivation and yield support for organizational performance. However, over the years researchers have suggested new ways of leadership which focused on the importance of industrial psychology, work hygiene, ethics, the human element, interrelationships, teamwork, leading in turn to flatter organizational structures (Lorinkova et al. 2013; Ismail et al. 2012).

At the peak of conceptual development these emerging leadership styles offered a sense of collaboration and power-sharing concerning organizational leadership, which challenged the structure for tasks and encouraged innovation and creativity (Martin et al. 2013). Alghazo and Al-Anazi (2016, p. 37), reported a positive relationship between leadership style and employee motivation and performance (Rahim et al. 2015, p. 198) and leadership style (Tarabishy et al. 2005) in turning leadership an institutional characteristic rather than an individual.

### **Leadership versus Management**

Kotter (1990, p. 86) stated that “Leadership is different from management, but not for the

reason most people think. Leadership isn't mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having the charisma or other exotic personality traits. It's not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement for it: rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment." In contrast, management is a process that aims to control an organization's formal functions (Kotter, 1990, p. 86).

As a function, leadership and management may overlap, but they are not the same (Kotterman, 2006). Both involve influence, working with people, and working to achieve common goals. Katz (1955) stressed that leadership is a multi-directional influence relation, while management is a unidirectional authority relationship. Discussion of similarities and differences in leadership and management is not new. In discussing leadership and management Zaleznik (1977) highlighted that the organization needs both effective leaders and effective managers in order to achieve its goals, but he contended that leaders and managers have different roles and contributions in achieving these goals. He explained that a leader promotes change, champions new approaches, and works to understand people's beliefs in order to gain their commitment. In contrast, managers promote stability, exercise authority, and work to get things accomplished (Zaleznik, 1977). Bennis and Nanus (1997, p. 33) briefly described the differences between leaders and managers as "Leaders do the right things; managers do things right." Kotter (1987) stated that leadership goes beyond routine tasks to cope with change, whereas management is a regular formal responsibility to cope with routine complexity. He argued that leadership is a process that aims to develop a vision for the organization; align people with that vision and motivate people to action through basic need fulfilment (Kotter, 1990).

In 2003, Covey stated that the leader believes in vision and goals, has strong values, and works to make sure that his attendants are focused in the right direction. In contrast Ylitalo (2004) suggested that managers focus on structural, tools, and work-related processes. Gosling and Murphy (2004) argued that leaders work to make an organization ready to face any new change and ensure the development of a sense of security and



purpose. Reinforcing the difference Bennis (2007, p. 3) wrote that "Managers do things right, while leaders do the right things". The comparison of management and leadership roles are outlined in table below Table (T1) below.

Table T1 - Comparison of Management and Leadership Process at Workplace (Kotterman, 2006)

Process	Management	Leadership
<b>Vision Establishment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans and budgets</li> <li>Develops process steps, and sets timelines</li> <li>Displays impersonal attitude about the vision and goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sets the direction and develops the vision</li> <li>Develops strategic plans to achieve the vision</li> <li>Displays a very passionate attitude about the vision and goals</li> </ul>
<b>Human Development and Networking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizes and staffs</li> <li>Maintains structure</li> <li>Delegates responsibility and authority</li> <li>Implements the vision</li> <li>Establishes policy to implement vision</li> <li>Displays low emotion and</li> <li>Limits employee choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns organization</li> <li>Communicates the vision, and mission</li> <li>Influences creation of coalitions, teams, and partnerships that understand and accept the vision</li> <li>Displays driven, high emotion</li> <li>Increases choices</li> </ul>
<b>Vision Execution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controls processes</li> <li>Identifies problems</li> <li>Solves problems</li> <li>Monitors results</li> <li>Takes low-risk approach to problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivates and inspires</li> <li>Energizes employees to overcome barriers to change</li> <li>Satisfies basic human needs</li> <li>Takes a high-risk approach to problem-solving</li> </ul>
<b>Vision Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manages vision order and predictability Provides expected results consistently to leadership and other stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes useful and dramatic changes, such as new products or approaches to improving labor relations</li> </ul>

In a comprehensive study of differences between leaders and managers Algahtani (2014) reviewed 25,700 articles and research papers before shortlisting 200 peer-reviewed articles. Table 2.2 below (extracted from Algahtani, 2014, pp. 77-80) offers a quick comparison and show how over the years, these concepts and their descriptions have evolved and been understood.

Table T2 - Historical Comparison between Manager and Leader Characteristics

Researchers	Leader Characteristic	Manager Characteristics
(Zaleznik, 1977)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on people</li> <li>• Has followers</li> <li>• Informal influence</li> <li>• Takes risk</li> <li>• Facilitates decisions</li> <li>• Doing the right things</li> <li>• Large range perspective</li> <li>• Transformational</li> <li>• Sets strategies and vision</li> <li>• Challenges</li> <li>• Values</li> <li>• Innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on system and structure</li> <li>• Has subordinates</li> <li>• Formal authority</li> <li>• Minimize risks</li> <li>• Makes decisions</li> <li>• Doing things right</li> <li>• Short range perspective</li> <li>• Transactional</li> <li>• Plans and budgets</li> <li>• Maintains</li> <li>• Rules</li> <li>• Standardization</li> </ul>
(Bennis, 1989)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovates, Creative</li> <li>• An original</li> <li>• Develops</li> <li>• Focuses on people</li> <li>• Inspires trust</li> <li>• Long-range perspective</li> <li>• Asks what and why</li> <li>• Eye on the horizon</li> <li>• Originates</li> <li>• Challenges the status quo</li> <li>• Own person</li> <li>• Does the right thing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administers</li> <li>• A copy</li> <li>• Maintains</li> <li>• Focuses on systems and structure</li> <li>• Relies on control</li> <li>• Short-range view</li> <li>• Asks how and when</li> <li>• Eye on the bottom line</li> <li>• Imitates</li> <li>• Accepts the status quo</li> <li>• Classic good soldier</li> <li>• Does things right</li> </ul>
(Northouse 2007, p.10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing directions</li> <li>• Creating a vision</li> <li>• Clarifying the big picture</li> <li>• Setting strategies</li> <li>• Aligning people</li> <li>• Communicating goals</li> <li>• Seeking commitment</li> <li>• Building teams and coalitions</li> <li>• Motivating and inspiring</li> <li>• Inspiring and energize</li> <li>• Empowering subordinates</li> <li>• Satisfying unmet needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and budgeting</li> <li>• Establishing agendas</li> <li>• Setting timetables</li> <li>• Allocating resources</li> <li>• Organizing and staffing</li> <li>• Provide structure</li> <li>• Making job placements</li> <li>• Establishing rules and procedures</li> <li>• Controlling and problems solving</li> <li>• Developing incentives</li> <li>• Generating creative solutions</li> <li>• Taking corrective action</li> </ul>
(Lunenburg, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on people</li> <li>• Looks outward</li> <li>• Articulates a vision</li> <li>• Creates the future</li> <li>• Sees the forest</li> <li>• Empowers</li> <li>• Colleagues</li> <li>• Trusts &amp; develops</li> <li>• Does the right things</li> <li>• Creates change</li> <li>• Serves subordinates</li> <li>• Uses influence</li> <li>• Uses conflict</li> <li>• Acts decisively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on things</li> <li>• Looks inward</li> <li>• Executes plans</li> <li>• Improves the present</li> <li>• Sees the trees</li> <li>• Controls</li> <li>• Subordinates</li> <li>• Directs &amp; coordinates</li> <li>• Does things right</li> <li>• Manages change</li> <li>• Serves subordinates</li> <li>• Uses authority</li> <li>• Avoids conflict</li> <li>• Acts responsibly</li> </ul>

## **Evolution in Leadership Styles.**

Since early times the study of history has been the study of leaders, what they did and why they did it (Bass, 1990). From the perspective of finding the right leadership style, looking at the landscape of organizational leadership, we observe uniqueness and diversity. In the human era of enlightenment, from Moses to Jesus Christ and Muhammad of Arabia to Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, there could be as many ways to lead people as there are leaders.

Leading from the top, leading from the front, to leading with examples and leading within teams – from the classical leadership styles of Lewin et al. (1930's) through the transactional and transformational leadership styles of Burns (1978) and Bass, (1990) to the more recent ideas of emotional intelligence (Goleman et al. 2002; Goleman, 1998), participative, collaborative (Arnold and Loughlin, 2013; Rok, 2009; Bass, 2000), distributed leadership (Gibb, 1954; Gronn, 2000, Bolden, 2011) and shared leadership vision to leaderful practice (Raelin, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011), every researcher and scholar had a thoughtful process to treat leadership as a practice and a process. It seems that to induce effective leadership in the workplace; it is imperative to comprehend leadership function so that the right leadership style can be understood and adapted to enhance organizational processes (Schein, 2010).

Leadership style usually refers to the characteristic behaviors of a leader in directing, guiding, and managing groups and motivating people. Great leaders have the power and proficiency to inspire political efforts, impact organizational change, and induce social change. Effective leaders can inspire and motivate others to act, perform, take the initiative, create, and innovate (Lewin et al. 1939; Burn, 1978; Bass and Bass, 2008).

In the last century or so, we have seen a growing interest in exploring the psychology behind leaders and leadership. During this period, many leadership theories were introduced to outline precisely how and why certain people become great leaders. Though many theories to explain leadership have emerged over time, most of them can be classified as one of the eight major types, shown in Table T3 below.

Leadership Theory	Viewpoint
<b>Great Man Theories (the 1840's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The capacity for leadership is inherent and not learned.</li> <li>• Great leaders are born, not made.</li> <li>• Great leaders are born with the required set of skills, i.e., confidence, charisma, intellect and emotional intelligence, and personal and social skills.</li> <li>• The leader is always a hero.</li> </ul>
<b>Trait Theories (1930's –1940's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain traits qualify some individuals to be leaders.</li> <li>• Traits or character may be inherent or learned</li> <li>• It is more or less the same set of skills that a great man is expected to be born with.</li> </ul>
<b>Behavioral Theories (the 1940's–1950's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The antithesis of the great man concept</li> <li>• The great leaders are formed, not born.</li> <li>• This concept is rooted in behaviorism.</li> <li>• This set of theories focuses on the actions of leaders, not on the mental qualities or internal states.</li> <li>• Leadership is a process that is learned through teaching and observation.</li> </ul>
<b>Contingency Theories (the 1960's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theories revolve around particular variables related to the environment to determine the way to lead and, in turn, address a situation.</li> <li>• No one particular trait or style works the best.</li> <li>• The outcome and success will depend on specific variables such as the style of leadership, qualities and level of response from the followers, and the situation.</li> <li>• To a certain extent, contingency theories are extensions of the trait theory; human traits are related to the situation in which the leadership is exercised.</li> </ul>
<b>Situational Theories (the 1960's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders opt for the best strategy and course of action per situational variables.</li> <li>• No single leadership style can be considered the best. Leadership will have to find the best combination of approaches to managing specific situations.</li> <li>• A lot is dependent on the sense-making of the leader, that is, the leader's ability to read the situation and understand the type and level of followers.</li> <li>• In this style, it is not only the leader's ability that is important; the level of maturity of the group to be led is paramount.</li> </ul>
<b>Participative Theories (the 1930's–2000's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ideal way to lead is through participation and taking the input of others into account while leading and making decisions.</li> <li>• In this style, leaders encourage followers, group members, and participants to collaborate and contribute.</li> <li>• Leaders seek a more democratic approach in decision making.</li> <li>• In this style, the leader controls and retains the right to limit the input from others.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Theories/</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also known as transactional theories.</li> <li>• Emphasize the role of managers, supervisors, organization, and group performance.</li> <li>• Leadership creates motivation through rewards and punishment.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Theories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also known as transformational theories.</li> <li>• Emphasize the connections between leaders and subordinates.</li> <li>• Focuses on the way interaction with others, especially followers, is carried out.</li> <li>• It also values a high level of trust and motivation – trust not only intrinsically but also extrinsically, and not only in leaders but also in followers.</li> <li>• It entails a two-way relationship of trust and motivation for transformation.</li> <li>• Promotes the performance of individuals and groups and drives each to fulfill potential.</li> <li>• Leaders are expected to show an exceptional level of compliance with ethical and moral standards.</li> </ul>

Table -T3 Evolution in Leadership Concepts and Theories (Bass and Bass, 2008)

## **Famous Leadership Styles, Models, and Frameworks**

Based on the above theories, researchers have presented different leadership styles, models, and frameworks over the years. In academic literature, there were many other leadership styles and models. Some of them overlapped, and some refined the existing styles, induced novelty or offered a modern touch to the same concept. Outlining all of them is beyond the scope of this thesis but some of the major styles are included in this review.

### **Lewin's Leadership Styles**

Kurt Lewin, a well-known psychologist, and researcher was among the foremost scholars who elucidated leadership as a function and classified probable leadership styles. In the 1930s, a group of researchers led by Lewin instituted a leadership framework that later became a sound foundation for future scholars and researchers. Lewin's research group presented three significant styles of leadership. Today, we know these styles as "autocratic," "democratic" and "laissez-faire" (Lewin et al. 1939, p.273-5).

#### **Autocratic Leadership Style**

As outlined by Lewin, this type of leadership style depends on the leader's authority. The leader solely makes the decision and dictates work methods and processes. Authority is leader-focused and followers or group members are rarely trusted with decisions or essential tasks. The decision making is done either with little or no input from subordinates. In this style, leaders provide clear expectations of what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done. This style of leadership is firmly focused on both commands by the leader and control of the followers.

Bass and Bass (2008, p. 440-441) explains autocratic leadership in their handbook of leadership as a type of leadership that is often described as controlling and close-minded. However, this overlooks the potential positive impacts of emphasizing rules, expecting obedience, and taking responsibility. To them (p. 440), these leaders are often "arbitrary, controlling, powder oriented, coercive, punitive and close minded.

According to Swarup (2013), autocratic is a classical way of management and leadership. In this, everything revolves around the manager and leader. The leader is the

primary decision maker and authority (Gordon, 2013). It is based on the traditional notion that leaders are good managers who direct and control their employees. It also follows the presumption that employees are loyal subordinates who follow orders (Ali et al. 2011).

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership Style**

This style is also called the delegation style. Laissez-faire is derived from a French phrase that means "leave it be." It describes the type of leaders who give their subordinates total freedom and allow their people to work on their own (Alan, 2013). This style is also known as "hands-off". In this style, the manager offers very little or no direction and gives employees authority and as much freedom as possible (Swarup, 2013). Subordinates and employees have full autonomy and authority to determine goals, make decisions, and resolve problems on their own (Swarup, 2013).

Kendra (2013) explained the laissez-faire leadership style as a style that gives group members the freedom to make decisions. This style follows the assumption that when employees are trusted and given responsibility, their performance is always excellent and at its best. Lewin noted that laissez-faire leadership tends to result in groups that lack direction, where members blame each other for mistakes, refuse to accept personal responsibility, and display a lack of progress and work.

### **Democratic leadership style**

In the democratic leadership style, leaders encourage participation from subordinates and trust in the followers' abilities and knowledge for completion of tasks (Lewin et al. 1939; Daft, 2007). The followers and workers under this leadership style feel valued and enjoy a sense of belonging. The sense of sharing responsibilities, empowerment and independence induce self-confidence among followers. On the other hand, lack of control (Whitehead et al. 2009) in this style of leadership may cause real trouble, especially where the direction is needed that may affect the completion of the task.

Lewin's leadership styles may have had limitations when introduced but later provided a foundation for numerous leadership concepts, theories, and styles (Bass and Bass, 2008; Daft, 2007). The table T4 below (extracted from Bass and Bass, 2008) explains that link.

Table T4 - Leadership Styles and Theories (extracted from Bass and Bass, 2008)

Leadership Style	Theories	Features
<b>Authoritarian (Autocratic)</b>	<b>Transactional</b>	Decide alone Power Oriented Task Oriented
<b>Democratic (Participative)</b>	<b>Transformational</b>	People Oriented Encourages Participation Delegate to Groups
<b>Laissez-faire (Delegative)</b>	<b>Situational</b>	Provide little or no direction Consult Individually Does not criticize
<b>Bureaucratic</b>	<b>Transactional</b>	Policies are well established and not easily changeable. Policies may not be realistic. Policies may demotivate employees The process of change is prolonged

### **Transactional Leadership Style**

The framework for this leadership style was advanced as an exchange in the relationship between leader and subordinates (Suleman et al. 2011). It offers a general leadership–subordinate framework where the leader directs subordinates to perform tasks and activities that may not induce commitment and enthusiasm for achieving goals. This style has been described as a leader's attitude towards subordinates' needs and ambitions, and undoubtedly offers ways to fulfill needs instead of performance.

In this style, to create motivation, the theory of fear and reward is employed. Bass (2000) argued that in this style, leaders garner subordinates' interest by offering incentives, honors, and rewards. Zervas and David (2013) explained that in this style, employee motivation and balance is maintained through contingent rewards or negative consequences. Alan (2013) and Bass and Bass (2008) posited that in this approach the leader possesses the right to "discipline" group members and subordinates if their work does not comply with the required criteria. Hellriegel and Slocum (2006) contend that this approach depends on three essential elements: 1) contingent reward; 2) active management by exception; and 3) passive management by exception.

Researcher suggest (Bass and Bass 2008, p. 623-625) that the key benefit in this style is role clarity for employees and offering of rewards and recognition to motivate employees. These rewards and recognition may make the workplace flourish. There is a

consensus that under this leadership style, employees' job satisfaction and motivation is not at the highest level suggesting it may lead to a stressed and low morale environment.

### **Transformational Leadership Style**

This framework was first conceptualized by James Burns in the later part of the 1970s. Burns (1978, p. 140) explained that “transformational leadership is observed when leadership encourages followers to enhance the level of their morale, motivation, beliefs, perceptions, and coalition with the objectives of the organization.” According to Burns this style of leadership must have strong sense-making skills to determine goals and way to achieve them. This leadership style involves a deep understanding of industrial psychology and organizational behavior to offer ideas for motivating the workforce (Rich, 2013).

Transformational leadership revolves around intellectual encouragement, commitment, motivation, idealized influence, ownership, and inspiration (Hassan et al. 2013). Hall et al. (2015) have described this style as a mode of shifting and transforming people. Many researchers (e.g. Ali et al. 2011) have argued that transformational leadership encourages the development of a positive connection with subordinates and strengthens the performance of employees, which in turn enhances the performance of the organization.

Bass (1985, 1998) expanded Burn’s (1978) original ideas to establish what is today referred to as Bass’s transformational leadership theory. According to him, transformational leadership can be outlined by the influence and impact it has on group members and followers. Bass (1985, p. 20) argued that transformational leadership motivates followers to do more than expected by (a) raising followers’ levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, (b) getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and (c) moving followers to address higher-level needs. To Bass (1990, p. 19), transformational leaders inspire, energize, and intellectually stimulate their employees.

Bass and Bass (2008, p. 620) outlined four critical components of his expanded theory: 1) intellectual stimulation; 2) individualized consideration; 3) inspirational motivation;



and 4) idealized influence. These integral components of his expanded version emphasize encouraging and stimulating creativity among followers, with a focus on keeping communication channels open between the leader and the group members, leaders having clear vision of the goals, helping followers to feel motivated, inducing trust in the relationship, and serving as a role model for followers. The table below offers a quick overview of some differences between transaction and transformation styles. Table T5 outlines comparison between transaction and transformation styles.

Table T5 Leadership Style Comparison - Extracted from Burns (1978) and Bass and Bass (2008)

Transactional leadership	Transformational Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership is responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership is proactive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership works within the organizational culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New idea and introduced. Work is done to change the organizational culture</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders make subordinates achieve organizational objectives through rewards and punishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivate and empower workers to achieve the company's objectives. Higher ideals and moral values motivate employees.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivates followers by appealing to their self-interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivates followers by encouraging them to transcend their interests for those of the group or unit.</li> </ul>

**Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence-based Leadership Approach**

Not all scholars agreed with the routine thoughts on leadership behavior and styles. One of these researchers was Daniel Goleman. He attempted to outline the correct leadership behavior that could yield positive results. His concept of effective leadership revolved around emotional intelligence and the way it can be employed to create an excellent environment for followers.

Goleman (1998, p. 94-95) outlined six distinct leadership styles, each one springing from the different components of emotional intelligence. Without denying the value of various leadership styles, he emphasized the idea of employing emotional intelligence and utilizing a combination of leadership styles to enhance effectiveness. His six styles of categorized leadership styles are: visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and commanding. The chart below (Figure, F1) explains these six styles and their implications (Goleman et al. 2002).

Figure F1 - Goleman's 6 Leadership Styles (Goleman et al. 2002)

1	<b>Visionary</b>	Motivate people towards a vision	<b>“Come with me”</b>	Self-confidence empathy, change catalyst
2	<b>Coaching</b>	Developing People for the future	<b>“Try this”</b>	Developing others, self-awareness, empathy
3	<b>Affiliative</b>	Creates harmony and builds emotional bonds	<b>“People come first”</b>	Empathy, building relationships, communication
4	<b>Democratic</b>	Forges consensus through participation	<b>“What do you think”</b>	Collaboration, team leadership, communication
5	<b>Pacesetting</b>	Sets high standards for performance	<b>“Do as I do now”</b>	Conciseness, drive to achieve, initiative
6	<b>Commanding</b>	Demands immediate compliance	<b>“Do what I tell you”</b>	Drive to achieve, initiative, self-control

### Charismatic Leadership Style

This leadership style garnered a significant amount of attention and became a significant area of interest in the early 1990s (Conger and Hunt, 1999). The concept itself was obtained from the Greek word "charisma," which means "divinely inspired gift" (Stephen, 2013). It is more associated with the influence of the personality of the leader. Researchers (e.g., Ehrhart and Klein, 2001, p. 155–156; Conger et al. 2000a; Conger and Hunt, 1999) argued that charismatic leadership style could be outlined by distinct behaviors that happen in three successive stages: 1) appraisal of followers' needs; 2) formulation of a vision and strategy for the user; and 3) execution of the vision, which may require the leader to show charisma by going into a situation that could pose risks. A charismatic leadership style bears three integral components: envisioning, empathy, and empowerment (Jaepil, 2006).

**Situational Leadership Style:** Hersey and Blanchard (1969) initially presented this as a life cycle theory of leadership but by the mid-1970s, this was renamed as the situational leadership model. Later, they further expanded upon their original leadership framework to highlight how the development and skill level of the learners impacts the style that should be employed by leaders.

In the situational leadership model, the leader's style of behavior should be related to the maturity of the subordinates. As the subordinates mature, the leader should decrease emphasis on structuring task and increase emphasis on consideration (Bass and Bass, 2008).

With further maturity there should be less emphasis on consideration. In this, effectiveness of the leadership style is dependent on the situation, maturity and attitude of the employees.

Hersey and Blanchard (1977) distinguish four levels of maturity: S1 – Directing, S2 – Coaching, S3 – Supporting, and S4 – Delegating. The model below (F2) explains its various leader-employee interrelationships and associated implications. These four different styles of learning that a leader may adopt: directing style (involves giving orders and expecting obedience), coaching style (involves giving lots of orders, but leaders also show supportive behaviors), supporting style (involves offering plenty of help but minimal direction), and finally delegating style (involves offering low direction and support).

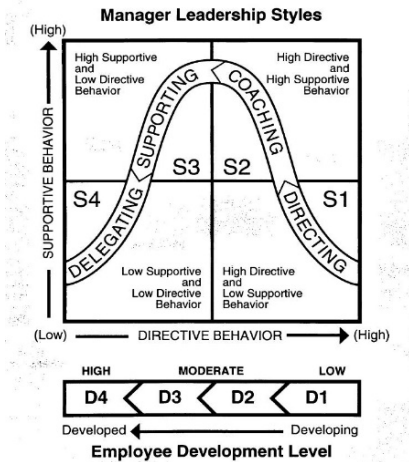


Figure F2 - Situational Leadership, Blanchard et al. 1993. pp. 26

**Participative, Collaborative, and Shared Leadership Style**

As a concept the notion of a participative approach to leadership is not new. Lewin et al. (1939) explained a very similar concept, named the democratic leadership style and Lewin’s three characteristics of leaders can be seen in Hersey and Blanchard’s model. Lewin and Bass (2000) suggested shared or participative leadership styles to be among the most effective ways of influencing organizational behavior. Many researchers expanded this further (e.g. Bass, 2000; Bass and Bass, 2008) and this style was given various names: collaborative, shared or participative, and distributed leadership style.

In participative and democratic leadership (Lewin, 1946; Burns, 1978; Goleman et al., 2002) the inputs from subordinates, team members, and peers are recognized, which in turn boosts

employee morale and motivation as they feel their opinions are valued. In practice this style is useful in causing transformation and bringing change (Burns, 1978). Raelin (2010, 2011) was among the contemporary scholars who elaborated on participative leadership and refined the application of leaders being participative and sharing. He proposed a novel concept of leading “within the group.” His proposed style offered a great sense of shared decision making.

Raelin (2003, 2010, 2011) approached shared leadership with a different perspective. He termed his framework as leaderful practice where everybody is a leader. He promoted the idea of bringing out leadership in others. He negated the value of leaders being different entities than the team and promoted the idea that instead of one leader or more than one leader in a group, everybody in the group must be a leader. Leaders are not from outside. Group members are not merely required for brainstorming and sharing ideas, they have a decisive role in decision-making. In participative leadership, the ultimate decision-making rests with the leader and the leader decides the level of participation.

Raelin (2010, 2011) advocated that in his proposed model, members do not wait for the leader to make a final decision or assess the level of participation. The group makes the decision, and everybody is a leader. According to him, modern organizations must not have leaders and bosses, but organizations and their environments must be “leaderful”. Raelin (2003, 2010) portrayed leaderful practice as a contemporary approach that may address our future leadership issues. He emphasized that leadership function must be compassionate and ethically sound. His research concerning leaderful practice refers to four Cs of this leadership style. As per this framework, leadership must be: collective, concurrent, collaborative and compassionate. The four C’s are discussed further in Table T6 below.

Table T6- Raelin’s 4 C’s of Leaderful Practice (2010)

<b>Concurrent</b>	Sharing Power, more than one leader at the same time.
<b>Collective</b>	Anyone and everyone in the group can serve as a leader. Many people can share leadership.
<b>Collaborative</b>	Everyone is in control of and can speak for the entire team. Mutual dialogue. All member contributes to and support decisions made in the benefit of the group.
<b>Compassionate</b>	Each member of the organization is valued. Members pledge to preserve the dignity of every individual on the team.

## **Distributed Leadership Style**

Though some researchers (Bolden, 2011, Gronn, 2000, and Gibb, 1954) advanced the concept of distributed leadership (DL) it is not new and its roots go back over 1000 years. Distributed leadership was initially explained by Gibbs (1954), and later reintroduced by Gronn (2000) and Bolden (2011) as another recent development in shared leadership styles. As explained by Bennett et al. (2003, p. 3), DL is not something ‘done’ by an individual ‘to’ others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action. Leithwood et al. (2009, p. 01) suggest “DL tends to be considered from a normative perspective, as a means for enhancing the effectiveness of, and engagement with, leadership processes.”

## **Shared Leadership**

Pearce and Conger (2003, p. 1) define Shared Leadership as: a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. The existence of shared leadership within the team is a recognition that team members are valued and competent.

The concept of shared leadership is based on mutual respect, engagement, and democratic values (Rok, 2009). It employs accountability and transparency for building communities and creates shared values while inducing a sense of self-responsibility. It fosters real development and growth at the individual, collective, and social level (Benoliel and Somech, 2012). As also proposed by other scholars (e.g. Rok, 2009; Waldman and Siegel, 2008; Khakee, 1999), shared leadership style tends to include others in the decision-making process. It seeks to enhance the participation and collective wisdom in the context of decision-making and engage stakeholders and others who could be affected by these decisions.

In the shared leadership style, rather than adopting an independent and autocratic decision-making approach, participatory leadership seeks to engage subordinates,

superiors, peers, and other possible stakeholders (Jamali, 2008). In an organization, the level of engagement depends on corporate leadership style or company culture. It could be confined to only consultation and brainstorming or extended to joint decision-making opportunities for the employee through delegation and empowerment (Freeman, 1984). With some differences, the concept of shared leadership (SL) has also been in use for some time, though over the years the words describing it have changed: 'collaborative leadership' (e.g., Rosenthal 1998), 'collective leadership' (Denis et al. 2001), 'co-leadership' (Heenan and Bennis 1999) and 'emergent leadership' (Beck, 1981). Though the title of the concept has kept changing the notion of leadership as a shared entity remained common.

### **Major Leadership Styles and Organizational Performance**

Leadership style (Stephen, 2013; Bass and Bass, 2008; Bass and Avolio, 2000, Bass, 1985, 1990; House and Howell, 1992) is instrumental in organization culture and an influential factor in understanding organization performance. Fiedler (1996), one of the contemporary researchers on leadership, argued that leadership effectiveness is the most important factor that determines the failure of a group, organization, or even an entire country. The roots of the assumption that leadership and leadership styles have a direct link with Organizational performance can be found in numerous studies (e.g. Bass and Bass, 2008).

Organizational performance is the outcome of organizational efforts to fulfil its objectives by employing specific resources, without placing a strain on its members and compromising its viability (Zammuto, 1982). Organizational performance is presumed to attain specific objectives, targets, and goals set by the organization. It is the output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs. It is the extent to which an organization attains its objectives (Zammuto, 1982).

It has been understood for a long time that effective leadership and employee performance have a significant connection (Zammuto, 1982). Responsible employees are among the most valuable assets and constitute a competitive advantage for companies. It is the leadership approach and style that establishes the scope and quality of output (Etuk, 1990). From this perspective management strives to harness the force of employee input and achieve organizational excellence. Researchers (Ushie et al. 2010; Obiwuru et al. 2011) argued that

organizational failure is related to various factors such as quantity, quality, and inappropriate style of leadership. Organizational performance is based on the quality of leadership (Iheriohanma, 2009).

In the literature there are two primary theories of organizational performance (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967): goal-based and resource-based. The goal-based theory is the one most commonly used in organizations (Etzioni, 1982). Regardless whether it is goal or resource-based, its outcome stays the same, namely improvement over time. So, it is always important to target measurable and quantifiable goals in assessing organizational performance.

In this research study, to make this research more focused, measurable and meaningful I have selected two dimensions of organizational performance (employee retention and food safety culture) to assess organizational effectiveness in ABC Food's food business environment. The latter part of this review will shed further light on these key dimensions and their association with leadership styles.

### **Leadership and Selected Key Performance Indicators**

The earlier sections review the interrelationship between leadership style and organizational performance in general. The section below sheds light on the specific aspects of leadership style and its interrelationship with chosen KPIs in this research. The fundamental idea here is to search for any possible link between popular styles of leadership and critical performance indicators, and comprehend the ultimate impact on organizational performance. The section begins by linking leadership style to organizational performance and selected KPIs.

### **Leadership Style on Employee Retention**

Samuel and Chipunza (2009) asserted that in order to win employees' confidence within an organization the critical leadership values required include trust, support, and forgiveness. They also suggest that the leadership approach within an organization can improve the work performance and satisfaction of its employees. According to Kleinman (2004), leaders are therefore an important weapon in retaining valued talent longer. For Kleinman (2004) and Srivastava, and Rastogi (2008), leadership is an essential and necessary role in establishing and maintaining employee well-being and satisfaction.

Samuel and Chipunza (2009, p. 412) in a discussion about the value of employee retention, stated that “the retention of good employees matters for 3 valid bottom line reasons; first, the growing importance of intellectual capital; second, a causal link between employee tenure and customer satisfaction and the third, the high cost of employee turnover continuity of competitive goods and services is assured.” Furthermore, a lack of employee retention does not merely concern the preservation of an asset, it is also akin to a competitive advantage, and this is only ensured if core employees are retained.

In studies (e.g. Samuel and Chipunza, 2009; Boxall et al. 2003), leadership has been recommended to adopt a style that understands employee needs and builds an environment of trust. Employees are more likely to stay with an organization when the leadership shows respect and an interest in them and their growth (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). When immediate superiors display interest and concern for them it enhances employees’ job satisfaction (Nair and Malewar, 2013).

In the main employees seek clarity regarding communication and expectations, like roles that fit their capabilities, and cherish feedback and recognition (Bass and Bass, 2008). The quality of the relationship an employee has with his/her immediate manager prolongs employees’ stay in an organization (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). Conversely, the lack of competent leadership is one of the key factors behind employees’ lack of satisfaction and the cause of turnover (Kleinman, 2004).

The key outcomes of incompetent leadership include high stress in the workforce, lack of job satisfaction, lack of job commitment, low employee performance, and most importantly heightened intention to leave (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). Leadership must have the ability to create environment that is helpful in managing relations. It plays a vital role in sustaining the human platform that supports productivity and profit. “When people feel good, they work at their best” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 14). In an organization, effective leadership approaches and influential leadership styles have illustrated their potential in managing staff retention issues and enhancing job satisfaction (Kleinman, 2004).

To enhance organizational performance and manage employee turnover, Kleinman (2004) asserted that it was necessary to provide an engaging environment. Rochelle



(2012) also supported the notion that leadership style is crucial to employee retention. Nair and Malewar (2013) and Samuel and Chipunza (2009) propose employees' perception of leadership behavior to be a key indicator and predictor of job satisfaction, commitment, and employee retention.

There are numerous ways to understand the reasons why employees leave. For example, Beardwell and Claydon (2007) believed that employees leave managers and not organizations. In other research leadership and approaches to it are pivotal in employee retention (Milliken et al., 2003; Spencer, 1986; Nair and Malewar, 2013) and root-causes of employee turnover. Researchers have also reached the consensus that the absence of trust and visionary leadership can cause severe problems for organizations (Spencer, 1986; Milliken et al., 2003; Boxall et al. 2003).

With a particular focus on organizational behavior and culture in food facilities, Yiannas (2009, p. 16) has advocated the role of leadership and its relationship with employees as being pivotal in employee satisfaction, with job satisfaction helping to improve employee retention. Explaining the transformational role of leadership Milliken et al. (2003) also advocated this thought. They also add managers in this connection. For them, not only the executive leadership, the relationship of the manager, and especially the immediate supervisor, with the employees are instrumental in enhancing the rate of employee retention and encouraging employees' opinions.

Similar to the investigations of Victor and Higgs (2005), Lucas (2010) believed that creating a team-based environment can enhance engagement, give employees a voice and enhance employee satisfaction and retention. For these researchers, enhanced satisfaction constituted a notion of attachment and a strong bond with the organization. For Nair and Malewar (2013), visionary and effective leadership may be crucial in transforming the workplace and earning the trust of the employees. This trust is ultimately an asset for organizations and a support in overcoming employee retention issues.

### **Comparison of Leadership styles and their impact on Employee Retention**

The section below outlines insight linked to important leadership styles and their corresponding impact on employee retention in an organization.

## **Autocratic Leadership Style and Employee Retention**

According to researchers (e.g. Lewin et al., 1939; Swarup, 2013) an autocratic style is a traditional way of managing and leading. For the autocrat everything revolves around the manager and leader. Relating to this style and its outcome for employee retention, Gordon (2013) argued that with this style of leadership the rate of absenteeism and employee turnover is usually high. Lack of trust in employees, employing consequence theory to motivate, and not valuing employee ideas are among the key issues associated with an autocratic style. Gordon further asserted that the autocratic leadership style often damages employee morale. As a result, talented employees become more passive or aggressive and often tend to leave the company. Ushie et al. (2010), supporting this position, noted that an autocratic leadership style tends to make employee behaviour belligerent or apathetic, bored and withdrawn.

Despite numerous limitations of the autocratic leadership style identified by researchers Swarup (2013) argued that the autocratic style was not all bad. Tending towards a situational leadership approach he suggested it could be the best style to employ while dealing with new and untrained subordinates who could not be acquainted with the tasks to perform. In such cases, only a firm and clear direction could guarantee results. However, as the need for direction minimizes and workers become acquainted with the requirement, this style may lose its grip, and worker satisfaction starts playing its role. Another issue he highlighted was that if workers were habitual of other styles, then the same goodness may become a drawback. He suggests that the autocratic style may not be effective when employees become fearful, tense and resentful.

The positive aspects of autocratic leadership in relation to employee retention were supported by Zervas and David (2013) who argued that an autocratic leader offers a clear, compelling vision with strong strategic planning and focus that guides the workforce and the organization. Effective planning is important as clarity at a strategic level may create comfort for employees and encourage them to be retained.

## **Charismatic Leadership Style and Employee Retention.**

Charismatic leadership provides a fertile ground for creativity and motivation, and is

often highly motivational (Michael, 2010). Charismatic leadership is achieved through positive role guidance rather than through instructions or planned strategies of staff development (Zervas and David, 2013). Following a charismatic leader is like following a superhero, a person with exceptional capabilities that are not observed in ordinary leaders (Stephen, 2013). According to Stephen a charismatic leader has the potential to rescue and revive organizations. He also argued that this style of leadership can transform the work environment.

Conger et al. (2000b) have highlighted a positive correlation between charismatic leadership, organizational performance and employee retention. However, charismatic leaders tend to become coercive when subordinates fail to live up to the expectation or when there is trouble (Zervas and David, 2013). Howell and Shamir (2005) believed that the behaviour of a charismatic leader could introduce instability and uncertainty into the management and the decision-making process. In their view, organizational members could be subjected to manipulation and deception by charismatic leaders. The leader might not comprehend all the organizational needs and may be unable to keep the ultimate organizational performance in mind (Stephen, 2013). This in turn can hamper performance and instigate employee turnover.

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership Style and Employee Retention**

This leadership style is most likely to be useful when individual team members are experienced, highly skilled, trustworthy, motivated and capable of working without constant supervision (Stogdill, 1974; Kendra, 2013; Alan, 2013; Swarup, 2013). Alan (2013) suggested that the primary benefit of laissez-faire leadership style is that it gives team members a considerable amount of autonomy, which could lead to a high level of job commitment and satisfaction, and may increase productivity in the organization. This suggests that if employees under this leadership feel satisfied with their job it could enhance employee performance and improve their retention.

Conversely, the laissez-faire leadership style has been criticized for its adverse effect on the organization. This leadership style (Alan, 2013) could be harmful if the team members do not manage their time well or if they do not possess the knowledge, skills, or motivation to perform their tasks effectively. This leadership style could lead to chaos, inefficiency, and

anarchy (Ronald, 2011). This situation may not support the retention of valuable employees. Kendra (2013) suggested that laissez-faire leadership has the capacity to give group members the liberty to make decisions that may strengthen their relationship with the workplace thus enhancing their retention possibilities. Tayfur-Ekmekci, & Tosunoglu (2016) observed that though styles like laissez-faire give more opportunities for employees to exercise their freedom the notion of having least possible guidance to employees in decision making could be frustrating at the same time. To employees another issue that could cause stress in this type of leadership is the fact that leadership thinks all is understood and accomplished, but when due to lack of guidance tasks are not done satisfactorily it could cause frustration in subordinates. This frustration ultimately could damage intention to stay and negatively affect organizational culture in the long run.

### **Transactional Leadership Style and Employee Retention**

Burns (1978, pp. 257), outlined the transactional leadership style as an "exchange of the relationship between the leader and the subordinates." Bass (2000) further argued that in this style of leadership, effective leaders accommodate the interest of their subordinates by offering contingent incentives, respect, and promises to those who fulfil leadership and organizational commitments. Zervas and David (2013) explain that transactional leadership uses tools such as rewards, recognition, or adverse consequences to create motivation.

A transactional style of leadership can clarify employees' roles and responsibilities. In this style employees may feel motivated due to the provision of recognition and rewards, which may enhance job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover (Alan, 2013). It has been argued that for some employees, this type of arrangement may be a cause for worry, as the fear of consequence or punishment is always present, which in turn can affect their performance. This may reduce job satisfaction and motivation especially when the odds are not under employees' control. This continued stress may hamper their morale and lead to employee retention issues in the organization (Alan, 2013; Zervas and David, 2013).

Researchers (Alan, 2013; Zervas and David, 2013) have argued that alongside benefits a transactional leadership style may also bring drawbacks in retaining employees in the

organization. They suggested that once performance declines the consequences may bring employee morale down. To these researchers, the fear of consequences may affect employee motivation, which may lead to unwanted turnover. Results of studies (Brahim et al., 2015; Advani, 2015) undertaken to understand the effects of transactional leadership style also support this opinion. In the first study, where the behaviour of 132 employees from five different banks was analysed, the findings indicated, transactional leadership style has a substantially adverse effect on employee performance.

Advani (2015) in another study involving 172 employees reached a similar conclusion and found the employee had a fear for consequences that could impact their intention to stay. In a third study that was performed by Koesmono (2017) in Indonesia involving 150 employees, intentions to leave and reasons for leaving were investigated. The results showed that job satisfaction and transaction leadership style had an impact on employee turnover intention. Another study by Saif (2017) investigated the effects of transactional and transformational leadership styles on employee satisfaction in numerous public hospitals in Jordan. The study concluded a mixed response and showed average effects of leadership style on employee satisfaction and intention to leave.

### **Transformational Leadership Style and Employee Retention**

As outlined by Burn (1978), the transformational leadership style revolves around motivation and transformation by understanding the leader-follower relationship and needs. This style motivates subordinates by appealing to higher ideals and moral values, which in turn can inspire employees to perform beyond expectations. This can help transform both the individual and the organization (Bass, 1985, 1990). A transformational leadership style contains idealized influence, intellectual encouragement, motivation, and inspiration, with which individual consideration takes place (Hassan, 2013).

Northouse (2007, p. 185) explains transformational leadership as a system of changing and transforming people. Ali et al. (2011, p. 71) viewed transformational leaders as those who develop a positive relationship with their subordinates to strengthen the performance of the employees and thus the performance of the organization. In other research Krishnan (2005, p. 552-53) described the transformational leadership style as “the leader’s power of motivating

the subordinates for achieving more than already planned by the followers”. It is argued that leaders attain this power and influence by being visible, in constant communication with their teams, and by infusing their actions and communication with enthusiasm and energy.

Behery (2008) viewed that transformational leadership, which includes knowledge-sharing and being open to listening to others (including followers), allows employees to be innovative, motivated, and committed. This fosters job satisfaction and organizational loyalty. Researchers (e.g. Umer et al. 2012; Gill et al. 2006) presumed organizations could reduce job stress and burn-out through the application of transformational leadership style. Based on these facts, it may be presumed that this style depends on high levels of communication from the management to meet targets. Leaders motivate employees and enhance productivity and efficiency through effective communication and high visibility (Krishnan, 2004). This framework may enhance employee interest and retention.

Although a transformational leadership style is known to produce motivated work environments it has been argued by some researchers that working under this style does not always induce motivation and satisfaction. Transformational style has been argued to have its own drawbacks. Researchers (Northouse 2007, p. 204; Tourish and Pinnington, 2002; Yukl, 1999) criticized this style and represented it as a “great man” concept. This visionary role might not maintain a leader’s interest or might not always keep an eye on followers’ interest and individual goals. This suggests that such leaders’ style may put leaders’ needs before followers' needs, which is undemocratic (Northouse, 2007, p. 203). This might leave unhappy internal customers. Once realized that the emphasis is always on the leader's or organizational vision, the employee may lose interest. There is a possibility of conflict, if the follower's vision is different from the leader's vision.

Northouse (2007) and Krishnan (2004) also highlighted issues when transformational leadership is new to the workplace or newly introduced to the role. While employees get acquainted with the style a unidirectional style may affect employee engagement and cause dissatisfaction for some employees. As Northouse (2007, p. 184) argued it is difficult to assure that a new leader's vision and direction is aligned with the existing vision of the organization and by the time a new leader learns and modify his directions, his charisma is spent from an employee perspective. This may be detrimental to

employee motivation and belief in a charismatic leadership style. As also outline by Krishnan (2004) blind trust or dogmatic belief in a leader could also have dysfunctional results. Further damage could result when the transformational leaders' vision is intentionally deceiving or unethical.

### **Shared, and Collaborative Leadership Styles and Employee Retention**

Shared, democratic and collaborative styles essentially encourage followers and group members to participate in the decision-making process of the organization (Swarup, 2013). Bass (1995, 2000) described a participative leader as a leader who encourages the participation of staff in problem-solving, making important decisions in routine operational matters, and long-term strategic planning. In the democratic leadership style (Ushie et al., 2010) the leader entrusts authority to the subordinates while retaining the ultimate responsibility. According to Iheriohanma et al. (2014) a democratic leadership style tends to foster responsibility, flexibility, and high employee morale, which ultimately enhances employee performance. Zervas and David (2013) suggested that the democratic leadership style boosts employees' ambition and motivation alongside nurturing employee retention. They further argued that since employees are engaged in the decision-making, delegation, and planning in the organization, there is a greater tendency for them to be engaged in organizational dynamics and more pragmatic about organizational needs. The milieu of participation and trust fosters employees' confidence in developing strong cooperation, instilling team spirit, enhancing morale, and finally lead to enjoying the work environment. Regardless of the value associated with the participative leadership approach it still has some pitfalls. In discussing these Donna (2011) emphasized the need to resolve the pitfalls before participative leadership is offered as a practical solution to positively impacting employee retention issues and organizational effectiveness. Donna (2011) has highlighted five fundamental challenges facing this leadership style that need to be overcome. Among the challenges are competency, crises, consensus, pseudo-participation and adherence. Donna (2011) placed emphasis on resolving the negatives of participative leadership and a shared approach that may ensure the attainment of desired results, including higher employee performance, satisfaction, and higher retention rates. This assumption is based on the fact

that the participative environment is filled with notions of employees' empowerment, creativity, initiative, participation, career growth and development, and succession that offers a sense of a safe future to the employee.

Researchers (e.g. Suleman et al. 2011; Drucker, 1993) believed that leadership effectiveness is the primary focus for an organization to achieve organizational goals and create organizational commitment in their employees. Oluyinka (2010) suggested that organizational researchers have often emphasized the decisive roles that work attitude and behaviour of personnel play in the well-being, acceptance, retention, and image of the organization. He stressed that the exhibition of negative work attitude and behaviour by employees might undermine organizational integrity, dent reputation, create mistrust, and hamper the organizations' relations. Efficiency regarding leadership is instrumental in assessing the negative work attitude and offer practical and timely remedies.

### **Leadership, Leadership Style and their impact on Food Safety Culture**

Fiedler (1996), among the most respected researchers on leadership and leadership style, has offered a recent treatise on the significance of leadership and its style by arguing that the effectiveness of leaders and leadership is a significant determinant of the failure or success of a group, organization, or even an entire country. Schein (1992) observed that organizational culture and leadership are interlocked. He demonstrates this interconnection by looking at the relationship between leadership and culture in the perspective of the organizational life cycle. Bass and Avolio (1994) underscore the argument of Schein (1992) by signifying that the relationship between the two concepts is an ongoing interplay in which the leader shapes the culture and is in turn shaped by the resulting culture.

Numerous aspects of the organizational culture literature (Schein, 1992; Siehl, 1985) argued for the role and significance of leaders and leadership in 'creating' and 'maintaining' particular types of culture in organizations. Williams and Hazer (1986) suggested that leadership style is one of the components that could be associated with commitment. To Rowden (2000), leadership behaviour affects organizational commitment, and that is one of the essentials of organizational culture, which is why



organizational culture needs leadership that is capable of generating commitment from the members of an organization.

The culture of an organization is a concept that explicates how organizational stakeholder especially employees perceive their organization and its environment. Chatman et al. (1998, p. 333), referred to it as "a system of shared meaning" that members of an organization hold that distinguishes one organization from another. Under the concept of "shared meaning," They include salient features the organization signifies and values, as perceived by individual members. Researchers (Chatman et al. 1998; O'Reilly et al. 1991; Sheridan, 1992) outlined some of these features as risk-taking, attention to detail, team orientation, outcome orientation, and aggressiveness.

The safety culture in general and food safety culture within food business operations are subsets of organization culture and have many attributes in common (Yiannas, 2009; Griffith 2010). In the literature about food safety culture, though the impact of leadership styles is not explicitly referenced, the need and role of leadership are duly emphasized (e.g., Wilcock et al., 2011; Vladimirov, 2011; Griffith et al. 2010a, 2010b; Yiannas, 2009, Worsfold, 2005; Manning and Bains, 2004). According to researchers (MacAuslan, 2013; Griffith, 2010; Pilling et al. 2008) leadership must provide leaders with appropriate means to lead their workers towards embracing food safety-related cultural practices. To understand food safety culture in its relationship with leadership style due to its shared focus, safety culture, in general, has been studied. Table T7 and T8 highlight the contribution of various researchers in explaining leadership style and their corresponding impact on organizational safety culture.

Table T7 - Leadership Style & Impact On Safety Culture (Extracted from Lendell and Marcham, 2018)

Study	Preferred Positive	Alternate Positive	Negative
Barling, et al (2002)	Transformational		
Breevaart, et al. (2013)	Transformational	Transactional	Management by exception (MBE)
Delegach, et al. (2017)	Transformational	Transactional	MBE
Clarke (2012)	Transformational	Transactional	MBE
Hoffmeister, et al. (2014)	Transformational	Transactional	

<b>Kelloway, et al. (2006)</b>	Transformational	Transactional	Laissez-faire/ abusive
<b>Martinez-Corcoles, et al. (2013)</b>	Empowering	Transformational	
<b>McFadden, et al. (2009)</b>	Transformational		Laissez-faire
<b>Willis, et al. (2017)</b>	Transactional	Transformational	Passive MBE
<b>US. Navy (2017a)</b>	Democratic Leadership	Team Leadership	Autocratic

Table T8 - Effects Of Leadership On Safety Culture Relative To Preferred Leadership Style  
(Extracted from Lendell and Marcham, 2018)

Study	Preferred Leadership Style	Safety Culture aspect promoted by leadership style		
		Most Prominent	Prominent	Contributory
Barling, et al (2002)	Transformational	Communication	Engagement	Task Management
Delegach, et al. (2017)	Transactional	Situational Prevention	Continuance Commitment	
	Transformational	Situational Promotion	Active Commitment	
	Active Transactional	Compliance	Commitment	Prevention
De Hoogh, et al. (2015)	Autocratic	Psychosocial safety climate (PSC)	Clarity of Command	Hierarchal structure
Kwan, et al. (2014)	Engaged/ Transformational	High PSC	High PSC and improved employee focus	Improved reporting and organizational communication
McFadden, et al. (2009)	Transformational	Communication	Reporting	Participation
Martinez-Corcoles, et al. (2013)	Transformational	Participation	Empowering	Compliance
	Empowering	Safety Behavior	Safety climate	Reduced risky behavior
	Leader Member Exchange (LMX)	Increased safety citizenship	Safety climate	
Kelloway, et al. (2006)	Transformational	Participation	Safety Consciousness	Motivation
Hoffmeister, et al. (2014)	Transformational and Transactional	Improved safety climate	Safety behavior	Decreased incidents
Clarke (2012)	Transformational	Compliance	Participation	Safety climate
	Transactional	Safety climate	Compliance	Participation
Willis, et al. (2017)	Transformational	Promotion	Safety behavior	Compliance
	Transactional	Prevention	Compliance	Participation
	Active Management by Exception (MBE)	Safety Performance	Safety climate	Prevention
Raelin (2012)	Democratic	PSC	Communication and Dialog	Participation
US. Navy (2017a)	Democratic	Crew communication	Hazard Identification	Team participation
Webster, et al. (2014)	Negative / Toxic leadership	Psychological distress, harm and anxiety	Mistrust and anger	Physical health problems

### **Autocratic, and Laissez-faire Leadership styles and Food Safety Culture**

Autocratic leadership as explained by De Hoogh et al. (2015), distinguished by the centralization of decision making and directive power coming from a single dominant leader, presents its own positive and negative impacts to organizational dynamics and safety culture. Autocratic leadership is known to offer clear hierarchical differentiation in an organization and may support the creation of structure thus enhancing team performance (De Hoogh et al. 2015) but this may only happen when there is no social power struggle evident in the organization. Therefore, the positive or negative impact of autocratic leadership on safety culture, team psychological safety, and team performance is dependent on the existence and level of power struggle conflicts present in an organization (De Hoogh et al. 2015).

Griffith et al. (2010a, 444, 2010b, 435) and Yiannas (2009, p. 15) portrayed a leader that is required for effective food safety management and food safety *per se* as a leader that is involved and open to communication. Even the ideal autocratic leader, being directive and making sole decisions, may not be able to offer such character. To change the organizational culture an autocratic may only succeed in the absence of friction and power struggle and negative results are often reported when a power struggle is present (De Hoogh et al. 2015).

Laissez-faire leadership style empowers employees and offers freedom and liberty to experiment, but lack of guidance and accountability thus often does not provide a suitable environment that supports safety culture (Lundell and Marcham, 2018). Such an environment does not enable employees to manage organizational safety and food safety challenges.

### **Transactional, Transformation and Shared Leadership and Food Safety Culture**

The transactional leadership style is well known for its clarity in setting and achieving objectives, accomplishments, consequences, imposing sanctions for failure to maintain standards and by engaging employees in social and economic exchanges with leadership (Delegach et al. 2017). Compared to a transformational style transactional leadership tends to monitor followers' behaviour more aggressively, tends to focus those behaviours

more toward personal responsibility and will elicit a more substantial focus on prevention (Delegach et al. 2017), otherwise both styles are known to monitor their followers' growth and development. However, the concept of exchange that is very clear in transactional leadership might not be visible in transformational leadership.

In transactional leadership due to the basic principle of exchange, leadership and followers' contributions and expectations are clear (Bass, 1998), but in transformational leadership the leader's expectations are clear but it may not be clear what is offered in exchange, and there may not be any guarantee for two-way exchange though leaders may get beyond expectations in response. In the different styles of leadership both leaders and followers have different expectations of each other so one style that is viable in one environment might not be effective in another.

An effective food safety culture necessitates, leadership, employee engagement, communication (GFSI, 2017). An organizational culture associated with food safety should exhibit combination, learning, rewards, and performance to sustain. As we learn that transactional style ensures the exchange and clarity in expectation (Breevaart et al. 2013) that is required for food safety culture, but it may be missing the true motivational part of the work environment (Griffith, 2010).

Transformational leadership has the most auspicious proficiency in establishing a link between behaviour and culture change in building a safety culture. This is due to the aspect of idealized influence being a salient feature of transformational leadership that uses inspirational motivation techniques, offers intellectual stimulation and takes time for individualized consideration to followers, which in turn plays a critical role in casting the success of occupational safety. However, to Kelloway et al. (2006) it is only possible if there is a high-quality relationship between leaders and followers backed up by enhanced safety communication and safety commitment. This is the type of leadership communication that's expected in food safety culture in order to build a sustainable organizational culture (Yiannas, 2009; GFSI, 2018).

To some researchers (e.g. Kelloway et al., 2006), both transactional and transformational leaders were reported to enhance individual safety consciousness and improved perceptions of safety climate in organizations. On the other hand, Kelloway et al. (2006)

reported a direct and positive impact of safety-specific transformational leadership on safety climate and safety consciousness, but an indirect impact on reductions of incidents and injuries. Martínez-Córcoles et al. (2013) found that transformational leaders' must have a tendency to encourage employees to participate in decision making about safety within their organizations in order to induce a sense of group belonging together with a greater commitment to safety from employees. The sense of engagement and the value of participation were also highlighted by Kelloway et al., (2006) in enabling a positive safety culture.

Martínez-Córcoles, et al. (2013) suggested factors that help reduce risk and cultivate a safety culture in an organization are knowledge growth through training and participation in a leadership style that promotes these attributes. This supports Kelloway et al's (2006) earlier research and selection of leadership attributes that show genuine concern for the well-being of employees, avoid fault-finding in the organization and is open to safety violation, or hazard reporting that lead to safer behaviours. Table 2 shows the interrelationship between safety culture and leadership style including most of the styles discussed in this work.

Shared, democratic and collaborative leadership styles that principally promote participatory decision-making (Fletcher and Käufer, 2003) and leaderful practice (Raelin, 2010) offer both benefits and risks to safety culture. Contrary to many other styles of leadership, the negotiation of shared understanding among a team of interacting individuals could be a source or form of leadership (Goethals et al, 2010). Organizations have steadily progressed into the knowledge economy, we can no longer rely on simple notions of top-down, command-and-control leadership, based on the idea that workers are merely interchangeable drones (Pearce 2007, p. 355). Participatory leadership (Magzan, 2011). coupled with a safety culture's set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices is in essence leadership accomplished within cultural means, and therefore should increase the coalescence of culture that leads to greater psychological safety, team participation and the trusting relationships that play a vital part in the development of positive safety culture (Lundell and Marcham, 2018).

However, a shared leadership style has its pitfalls including issues of competence, crises,

consensus, pseudo-participation, and adherence (Donna, 2011, Suleman et al., 2011; Drucker, 1993). The assumptions behind these challenges are grounded in the fact that the actual organizational environment might not be ideal. There is a possibility that the organizational environment does not support empowerment, creativity, initiative, participation, career growth and development, and succession that offers a sense of a safe future to the employee. Development of such an environment might be a challenge. As Suleman et al. (2011) and Drucker (1993) asserted, if employees are not committed and embrace a sense of true participation, then employee engagement may not occur, which of course is the key for success in this style of leadership.

Oluyinka (2010) and Brita et al. (2009) stressed that to change employee behaviour to engender cultural change, employee engagement and participation is the key that supports a leadership style to be one of the effective styles. The collaborative approach will itself be a remedy for differences over a period of time. Challenges are there, but due to its nature, this style has the tendency to embrace transactional and transformational aspects according to the phase of the project.

### **Which Leadership Style is best fit to address ABC Foods Problems?**

Earlier sections of this literature review discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various prevalent leadership styles. Looking at the comparative review, it is not an easy task to identify one style that could answer all the questions and be employed as the most effective style in this action research project. Every style has something to offer.

Researchers are on both sides in explaining the strengths and weaknesses of each style. Being an action research project, this would be a difficult task for the researcher and his learning set to pick one final style. Nevertheless, this was an issue that the learning set addressed.

As explained in the corresponding sections, looking at the requirements of ABC Foods initiative and findings from researchers on employee retention (e.g. Sandhya and Kumar, 2014; Shakira et al. 2013; Nair and Malewar, 2013; Pascal et al. 2011; Henry, 2007; Chaminade, 2007; Milliken et al. 2003; Appelbaum et al. 2000) and food safety culture (Powell et al. 2011; Tayler, 2011; Ball et al., 2010; Griffith, et al., 2010b; Yiannas, 2009;

James and McIntyre, 1996) it is evident that ABCs Foods problems require competent and effective leadership, management commitment, interactive leadership style (Yiannas, 2009), open communication (Griffith et al., 2010b, p. 441), employee engagement, proactive process centred approach, management by examples (Yiannas 2009), accountability (Taylor, 2011), understanding of employee behaviour (Powell et al. 2011), and a learning environment (Ball et al. 2010; Griffith, et al., 2010b; Yiannas, 2009) in order to achieve the desired organizational change.

Now the question arises, which style could provide all of these essentials. Considering the strengths and weaknesses of significant leadership styles explained in the earlier sections, styles like autocratic and laissez-faire styles, these do not appear to be appropriate for this project. The principal reasons may be embedded in their lack of open communication and lack of flexibility (except Laissez-Faire). Though laissez-faire offers flexibility its lack of guidance and accountability is the limiting factor in qualification.

Inspiration gained through a charismatic style may be an option but is difficult to maintain in a long-term project, difficult to recruit charismatic leaders initially and difficult to maintain charisma and interest of these leaders. Another challenge of charismatic leaders could be a unidirectional approach to give vision and expect followers to follow. Food Safety Culture requires two-way open communication (Yiannas, 2009; Griffith et al. 2010b) where the behaviour of the employees is changed through understanding organizational needs and employees' concerns (Yiannas, 2009). Looking at the needs of employee retention, these will require rewards and compensation alongside recognition, inspiration and motivation (Balakrishnan et al. 2013; Milliken et al., 2003). Charismatic style with all its charisma would be difficult to employ as a total package.

Among other pertinent styles are transactional, transformational and shared leadership styles. All of these styles seem to be strong contenders for the job. Starting with transactional leadership style, with its focus on exchange, it may qualify in terms of employee retention by offering satisfaction through rewards and recognition (Burns, 1978) but it might not fit food safety culture's challenges (Griffith et al. 2010). Even looking at employee retention requirements the transaction approach might not work,

and job satisfaction and employee retention may require an approach beyond monetary benefits (Milliken et al., 2003).

On the other hand, food safety culture is transformational in nature. Inducing a change in organizational behaviour needs an understanding of organizational dynamics and its bottlenecks. The sense of inspiration will always be required to overcome organizational cultural woes. Even if we are able to make changes, the fear of dysfunctional consequences will always haunt employees if performance falls below expectations. To address such challenges a transaction style is likely to be found wanting. The ongoing motivation of employee to bring change in behaviours will require more than just compensation. This suggests that a transaction style is not the appropriate option.

A transformational leadership style is another option. As evident from its title it is transformational in nature, which might partially fit safe food cultural requirements. One of the key researchers on food safety culture (Griffith et al. 2010a, p. 444) has mentioned both transactional and transformational styles. Though when compared to transactional, a transformational style does not work on the issue of exchange. Despite the fact that research has shown the positive side of a transformational leadership style (TL) for organizations, other scholars have also surfaced the limitations of transformational leadership. Apparently, the concept is a combination of many leadership styles and more inspirational than transformational, which is why researchers like Northouse (2007), and Yukl (1999) have criticized this style and representing a “great men” concept with much in common with a visionary style. To these researchers, the writing of Bass (1998) reflected a strong bias in arguing for a transformational leadership style. As he explained, TL is perfect, immaculate, and the ideal form of leadership that offers a modern solution to leadership question. There is no real and satisfactory answer to pseudo-transformational leadership questions.

The idea that a transformational leader might fall into the trap of following his individual vision and not the real organizational vision will always be there. In literature there are many examples of negative employment of this transformational concept. For instance, the ‘Hitler problem’, is often discussed in the leadership literature. There is no doubt that he was a transformational leader, but as history reveals, he exploited his emotional



appeal in a negative way. This may be true for many others. Bass (1998) himself tried to differentiate and highlight this fact and declares unethical a transformational leader who is "pseudo-transformational" since moral development is an essential characteristic of a truly transformational leader. The question remains about how to control this pseudo-transformational aspect.

The supporters of TL have failed to stipulate how pseudo-transformational leaders should be identified or dealt with particularly the pseudo-transformational leader who disguises him or herself. Different leaders will be at a different level of development and will have personal perspectives that may affect the organizational initiative. There will have to be another layer to observe the unethical mindset, and that might not be practical or even too late. In the beginning the pseudo-transformational leader may behave like a transformational leader with the unethical or immoral side of the leader only emerging at a later stage. That is why researchers question the notion of pseudo-transformational and heroic leadership bias and declare this to be detrimental to organizational outcomes (Northouse, 2007; Krishnan, 2004). To these researchers there exists a possibility of blind trust from followers (Krishnan, 2004) and possible autocratic behaviour from leaders (Northouse, 2007).

According to Bass (1998) the transformational leader stresses what the leader can do for the organization rather than the other way around. The question arises if it is vice versa it does not ensure motivated followers contribute to the organization and does not clearly explain what the reward in response. Transformational leadership does not address this exchange. A transformational leader influences follower to offer extra and put forward exceptional efforts in order to achieve the common goal (Bass, 1998; Burns, 1978; Howell and Avolio, 1993). From this perspective, the influence is presumed to be "unidirectional, and it flows from the leader to the follower" (Yukl, 1999, p. 292). In the situation just outlined the danger of unidirectional influence is that it "makes the followers more prone to deception" (Mullins, 2007, p. 383) and questions how followers' individual interests will be safeguarded (Keeley, 2004).

This suggests leaders who put themselves before the needs of followers, which is "anti-democratic" (Northouse, 2007, p. 203). Although Bass (1998) maintained his position

and continued to advocate existence of democracy and participation in transformational leadership. However, the possibilities of a transformational leader being autocratic and antidemocratic remained there. Another pertinent issue is that followers risk fulfilling their leader's vision; however impractical, over-ambiguous, misleading or even deceptive it could be. That opens up a new discussion and questions whether the goal proposed by the transformational leader is for the collective good or not (Northouse, 2007; Tourish and Pinnington, 2002; Tucker and Russell, 2004). As Northouse (2007) argued, there are no specific means to ensure that the new direction or vision proposed by a transformational leader is better or more promising than the existing organizational priorities. This becomes more problematic where there is a considerable (either physical or social) distance between followers and their leader. If for some reason any frictions exist the concept might itself create more problems than the problem it is supposed to solve.

Krishnan (2004) explained that behaviors of leaders in this style are often idealized which leads to "blind trust" in the leader. The dogmatic obsession of the leader amplifies the heroic leadership bias. These dangers could be considerable especially in the case where the transformational leaders' vision is intentionally deceiving or unethical. In such a case, the organization will not achieve its ultimate goals.

Like other styles, TL style has its own pitfalls. The idea of transformational leadership is criticized as lacking in 'conceptual clarity' (Northouse, 2007, p. 202) which in its turn leads to ambiguity in measuring and explaining the effectiveness of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 1999). Some researchers (e.g. Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 1999) have argued that the four fundamentals of transformational leadership style as promoted by Bass (1998) have considerable overlap.

The authoritative writers on transformational leadership used the terms 'inspirational motivation', 'inspirational leadership', 'idealised influence', 'charisma' and 'charismatic leadership' loosely to refer to a composite latent construct of transformational leadership (e.g. Bass, 1985 and 1998; Bass and Riggio, 2008; Howell and Avolio, 1993). In the view of Northouse (2007) Bass's (1999) explanation fails to clarify how transformational leaders can make use of the four components. On the same note Yukl (1999) highlights

the ambiguity in defining the four components of transformational leadership. To the critique, the employment of four essentials creates doubts about their construct validity. It is not sure with these limitations that this style could offer an ultimate solution given its apparent lack of open communication.

Another style reviewed is shared participative and collaborative style. Like any other style it has advantages and disadvantages. As explained by researchers the concept behind this leadership style revolves around mutual respect, engagement, and democratic values (Rok, 2009), accountability and transparency for building communities and creates shared values while inducing a sense of self-responsibility. It fosters real development and growth at the individual, collective, and social level (Benoliel and Somech, 2012) and tends to include others in the decision-making process (Waldman and Siegel, 2008; Khakee, 1999).

The principle of participation and collaboration tends to avoid an independent and autocratic decision-maker and necessities seeking shared decision-making through engagement with subordinates, superiors, peers and other possible stakeholders (Jamali, 2008). Unlike a simple democratic style, a participative/collaborative style involves consultation and brainstorming and extends to joint decision-making opportunities for the employee through delegation and empowerment (Freeman, 1984).

In participative leadership (Lewin, 1946; Burns, 1978; Goleman et al., 2002, Magzan, 2011), the inputs from subordinates, team members, and peers boost employee morale and motivation through a feeling that their opinions are being valued. This style is useful in engendering transformation and bringing change (Burns, 1978). Raelin was among the contemporary scholars who elaborated on participative leadership and refined the application of being participative and shared in leadership. He proposed a novel concept of leading within the group. His proposed style offers a great sense of shared decision making, in a shared leadership environment that could be 'leaderful' (Raelin, 2003, 2010, 2011), that is where everybody could be a leader. This idea seeks to find leadership in others.

Seeing through the needs of organization culture the shared leadership style has its own challenges and counter-arguments. To some researchers (e.g. Willis et al., 2017) a safety environment demands more directive, less inclusive prevention-focused leadership to

support employee psychological safety. To Willis et al. (2016) a strong directive leader is pre-eminently important when critical decisions must be made promptly and cannot wait for shared and collaborative decision making to happen. Willis et al. (2016) suggested that leadership for a safe environment must be able to address issues of pragmatic problem solving, actively monitor safety practices and respond promptly with decisive measures. The leadership must be able to support management and followers.

As outlined by Conger and Pearce (2003:299), shared leadership is not one universal solution. The authors argue that there do exist some circumstances when shared leadership style is not just non-optimal, but even harmful, e.g. when mentioning lack of knowledge, skills and abilities. Locke (2003 p. 273-274) suggested that shared leadership must be used together with vertical leadership to be successful. The shared leadership style has been reported with problems, but in most of the cases, the problem has not been reported with the style or theme of leadership itself, but the challenges in its application.

Though shared and participative leadership has its challenges and pitfalls, if food safety culture is a lens through which most of the vital guidance frameworks or research studies has been viewed (GFSI, 2018; Griffith, 2010; Yiannas, 2009; FSANZ, 2018; BRCGS, 2018) it seems a better fit with organization culture in producing a sustainable food safety culture. It might not be a comprehensive approach but it has the ability to attributes like engaged leadership, participation, commitment, open communication, transparency, accountability, shared focus, learning environment, rewards and recognition, performance and others.

The advantages and disadvantages of the various leadership styles outlined in this section and other parts of the literature review offer guidance to suggest the most appropriate leadership style for ABC Foods to effectively address its challenges. A participative, shared leadership style offers guidance to the researcher and his learning set to in assessing what could work best for this action research project.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methods**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explains the materials and methods employed in my action research project. It outlines how I approached this project right through from its inception. The early part of this chapter explains my understanding of action research (AR) and reflection, and a justification for employing AR. It also reflects on my research selection and the importance of this research and its context. The second section discusses the methods used in this research. It outlines methods of data collection, data analysis and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of this process.

The key developments in this study may be perceived through my experience and reflections, and contribution and reflections from ABC Foods learning set. As an action research project, there was a lot of insight throughout the process. This chapter also explains the way the rest of my thesis will be presented and written.

#### **Action Research as a mode of Inquiry**

This research project follows the principle of action research (AR). Action Research (AR) is a mode of collaborative inquiry. This particular method is about change and intervention, and within which researchers and practitioners work with practitioners on matters of concern (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012). AR is not new as a mode of inquiry to solve social and organizational problems, and its use has been shown to provide robust results (Greenwood and Levin, 2007, pp.13-14).

AR in its approach is adaptive, flexible and participatory. It is a process in which a group of people with a shared issue of concern collaboratively, systematically and deliberately plan, implement and evaluate actions. AR combines action and investigation. The investigation informs action, and the researchers learn from critical reflection on the action (Gilmore et al. 1986).

#### **Participatory Action Research:**

Participatory action research (PAR) is a special form of action research that takes place primarily as a basis for community development. It is a democratic or non-coercive process whereby all relevant parties (participants) are involved in actively examining together current action in order to improve or change it (Realin, 2009, p. 10). The process determines the purpose and outcomes of its own inquiry through active co-research with or without a facilitator (Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

As obvious from the term PAR, it's participative and collaborative and learning is within action that facilitate problem solving. As explained by Zuber-Skerritt (2015, p. 14), "its fosters collaborative problem solving from the inside out, that is, the research and development project is planned and conducted with, for and by (not on) the people themselves who are affected by the problem, its solution, and the decisions made as a consequence" It's new addition in AR as one of the modalities but it is helpful in creating knowledge. Through this academic can produce research outcomes that are rigorous and valid as well as community relevant, practical, and collaborative—therefore more transformative and sustainable but it necessities them to learn new processes and methods of collaborative and qualitative research (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015, p. 17).

The PAR work in actual practice. As suggested by Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007), it should also be stressed that participatory action research involves the investigation of actual practices and not abstract practices. It involves learning about the real, material, concrete, and particular practices of particular people in particular places. It has seven key features (Kemmis and McTaggart 2007, p. 281).

1. Participatory action research is a social process.
2. Participatory action research is participatory.
3. Participatory action research is practical and collaborative.
4. Participatory action research is emancipatory
5. Participatory action research is critical.
6. Participatory action research is reflexive (e.g., recursive, dialectical).
7. Participatory action research aims to transform both theory and practice

McIntyre (2008, P. 1) describe main features of PAR projects, which are expected to show four key elements; collective commitment to investigate an issue or problem, a desire to engage in self- and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issue under investigation, a joint decision to engage in individual and/or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits the people involved and the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process. PAR is done by critically reflecting on the historical, political, cultural, economic, geographic and other contexts which underlie the action. Participatory action research is not just research followed by action (Realin, 2009, p. 10). It is action which is researched, changed, and re-researched within the research process by the participants themselves. It attempts to be a genuinely democratic or non-coercive process whereby those to be helped determine the purposes and outcomes of their own inquiry (Wadsworth 1998, p. 9).

### **Action Research and Problem Solving**

The history of the term “Action Research” is usually traced to Kurt Lewin (Lewin 1946; Adelman 1993). The concept was initially employed in 1939 to solve the productivity issues of a manufacturing plant (Appelbaum et al. 2000). As portrayed by Lewin, action research involves a spiral process to examine, understand the problem and find solutions. The notion of democracy, participation, collaboration and collective approach to problem-solving had been part of the approach since its inception (Conger and Pearce, 2003; Raelin, 1999).

In its approach, action research is practical, theoretical, collaborative, reflexive and contextual. McNiff (1992, 1995) provided a detailed view of action research: AR reviews the current practice, identifies the issues that need improvement, chalks out the solution, implements, monitors sustainability of the action, steps back and modifies plan, monitors and assesses the modified action and the spiral of learning, reflects and action goes on until a permanent solution is achieved.

Researchers explain the spiral of action research as a four-step process: plan, act, observe and reflect (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). The first cycle leads to the second and later cycles,

which alternate between action and critical reflection (Dick, 2002). In this process, greater understanding is gained that further refines the methods, data and its analysis, and interpretation (Dick, 2002).

The approach of Action Research (AR) is about change and intervention (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012) where applied behavioral science learning is combined with existing organizational wisdom and employed to resolve real problems in organizations. As outlined above, its beauty and strength lie in its evolving process that is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and co-inquiry. (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014).

AR may be practiced through different modalities (Raelin, 2008): cooperative inquiry, participatory action research (PAR), action learning (AL), action science and developmental action inquiry. In my action research project AL has been selected as a framework for this study. AL is a methodology (Pedler (2008, pp.) to problem-solving and discovery in groups to bring about change in individuals, groups, systems, and organizations. Since AL promotes a team focus, so learning happens in a group known as a learning set (Pedler 2008; Pedler and Christine, 2013; Raelin, 2008). ABC Foods project being an organizational problem is expected to be resolved through AR and AL. Action learning helps organizations develop creative, flexible, and successful strategies for the resolution of pressing problems (Yanow and Tsoukas, 2009). PAR will also be introduced in the latter stages of the study to provide a food industry-wide perspective and as a means of data triangulation (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005).

### **Why Action Research at ABC Foods?**

As explained in earlier chapters, ABC Foods failed to achieve its targets and to comply with customer expectations, as indicated by their yearly KPIs, triggering a need to work on possible causes and suggest solutions. The need was initiated by the executive management (owners and board of directors) at ABC Foods. Being a Technical Advisor at ABC Foods, I decided to use AR to find a solution for ABC Foods problem as AR which is an approach that is known to be successfully used for problem-solving in organizations (Greenwood and Levin, 2007). Although AR was required to be used in my DBA research one of the key attractions while selecting this approach was its



collaborative and participative nature. In order to solve issues the idea was to engage the organization in a problem-solving loop and AR was a proven way for doing that (Greenwood and Levin, 2007).

For this AR project, among action research modalities (Raelin, 2009), I opted for action learning (AL). Among the key reasons for this selection was AL's ability to solve problems through collaborative inquiry, its simple rules that force critical thinking and collaboration in participants (Pedler, 2008) and finally its ability to produce compassionate and collaborative leadership (Raelin, 2007).

Pedler (2008) refers to AL as an approach to problem-solving and learning in groups to bring about change in individuals, teams, organizations, and systems (Pedler, 2008). As suggested by researchers on AL (e.g., Pedler 2010; Raelin, 2008), it is perhaps, one of the most significant approaches in individual and organizational problem solving that has emerged in the past 40 years.

### **Research Challenge**

The research challenge was to find the right solution for ABC Food's problems. In this context, among the leadership styles reviewed, I wished to investigate whether any specific leadership style was significantly helpful in solving ABC Foods' problems. Since the problems were linked with organizational performance, two aspects of organizational performance were selected for this research project. As foreshadowed in earlier chapters these indicators were employee retention and food safety culture.

To address the leadership style problem at ABC Foods the research questions detailed in Chapter 1 are reiterated::

***RQ1** What leadership challenges does ABC Foods face?*

***RQ2** Why does ABC Foods face these challenges?*

***RQ3** How can ABC Food's leadership challenges be addressed to enhance food safety culture and employee retention?*

### **Why Action Research and Multiple Qualitative Methods?**

In this research the overall AR mode of inquiry has been employed to as appropriate for the study and as meeting the mandatory requirements of DBA research. The research design is a multiple qualitative methods research that includes internal and external inquiry (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Hynes, 2012). The internal action research inquiry is through ABC Foods Learning set and other sources of ABC Foods and observations. In the external inquiry, the data were obtained through observation and interviews. These were all qualitative methods.

The reason for adopting qualitative methods was the nature of the inquiry. This inquiry was more about experience, behavior and the human side of the problems facing the organization. As researchers (e.g. Creswell, 2013; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bernard, 1995) proposed qualitative methods are effective when identifying intangible factors; social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, religion, ethnicity, and other human elements. It is less about numbers and numerical data.

I had alternate methods available for researching such subjects and the option to explore external inquiry through quantitative methods (Easterby-Smith et al. 2012). However, I did not employ quantitative methods due to the limited duration of the research, required larger sample size and constraints in managing and having an agreement to participate in such an extensive inquiry. Due to the nature of this subject, I did not opt to use structured interviews, pre-determine questionnaires or surveys. Instead, the subject under research lent itself more to open-ended, semi-structured interviews. This was because it required actual in-depth interaction to learn from experience, records reviews, and observations. The research requirements did not require a method that needed a large sample size, possible longer duration due to getting agreement from a larger sample to participate and lack of interaction, and lack of participant insight due to pre-determined questionnaire or surveys. I had the option to add other layers or quantitative method in triangulation to confirm identified themes but the time available for the research and DBA requirements were constraints. Instead I opted to triangulate the results of the internal inquiry with an external element thus providing a third-person aspect to the research (Hynes, 2012; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). Finally, the research was less about numerical data and more about human elements, so I chose to use multiple qualitative methods.

In the internal inquiry I employed AR, using interviews to collect first and second-person

data (i.e. my perspective and that of others in my organization). In the external inquiry I employed PAR interviews and observations to collect third-person data (i.e. the perspectives of external food industry experts). I also had the choice to use focus groups, which I decided against, as I could not manage to bring my research participants together in a focus group setting. Also, the records review and observation that were insightful during interviews were not possible in the focus groups so, I did not opt for this.

## **Methods and Research Design**

The research was a multiple qualitative methods study where data were obtained from ABC Foods Executive Management, various stakeholder including employees, ABC Foods learning set, and food industry experts through external interviews. Several researchers (Bergman 2008; Creswell and Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2003; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2012; and Tashakkori, and Teddlie, 2010) have shown preference to using multiple qualitative methods to produce comprehensive and reliable results. Employing multiple qualitative methods allows researchers to gain a more profound sense of the problem by acquiring insights through all possible sources, which makes the outcome robust, reliable, and applicable (James et al. 2008).

In this research the emphasis was placed on the internal inquiry in order to ascertain and investigate the perspectives of the researcher and people in the organization. External inquiry and insights were employed to provide perspectives of food industry experts and to further validate the internal thought process. The internal inquiry included initial data obtained from the executive management, employees, supervisors, and managers to understand the problem and then later through learning set interactions and reflection processes. Later, further data were obtained from external interviews. Food industry experts were engaged in one-on-one open-ended semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2003; Minichello et al. 1997; Patton, 2002 Kvale, 2006, Kvale, 1996) and the review of relevant documents presented during these external interviews.

As designed, the overall project had three phases, where Phase I had a further two subparts. Part one in the first phase included working on defining and refining the problem and setting the stage for AR and AL, while part two in this phase involved aspects of external

inquiry including bringing the external learning to the learning set and their engagement in a reflective process, suggesting solutions and employing the learning. Phase II in this research design revolved around implementing the proposed course of action and strategies to solve ABC Foods Problem. Phase III outlined the monitoring and verification of sustainability of change induced due to this research and further reflection. Figures F3 explains this research framework and the various phases in this AR study. The colors on this figure shows various phases and their key activities.

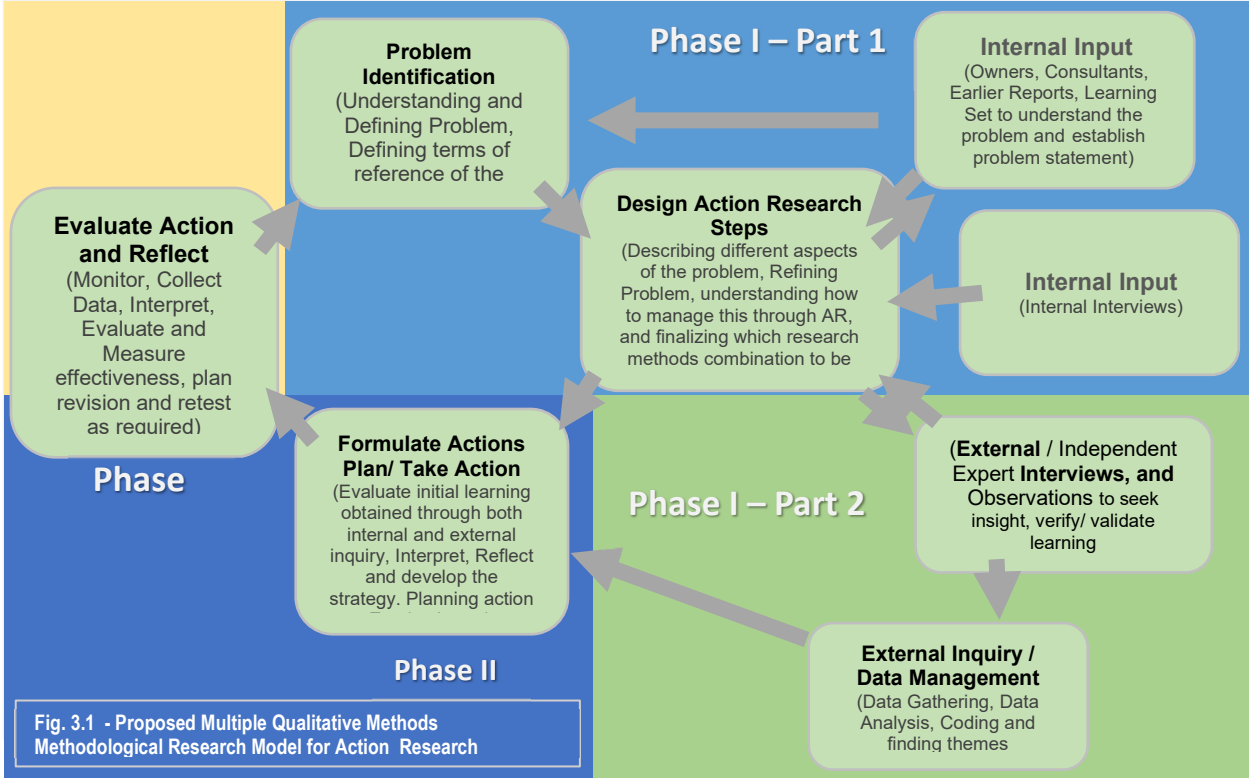


Figure F3 - Proposed Multiple Qualitative Methods Methodological Research Model for Action Research

**Research Project Timeline**

The project started on December 01, 2016 with an assigned timeline of 2-3 years to complete all the phases. The first six months were assigned for initial groundwork, LS development, initial working and problem statement issuance. The period from 6-18 months was for internal and external inquiry and bringing data to LS, and completing the reflection, suggesting the solution, and taking action. The next six months were to see the

immediate results of the action and the last 12 months were to see sustainability. monitor the sustainability of actions on these changes. A committee was proposed to monitor results and KPIs.

### **Methods in Action Research Project – Phase 01**

Terms of reference and the context of this project were established at the beginning of the project following discussion with ABC Foods' Executive Management. The phases of the research were designed and required activities were established. Then the research design was finalized.

As per the research design, this phase had two further parts. Part 01 was about aspects surrounding internal inquiry while part two was an external inquiry, then bringing the learning to the learning set based on both internal and external insights before a further course of action was prescribed. Being an AR project, as a first step, the learning set was established.

### **Selection and Training of the Learning Set**

In this project members of the learning set (LS) were selected on December 02, 2016 and the concept of AL was introduced. In the LS there were seven members plus the researcher. Pedler (2008) and Marquardt et al. (2013) have suggested 6-8 members of a LS for action learning projects. As also advocated by Marquardt et al. (2013), each LS member was deliberately chosen (Dilworth, 1998; Pedler, 2008). One of the key criteria for selection was awareness and earlier involvement with ABC Foods problem-solving efforts. Another reason was the ability to engage others and be effective in organizational efforts. All the members had a stake in the organizational problem and its solution. These people were part of the problem and were expected to be part of the solution, which Marquardt et al. (2013) discussed as the power of diversity.

The LS for the study included Director QA & Food Safety Operations, Senior Director Operations, HR Manager, Member Supervisors', Plant Manager, Board Member, Member Employee Committee and the Researcher. Learning set members participation was voluntary. In the early stages the LS members had their roles, duties and rights explained

by the researcher. An agreement was signed with members of the LS that explained their right to join, be within the group and right to leave. There was no financial benefit for LS members to be part of this team. Their only gain was recognition and skill development in a problem-solving process.

I convened multiple sessions to explain the concepts of AR to LS members. As also outlined by Marquardt et al. (2013, p 13, 45), among the group norms and ground rules were “a promise to the task, commitment to participate, knowledge of the problem, implementation power and confidentiality”. After the LS was established one of its key tasks was to define ABC Foods problem and prepare a problem statement.

### **Learning Set Awareness and training for AR**

The ABC Foods learning set was new to the concept of AR and AL and its application in problem-solving. To understand the aspects of AR, contributions from various experts, practitioners, and researchers were reviewed and consulted. The study was based on AR concepts and methodologies outlined by Coghlan and Brannick (2014), Coghlan and Shani (2014), Raelin (2010), Damme (1998), Argyris et al. (1985) and Lewin (1946). For AL the research was grounded in the work of Revans (1982, 2011), Pedler (2008), Pedler and Christine (2013) and Marquardt et al. (2013).

The AR project was structured on four major elements outlined as below by Coghlan and Brannick (2014):

1. *Understanding the Context of the problem to the organization,*
2. *Building Collaboration with the process,*
3. *Cycles of Learning, Reflection and Action and*
4. *Sustainability in Action.*

The inquiry in this project involved first person, second person and third person practice. Collaboration is the key in AR projects; that is why it is stated that action research is principally a collaborative process. Action is vital in AR and in organizations, it is not possible without others and their collaboration. The challenge is engaging others in a useful inquiry and reflection. The key was to engage the process in double loop learning

(Argyris et al. 1985) by not only identifying issues but also establishing why they existed.

### **Action Research Cycle and Spirals of Learning**

As explained by researchers (e.g., Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Greenwood and Levin, 2007), learning and reflection in AR occurs through the operation of spirals. Spirals work in sequence and may operate at the same time or even overlap. These concurrent spirals of action research were similar to Deming's Plan, Do, Study and Act cycle (Tague, 2005). The moment one cycle failed to produce results; after evaluation, a new cycle was initiated. This process of continuous improvement went on until the problem was resolved or some important insight was revealed. Figure F4 and F5 show these cycles.

As advocated by Coghlan and Brannick (2014), the research process at this stage was seeking to know the present situation, intended focus, plan to do, how to get there, the actors, way of action, plan to do next, if it does not work and produce intended results. The figures below reflect the single spiral and series of spirals of learning and reflection.

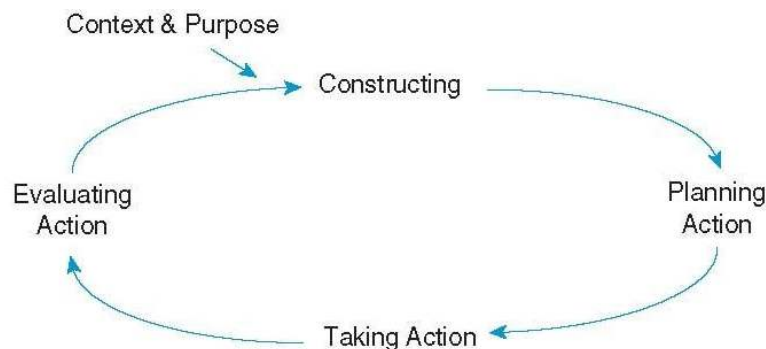


Figure F4 - Action Research Cycle (Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p. 9)

### **Data Collection through Spirals of Learning and Reflection.**

This was the phase where the group started going through spirals of learning and reflection. The problem was clarified, and its implications were discussed with the LS. Possible solutions to address this problem were discussed. The LS ran numerous spirals of learning. The learning set defined and refined the problem of ABC Foods and explored various aspects of the problem. At this stage, contributing to the learning set's learning, the sources of data were executive management, managers, employees, past consultants and advisors.

Also, the researcher and the learning set members reviewed all the reports and minutes of meeting from previous consultants and improvement teams.

Through the spirals of learning, the outcome of this part of the research was the problem statement, finalized research questions, research design and initial assessment about the possible causes and remedies. This process took a few months to find possible causes and then highlight the key issues.

The researcher and the learning set assessed these documents (Appendix A), discussed possible causes, engaged in the extensive literature review, consulted various stakeholders in the organization and finally suggested leadership style as the key factor in failures in achieving success in earlier food safety initiatives. The learning set explored the aspects of both management and leadership as a possible cause of the failure. The learning set process of reflection declared this not to be a question of application but a question of direction and top management leadership and commitment. This was also supported by the earlier consultants' reports. So, it became evident that it was the leadership and their style that caused the issue. The researcher decided to explore what was an appropriate leadership style. That required spirals of learning and reflection at ABC Foods.

The researcher with the help of LS, engaged in spirals of learning in order to address the research questions relating to ABC Foods' leadership challenges, why these were challenges while trying to identify possible remedies. The initial research design consisted of an internal inquiry but later in order to provide a third-person perspective, and to validate the internal inquiry outcomes, it was decided to seek confirmatory answers of the RQs through external inquiry. The research design was expanded to add an external inquiry through expert interviews and observation during these interviews.



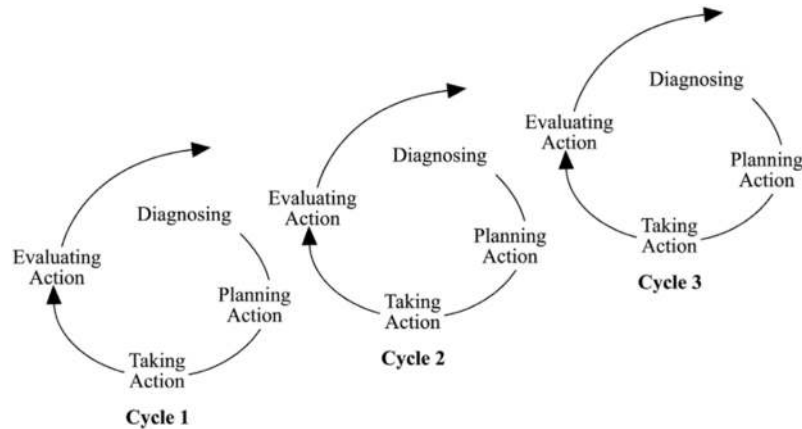


Figure F5 Spirals of Inquiry in AR by Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p. 11)

### **Phase 01- Part 1 – Methods - Internal interviews**

In this research model, in phase 01, part 01, one of the significant sources of insight to understand ABC Foods problem was internal interviews. These were semi-structured, open-ended interviews. An interview guide (Appendix B) was prepared and used to conduct these interviews. In this step, the researcher selected 17 interviewees from inside the organization. The number of participants selected was aligned with the suggested sample size outlined in table 9.

#### **Selection Criteria**

To select participants for the internal interviews, selection criteria were established. Since the idea was to understand the problem and its implications, individuals with greater insight and deeper involvement in the organization and its earlier efforts to induce change were selected. Some of the participants were members of the earlier improvement committees in the organization.

Wherever possible individuals with a long association (at least 10 years or more), or significant involvement in earlier efforts to bring change, or involvement in similar initiatives in the company were selected. In order to have appropriate representation, selection was made from all possible groups to understand their perspective about the ABC Foods' issues. This diversity was also required to remove any bias among different groups and finally to have a comprehensive and clear view of the problem.

## **Exclusion Criteria**

Individuals with shorter duration (less than 3 years) at the organization, and individuals with no strategic role or possibly no role in earlier efforts in the organization to bring change or similar changes, were not included. In the entire list of participants, the only exception to the selection criteria was a new chief executive officer with two-year service but who was part of the earlier efforts to make changes in the organization. The interviewees list is given in Appendix C.

## **Phase 01- Part 2 – Methods - External interview**

In this phase, the researcher and the LS decided to take help from external inquiry to augment and validate internal learning. This was done through external interviews. The senior executives and experts from diversified food business manufacturing environments were included in these interviews.

## **Selection of Research Participants – For External Expert Interviews**

For semi-structured in-depth interviews, the companies were selected from professional databases or professional organization memberships and internet resources. I was a member of various professional organizations that helped me in the communication, and selection. For interviews, participants' selection was made through convenience sampling from food companies and their executives which were either actively engaged or had been engaged in managing organizational performance projects, managing employee retention challenges or running food safety culture initiatives and dealing with challenges of food safety culture. Through this process 12 interview participants were selected from various food manufacturing sectors. In order to diversify and understand the implications of the study attributes, data were sourced from diversified food business environments.

For external interviews, experts were selected from the different food sector categories; juice and beverage, premium water, dairy, baking, nuts and cereals, snack manufacturing, food services (food auditing/consulting), confectionery, meat, and natural products. Attempts were also made to find respondents from different layers of senior management, such as CEOs, presidents, general managers, VPs, directors, and plant managers. Furthermore, in order to diversify the selection was also extended to

experienced food safety and quality system auditors and consultants.

The selection of interviewees was made within Canada and the USA. The interview participants were formally approached in order to judge their interest and seek their consent. The purpose and implications of the study were explained, and once an agreement was reached, written consent was requested before recruitment.

The key reason for interviewees' selection was based on the fact that he/she was either currently involved or had been, at some point, actively involved with projects associated with leadership and leadership styles and their impact on organizational performance, preferably in terms of our selected indicators, i.e., employee retention, and safe food and quality culture. Their valuable insights did not just help me in completing my research but also facilitated in the understanding of the value of shared leadership in managing organizational performance for the industry.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Companies that did not focus on leadership and its style as a strategy to manage performance were excluded. In addition, companies and individuals who did not encounter employees' retention issues, or were not working to cultivate advanced food safety management systems and food safety culture were excluded.

### **Data Gathering in Phase 1 (Part 1 & 2)**

In this phase, in addition to other sources of information (owners, internal consultants, external consultants' reports, earlier minutes of meetings and improvement reports review, observations, suggestion box, learning set discussions), the most significant sources of insight were interviews. Though all the modes of data gathering contributed to understanding internal interviews were used to finally understand the research questions, especially RQ 1 and RQ 2. RQ 3 was oriented more towards findings solutions so at this stage although insight was gained it was left to the end to finalize solutions. The learning gained through various data gathering, including internal interviews, was later brought to the learning set for further discussion and reflection.

Part 2 in this phase involved external interviews. This part of the research involved employing external interviewing as a data gathering tool and testing research questions before the insight was brought back to the ABC Foods learning set and employed to assist in solving the issues faced by

ABC Foods. External data from interviews was added into the research model to add further trustworthiness and to triangulate the internal data (Karvinen and Bennett, 2006). The value of external data in AR is proposed by Coghlan and Brannick (2014).

Part 1 of this phase included exploring implications of the research questions and the tools required to pursue further insight. To manage both internal and external interviews, the researcher developed an interview guide and formulated its requirements based on literature, the RQs and the researchers' experience.

During this phase, in order to learn from external sources, the research aimed to interview around 12 experts from 8–10 companies. This sample size was based on the recommendations of numerous researchers, for example McCracken (1988), Baker and Edwards, (2012), Robinson (2014) and Guest, et al. (2006). Among these researchers, McCracken suggested that for this type of study, a minimum of eight respondents are adequate. Baker and Edwards compiled a review paper that brought insight from various researchers. Their recommendations were for 12 respondents. Robinson (2014) on the other hand suggested 10-12 interviews. Guest et al. (2006) suggested 12 interviews as sufficient. To them, in a homogenous group six interviews are sufficient to identify meta-themes with a further six interviews to achieve data saturation. Table T9 has been adapted from the work of Guest et al. (2006) to underpin the researchers' view on the correct sample size.

When I started my search to find the appropriate sample size, I found it a daunting task and a tough question. Due to the variance in approaches, it was not easy to find the right sample size of interviews. The table below (Table 3.1) reflects that after Guest et al.'s (2006) publication, other researchers have confirmed and adopted 6-12 interviews as a range for qualitative interviews to reach saturation. The work of Wilcock et al. (2011), Nguyen et al. (2004) and Latham (2014) provided examples of adopting a sample size of 8-11 respondents. Working in the range of 6-12 sample size, to avoid validation issues, I have kept my sample size towards the upper limit.

Table, T9 - Understanding when to reach Saturation from Empirical Studies (adapted from [Guest et al. 2006](#))

Study Authors	Saturation Definition	Findings
Individual interviews		
<b>Morgan and colleagues (2002)</b>	Not defined	5-6 interviews for most concepts
<b>Guest et al. 2006</b>	The proportion of identified themes at a given point in analysis divided by the total number of themes identified in that analysis	Total 12 interviews (6 interviews to reach discovery of meta themes and later 6 interviews to reach data saturation).
<b>Francis et al. (2010)</b>	The point, after conducting 10 interviews, when three additional interviews yield no new themes	Most themes in both studies identified within 5-6 interviews Saturation reached within 17 interviews in one study, and not reached in 14 interviews in a second study
<b>Coenen et al. (2012)(gated)</b>	The point at which linking concepts from two consecutive focus groups or individual interviews reveals no additional second-level categories	Inductive approach: 13 interviews to reach saturation Deductive approach: 8 interviews to reach saturation
<b>Hagaman and Wutich (2016)(gated)</b>	The number of interviews required to identify the most common themes in a total of three interviews	Less than 16 interviews at the site level 20-40 interviews to identify cross-cultural meta-themes
<b>Namey et al. (2016)</b>	The proportion of identified themes at a given point in analysis divided by the total number of themes identified in that analysis	At the median: 8 interviews to reach 80% saturation (range 5-11). 16 interviews to reach 90% saturation (range 11-26)

## Interview Guide

Before conducting the interviews, an interview guide was developed to manage the process. The guide explained the type of questions in general and how the data was to be secured and interpreted. As argued by Seidman (2013), the interview process itself could be misleading if it is not managed correctly. Seidman 's (2013) work offered insight regarding the implications associated with the interview staging process. It also set out various pitfalls associated with this process. As emphasized by Gorden (1992) in his comprehensive book on basic interviewing skills, since interviews were conducted with a purpose, it was imperative to store them in a relevant, usable, and accessible form in order to fulfil the purpose.

The guide (Appendix B) for semi-structured internal interviews was developed based on the researcher's learning, researcher's experience, LS experience, the management problem and the literature review. The key idea was to address the RQs. The guide

(Appendix D) for semi-structured external interviews was developed based on the researchers learning, researcher's experience, LS experience, the literature review, the outcome of internal interviews and the last RQ. The key idea was to explore answers for the third RQ and cross check findings of internal interview linked with RQ three.

## **Analytical Methods**

### **Data Collection, Data Security and Interpretation**

In this research model, part 2 in phase I also conducted data collection, handling, and processing. This involved two set of interviews. Internal interviews and external interviews. Internal interviews were conducted inside the organization whereas external interviews were done outside ABC Foods. Internal interviews took less than two weeks. Interviews from food industry experts and top executives were arranged and took four months to complete. The data obtained from interviews were collected through trusted media (written, recorded, and audio/video tools). Records were maintained securely. All computer files were password protected. Only the researcher and his supervisor had access.

As suggested by numerous researchers and scholars (e.g., Berg, 2007; Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2013; Holloway and Wheeler, 1995; McCracken, 1988) the interviews offered significant insights into understanding the answer to the research questions. The data obtained from interviews were carefully recorded. The researcher reflected on these interviews immediately after the activity and memos of activities were maintained. All recordings were transcribed and detailed notes were prepared.

### **Interview Data Analytical Methods**

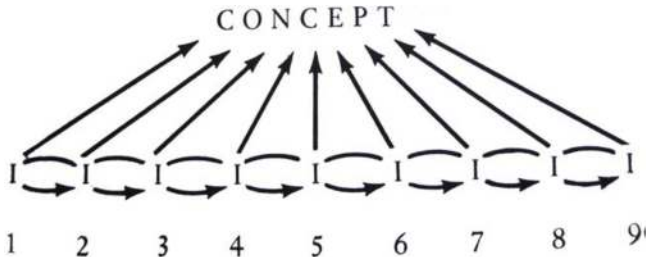
Data obtained from interviews were then analyzed employing the concept of coding and constant comparison. Coding is referred to as a process of data analysis that labels patterns or events in the data (McCann and Clark, 2003a; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998). Coding has three levels: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. At the start, open coding was used on a line-by-line basis, splitting data into distinct parts, closely and watchfully and probing them, and then comparing them with other data to establish dissimilarities and matching trends. The outcome of this process was labelled

concepts (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998).

As proposed by Charmaz (2000) and Corbin (1986a) classifying data as abstract representations facilitates identification of concepts that are similar in nature, or close in terms of meaning, together with the grouping of concepts into categories. While classifying the data, all aspects and contexts were studied to comprehend full understanding of the phenomenon under study. While analyzing data, both macro and micro conditions were considered. As classification was progressing the researcher continuously compared the aspects under consideration with others already identified, to discover common features between concepts, occurrences, events and phenomena, and also to recognize differences.

Strauss (1987) suggests a concept-indicator model, presented in Figure F6 below, that shows the conceptual coding of empirical data, based on the constant comparison of one concept with another. Wherever common features were discovered the concept under discussion was added to the same category as the similar concepts previously identified. As a result, higher-order categories or concepts were put together. As concepts were emerging the researcher endeavoured to group concepts and categories then into more abstract collectives or categories.

This process of labelling outlined a degree of interpretation of meaning that originated from the context in which the phenomenon was found. As the concepts were labelled, details of methods of analysis, possible interpretation and possible queries were also recorded for future consideration.



Figure, F6 - The Concept Indicator Model from Strauss (1987).

In data coding the next stage is termed axial coding (Strauss, 1987). In this process, data disaggregated in the open coding process are re-assembled to offer further elucidation of

the phenomena. To Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998) axial coding is a conceptual exercise not a descriptive one. Similar concepts are grouped in the process of axial coding. At this stage, while open and axial coding techniques were being employed, the researcher was attempting to review and think about data at a theoretical level in order eventually to re-organize concepts back into a meaningful whole. This was the time that the researcher was reorganizing data to see possible linkages and correlations. This reorganizing of data has been explained as a method and activity based on probing the interrelationship between and amongst themes and concepts, following the coding scheme advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998).

Simultaneously while passing the data through open and axial coding, the third level of coding, termed selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990,1998; McCann and Clark, 2003a, 2003b) was introduced. This particular level of coding was more about creating linkages and provided a conceptual ordering of the data and available information (Corbin, 1986b). Selective coding has been explained as the theory building stage of analysis in which the researcher, at a theoretical rather than descriptive level, tries to establish a theory based on explanations of phenomena grounded in data from interviews and literature (Stern, 1980; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). By developing linkage between categories and concepts, the researcher was able to see prevalent themes.

### **Interview Data Processing Methods through Learning Set**

After analysis, data were presented to the LS at ABC Foods for learning and reflection. As a result, the researcher after taking input from the LS suggested a solution and developed a strategy to implement that solution. It was this stage where the outcome of the internal inquiry was also compared with the insight obtained from the external inquiry. Internal learning was strengthened with supporting insight from external learning as suggested by Coghlan and Brannick (2014, pp. 91). The researcher again engaged the learning set in comparison and reflection processes and finally was able to see the answer to leadership and leadership style questions.

## **Phase II**



This phase in this AR was the stage for the implementation of learning. A central implementation board was established along with 10 different teams for departments.

The training program was established for different levels at the facility. In addition, due to the size of the overall operation, and time constraints, I also conducted a train the trainer program to produce a trainer for helping create awareness at lower levels. The key learning in these training programs revolved around shared leadership style, concept awareness, individual and team roles, and expectations from management and employees.

Sessions were also conducted for senior management where the above concepts, limitations and strengths of shared leadership were also outlined. It was explained, why the researcher and the LS have proposed this leadership style. The teams were also trained on how to engage in spirals of learning and reflection to manage resistance to change. The leaders were involved in case studies and actual scenarios, so the concept was truly understood. In this process, external help was also obtained. I also arranged for train the trainer sessions, so the required awareness and training did not rely on one person. We developed quizzes and one-on-one sessions to monitor the training effectiveness. The learning set was heavily involved with the propagation of shared leadership and creating a shared vision and emerging focus.

The training was not the only thing that was required for effective implementation. The organization's ownership and executive management before training allocated resources and assigned a budget to attain our objectives. A well-structured plan was developed, and milestones were set up to monitor the status of effectiveness of the implementation phase. After successful completion of training and awareness programs, finally, the concept was introduced through the system.

A team lead by the researcher was established to ensure compliance and troubleshoot where required. We had a lot of issues and resistance from a few people in terms of accepting the proposed leadership style, which was expected as foreshadowed by Locke (2003) and Conger and Pearce (2003). We were prepared and were able to find solutions to convince management and employees at ABC Foods to be on board.

## **Phase III**

### **Action Research Phase – III – Sustaining the change, Monitoring its impact and Reflection**

After implementation of the learning to bring required change in the earlier phase, the current phase was designed to monitor change and its effectiveness and provide further reflection on making this change effective and sustainable. To monitor change data were gathered in order to see its progression and key performance indicators were identified. It was decided to make a monitoring plan and issue a progress report regularly. For further discussion and reflection, the researcher shared the report with the main learning set and other improvement teams involved in this project at ABC Foods. To see the effectiveness of the changes introduced as a result of the research intervention and adoption of shared leadership style, two KPIs were established; one for employee retention and second for food safety culture.

#### **Monitoring and Measurement of Employee Retention**

For this KPI, an employee retention index/employee stability index was established as an indicator to monitor how ABC foods were doing after the change. This indicator was easy to calculate, being a simple percentage of employees retained by ABC Foods in the next 12 month period. This indicator was extracted from the Work Institute Employee Retention Report (2016), and HR Manual (2011) and is the difference between employees joining and leaving in the period per 100 employees. These employee retention reports showed 88-92% (year 2015/2016) of retention as an average for organizations. The ABC Foods retention rate (77%) at the time was much lower, so it was proposed to monitor the impact of changes on employee retention. At the time of project start-up, the monthly rate of retention was 77 % that did not include acceptable 1% for unproductive employees leaving the organization. The aim was set for 96 % retention over the next five year period. It was decided to monitor the data once every month to see the effectiveness. It was also decided to do exit interviews to see if leadership style or other similar aspects influenced turnover. The voluntary exit interview was straightforward and asked what caused a person to leave?

## **Monitoring and Measurement of Food Safety Culture**

One of the key questions was about measuring the success in food safety culture. It was a tough ask. Though various assessment tools, strategies, or fundamental factors have been suggested by researchers (Jespersen, 2014; Seward et al. 2012; Yiannas, 2009) all of these tools or factors are not wholly implemented by any organization. Furthermore, these research works do not achieve comprehensive coverage of possible food operation types, such as food service, food retail, bulk food operation, and food manufacturing. In fact, these models have proposed further models that are works in progress.

Seward et al. (2012) sought to employ or establish a performance-based standard to measure or assess food safety culture. Jespersen et al. (2016), through their research work "Measuring Food Safety Culture in Food Manufacturing," proposed a model to assess the food safety culture, which they termed the food safety maturity model (Appendix E). This proposed model on food safety maturity offered five levels for the realization of an internalized state of maturity. In this model, maturity was evaluated across five areas of capability: perceived value, people systems, process thinking, technology enabled, and tools and infrastructure. This model was designed to carry out assessments and establish a road map. The model offered a scale of measurement outlined by Jespersen et al. (2016, p. 179) as "the measure is one of progression along the food safety maturity model scale, and can, therefore, be used to highlight areas of strength and help prioritize areas of improvement for the individual organization." This model represents a significant advancement towards understanding the basis of food safety culture and how it can be attained. The aspect is relevant for this research in examining leadership, leadership style as a requirement, or the level of leadership as a requirement for a productive food safety culture.

Another view is taking globally benchmarked (GFSI benchmarked) food safety management standards and codes (BRC, SQF, FSSC 22000, IFS) as models of food safety culture and organizational performance. These GFSI standards have been highlighted as indicators of food safety culture by many researchers (e.g. Jespersen et al. 2016; Jespersen and Huffman, 2014; Griffith, 2006, 2010; Yiannas, 2009). These food safety standards are well known in the food industry.

In the food industry performance standards that define the most critical food safety tasks,

competencies, and behaviors are either defined by organizations themselves or provided by external and independent bodies or regulatory authorities. In such cases, I relied on an independent regulatory or third-party code of practice, standards, and schemes. Among these available possible performance standards are regulatory HACCP (FDA, USDA, CFIA FSEP, Health Canada, FSA-UK, EFSA, Standards Australia, and similar other standards), Codex HACCP (Codex Alimentarius), privately-owned GFSI benchmarked food safety standards/schemes (IFS, SQF, BRC, FSSC 22000, Global Gap, Primus Gap, among others), and Global Quality Excellence Standards/Awards (Baldrige Award, Black Pearl). Wherever feasible, I have preferred the application of the GFSI benchmarked standards, since these are globally well-recognized as common performance monitoring standards for food operations (Jespersen et al., 2016, Griffith, 2010; Yiannas, 2009; Nguyen et al. 2004; Jespersen, 2014).

Across all these performance monitoring standards, there is an emphasis on management commitment. Resource provision and leadership commitment constitute central factors. All of these performance monitoring standards (GFSI, preferred standards) necessitate collaboration, participation, and teamwork. The central aspect that renders it further suitable for my research as a performance monitoring standard is that these require input from everybody, they value shared vision and portray food safety as a shared responsibility.

In all of these standards, the lack of input from senior management or the absence of the leadership and executive management's role is rated as a critical responsibility. Recently, BRC, one of the schemes among these GFSI benchmark food safety schemes added a particular optional module in food safety culture. Other benchmarked schemes did not have this food safety culture module, but SQF Quality had almost all the fundamentals that BRC food safety culture had. In addition SQF Quality had additional total quality management and business excellence tools. To measure performance under food safety culture in this research selected successful implementation of SQF Food Safety for manufacturing code and SQF Quality code both as an indicator.

For food safety culture, it was decided to achieve an advanced food safety management system certification within 6-12 months' period. GFSI benchmarked schemes were selected for that. ABC Foods decided to go for SQF food safety certification (Level 2) in

12 months, SQF Food Quality (Level 3) within 24 months of execution date and 12 months after SQF Food Safety certification. Many researchers (e.g., Jespersen, 2014; Jespersen et al., 2016, Griffith, 2006, 2010; Yiannas, 2009) argued that compliance and independent third-party certification to any of the GFSI Benchmark schemes (BRC, SQF, IFS, FSSC 22000) is an indicator of achieving success in establishing requirements of food safety culture. Yiannas (2009) and Griffith et al. (2010a) encouraged that showing compliance to these GFSI schemes is to show intent and indication towards employing a food safety culture. Another reason to make this was the links between KPIs and customer requirements. The customers emphasized having a strong food safety culture at ABC Foods, and SQF was suggested as an indicator.

Table T10 and 11 explain all three phases in this action research project, their description, the primary tools employed for data gathering in these phases, research methods used, and strategies developed to manage this research and its requirements. The last column in Table 11 also outlines learning in all three phases and in Table 11 explains the weight and value of the evidence used in data gathering.

Table, T10 - Action Research Project Phases and their associated implications

Phases	Phases Description	Data Collection, Research Methods Employed, Strategies	Learning in the Phase
<b>Phase - I</b>	<p><i>Understanding and defining the Problem through internal and external inquiry.</i></p> <p>Part -1: Internal Inquiry Part – 2: External Inquiry</p>	<p><b>Internal Inquiry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Documents Review</li> <li>• Consultants’ Reports</li> <li>• Review Employee Surveys</li> <li>• Suggestion Box</li> <li>• Internal Interviews</li> <li>• Interviews Analysis/ Coding</li> <li>• Learning Set Reflections</li> <li>• Observation</li> </ul> <p><b>External Inquiry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Documents Review</li> <li>• Expert Interviews</li> <li>• Data Collection</li> <li>• Coding/ Constant Comparison</li> </ul>	<p>The problem with ABC Foods is understood. The AR project and its link and importance in solving the ABC Foods problem is understood. Research design is finalized and applied, and research inquiry is completed. Data was obtained through both internal and external inquiry and processed to find facts. Being an AR project, research outcome was mainly based on internal inquiry. The external inquiry was added to add external perspective, validation and support triangulation.</p>
<b>Phase - II</b>	<p><i>Strategy Development and Implementation</i></p> <p>(Strategies to implement the proposed mode of action to bring change at ABC Foods)</p> <p>Part - 1: Strategy Development Part – 2: Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Set</li> <li>• Executive Management Meetings</li> <li>• Core Implementation Teams development</li> <li>• Sectional Implementation Development</li> <li>• Awareness and Training program development</li> <li>• Train the Trainer Program development</li> <li>• Train the Trainer development</li> <li>• Training program delivery</li> <li>• Working on Implementation</li> </ul>	<p>Based on the learning set’s recommendations, strategies are developed to implement changes.</p> <p>A specific leadership style will be adopted that could offer solutions to ABC Foods Problems.</p> <p>The strategy will be developed on how to embrace the proposed leadership style.</p> <p>Among other strategies, training at different levels is the key tool in implementation.</p>
<b>Phase - III</b>	<p>Implementation Evaluation, Monitoring Effectiveness and Reflection</p> <p>Part 01 – Monitor Changes and evaluate their effectiveness.</p> <p>Part 02 – Reflection based on the effectiveness of implementation changes and their results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collected through monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>• Learning Set Meetings</li> <li>• Implementation Groups meetings</li> <li>• Review of Changes and their effects</li> <li>• Running new cycles of reflection</li> </ul>	<p>To monitor implementation and assess effectiveness, strategies are developed.</p> <p>Data is collected and evaluated in the learning set.</p> <p>Based on the outcome of monitoring and level of effectiveness, further cycles of reflection will be run.</p> <p>Learning Set for learning set and the organization (ABC Foods).</p> <p>Learning for the DBA Scholar as a practitioner, as a researcher, leader and a future practitioner.</p> <p>Learning for the food business operations in general and for the future researchers in this subject.</p>

Table, T11 - Phases, Instrument used and Weigh and Value of Corresponding Evidence

Phases		Data Gathering Instrument used	Evidence Resulting
Phase - I	Part 1 - Internal Inquiry	Executive management meeting – to initially understand the problem	Minutes of 03 meetings of 60-75 minutes each.
		Employee surveys	Review of 01 survey of employees
		Examination of old documents	Minutes of 45 earlier improvement meetings Review of six internal and external consultation reports.
		Face to face interviews	17 semi structured interviews 30-45 minutes duration
		Learning set meeting	Minutes of 17 LS meetings
	Part 2 - External Inquiry	Face to face interviews	12 semi structured interviews 30-45 minutes duration
		Examination of documents obtained from external interviewees	Two report of improvement projects, there case studies – final summaries of improvement and change management projects. One environment analysis. One annual review meeting minutes.
Learning set meeting		Minutes of 5 LS meetings	
Phase - II	Part 1 - Strategy Development	Executive Management Meetings	Meeting minutes of 05 meetings 30-60 minutes each.
		Team Development meetings	Meeting minutes of 11 meetings 45-60 minutes each.
		Learning set meeting	Minutes of 09 LS meetings
	Part 2 - Implementation	Executive Management Meetings	Meeting minutes of 04 meetings 30-60 minutes each.
		Team Training meetings	Meeting minutes of 17 meetings 45-60 minutes each.
		Learning set meeting	Minutes of 11 LS meetings
Phase - III	Part 1 - Monitoring Part 2 - Reflection	Executive Management Meetings	Meeting minutes of 08 review meetings 45-60 minutes each.
		Team project monitoring overview meetings	Meeting minutes of 11 meetings 45-60 minutes each.
		Learning set meeting	Minutes of 26 LS meetings
		KPIs compliance Review meetings	Meeting minutes of 12 monthly meetings 45-60 minutes each.

As an action research model, spirals of learning were my way of progression to see how the environment at ABC Foods was changing. Data collected in Phase III was in terms of a *stability index in employee retention* and achievement in getting closer to SQF Certification for Food Safety and later Advanced Quality Management System (SQF for

Quality). The performance was assessed, and reports were issued every month and information and data was brought to the learning set and other improvement teams to see progress. The researcher and the learning set was there to run spirals of learning and reflection to made changes in strategy as required. The results and analysis and reflections chapters outline how these methods were employed and what data was generated and analyzed and how the strategies were developed at the beginning and then modified as the project proceeded in this project.

### **Story Telling in this Thesis**

To explain the process of AR, most of the thesis is written more in a storytelling style. Since the research is divided into phases as explained later, and in a reflection chapter, this storytelling is more evident in the results and reflection chapter. I had the option to merge results and reflection chapters together, but due to the nature of the research and to show distinctively the process of employing action research, action learning, and reflection, standalone chapters were added. Raw data are presented in the data and results chapter only, but interpretations and usage are also outlined and expanded in the reflection chapter. Both chapters are required to be studied to understand the employment of AR in this study. The remainders of the chapters are those usually present in a thesis (e.g. introduction, literature review, conclusions) and a very formal approach has been adopted while researching and writing those chapters. The rationale and methodology have been explained in these corresponding chapters.

### **Data and Research Process Reliability and Trustworthiness**

Like any other reputable research work, trustworthiness and credibility of the process and work done in this study were very important to the researcher. To ensure trustworthiness, precautions were taken at every step of the way: idea generation, action research as a mode of inquiry, literature review, methods, research design, data sampling, data collection, data security, data interpretation and analysis, coding and, constant comparison analysis, and employment of ethics in this research project.

In the literature review, data analysis, comparison and review, the researcher tried to rely on the latest and most reliable research work unless it was really necessary to show



evolution or origin of concepts. Unless there were constraints in getting relevant work, most of the knowledge sources, reference articles, research papers, and books were contemporary, reputable and scientific. A very few sources were used that were more than 15 years old though every effort was made to refer only to recent and authentic work.

To avoid mistakes in the review of literature, guidance and frameworks advocated by renowned researchers like Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) Zorn and Campbell (2006) and Hart (1998) were embraced. Since it was an AR and AL project, the fundamental insight about the processes from either concept originators or very reputable experts and researchers was sought (e.g. Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Coghlan and Shani, 2014; Raelin, 2010; Greenwood and Levin, 2007; Pedler, 2008; Marquardt et al., 2013; Damme, 1998; Mumford, 1994; Argyris et al., 1985; Revans, 1982; Lewin, 1946).

To make the interviewing process reliable, guidance was obtained from the work of Dempsey et al. (2016), Berg, 2007, Seidman (2013), Guest et al. (2006), Crouch and McKenzie (2006), Patton (2002), Creswell (2013), Holloway and Wheeler (1995) and McCracken (1988) and numerous others. The idea was to establish a strong interview framework and avoid process pitfalls to deliver a reliable research product that offers reliable reference and knowledge to future researchers. To establish questionnaire insights and possible questions, while maintaining relevance to the food industry, the work of Ball et al. (2009), Wilcock et al. (2011), Nguyen et al. (2004), and Abidin, (2013) were sourced. Among the current contributions, Abidin's (2013) questionnaire (Appendix F) offered me useful insight.

My research design had multiple qualitative methods. I used numerous methods to gain insight. Researchers (e.g. Bergman, 2008; James et al. 2008, Creswell and Clark, 2007; Creswell, 2003) have encouraged the use of mixed methods in research. The concept of triangulation was really useful to gain comprehensive learning. Triangulation in research data is a powerful technique that facilitates data through cross verification from two or more data sources (Carter et al. 2014) and its application is viewed as an indication of trustworthiness. It refers to the combination and application of numerous research methods in the same study (Patton, 2002). With the help of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research establish a comprehensive understanding of the

phenomena (Patton, 2002). Triangulation was also provided by including a third-person perspective through interviews of food industry experts (Hynes, 2012). As advocated by Carter et al. (2014, p. 545), “Triangulation also has been viewed as a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources”. As in qualitative research, Triangulation is viewed as a strategy to test trustworthiness of the data and methods.

In data gathering the concept of saturation (Latham, 2013; Wilcock, et al., 2011; Guest et al., 2006; Nguyen et al., 2004) was used to ensure data sufficiency. In sample size and data gathering process, the use of the concept of saturation was another indicator of reliable sample size and data validity (Guest et al., 2006). In data interpretation and analysis, content and coding a constant comparison approach to analysis was used to add further credibility in the process (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998).

To add further to trustworthiness in this research, in the external interviews, the data and input has been taken from industry leading professionals with hands-on experiences. In external inquiry, experts were not from one industry. These interviewees were from different hierarchical levels, diversified food sector, various food business environments including manufacturing and service industries, and from different geographical regions. This diversity offered triangulation (McCann & Clark, 2003c) in this research. As outlined under table T12 the background and experience of external interviewees were diversified and extensive. With the exception of two, all interviewees were long-serving employees with more than 20 years of professional exposure to food business environments, with none having spent less than 15 years in a leadership role. To expand and add further comprehension, leaders were selected from both public and privately-owned companies. The interviewees were carefully selected with appropriate and relevant backgrounds to add further strength and authenticity to insights received through this process.

Another aspect that further added to credibility and trustworthiness of the insight gained from this research was the constant comparison of information during data analysis before themes were identified. The data obtained in interviews were cross referenced and validated through the constant comparison process both within and between interviews. Constant comparison helped not just in creating linkages but also in the coding process.

At the beginning categories developed quickly but as the review progresses slowed down as argued by Corbin (1986a).

Additionally, the information obtained was challenged and reviewed through the rigorous lens of reflection and literature review. The reliable work of earlier researchers, wherever possible and available was used to cross reference, verify and validate findings. Key concepts were referenced through leading scholars in the food industry on the subject or related subjects. Agreements and disagreement were observed in this research, which were supported through reliable references.

### **Ethical Perspective – How to Preserve Ethics in this Research**

The role of ethics in conducting research is paramount. Numerous researchers (e.g. Creswell, 2013; Easterby-Smith, 2012; Guillemin and Gillam, 2004; Orb et al., 2001) have highlighted its need and application in research. This research work set out to preserve respect, integrity, and confidentiality for individuals and organizations. In addition, compliance with organizational codes (organizations in which research will be conducted) of conduct is another important aspect.

This research project ensured compliance with legal and ethical requirements. For this purpose, ethical frameworks recommended by numerous globally renowned associations and organizations, such as the American Associations of Professors, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Medical Research Council of Canada, American Association of University Professors, and Helsinki declaration (Kimmel, 1988; Sales, & Folkman, 2000; American Psychological Association, 2002; Smith, 2003; Guillemin and Gillam, 2004), have been explored. In addition, DBA's research ethics requirements were also learned through UOL's DBA handbook. These ethical frameworks obligate researchers to abide by fundamental ethical (respect, consent, privacy, fairness, security, and integrity) and legal requirements while conducting any research. To comply with ethical requirements, every step in my research involved either indirect interaction (development of interview questionnaire or using them) in surveys or direct interaction in interviews or participative action learning; "ethics in practice" was an obligation. All steps of this work were completed in an environment of ethical and legal compliance.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Story of Cycles of Action Research, Reflection, and Sense-making**

#### **Findings and Discussion**

##### **Introduction**

This chapter has two major sections. The first outlines the cycles of action research, reflections through the learning set, and findings through internal and external interviews together with all the data gathering in this study. The second section covers interpretation and analysis of these findings to establish strategies to resolve problems at ABC Foods. The project research design, as outlined in the previous chapter, adopted a multiple qualitative methods approach that included both internal and external inquiry.

The primary data were obtained through internal interaction with the organization and its stakeholders, other internal sources, ABC Food's learning set interactions and insider inquiry through internal interviews. Although the key learning and suggested implementation strategies were based on the outcome of internal inquiry in order to gain confidence, and add further reliability into the application and adopted strategy, additional insight was gained through external inquiry. In this external inquiry, external interviews were conducted with senior managers and seasoned food business experts from diversified food business environments. While the chapter concludes the overall data gathering and evaluation process, and also touches upon aspects of action research embedded in this analysis, it is the later reflections chapter that comprehensively covers aspects of action research linked with the implementation and sustainability of changes made to address organizational problems.

##### **Employing Action Research in this Research Project**

In this AR project aspects of AR were employed at every step of the way. From initial engagement with and conceptualization of the project, problem identification, learning set development to refine and reframe problem through to employment of learning acquired

through internal employee and expert interviews and reviewing the impact of the execution of this knowledge, the concept of action research remained the key focus.

This AR study had three main phases (I-III), whereas phase I and Phase II had further subparts (I-II). In this research project, all the developments, actions, and learning happened in numerous spirals referred as spirals of inquiry, learning, and reflection (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Coghlan and Shani, 2014).

## **Action Research (AR), learning and Reflection (AR) During the Phase I**

### **Understanding the Problem - First Cycle of Learning**

This was the phase where I passed through the first cycle of action research. I understood the problem and understood the context and significance of the problem. As Coghlan and Brannick (2014) advocated, following my understanding of the problem the next task was to assess and seek who could help to solve this problem. Who could be engaged and how could the selected people help? This was in itself a real question since AR sought to engage those who are linked to the problem and who could be helpful in exploring the problem, leading to the later steps of AR. This was done through learning set development.

### **Learning Set Development and Engagement**

A group of problem solvers and learners called a learning set (LS) was required to work on problems in this action research project. Establishment of the set was accomplished on Dec 02, 2016 as outlined in the Research Methods chapter. The LS was trained and made aware of their role.

### **Exploration of the issue and Defining the Problem**

After the initial interaction, and in the third session, the problems associated with ABC Foods were presented to the set. Looking at the current situation and concerns at ABC Foods one key task was to understand the complexity of the problem and its implications. To understand various facets of ABC Foods' concerns the learning set decided to engage all stakeholders in the organization. The researcher needed to learn about the problem from those who are

involved with the problem and those who have concerns (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). In this effort management and employees were engaged to understand their perspective. In this process, 23 employees and 13 management members participated and four group sessions were arranged to get their insights.

In this process executive management was also invited to explain the issues at ABC Foods. To seek anonymous input from general employees and to gain deeper insight and cover groups which could have been overlooked, open suggestion boxes were placed at different locations. All of these avenues generated much insight. It was a daunting but rewarding task for me to screen this input. The learning set had to have numerous sessions to gain clarity. All of these groups had their own way of presenting issues and many of them were more interested in sharing solutions or causes rather than the actual problem.

In addition the learning set was also given access to the organization's management reviews, improvement meetings records, consultation notes and external experts' surveys from archives. This information helped the LS to expand its horizon and understand the problem, which was discussed in light of these insights.

To understand the problem and its implications, the data gathering in this action research project started from the discussions with executive management at ABC Foods about this study. The researcher had four sessions before the project was agreed. In addition to these discussions, information was also extracted from previous years' management review minutes, annual performance summaries, and reports for previous attempts to achieve organizational excellence. Another source of data was ABC Foods external consultants and advisors' assessment reports and surveys. Moreover, discussions were also arranged with various stakeholders at ABC Foods (employees, managers, supervisors, consultants, and directors). Compiled from these sources, the organization's significant concerns were outlined below. The table below also highlights the outcome and compliance status of the top two indicators in the last three years.

Top 10 KPIs (2014 -2016) in order that generated sub-optimal results:

- 1. Success in inducing Food Safety Culture**

- 2. Employee Retention Index**

3. Organizational Corporate Sustainability
4. Productivity and Compliance to Target
5. Cultural Diversity
6. Standardization and Line Efficiency
7. First Time Quality
8. Workplace Safety and Injury Index
9. Compliance to customer specs
10. Compliance to Regulatory Compliance

From the internal reports and earlier notes, the researcher was cognizant of the organization's issues and earlier efforts in 2014-2016. After review, the following facts (T12) relevant to this study were highlighted.

KPI	Compliance Level in last three Years – ABC Foods			
	Food Safety Culture		Employee Retention	
Year	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
2014	39 %	60 %	46 %	50 %
2015	34 %	80 %	36 %	75 %
2016 (By November)	18 %	100 %	44 %	85 %

Table, T12 - Top two indicators with their corresponding compliance Index within the last three years

Extracted from the earlier report summaries and discussions with the current executive management and the site consultants, the list below outlines possible factors behind ABC Foods' problems. There were numerous root-causes, and the list was long, but the researcher recorded only those factors which were mostly highlighted and declared to be significant. These factors were reported but never tested and applied to ascertain the outcome.

- Leadership, Leadership Style

- Management Style
- Employee Motivation
- Employee Silence/ Lack of engagement
- Employee Retention strategy
- Rewards Remuneration and Recognition
- Training and Development
- Workload
- Workplace Hygiene
- Employee – Supervisor – Leadership relationship

### **Problem Statement**

Based on learning from various stakeholders and discussion within the group, the learning set presented its first draft of problem description on Dec 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018. It took four more sessions in reframing and before the final problem statement was finalized and issued. By the end of week 1, the learning set issued the problem statement.

*"The right Leadership style that could help to enhance organization performance."*

Since this research was proposed to study and view organizational performance through two KPIs: Employee Retention and Food Safety Culture, the research questions were developed accordingly.

Before the strategy was established, and in order to expand the data collection and learn from internal and external inquiry, I presented the interview strategy to the learning set to gain further insights from internal employees and external experts. The interviews idea was highly appreciated since it could have given further confidence to their solution finding mission. As outlined under the methods and data gathering chapters, the interview guide (Appendix B & D) was finalized. As a process of action research, it was decided that the internal and external learning through interviews would be brought back to the learning set for further dialogue and comprehension and to finalize suggestions.



## **Expected Learning from Interviews**

The interviewees were expected to be insightful and the researcher with LS input established the key focus from these interviews. The key focus of the internal interviews was to explore the problem, leadership challenge, its implications and the insiders' view to harnessing their organizational problems. The challenge around leadership and its style had already surfaced through other internal sources and LS discussions, but the internal interviews role was to offer further insight to clarify and to comprehend further the issues, related aspects and possible solutions. The internal interviews were designed to answer all three RQs.

At the same time, the purpose of external interviews was to get answers for RQ3 and to see the selected remedies through an external lens. It was an effort to learn from seasoned professionals and diversified executives. As an AR project the actions taken at the end were mainly originated and suggested by the researcher and the LS's reflection. It has very limited influence from the external inquiry except to confirm findings. This external learning, a third-person perspective, was engaged just to strengthen the action further and avoid internal biases.

## **Research Interviews Data Management, Interpretation and Analysis**

In this research the key component of internal inquiry was internal interviews. This inquiry was made through individuals within the organization. These interviews were conducted over a six days period during December 2016 (Dec 16-21). All of these were formal interviews. The organization provided a dedicated person to take notes with the consent of interviewees. In order to ensure anonymity, all the interviewees were assigned pseudonyms. Except for the first and second day, where one and two interviews were conducted respectively, three or more interviews were done every day.

The aim of internal interviews was to explore answers for the research questions;

*1) What leadership challenges does ABC Foods face? 2) Why does ABC Foods face these challenges? and 3) How can ABC Food's leadership challenges be addressed to enhance food safety culture and employee retention?*

The first interview was conducted on Dec 16, 2016, and my interviewee was Bill, a

member of the senior management. The scope of the activity was explained, and his rights and the researcher's ethical bindings were also outlined. In addition, before the interview began, the consent form was signed that also included his rights and voluntary participation in the process and the right to quit and ask to delete any portion of the discussion. In this interview, in addition to taking notes, observations (e.g. non-verbal communication - voice tone and gestures) were also made. Details were noted down during the interview and at the end.

Bill was a seasoned individual with a long professional career. He was very calm and shared a lot of insight into the issues at ABC Foods. He explored the challenges faced by the organization and why the challenges were there and how the organization could address these challenges.

Immediately after the interview, interview details and observations were recorded in a memo, and later that night, a clean copy was rewritten using MS Word. The final document was then printed to assist the coding process. Before taking the print, all means of identifying the interviewee, either directly, or indirectly or by inference were removed to ensure confidentiality. Before starting the coding process, the researcher then took the time to read the final document.

### **Analyzing interview material**

The data obtained through this interview was then analyzed through various levels of coding; open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (McCann & Clark, 2003a; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998) as discussed in the previous chapter. In the first instance open coding was used in data analysis. In this process, the transcript's reading was read line by line, and the data were fragmented to individual parts. Data were carefully analyzed to determine matching trends and dissimilarities. In this process of analyzing data obtained through this interview, both macro and micro conditions were considered (Charmaz, 2000; Corbin, 1986a).

A concept indicator model (Strauss, 1987, pp. 25 and Figure 3.2) was also used for constant comparison of one concept with another to discover common features that resulted in the identification of higher-order categories. As the concepts emerged the

researcher attempted to cluster concepts and categories into more abstract collectives, sets, or categories. This practice of labeling sketched a degree of understanding of meaning derived from the context in which each phenomenon was observed. As the concepts were identified, details of the methods of analysis, possible interpretation and possible questions were also recorded for future attention.

In the data coding process, the next level employed was axial coding (Strauss,1987). In this stage the data disaggregated in the open coding process were re-assembled to understand further and seek clarification of the phenomena. In this coding data obtained in the open coding process were re-grouped to a higher level of abstraction, creating new composite categories.

Through these coding techniques the researcher was endeavouring to review data at a theoretical level in order ultimately to rearrange concepts back into a meaningful whole. This effort of reorganizing data was to see likely nexuses and correspondences. Bill's interview analysis identified seven concepts and five composite categories.

The last coding level that was employed to understand data further was selective coding (McCann & Clark, 2003a, 2003b) that helped to create further linkages and conceptual ordering of the available insights (Corbin, 1986b). It was a theory-building stage (Stern, 1980; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), based on enlightenment of phenomena grounded in data from interviews and literature. In this process the researcher was able to see prevalent themes by developing nexuses between categories.

While Bills interview record was being reviewed and analyzed through open and axial coding, the researcher did the second interview with Joe. He was a floor level employee with over ten years of association with the organization. The selection was made randomly from the list of employees with long term association.

Exactly the same procedures were followed in managing the interview and obtaining data through interaction and observations. Interview data were processed to obtain concepts and categories identification through coding levels. As an outcome, concepts were isolated, and linkages were established, and inter-relationships were recognized.

After the first interview, during the second interviews and after, the concept of constant

comparison started making more sense as more data were available for the comparison. With information from more than one interview on hand, the content comparison was made not just within Joe's interview but also with Bill's interview. This comparison was insightful for the researcher to label similar concepts both within Joe's interview and between Bill and Joe's interviews.

While studying data within and between both interviews the researcher noted discrete items in Joe's interview by asking questions of the data such as "what is going on here", "what does it mean", "why is it happening" (e.g., Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998, and Glaser, 1978) to determine the implications of these items.

Though it took time to grasp the meaning of these items, when the researcher was satisfied with the sensemaking of an item, it was labeled as a concept, and its meaning was documented before progressing to the next item.

At the conclusion of Joe's interview, eight new concepts were identified and compared with nine categories. After thorough comparison, combining common concepts and categories, at the end of both interviews the researcher had identified 15 concepts and 11 categories. As also advocated by researchers (e.g., Glaser & Strauss, 1967; McCann & Clark, 2003a), constant comparison of data, both within and between interviews, added confidence and reliability in understanding meanings and interpretations.

After that, the researcher conducted interviews number three to seven (pseudonyms; Jen, Lill and Embik, Sandy, Miggi) with each interview was comprehensively analysed in the manner described above. Interviews were done sequentially though the time taken to conduct these interviews was a challenge. Later interviews were more precise and shorter in length but no interview was less than 45 minutes. In all interviews exactly the same practice of data coding was employed and the same approach of constant comparison was used to label new concepts and conclude new categories. In this process existing categories were enriched and where evident new categories were added.

The process was repeated in the eighth to tenth interviews. At the end of the tenth interview, the constant comparison method had revealed 26 concepts and 15 categories. On appraisal some of these were single concepts, whereas others were composite concepts. Some concepts were clearer to interpret than others, while composite concepts

were complex and required further examination.

The researcher noted that during the coding and constant comparison processes, categories initially amplified quickly within and between interviews, but as the process continued further it slowed down as also argued by Corbin (1986a). As analysis progressed from the tenth interview the occurrence of new categories from gradually lessened, with no new category being recognized during analysis of the twelfth interview. At this stage, the researcher thought that saturation of data may have occurred. This meant that no additional categories would be uncovered from later interviews (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1998). Although it was believed saturation had been reached the researcher continued interviews to further strengthened the data obtained and enrich learning by providing greater depth or density to existing categories. In this process, as per the research design, 17 interviews were conducted but while maintaining alignment with the research question, no new and significant insight was added from analysis of later interviews beyond enriching existing themes.

Continuation of data gathering after saturation is achieved in interviews has also been advocated by Johnson and Duberley (2000) to ensure the concepts are dense and robust. In addition, although the data were saturated, the continued constant comparison offered additional confidence and trustworthy in learning in this process. Johnson and Duberley (2000) described the enrichment process as 'thick description', thus reinforcing the trustworthiness of analysis.

The data review and analysis produced 439 pages of interview data. In addition, four interviewees shared some old reports, stories, company history records, and other documents which they thought could add value in understanding the issue and their implications.

### **Research Questions and Identified Themes in Internal Interviews**

Following analysis using the constant comparison process nine themes relevant to the RQs were identified, which are detailed below.

1. *Leaders – followers and union – leadership relations at our organization had been more strained in the last ten years or so, and possibly leaders, leadership,*

*and their approach were among obvious reasons. Perhaps leadership never approach it correctly and diligently.*

- 2. Retention - over the years, though, we had many issues, but the most critical issues were employee retention, food safety culture, and consistent quality that played a negative role in growth and sustainability. There could be many unknown factors behind these issues, and among the possible known reasons, our leadership itself could be an important factor.*
- 3. Leadership Style - although it is not easy to pinpoint one reason but apparently, the current organizational issues (e.g. employee retention, food safety culture, consistent quality and others) may be embedded in leadership and its style at all levels in our organization. Our failures had indicated that leadership was not readily there when needed to be, and even when they were there, their approach and style was an issue.*
- 4. Lack of Shared Leadership - Most of the time, during the last ten years, the most prevalent style of leadership had been autocratic, or less democratic with a least open-door policy. Shared leadership and participation in decision making were never practiced. Adoption of shared and participative style may be a solution to ABC Foods Problems.*
- 5. Top Down Decision Making - Employees and supervisors were mostly not part of the decision-making process. Key decisions were mostly made at the top and communicated.*
- 6. Impact of Leaders - Leaders, Manager, and Supervisor were among the most important and effective stakeholders in managing employee retention issues, enhancing food safety culture and inducing first time quality mindset.*
- 7. Employee Involvement - Democratic approaches and sharing in the leadership process were not mostly practiced in the organization, but the leadership, whenever involved, managers, supervisors, and employees in the decision-making process produced better results.*
- 8. Need for New Leadership Style - Any effective and well-suited leadership style*

*may offer solutions to ABC Foods problems like employee retention, food safety culture, constant quality and others.*

9. *Shared Leadership - Considering our organizational environment and dynamics, any shared and collaborative style of leadership that ensures participation in decision making may be a suitable approach for our organization in overpowering its current problems.*

These were altogether nine themes which were identified through coding and constant comparison. In this process, various concepts/categories/themes not directly related to the RQs were also noted and set aside for future further research. The table 13 explains identified themes and some of the relevant and selective quotes from interviewees.

Table T13 - The identified themes and relevant quotes from the internal interview.

#	Internal Interview Themes	Relevant quotes from the interviews
1.	<i>Leadership relations at our organization had been more strained in the last ten years or so, and possibly leaders, leadership, and their approach were among obvious reasons. Perhaps leadership never approach it correctly and diligently.</i>	<p><b>Len</b> – We put efforts into building the relationship over the years, but we had little success. We had roadblocks, and today if we look back, it seems there was something that was missing, and that could be leadership behavior and sensemaking.</p> <p><b>Joe</b> – In my long association with the organization, employee motivation and retention had always been an issue. There could be multiple issues, but the relationship between employee, and senior leadership had been most of the time strained.</p>
2.	<i>Over the years, though, we had many issues, but the most critical issues were employee retention, food safety culture, and consistent quality that played a negative role in growth and sustainability. There could be many unknown factors behind these issues, and among the possible known reasons, our leadership itself could be an important factor.</i>	<p><b>Nasir</b> – I am not sure, but I don't see employees staying and customers happy in terms of product quality and safety. Overall organizational behavior and management system is not supportive of delivering quality and safety.</p> <p><b>Banny</b> – I am not sure about all the reasons, but employee involvement had been an ongoing question. Maybe the reasons could be linked with their relationship with leadership and leadership approach in understanding and handling their association.</p>
3.	<i>Most of the time, during the last ten years, the most prevalent style of leadership had been autocratic, or less democratic with a least open-door policy. Shared leadership and participation in decision making were never practiced. Adoption of shared and participative style may be a solution to ABC Foods Problems.</i>	<p><b>Jen</b> – There were patches of goodness in employee – leadership relations, but most of the time, it was all autocratic. A very little was done to understand the missing links and to me that could be with leadership style and working on a proactive approach in managing food safety issues.</p> <p><b>Len</b> – The process of sensemaking was mostly autocratic. Leaders were not open to involving others in decision making and sharing leadership burden.</p>
4.	<i>Although it is not easy to pinpoint one reason but apparently, the current organizational issues (e.g. employee retention, food safety culture,</i>	<b>Ambik</b> – The organization failed to produce an environment – food safety culture that ensures consistency in approaches and results. There had been one-way traffic. Effective communication and mentorship had been missing. Probably leadership did

	<i>consistent quality and others) may be embedded in leadership and its style at all levels in our organization. Our failures had indicated that leadership was not readily there when needed to be, and even when they were there, their approach and style was an issue.</i>	not play their role. Leadership was there when needed and when they were there they did not listened.  <b>Sanj</b> – There could be many issues with the leadership, but to me, their inability to understand issues and findings their causes and addressing these causes had been lacking. The leadership did not try to penetrate and looked into the employee perspective.
5.	<i>Employees and supervisors were mostly not part of the decision-making process. Key decisions were mostly made at the top and communicated.</i>	<b>Joe</b> – We hardly experience a sort of autonomy, especially in key areas. It was all one-way traffic. Just follow the instructions. At the time, even managers and supervisor were not much involved in important decisions.  <b>Kardi</b> –The leadership failed to understand the missing link and real causes and introduce measures to fix it. I wish the leadership had engaged all in the process to fix it.
6.	<i>Leaders, Manager, and Supervisor were among the most important and effective stakeholders in managing employee retention issues, enhancing food safety culture and inducing first time quality mindset.</i>	<b>Joe</b> – In our improvement efforts, whenever leadership involved managers and supervisors, the results were promising. Managers and supervisors enhanced this participation to employees that made them felt valued and engaged and retained. We experienced a shift in our organizational food safety and quality culture.  <b>Kim</b> – I had been very close to the employees at all levels due to the nature of my job. Employees were not satisfied with the handling of their concerns, and among the key questions had been their efforts to retain employees, lack of two-way communication and manager-employees link and leadership style to address their issues.
7.	<i>Democratic approaches and sharing in the leadership process were not mostly practiced in the organization, but the leadership, whenever involved, managers, supervisors, and employees in the decision-making process produced better results.</i>	<b>Joe</b> –whenever leadership involved managers and supervisors, the results were promising. Managers and supervisors enhanced this participation to employees that made them felt valued and engaged and retained.  <b>Bill</b> – Whenever the shared approach was employed even just brainstorming, it enhanced mutual respect, trust, and confidence in decisions. But even this much involvement was not always practicing.
8.	<i>Any effective and well-suited leadership style may offer solutions to ABC Foods problems like employee retention, food safety culture, constant quality and others.</i>	<b>Sandy</b> – Looking at the issues and history of managing issues, a shift in mindset at leadership and managerial level could make the difference. To me, management may be a smaller issue because once the leadership understands issues, management will just follow these norms.  <b>Shoa</b> – There is no real recipe for our success. Our problem is complex, and I don't see an effective solution. Maybe a change in the approach and style of leadership. Employee retention, leadership role, style, and success in delivering consistency may be well rooted in employee engagement, organizational behavior, and food safety culture in our organization. I had been part of other well-structured organization in my careers. Employee engagement, leadership, and food safety culture are all essential components of organizational performance and success.
9.	<i>Considering our organizational environment and dynamics, any shared and collaborative style of leadership that ensures participation in decision making may be a suitable approach for our organization in overpowering its current problems.</i>	<b>Nasir</b> –Overall organizational behavior and management system is not supportive of delivering quality and safety. If valuable employees don't stay, there will be no one to manage consistent quality. Engage employee and give them some share in decision making. If you ask me shared leadership, then I will say probably yes.  <b>Ambik</b> –Our disaster could be linked with just management and leadership communication or maybe just the style of leadership. We had a change of ownership but not a change in the style of managing organizational woes.



## **Discussion on internal interview Results**

### **Understanding the problem and its implications at ABC Foods**

As explained above, as an outcome of internal interviews, the insider's perspective highlighted various ideas and themes relevant to my research questions. The discussions below examine the results from these interviews and themes, and how these helped to clarify assumptions minimize researcher and LS bias. These findings have been summarized in the same sequence as the research questions.

### **Leadership challenges at ABC Foods and their possible implications.**

**RQ 1 - *What leadership challenges do ABC Foods face?***

**RQ 2 - *Why does ABC Foods face these challenges?***

RQ 1 and 2 are linked together, and due to the overlapping nature of their themes the discussions have been presented together.

***Theme # 1 - Leaders – followers and union – leadership relations at our organization had been more strained in the last ten years or so, and possibly leaders, leadership, and their approach were among obvious reasons. Perhaps leadership never approach it correctly and diligently.***

***Theme # 2 - Over the years, though, we had many issues, but the most critical issues were employee retention, food safety culture, and consistent quality that played a negative role in growth and sustainability. There could be many unknown factors behind these issues, and among the possible known reasons, our leadership itself could be an important factor.***

***Theme # 3 - Though it is not easy to pinpoint one reason but apparently, the current organizational issues (e.g. employee retention, food safety culture, consistent quality and others) may be embedded in leadership and its style at all levels in our organization. Our failures had indicated that leadership was not readily there when needed to be, and even when they were there, their approach and style was an issue.***

These first three themes, as stated above, reflect the nature of bottlenecks and their associated inferences at ABC Foods. These highlight the existence of leadership issues and association with prevalent issues in the organization. Respondents in the interviews spoke about the lack of stability in the organization and the existence of a mechanism that has caused issues in enhancing organizational performance. There was a consensus throughout about the recognition of issues and probable links with leadership and its approach to addressing these issues. The interviewees spoke about the challenge and how it has affected the organization and its sustainability, its ability to consistently produce safe and quality products and its inability to ensure compliance with customer expectations. Most of the interviewees offered a list of challenges and an account of earlier efforts to bring change. They also shared the possible reasons behind the failure of earlier attempts to bring change. Interviewees had their own thoughts and different approaches in highlighting reasons behind failures but the issues linked with leadership were emphasized by almost every participant.

**Joe** – *In my long association with the organization, employee motivation and retention had always been an issue. There could be multiple issues, but the relationship between employee, and senior leadership had been most of the time strained.*

**Bill** – *The lack of trust had been there between employees and the leadership at different levels.*

**Len** – *We put efforts into building the relationship over the years, but we had little success. We had roadblocks, and today if we look back, it seems there was something that was missing, and that could be leadership behavior and sensemaking.*

**Jen** – *The organization and leadership struggled in this period to produce certainty, keeping employees engaged and motivated.*

**Ambik** – *The organization failed to produce an environment – food safety culture that ensures consistency in approaches and results. There had been one-way traffic. Effective communication and mentorship had been missing. Probably leadership did not play their role.*

**Kim** – *I had been very close to the employees at all levels due to the nature of my job. Employees were not satisfied with the handling of their concerns, and among the key questions had been their efforts to retain employees, lack of two-way communication and manager-employees link and leadership style to address their issues.*

**Sandy** – *Being part of the conflict resolution link, I found a lack of resolve at the management and leadership end. A bit conservative approach in handling issue linked with employees and*

*producing consistent quality. Leadership listened less and ordered more in the last 10 years.*

**Jamy** – *Motivation of employees had been an issue over these years, but a very little effort had been put to address it logically and permanently. There had been some efforts which failed due to lack of consistency. Management and leadership always thought employees were the cause of the problem. There could be a different view, but to me, their approach had been fixing than finding real root cause.*

**Sanj** – *There could be many issues with the leadership, but to me, their inability to understand issues and findings their causes and addressing these causes had been lacking. The leadership did not try to penetrate and looked into the employee perspective.*

**Nasir** – *I am not sure, but I don't see employees staying and customers happy in terms of product quality and safety. Overall organizational behavior and management system is not supportive of delivering quality and safety.*

**Shoa** – *Employee retention, leadership role, style, and success in delivering consistency may be well rooted in employee engagement, organizational behavior, and food safety culture in our organization. I had been part of other well-structured organization in my careers. Employee engagement, leadership, and food safety culture are all essential components of organizational performance and success.*

**Banny** – *I am not sure about all the reasons, but employee involvement had been an ongoing question. Maybe the reasons could be linked with their relationship with leadership and leadership approach in understanding and handling their association.*

### **Leadership challenges at ABC Foods and possible resolution to employee retention issues and to enhance food safety culture and employee retention.**

**RQ 3** - *How can ABC Food's leadership challenges be addressed to enhance food safety culture and employee retention?*

The third RQ was about looking into the solutions and remedies to address challenges linked with food safety culture and employee retention at ABC Foods. In the interviews, after sharing the issues and challenges linked with the organization, the participants did speak about possible solutions. Among the identified themes linked to RQ 3, the researcher noted six specific themes out of the total nine themes.

**Theme # 4** *Most of the time, during the last ten years, the most prevalent style of leadership had been autocratic, or less democratic with a least open-door policy. Shared leadership and participation in decision making were never practiced. Adoption of shared and participative style may be a solution to ABC Foods Problems.*

**Theme # 5** *Employees and supervisors were mostly not part of the decision-making process. Key decisions were mostly made at the top and communicated.*

**Theme # 6** *Leaders, Manager, and Supervisor were among the most important and effective stakeholders in managing employee retention issues, enhancing food safety culture and inducing first time quality mindset.*

**Theme # 7** *Democratic approaches and sharing in the leadership process were not mostly practiced in the organization, but the leadership, whenever involved, managers, supervisors, and employees in the decision-making process produced better results.*

**Theme # 8** *Any effective and well-suited leadership style may offer solutions to ABC Foods problems like employee retention, food safety culture, constant quality and others.*

**Theme # 9** *Considering our organizational environment and dynamics, any shared and collaborative style of leadership that ensures participation in decision making may be a suitable approach for our organization in overpowering its current problems.*

Themes four to nine highlighted the reasons behind failures and possible reasons for them. Based on their exposure and experience, the interviewees shed light on possible remedies and solutions. To most of the participants, leadership and its application were key concerns. The style of leadership was never shared and democratic. The involvement in the decision making was restricted only to senior leadership, and there was very limited involvement from the employees and non-managerial staff in this process. Based on the findings, though it was hard to single out one solution, the approach and style of leadership were identified as the key factors. Adoption of an effective leadership approach was suggested as a key remedy. Some of the interviews were even very clear in suggesting the style of leadership that could resolve issues. They suggested a need of an effective leadership style that was expected, shared and collaborative. The interviewees explained that a change in leadership style at all levels could be useful in managing employee retention and instilling essentials of food safety culture. Over 50% of participants shared that whenever the site engaged employees in projects and had open communication and shared them in decision-making, the site produced results and the situation improved. However, one of the challenges was lack of consistency and continuation of this approach. Though it was not clear what the

most effective style was that could work for ABC Foods to enhance employee retention and enhance food safety culture it was evident that the effectiveness and success of the style were embedded in the notion of involvement, democracy and sharing in decision making.

**Mell** – *In the last 10 years, the organization had always struggled to show consistency in practice. Most of the time, the approach has been all directions — the one-sided flow of instructions.*

**Joe** – *We hardly experience a sort of autonomy, especially in key areas. It was all one-way traffic. Just follow the instructions. At the time, even managers and supervisor were not much involved in important decisions.*

**Bill** – *Whenever the shared approach was employed even just brainstorming, it enhanced mutual respect, trust, and confidence in decisions. But even this much involvement was not always practicing.*

**Len** – *The process of sensemaking was mostly autocratic. Leaders were not open to involving others in decision making and sharing leadership burden.*

**Jen** – *There were patches of goodness in employee – leadership relations, but most of the time, it was all autocratic. A very little was done to understand the missing links and to me that could be with leadership style and working on a proactive approach in managing food safety issues.*

**Ambik** – *We worked many times and ran projects but could not have ongoing and ultimate success. The disaster could be linked with just management and leadership communication or maybe just the style of leadership. We had a change of ownership but not a change in the style of managing organizational woes.*

**Kim** – *Communication and manager-employees link and leadership approach to address their issues did impact organizational behavior over the years.*

**Banny** – *We can't deny the issue, and the issues seem to be with the organizational behavior. The environment is not supportive of improvement. I am not sure about all the reasons, but employee involvement had been an ongoing question. Maybe the reasons could be linked with their relationship with leadership and leadership approach in understanding and handling their association.*

**Sandy** – *Looking at the issues and history of managing issues, a shift in mindset at leadership and managerial level could make the difference. To me, management may be a smaller issue because once the leadership understands issues, management will just follow these norms.*

**Jamy** – *Motivation of employees and engagement may be enhanced through the better system to understand their issues and giving them recognition and valuing their existence through involvement in decision making at all levels.*

***Shoa** – There is no real recipe for our success. Our problem is complex, and I don't see an effective solution. Maybe a change in the approach and style of leadership.*

***Sanj** – The organization and its leadership must recognize the value of employee engagement and need to understand how to approach these issues. There could be many issues with the leadership, but to me, their inability to understand issues and findings their causes and addressing these causes had been lacking. The leadership did not try to penetrate and looked into the employee perspective.*

***Kardi** –The leadership failed to understand the missing link and real causes and introduce measures to fix it. I wish the leadership had engaged all in the process to fix it.*

***Nasir** –Overall organizational behavior and management system is not supportive of delivering quality and safety. If valuable employees don't stay, there will be no one to manage consistent quality. Engage employee and give them some share in decision making. If you ask me shared leadership, then I will say probably yes.*

### **Leaning through internal interviews**

Based on these 17 interviews and their analysis through coding and constant comparison the key learning that I had, which was presented to the LS for further discussions and reflection, was not much different than the initial assumptions. The researcher, with the help of LS after initial learning and during the first cycle of learning formulated the problem statement. As per the statement, the site was struggling with the leadership challenge, and due to the challenges, there was an issue in managing its performance. There were many issues, but the key issues which were hurting the most were lack of employee retention and failure in inducing food safety culture.

The internal interviews task was to explore it further and learn through an internal inquiry from experienced key stakeholders in the organization. The internal interviews strengthened the fact that the leadership challenge was in fact real. It was not new, and over the years leadership had failed to develop trust in, and engage with, employees. ABC Food's leadership did not engage employees and non-managerial layers in decision making. There was a lack of motivation and an atmosphere of fear that caused a huge crevice between employees and leadership. This was a major leadership challenge that supported the initial thoughts that leadership and its approach had been among the key issues at ABC Foods. It also gave me confidence as a researcher that this finding was not the thoughts of just one person, it was almost a consensus that the organization key

issues were employee motivation, employee retention their engagement, and sustainability of food safety management systems. A further learning was about the probable root cause. This solution was in working on achieving a successful food safety culture. The interviews also offered the learning that solutions were embedded in a change in leadership approach and offering an environment of trust, engagement and belonging. The certainty that was missing was causing a real threat to the organization's environment.

The above learning was presented to the LS, which took a few sessions before various aspects of this learning were discussed and questioned. The discussion concluded the second major cycle of action research. The researcher, after a process of reflection through the LS, developed recommendations which were not different than the outcome of internal interviews as outlined above. Now the researcher had more confidence in the recommendations due to the insights and support gained through the internal interviews. As the interviews confirmed that there was no possible personal bias on the part of the researcher in these recommendations. These were all tested and reflected through internal interviews and the LS.

### **The key focus of external interviews**

Though the course of action was suggested by LS, as per the research design the external inquiry was initiated to augment the course of action further. It was an effort to learn from the outside world and through senior professional and seasoned food experts from diversified business environments. It was an attempt to explore how leadership approach played their role in managing organizational performance in the outside world. The internal interviews were the base of the insiders' inquiry and sense-giving, and the external interviews were an additional inquiry to know how other industries had handled such issues. This external inquiry was to confirm that I was heading to the right direction. The key idea was to get an answer to the last research question: *RQ3 How can ABC Food's leadership challenges be addressed to enhance food safety culture and employee retention?*

### **External Interviews**

To gain insight from external sources the interview strategy, as explained in chapter 3, was presented to the LS and agreed to be followed. External data from interviews was used in this research to obtain a third-person perspective triangulate the internal data (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; McCann and Clark, 2003b; Hynes, 2012). The proposed interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions, but to keep the process on track an interview guide was developed (Appendix D). As per the research design the plan was to bring the interviews' outcomes back to the LS for further discussion.

At this stage, the interviewee list was finalized, which included 12 interviewees in accordance with the research model. Interviews were conducted by the researcher over four months, from the later part of January to the second week of April in 2017. Table T14 outlines some basic details about external interviewees.



Table, T14 - Basic Facts about the Externa Interviewees

ID	Pseudonym	Title	Food Industry Type		Type of Role	Years in Service		Owner or Employed	A corporation or Private Ownership	Industry / Business Age	# of Employees
			Current	Prior		Total	In Leadership				
ME-YL-1	Sandra	Vice President QA/ Food Safety	Food Preservation, Canning, Fruits Processing	Pharma, Dairy	QA, Food Safety Mgr., Operations, R & D, Coaching	18	>15	Employed	Private Ownership	>100 years	> 350
WJ-FW-2	Mark	General Manager	Oil, Dairy, Canning, Preserved Foods, Recipe Meals, Imitation products	Dairy,	Sales, Operations, QC, Warehouse Mgt, Production	30	>25	Employed	Private Ownership	> 40	> 200
ML-YL-3	Dave	President	Fruits Processing & preservation, Fruit Canning, Apple Cider, Spreads	Fruits Processing & preservation, Fruit Canning, Apple Cider, Spreads	Head of Business, VP, Operations, Procurement, HR	45	> 40	Owner	Private Ownership	> 100	> 350
WA-FC-4	Mike	Plant Manager	Dietary Supplements/ Dairy, Milk Powders, Energy Products,	Dietary Supplements Dairy, Milk Powders, Energy Products	Production, Operations, Plant Management, Construction	25	>20	Employed	Corporation	> 100	> 250
GC-FT-5	Mary	Vice President	Bakery, Flour Confectionery	Bakery, Flour Confectionery	HR, Administration, Retails, Sales	16	15	Owner	Private Ownership	> 35	> 230
MS-BG-6	Andrea	President	Nuts, Tea Processing, and Packing	Nuts, Tea Processing, and Packing	Production, Operations, Plant Management	25	24	Owner	Private Ownership	> 35	> 250
MI-IS-7	Dale	Senior Lead Auditor	Approved for various food safety categories	Meat, Fresh Cut, Food Preservation, Banking,	Banking, Operations, QA, Quality and Food Safety Auditing, Regulatory Compliance Auditing	25	>18	Employed	Corporation	> 50	> 100,000
GT-TF-8	Nick	President	Bakery	Bakery	Head of Business, Operations	16	> 12	Owner	Private Ownership	> 35	> 230
MG-EN-9	Gary	Senior Corporate QA Manager	Sugar Confectionery, Chocolates & Candies	Water, Dairy, Culinary, Dietary Supplements, Baby Food	Plant QA/ QC, Corporate QA, Regulatory Compliance	18	15	Employed	Corporation	> 140	> 125,000
SU-GS-10	Manny	President	Recipe Meals, Ready Meals, Food Preservation, Seafood, Meat Processing	Recipe Meals, Ready Meals, Food Preservation, Seafood, Meat Processing	Production, Operations, Plant Management	20	15	Owner	Private Ownership	> 42	> 100
YF-MW-11	Chris	VP – Food Safety	Retail and Food Products Retail	Retail and Food Products Retail, Labs	Retails, QC, QA, Labs, Food Safety	30	20	Employed	Corporation	> 60	>100,000
MF-FA-12	Neil	President	Food Manufacturing, Trade, Cereals, Pulses, Grains Processing, and Packing	Confectionery, Baking, Cereals, Food Preservation, Canning, Sweets, Beverages	QA, Operations, Administration, Production	23	15	Owner	Private Ownership	20 Years	70

## **External Interviews Data Management, Interpretation and Analysis**

The external inquiry was made through interviews with food industry experts and top executives. These interviews were conducted over a four-month period in 2016 and 2017. All of these were arranged interviews, and except three of them were all audio recorded with the consent of the participants. Three interviewees did not allow the researcher to make audio recordings for their discussions. In respect to their decision only written notes were maintained. All the interviewees were assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. This was phase one (part 2) of my action research project.

The first interview was conducted on Dec 28, 2016, with Sandra a group vice president at a fruit processing and manufacturing facility. The interviewee was involved in a leadership role since 2001. The food operation had a history of over 100 years, with over 350 employees at multiple locations.

The project and its implications were explained, and the consent form was signed by both the parties before the actual interview. Besides audiotape recording the interview, the researcher also made observations (e.g. non-verbal communication - voice tone and gestures) and recorded both during the interview and at its end. In the beginning, the researcher was a bit nervous but well in control but the interviewee being very seasoned was very calm throughout the process, responding to questions in a confident manner and explaining points whenever urged by the researcher. The interviewee for the research purposes was assigned the pseudonym "Sandra" to ensure anonymity.

Right after the interview the researcher recorded an account of the interview, with observations, in a memo. The interview was then transcribed using Microsoft Word. The finished article was then printed to facilitate ease of coding. To ensure confidentiality all means of identifying the interviewee, either directly, indirectly or by inference, were eliminated. The researcher then spent time reading the finished article from the interview before embarking on the coding process.

### **Analyzing interview material**

Data obtained from these interviews were then analyzed one after the other for all the interviews, employing the concept of coding using a constant comparison process as

explained in research methods and following the approach employed earlier in the analysis of internal interviews.

The data analysis started with Sandra's interview. Sandra's interview analysis identified nine concepts and seven categories. While Sandra's interview transcription was passing through open and axial coding, the researcher conducted the second interview with Mark, a general manager at a dairy processing facility with over 25 years of leadership experience from diversified food processing and foodservice experience. Precisely the same process was followed in conducting the interview and getting data through interview and observations. Interview data passed through a similar process of concepts and categories identification through coding. Concepts were identified, links were developed and inter-relationships were understood.

With data from more than the interview on hand, the constant comparison was made not just within the Mark's interview but also between Sandra and Mark's interviews. With this analysis the researcher was able to identify similar concepts both within Mark's interview, and between Sandra and Mark's interviews.

While analyzing data and the outcomes from both interviews, when the Researcher noted discrete items in Mark's interview transcript the data were interrogated by asking questions such as "what is going on here", "what does it mean", "why is it happening" (e.g. Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998, Strauss, 1987, Corbin, 1986b, and Glaser, 1978) in order to discover the meaning of these items.

When the Researcher was satisfied that the meaning of an item was understood it was labeled as a concept and its meaning captured in a memo before proceeding to the next discrete item. In this process, links wherever exist were identified for all discrete items. Each new concept was compared with the earlier interview.

At the conclusion of Mark's interview, 24 concepts were labeled and compared with 15 categories. After removing common concepts and categories, altogether from both interviews, the researcher identified 17 concepts and 11 categories.

After that, the Researcher completed 3-4 interviews. The precisely same coding process was embraced, and finally, concepts and categories were identified. Each time in comparison, once the new categories were added to the list, the focus moved to

enrich the existing categories.

The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth, interviews were conducted following the same processes as adopted in earlier interviews. At the end of the eighth interview, the constant comparison process had discovered 37 concepts and 19 categories. On review, some of these were single concepts, while others were composite concepts. Some concepts were clear to perceive, while composite concepts were not clear that required further processing of data. So, at that stage, an axial coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990 13-14, 1998) was employed to fashion mixed concepts to construct similar and overarching themes. Through the axial coding process themes were constructed.

During early data analysis, through the coding process, categories developed quickly within and between interviews but as the review progressed slowed down as predicted by Corbin (1986a). As it proceeded from the fifth interview, the emergence of new categories emerging from interview data steadily reduced, with no new category being acknowledged during the analysis of the eighth interview. At this stage, the researcher believed that saturation of categories *might* have occurred. This means that no new categories would be discovered from future interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1998). Though reaching a saturation stage, nothing new was expected, but in order to ensure that saturation had occurred, the researcher continued interviewing food business executives until 12 interviews had been accomplished. The last interview was completed on April 21, 2018. After saturation had been reached the continuation of interviews and analysis ensured that the concepts were dense and robust (Johnson and Duberley, 2000).

Analyses of the interviews 9-12 continued, but no new categories were added from analysis, though each interview enriched existing categories to some degree. Table T12 gives a list of all the interviewees and their backgrounds.

Data collected from the external interviews covered 831 pages. Also, seven interviewees shared some transcripts, stories, company history records, summary reports of their projects, and case studies to support success stories during the interview process. The researcher was not allowed to make copies of these records, but interviewees allowed him to take notes and share these relevant details in the research.

## Identified Themes in External Interviews

Analysis of external interviews through coding and the constant comparison process identified numerous themes. Though this process overall was very enlightening the researcher selected themes that were relevant to the management problem and RQs to analyse. Discussion centered on the inter-relationship to the research questions, mainly the third research question that necessitated finding the right leadership and the leadership style required for a food business environment in general and especially for ABC Foods to address its employee retention and food safety culture challenges. In addition, through these interviews the pre-requisites and bottlenecks associated with employing the highlighted leadership style at any Food Business operation were also understood. The following seven relevant themes were identified.

- 1. Leadership and its styles are related to organizational performance and effectiveness in food business environments and make a difference in achieving organizational goals and solving its problems.*
- 2. Supervisors, Managers, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in retaining employees.*
- 3. Cultivating Food Safety Culture is an ongoing challenge in food business operations.*
- 4. Managers, Employees, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in developing and improving food safety culture.*
- 5. A leadership style that does not involve others in the decision-making process is not supportive of making food organizations sustainable and solving their problems related to employee retention and food safety culture.*
- 6. Shared Leadership style may impact problem-solving (e.g., employee retention issues, food safety culture challenges, and others) and organizational performance in food business environments.*
- 7. Shared Leadership style needs a trained workforce to be effective.*

Table below (T15) includes identified themes and some of the relevant quotes.

Table, T15 - The identified themes and relevant quotes from the external interview.

#	External Interview Themes	Relevant quotes from the interviews
01	Leadership and its styles are related to organizational performance in food business environments and make a difference in achieving organizational goals and solving its problems.	<p><b>Sandra</b> -Leadership makes a lot of difference, big difference, I understand that some situations may need more autocratic, but the leadership style, for me, will change completely the way people will go behind and accept the changes the leader can bring or the decision it will take.</p> <p><b>Mark</b> - I found that communication and leadership role and direction were very important. We kept on achieving corporate goals, and our strength was shared focus and engagement, and it mattered a lot.</p>
02	Supervisors, Managers, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in retaining employees.	<p><b>Sandra</b> - The reason you will stay and continue and not leave, for me, is the relationship with your boss and how much your leader can engage and value you.</p> <p><b>Chris</b> - My experience is that people that feel empowered, in general like to work for those types of Leaders and Organizations. Getting empowered and being respected is good for retention.</p>
03	Cultivating Food Safety Culture and Employee Retention is an ongoing challenge in food business operations.	<p><b>Sandra</b> - In my Organization, we are trying to change the food safety culture. We are trying different strategies and banking on employees and leadership. It's challenging and seems like an ongoing strive.</p> <p><b>Mark</b> - I like SQF level 3 and not 2 to show a good culture. It asks for more involvement, and that not possible without leadership being involved and with employees being involved. Not sure it's shared leadership, but engagement helps. It was not an overnight task. It was an ongoing effort.</p>
04	Managers, Employees, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in developing and improving food safety culture.	<p><b>Nick</b> - I believe the culture of the Organizations and direction by the leadership and their style and input and support from their managers and employees make things happen.</p> <p><b>Mark</b> - Of course, management and leadership need to talk about food safety culture very often with the people, that the people and employees will see that. Leaders, managers, supervisors, operators and even regular employees have a significant role in food safety culture.</p>
05	A leadership style that does not involve others in the decision-making process is not supportive of making food organizations sustainable and solving their problems related to employee retention and food safety culture.	<p><b>Gary</b> – For an employee to stay with the company, there is no one answer. Employees like to be respected, and their presence admired time to time. It is human nature. Involvement and ownership help retention. I believe these things motivate them, and motivation is the key to retention.</p> <p><b>Mary</b> - Shared model of leadership certainly gives employees a sense of belonging that may affect employee retention, but it is not the only factor employee leaves. It is probably the overall environment and job security.</p>
06	Shared Leadership style may impact problem-solving (e.g., employee retention issues, food safety culture challenges, and others) and organizational performance in food business environments	<p><b>Neil</b> - More heads may bring better solutions. Shared culture needs to be built. It is not always there. It has long efforts at the back before you see results. We did not have this culture – we had to build it.</p> <p><b>Mary</b> - Any leadership style that can engage the workplace is useful for food safety culture. I experienced engagement, recognition, and rewards are helpful. Lack of attention and absence of coaching activities kills workplace culture. Do not just ask them to follow the rule, engage them, and explain why. Involve them when you develop the rule. Let them make these rules for them when they share this task and decision making it will be stronger and durable practice and will be helpful in solving organizational problems.</p>
07	Shared Leadership style needed a trained workforce to be effective.	<p><b>Mike</b> - I feel that a shared leadership style may not need a lot of education and training. It is the prevailing culture that matters. Yes, if culture is not there, a lot of spadework is required.</p> <p><b>Nick</b> - Not just at the top but all layers. Involvement makes a significant shift. Shared leadership means engagement, and that remove frictions. The success of culture is embedded in the values. If the understanding is there, enforcement is easy. Training and learning your role and expectations are key factory in sharing leadership.</p>

A quick overview and comparison between internal and external interview themes revealed many common elements. The table (T16) below explain these facts.

Table, T16 - RQ 3 related themes identified from internal and external interviews

#	Internal Interview Themes	#	External Interview Themes
03	Though it is not easy to pinpoint one reason but apparently, the current organizational issues (e.g., employee retention, food safety culture, consistent quality, and others) may be embedded in leadership and its style at all levels in our organization. Our failures had indicated that leadership was not readily there when needed to be, and even when they were there, their approach and style were an issue.	01	Leadership and its styles are related to organizational performance in food business environments and make a difference in achieving organizational goals and solving its problems.
06	In our system, leaders, manager, and supervisors probably did not play their roles with due diligence. Whenever we had them working together and playing their roles, the difference was observed, but our system seldom has its presence and coordination. Even when managers and supervisors were there, leaders and their approach were not supportive of solving problems at ABC Foods.	02	Supervisors, Managers, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in retaining employees.
		04	Managers, Employees, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in developing and improving food safety culture.
	<i>The internal interviews did highlight theme which explained the development of food safety culture as employee retention an ongoing task but researcher did not include in selected themes due to the fact that the theme was not linked to research questions under this AR project.</i>	03	Cultivating Food Safety Culture and Employee Retention is an ongoing challenge in food business operations.
05	Employees and supervisors were mostly not part of the decision-making process. Key decisions were mostly made at the top and communicated.	05	A leadership style that does not involve others in the decision-making process is not supportive of making food organizations sustainable and solving their problems related to employee retention and food safety culture.
07	Democratic approaches and sharing in the leadership process were not mostly practiced in the organization, but the leadership, whenever involved, managers, supervisors, and employees in the decision-making process produced better results.		
04	Most of the time, during the last ten years, the most prevalent style of leadership had been autocratic, or less democratic with a least open-door policy. Shared leadership and participation in decision making were never practiced. The adoption of shared and participative style may be a solution to ABC Foods Problems.	06	Shared Leadership style may impact problem-solving (e.g., employee retention issues, food safety culture challenges, and others) and organizational performance in food business environments
07	Democratic approaches and sharing in the leadership process were not mostly practiced in the organization, but the leadership, whenever involved, managers, supervisors, and employees in the decision-making process produced better results.		
08	Any effective and well-suited leadership style may offer solutions to ABC Foods problems like employee retention, food safety culture, consistent quality, and others.		
09	Considering our organizational environment and dynamics, any shared and collaborative style of leadership that ensures participation in decision making may be a suitable approach for our organization in overpowering its current problems.		
	<i>No theme was identified that explained training as one of the pre-requisites for the effectiveness of shared leadership culture.</i>	07	Shared Leadership style needed a trained workforce to be effective.

## **Discussions on External Interview Results**

External interviews were mainly conducted to provide a third-person perspective of the issues facing ABC Foods, particularly in relation to the third RQ that sought to find the solution for the leadership challenge that could help the organization in harnessing their employee retention issues and food safety culture challenges. Though the role and significance of leadership and its style were stressed in most of the themes the first theme clearly addressed these issues.

***Themes # 1**– Leadership and its styles are related to organizational performance in food business environments and make a difference in achieving organizational goals and solving its problems.*

Second and Fourth themes explained that alongside senior leadership, the role of managers and supervisors might not be ignored. This highlighted the value leadership at all levels, and not just at the top.

***Themes # 2**– Supervisors, Managers, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in retaining employees.*

***Themes # 4**– Managers, Employees, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in developing and improving food safety culture.*

Respondents in the interviews spoke about the value and role of leadership at their workplaces and food business operations. During the interaction, interviewees also shared about their style of leadership and the prevalent style of leadership in the food business environments and even how their personal style evolved. Through personal experience and stories of their projects, the key message was to acknowledge the value of leadership and its style in food business environments and importance in organizational performance. Below are some of their very relevant statements.

***Sandra** -Leadership makes a lot of difference, big difference, I understand that some situations may need more autocratic, but the leadership style, for me, will change completely the way people will go behind and accept the changes the leader can bring or the decision it will take. For me, that is a difference'.*

***Nick** - I believe the culture of the Organizations and direction by the leadership and their style and input and support from their managers and employees make things happen.*

***Mark** - I found that communication and leadership role and direction were very important. We kept on achieving corporate goals, and our strength was shared focus and engagement, and it mattered a lot.*



The learning in these themes seemed to support the insight gained through internal inquiry from the internal interviews. It was also aligned with the researcher's view, and LS's perspective learned through learning set discussions and reflections after the internal interviews and then later after the external inquiry.

This learning was also aligned with the thought process of earlier researchers in the literature review. Fiedler (1996) suggested that leadership is the most dominant aspect that influences the failure of an organization or a group. Various studies conducted by Bass (1985, 1995), Bass and Bass (2008), and Bass and Avolio (1994, 2000) emphasized the importance of leadership style on organizational sense-making and performance, and managing problems related to employee and organization culture. Leadership and leadership style play an instrumental role in organizations (Stephen, 2013; Kotter and Heskett, 1992). It appeared the value and role of leadership in relation to managing organizational issues and their performance, identified in these research interviews, is a standard feature in leadership practice and available research.

One part of the learning in these interviews was about the type of leadership to overcome issues linked with employee retention and food safety culture. Themes five and six seem to explain the type of leadership that helped other organizations and adoption of that may also help ABC Foods.

***Themes # 5**– A leadership style that does not involve others in the decision-making process is not supportive of making food organizations sustainable and solving their problems related to employee retention and food safety culture.*

***Themes # 6** - Shared Leadership style may impact problem-solving (e.g., employee retention issues, food safety culture challenges, and others) and organizational performance in food business environments.*

Linking organizational problems to leadership style, interviewees shared their experiences. It appeared that there was no divergence in the responses in suggesting the value of leadership style in producing results in food organizations. To respondents, the various styles have their value. Except for one interviewee (Gary), there was a consensus that style has to be always collaborative, democratic, and

engaging others in decision making and building trust between leaders and followers. Some used the word 'shared' but others just explained the value of engagement, democracy and transparency in leadership decision making. Some of the statements are listed below.

***Dave** - We observed our way to supervise, and lead was not having a lot of trust in people. We struggled for years in KPIs before we understood the reason, leadership, and style of engaging employees and staff. Not sure, it was the only reason, but it did help.*

***Neil** - More heads may bring better solutions. Shared culture needs to be built. It is not always there. It has long efforts at the back before you see results. We did not have this culture – we had to build it.*

***Sandra** - Democratic style for me is the style that I saw that gave me the best results. For me, I see it as I am at their service, and I am there.*

As mentioned above, one respondent had a little different view on the value of leadership style linked to managing organizational issues. He presumed that leadership style does not contribute much. For this interviewee it is the way you approach problems in the workplace.

***Gary** - I strongly feel, the better way to lead and sharing others is suitable for taking their input, and single leaders must make the final decision. Share but make the final decision.*

Though the researcher found a different opinion from Gary but due to the fact, no one else supported this view, the main observations and learning were adopted that an effective style of leadership is expected to collaborative and participative and shared. This finding in the external interviews supported the outcome of the internal inquiry. The earlier reports at ABC Foods and learning set discussions supported this idea. Besides, to be very specific, the themes # 4 and 7, 8, and 9 from internal interviews reflected very similar facts.

**Themes # 04** - *Most of the time, during the last ten years, the most prevalent style of leadership had been autocratic, or less democratic with a least open-door policy. Shared leadership and participation in decision making were never practiced. The adoption of shared and participative style may be a solution to ABC Foods Problems.*

**Themes # 7** - *Democratic approaches and sharing in the leadership process were not mostly*

*practiced in the organization, but the leadership, whenever involved, managers, supervisors, and employees in the decision-making process produced better results.*

**Themes # 8** *Any effective and well-suited leadership style may offer solutions to ABC Foods problems like employee retention, food safety culture, consistent quality, and others.*

**Themes # 9** *Considering our organizational environment and dynamics, any shared and collaborative style of leadership that ensures participation in decision making may be a suitable approach for our organization in overpowering its current problems.*

The learning of internal and external interviews was brought to the learning set for further discussion and reflection. The LS was aligned with these findings. The leadership and leadership style questioned was brought to LS and the views were very clear. The LS valued the impact and role of leadership style in solving ABC Foods problems and recommend a shared style of leadership where employees were engaged and decision-making process was shared.

Both internal and external interviews and the LS seemed to suggest a shared and collaborative style of leaders that binds the organizational culture and induces the culture of shared decision-making at ABC Foods was desirable. Not only learning in this research supported this leadership style concept, but also the literature reviews from an earlier chapter supported the idea of valuing leadership style and employing a shared and collaborative leadership approach in managing various organizational issues.

Leadership styles significantly impacted (Tarabishy et al. 2005) employees and organizational efforts in making leadership an institutional characteristic rather than an individual one (O'Toole et al. 2002) as the trend has been away from the concentration of power in one person and is towards the team or stakeholders. O'Toole et al. (2002) and Pearce and Conger (2003) suggested the value of shared leadership, (i.e., leadership that is shared not just in an informal and tacit way, but in a formal and explicit way).

### **Linking Leadership and its style to employee retention and food safety culture.**

The earlier part of the discussion explained the role and value of leadership style

linked to organization issues in general, but there were themes that also outlined the value of leadership style and suggested a shared leadership style in managing specific issues like employee retention and food safety culture.

In the external interview analysis, the themes # 2, 4, 5, and 6 were about a possible correlation between effective style of leadership and organization's selected issues; employee retention and food safety culture. Theme 2 and 4 in the main, and 5 and 6 particularly outline this relationship.

***Themes # 2 - Supervisors, Managers, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in retaining employees.***

***Themes # 4 - Managers, Employees, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in developing and improving food safety culture.***

***Themes # 5 - A leadership style that does not involve others in the decision-making process is not supportive of making food organizations sustainable and solving their problems related to employee retention and food safety culture.***

***Themes # 6 - Shared Leadership style may impact problem-solving (e.g., employee retention issues, food safety culture challenges, and others) and organizational performance in food business environments.***

### **Leadership style and Employee Retention**

External experts shared their thoughts and success and failure stories. Interviewees were very vocal when asked to explain the issues pertaining to employee retention. All were leaders and decision-makers and so had many incidents, stories and case studies linked to their leadership role or to the current organization or organizations they have worked with in the past. In not even a single case was it was not highlighted that in some sense that it was an ongoing issue and that food operations were in a constant battle to harness this. So, interviewees while explaining their views on employee retention, narrated their experiences and explained implications and relationships with various aspects, including leadership styles.

During the interviews, Nick shared his own story of working through different leadership styles in managing employee retention. Since his father's time, he was part

of organizational improvement projects. He narrated that their team had limited success in achieving KPIs with the old autocratic style.

**Nick** – *My dad was a strong autocrat with a firm control on decisions. When he was terminally ill, I had to take over. I was confused about the future of the company. On experts' recommendations, I adopted a collaborative and shared leadership style and engaged our managers in decision making. The first resistance was from my GM. Finally, I had to let him go since not just saw results; I also got convinced that shared leadership was the future to solve organizational problems.*

From the interviews, it was identified that there could be multiple and diversified reasons for the employee to leave food business organizations. The aspects of organizational environment and employee engagement were among the common categories emerging during the coding process.

**Mark** - *I do feel employees like to be retained but its environment that may make them leave. As you asked me what environment. I would say a sense of belonging, value at the workplace, appreciation, treatment from peers, and bosses.*

**Nick** - *People run away when losing motivation. The environment they work makes a bit different. We may not be paying well, but we offer the environment. People left us, and some came back and told, they left for money but came back for the environment. People like to be listened to and valued — engagement and participation are valued.*

**Gary** – *For an employee to stay with the company, there is no one answer. Employees like to be respected, and their presence admired time to time. It is human nature. Involvement and ownership help retention. I believe these things motivate them, and motivation is the key to retention.*

Leadership and leadership style were declared useful in retaining employees in many cases, and the style of shared leadership was deemed a potent force to keep employee engagement and retention for years. The relationship of the employee with immediate bosses was repeatedly cherished.

**Sandra** - *The reason you will stay and continue and not leave, for me, is the relationship with your boss and how much your leader can engage and value you.*

**Mark** - *I would say a sense of belonging, treatment from peers and bosses, and yes, leadership, of course, but the style of leadership, I think so. It is important how employees are being treated, job security. "Employee engagement brings mutual trust."*

**Chris** - *Yes, my experience is that people that feel empowered just, in general, like to work for those types of Leaders and Organizations. Getting empowered and being respected are -- that is good for employee retention.*

*Mary - Shared model of leadership certainly gives employees a sense of belonging that may affect employee retention, but it is not the only factor employee leaves. It is probably the overall environment and job security.*

*Sandra - It is the ownership and motivation that determine whether you will leave or stay any shard or democratic style of leadership will increase this chance. Such leadership engages employees and enhance ownership and motivation.*

*Gary –Leaders and their style is a key force behind employee motivation and retention.*

On the other hand, one of the interviewees in this research Dave, who had over 40 years of leadership experience and was the owner of a powerful multi-facility corporation, had a very different opinion that did not match with other respondents. While sharing his life experiences he questioned whether leadership style could make any difference. He suggested that the style of leadership had no direct role in employee retention.

Not only did Dave disagree about the role of leadership style in retaining employees but also suggested that people may leave for money more than other aspects. Except for Dave, all other respondents did not support the notion that money could be a vital factor today for employees in leaving food business operations.

*Dave - When you grow too fast, then any style may not be relevant in retaining employees. I do not see how a style could be an issue. Yes, engagement and environment may be a question. I see the style of immediate supervisor may be influential.*

Dave's view was an exception in our findings. Though we cannot just disregard it his view was not a common theme. The researcher has discussed Dave's views here just to explain the contradicting thoughts in the interviewing process and to show alternative views.

For Dave money is still a major issue and people may leave organizations for money. However, Dave's view is not supported by literature, with only a handful of researchers advocating that money and rewards are among the key issues in low rates of employee retention (Milliken et al., 2003). Balakrishnan et al. (2013) researched the 25 factors of high employee turnover and shortlisted nine most significant factors. Monetary rewards were not listed among these nine, and all of these were non-financial aspects; however, the role of leadership was among the determining factors.

The findings, *“Supervisors, Managers, and Leaders, are presumed to have a strong*

*role in retaining employees*” in external interviews were not much different from insights gained through internal inquiry. It seemed to be aligned with internal interviews. As per the internal interviews and other sources of internal inquiry, the relationships between workforce and employers were strained with management and leadership not usually involving employees in decision making and leadership. The external interview analysis reflected the importance of support and style of leadership and management in retaining employees. The same effect is highlighted in theme # 3 and 6 in the internal interviews.

These findings seem to support the idea that employee retention issues could be better if the environment and leadership approach was open, collaborative, and shared. As explained in internal interviews it is has worked whenever employees were engaged and shared in decision making and leadership. If it has worked earlier, and also supported by external interviews, then it probably has more tendency to work if employed at ABC Foods.

It is not just internal and external inquiry that supports the employment of collective wisdom and shared leadership. Previous research also appear to endorse this approach in solving organizational employee retention issues.

Yiannas (2009, p. 18) emphasized the significance of employee engagement and job satisfaction and associates this with effective leadership and management. Milliken et al. (2003) suggested that aspects of job security, engagement, and motivation are key for the employee to be retained. Samuel and Chipunza (2009, p. 411) elaborated "leadership style that lacks communication, limits engagement, and participation in decision making ultimately affect employee job satisfaction."

The data in the current research (both internal and external inquiry) also highlighted the value of managers, leaders, and supervisors in understanding employee retention requirements. Among other key implications highlighted were motivation, money, rewards and recognition. The key outcome was that recognition and motivation were linked to leadership and leadership style in the organization.

### **Leadership Style and Food Safety Culture**

Through interaction with interviewees and analysis of data obtained from interviewees, the researcher was able to identify three themes relevant to leadership style and food safety culture issues in this research. Due to their inter-relationship, the researcher has opted to discuss the themes together.

**Themes 4 - Managers, Employees, and Leaders are presumed to have a strong role in developing and improving food safety culture.**

**Themes 5-** *A leadership style that does not involve others in the decision-making process is not supportive of making food organizations sustainable and solving their problems related to employee retention and food safety culture.*

**Themes 6 - Shared Leadership style may impact problem-solving (e.g., employee retention issues, food safety culture challenges, and others) and organizational performance in food business environments**

Researchers experienced that Food Safety Culture was a hot topic for the food industry and for interviewees. All the interviewees were active managers and leaders and decision-makers in their capacity. Either in the current position or earlier, most of them were actively engaged in food safety management and food safety culture projects. All were concerned about the state of food safety culture in their organizations. They have their stories, case studies, and attempts to induce an influential food safety culture. So, interviewees, while sharing their thoughts on food safety culture, explained their experiences and outlined relationships and implications with various characteristics, including leadership styles. Some of the comments from interviews are stated below.

**Dale** - *As I see, the missing element in inducing food safety culture maybe lack of engagement, the involvement of senior management, and shared collaborative leadership: commitment, training, and involvement. It's only possible with all the stakeholders i.e., like leaders, managers, and employees.*

**Sandra** - *In my Organization, we are trying to change the food safety culture. We are trying different strategies and banking on employees and leadership. It's challenging and seems like an ongoing strive.*

**Mary** - *Any leadership style that can engage the workplace is useful for food safety culture. I experienced engagement, recognition, and rewards are helpful. Lack of attention and absence of coaching activities kills workplace culture. Do not just ask them to follow the rule, engage them, and explain why. Involve them when you develop the rule. Let them make these rules for them*



*when they share this task and decision making it will be stronger and durable practice and will be helpful in solving organizational problems.*

Also, it was evident from results that it is a shared approach with employees, managers, and leaders involvement that can achieve success through collaboration, engagement, and shared decision-making. Interviewees explained that culture was also about leaders and not just employees. It also determines that the style of leadership could make a vital difference in the success of food safety culture in food business environments.

**Nick** - *Food Safety Culture needs awareness of leadership needs. Not just at the top but all layers. Involvement makes a significant shift. Shared means engagement, and that remove frictions. The success of culture is embedded in the values. If the understanding is there, enforcement is easy. Training and learning your role and expectations are key factory in sharing leadership.*

**Mark** - *I do not think proper food safety management is possible with food safety culture, and for that management, commitment is the key. I like SQF level 3 and not 2 to show a good culture. It asks for more involvement, and that not possible without leadership being involved and with employees being involved. Not sure it's shared leadership, but engagement helps. It was not an overnight task. It was an ongoing effort.*

**Mark** - *Of course, management and leadership need to talk about food safety culture very often with the people, that the people and employees will see that. Leaders, managers, supervisors, operators and even regular employees have a significant role in food safety culture.*

**Mary** - *For me, it is more about changing Behaviors; the culture is just a result. How to go there is not that easy. For me, working together is the key, and the leadership style that engages employees is the key.*

As per the analysis of external interview data, there was no divide in understanding the value of an effective leadership style in cultivating food safety culture in an organization and the importance of engagement, involvement and a shared approach were underlined. All 12 interviewees were of the opinion that any democratic, shared, or collaborative leadership style and approach was instrumental in getting success in this objective. The findings look to align with the internal inquiry's findings, except the word shared was not used (but implied) to show the type of effective leadership style.

In internal interviews, it was highlighted that like other problems, food safety culture issues and consistent supply safe food products improved when the leadership and management engaged employees, but most of the time in recent years it was not

consistent. Together with the results of the internal and external inquiry it seems a workable idea to embrace any shared, democratic, and collaborative style at ABC Foods in order to reduce issues in cultivating food safety culture.

The idea to see shared leadership style producing results and solving food safety culture issues in a food organization is also supported by the practitioner and earlier researchers and experts. Recently (2018) GFSI – Global Food Safety Initiative has issued a white paper on food safety culture. That paper outlines a model of food safety culture (Appendix E) to assess the status of cultural development. The document shows senior management and leadership role among the first requirements.

Griffith et al. (2010b, p. 435) believed that safety culture remains an attractive approach to enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness, which have been conceptually linked to context-dependent organizational factors that are grounded in empirical research (Cox and Flin, 1998). These include leadership processes (Bass and Avolio, 1994), organizational commitment (Cox et al. 2002), and communication (Nieva and Sorra, 2003).

Based on the data, the researcher did not see any disagreement in results (internal inquiry, external inquiry, and learning from earlier researchers) that show that there was any disagreement about the value of leadership and its style in cultivating a food safety culture environment at ABC Foods.

### **Challenges in the adoption of Collaborative/ Shared Leadership Style**

During the interviews' data review, it appeared that to food industry experts shared leadership, even as a suggested and preferred style of leadership, could present challenges in implementation. Themes # 2, 3, 4, and 7 highlight such challenges.

*Primarily, the second and fourth themes highlighted the value of participation at all levels, including leadership, management, and supervisory levels. The question will be how to achieve such participation levels.*

*Secondly, the statement (theme 3) “achieving success in retaining valuable employees and enhancing food safety culture is an ongoing task” necessitates to have a reliable mechanism, availability of right and adequate resources, and ongoing monitoring*

*system to measure success over time.*

*Moreover, lastly, if the shared leadership is proposed, then, it will require a very trained work environment. The challenge will be to have adequate resources to train and to measure the effectiveness of the learning and training mechanism.*

These four themes together highlight the pre-requisites of a collaborative culture. They explain fundamental requirements in establishing a sustainable and robust environment that supports the progression of engagement and shared leadership, one that could help the organization retain employees and induce a prosperous food safety culture. Both internal and the external inquiry have consensus on the application and value of collaborative and shared leadership except for Mike, Nick and Dale who raised concerns on its effectiveness in a crisis and where prompt decision-making is needed.

The internal inquiry did not highlight the aspect of training as a pre-requisite and it was not captured in any relevant themes in the analysis. It may be due to the reason that internal inquiry was from one organization and thus skewed by perspectives of members from the same organization. The external inquiry was from seasoned professionals from different organizations where the environment and challenges could be different.

Some of the issues and challenges and pre-requisites associated with shared leadership that surfaced in this research are already highlighted in the literature, and not all is positive about shared leadership. O'Toole et al. (2002, p. 68) assert that "some of the most visible examples of shared leadership have ended in failure". Answering the question or common understanding that two or more leadership heads are better than one, as O'Toole et al. (2002 pp. 68) explains "when the challenges a corporation faces are so complex that they require a set of skills too broad to be possessed by any one individual."

Conger and Pearce (2003) are strong advocates of shared leadership, but they also highlight possible issues with this style. To researchers (Conger and Pearce, 2003; Pearce, 2007; Pearce et al., 2009) them, shared leadership cannot be viewed as a universal solution to any leadership issue or group setting. They argue that situations exist when shared leadership may not just non-optimal but even harmful, for example

situations where there is lack of awareness, knowledge, skill and abilities required to practice shared leadership. Or conditions where there is a dearth of goal alignment and shared vision among team members, and the scenarios where there is deficiency of time to develop shared leadership, and finally when there is scarcity of receptivity. The need for awareness and training is also highlighted by Nick, as stated above, and Mike, as explained below.

*Mike - I feel that a shared leadership style may not need a lot of education and training. It is the prevailing culture that matters. Yes, if culture is not there, a lot of spadework is required.*

Researchers have argued that shared leadership has challenges in its execution. Organizational studies investigating shared leadership expose the complexity of issues surrounding this model, the conditions which engender successful implementation and practice of shared leadership, the importance of communication, and problems associated with shared leadership (Conger and Pearce, 2003). Shared leadership may not be a workable idea for groups which do not have enough strategic skills, instead being too tactical and focused on details, and also groups where "a critical number of members lack the appropriate leadership competencies" (Conger and Pearce, 2003, pp. 299). It appears that share leadership needs a platform and preparedness. It is appropriate when there is ample time, receptivity, awareness, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to grasp the theme of shared leadership and where the teams, groups and organizations are united for a shared vision and common goal. Conger and Pearce (2003) pondered if all of these conditions are ever manageable at the same time in organizations.

### **Learning for Phase III**

Reviewing findings through the lens of literature together with learning through the LS and reflections of the researcher lead to the proposition that a shared leadership style could be adopted at ABC Foods. It suggests that shared leadership may not be the only remedy for organizational solutions for employee retention issues and food safety culture issues, but it has the tendency to manage such issues better than other styles of leadership. The outcome of this discussion, based on internal inquiry and supported by

external inquiry, suggests a shared and collaborative leadership style for ABC Foods that encourages shared decision-making at all levels. The outcome of this AR study highlights pre-requisites and bottlenecks and suggests courses of action to overcome such hurdles. It asks for preparedness through the provision and adequacy of resources. Among the key pre-requisites are an atmosphere of participation and collaboration, the mindset of shared decision-making and training have been suggested as fundamental tools to achieve such a mindset.

### **The Third Cycle of Learning**

The conclusion of external interviews was brought to LS by the Researcher, and there were multiple sessions on how to get learning from this insight. The cycle completed its loop and the researcher decided to embark on an earlier recommendation as except few minor differences as discussed above there was not much new learning except the site will have to show patience and it will be a daunting task. Also, a lot of effort will be required to instil the culture of shared leadership. The conclusion chapter outlines the lesson learns for Phase 2 and 3 in this AR Process.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explains the outcome of this action research project. It outlines the conclusion of the AR project that was initiated by the researcher in 2016. In this period, the project passed through various phases: understanding its requirements, internal and external inquiries, and finally concluded with the implementation of the acquired learning and monitoring phase to see the effectiveness of the execution. The first part of this chapter explains the actual learning, the outcome of the internal and external inquiry, and the application of learning, while the latter part sheds light on the contribution that the current research made to ABC Food and Food Industries, the food profession and towards practical knowledge creation. The latter part of this chapter also discusses additional learning (Appendix G) that was acquired in this AR project, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

#### **Impact of leadership style on organizational performance, employee retention, and food safety culture**

In order to address the problem involving the impact of leadership style on organization performance in ABC Foods workplace, three research questions (RQs) were established. The RQs inquired about the leadership challenge at ABC Foods, the reasons for these leadership issues, and finally, the possible impact of a different leadership style on organizational performance in the organization. The success of the suggested leadership style was assessed by monitoring its impact on two attributes; employee retention and food safety culture.

This was an AR project. The data was gained through various sources. As an outcome of learning derived from data at ABC Foods, observation, learning set early discussions, internal interviews, external interviews, data analysis through coding processes and constant comparison to extract themes and finally the discussion on extracted themes in light of findings from earlier researchers, learning set's final interaction and reflection, the outcomes from the current action research study were

deemed to have addressed the research questions.

As outlined in detail under the results and discussion chapter, this AR project suggested a positive role for leadership style, preferably shared leadership in order to achieve organizational performance. A similar correlation was observed while exploring the impact of leadership style on selected attributes; employee retention and food safety culture. Although this research does not show a shared leadership style as the only remedy for achieving organizational performance, the outcomes tend to reflect a sense of collaboration and participation, having a positive impact on organizational performance.

The research was planned to address ABC Foods problems. So, the research suggested to employ collective wisdom and shared leadership style at ABC Foods in resolving employee retention and food safety culture problem. The research also suggested that leadership and leadership style could play a vital role in making organizations in the wider food business operations successful.

The findings of this research seem to be aligned with the work of earlier researchers (Alghazo and Al-Anazi 2016, p. 37), showing a strong relationship between leadership style and employee motivation and performance and (Rahim et al. 2015, p. 198) showing the value of leadership and leadership style and its impact on employees and organizational efforts and link of leadership style (Tarabishy et al. 2005, p. 26) in turning leadership an institutional characteristic rather than an individual.

O'Toole et al. (2002) and Pearce and Conger (2003) suggested the value of shared leadership, a leadership that is shared not just in an informal and tacit way, but in a formal and explicit way. O'Toole et al., (2002, p. 67) notified a gradual change in leadership, shifting the concentration of power from one person to team or stakeholders. Bass and Bass (2008), and Magzan (2011) viewed democratic and participative leadership as an effective approach in organizational performance.

Yiannas (2009, p. 15) and Griffith et al. (2010a, p. 441) have advocated participation and commitment as being essential in an effective food operation. The participative and shared style had more to offer regarding making the organization sustainable, resilient, and viable (Pearce et al., 2013). Pearce (2007, p. 355) has argued that "As

organizations have steadily progressed into the knowledge economy, we can no longer rely on simple notions of top-down, command-and-control leadership, based on the idea that workers are merely interchangeable drones”. Today, leadership is not merely an individual trait, but it is an institutional trait and shared responsibility (O’Toole et al., 2002, p. 66).

As also outlined in the results and discussion chapter, the internal and external interviewees and learning set did show preference to shared leadership style but did not report shared leadership as the only remedy and an ultimate style. Some respondents had reservations. Even when shared leadership style was suggested as a possible option, its pitfalls and pre-requisites were also surfaced. That is why this research reports pre-requisites while adopting a shared leadership style and highlights its challenges. This was aligned with Conger and Pearce’s (2003, p. 299) work that also highlights preparedness and competency as pre-requisites while adopting a shared leadership style.

To this research, shared leadership style may only be used if the organizational culture is ready to embrace it. The trained and well aware workforce may be one of the pre-requisites, and per the research findings, this style might struggle in crisis situations and situations when consensus takes time to make decisions where time is of the essence. Some of the interviewees advocated the use of a mixed style or situational approach in food organizations for managing various difficult and tricky situations in order to produce better results.

The value and benefits of this style may not be understated, but its challenges may not be overlooked at the same time. The shared leadership style may be appropriate in conditions where there is plenty of time to create consensus and make collaborative decisions, awareness, knowledge, and skills to grasp the concepts of leadership sharing and where groups and organizations are aligned for common goals and shared focus. To explore it further and make the best use of the benefits of shared leadership, there is a need to do further research so that all of its implications are understood.

Although positively inclined towards the concept of shared leadership, Conger and Pearce (2003:299) are keen to highlight that they do not see shared leadership as the



universal solution to any leadership issue or group arrangement. Researchers (e.g., Conger and Pearce, 2003, p. 299; Locke, 2003, p. 273-274) see pitfalls in a shared leadership style and believe research on shared leadership is a work-in-progress and ask for further studies before it is adopted as a useful style in organizations. Locke (2003 p. 273-274) proposed that shared leadership must be used together with vertical leadership. The shared leadership style has been reported with problems, but in most of the cases, the problem has not been reported with the style or theme of leadership itself, but the challenges in its application. To Conger and Pearce (2003), Locke (2003), Raelin (2010) and Donna (2011), only a well-prepared work environment may adopt a shared leadership style and reap its benefits.

Being an AR project, though the key emphasis in this research was internal data, support was also obtained through external inquiry. This support was to explore the third research question and enhance trustworthiness through triangulation. The idea was to see out of the box thinking and negate any possibilities of internal bias and to eliminate organizational bias. The findings were not based on the external data, which had a confirmatory role by providing a third-person PAR perspective (Hynes, 2012).

Linking employee retention attribute in specific, the research findings were also supported by the earlier researchers' work. Yiannas (2009, p. 18) emphasized the significance of employee engagement and job satisfaction and associates this with effective leadership and management. Samuel and Chipunza (2009, p. 411) elaborated "leadership style that lacks communication, limits engagement, and participation in decision making ultimately affect employee job satisfaction". They also encouraged the value of a leadership style in adding positive energy to boost employees' confidence and enhance chances of retention.

This research was not the first one to report leadership and its style among the possible remedies to enhance employee retention. The literature review reported similar facts. Researchers Nair and Malewar, 2013; Milliken et al. 2003; Boxall et al. 2003; Spencer, 1986) reported deficiencies with leadership and their style among the employee retention issue. Krishnan (2004) promoted the value of effective communication and necessitates leaders to be visible if the problem of employee retention existed.

This research also suggested a positive link between collaborative and shared leadership and food safety culture. As outlined in the results section, all the interviewees supported the assumption that a shared leadership style impacts food safety culture. Not a single respondent shared any concern for adopting a shared leadership style in producing successful food safety culture in food operations. Many of the respondents even shared stories where they had to use earlier styles to produce results, and they value the fact that the adoption of a shared focus and shared decision making was helpful.

Yiannas (2009) stressed understanding the value of leadership and its approaches in food safety culture development. Yiannis (2009, p. 78) stated that "we often talk about food safety management, but we rarely talk about food safety leadership," which highlights the value of leadership in food safety culture. Griffith et al. (2010a, p. 441) advocated the role of management and leadership in food safety culture. He mentioned the value of management and leadership. He also deals with leadership styles but mainly focusses on transactional and transformational styles. He did not openly and clearly outline the impact of shared leadership on food safety culture. Recently (2018) GFSI – Global Food Safety Initiative has issued a white paper on food safety culture. That paper outlines a model of food safety culture (Appendix E) to assess the status of cultural development. The document shows senior management and leadership role among the first requirements.

During research interviewees, as explained by various respondents and supported by researchers (e.g., Schein, 2010; Ball et al. 2009, Bass and Bass, 2008), culture forms a reflection of organizational practices. Researchers such as Hinsz et al. (2007) and Wilcock et al. (2011) declared this to be an interdisciplinary challenge, and its resolution lies by employing strategies from cognitive, social sciences, and empirical insights. Schein's (2010, p. 85) highlighted the key dimensions of organizational culture. To him, leadership and its style are among the key factors involved in the development of a successful organizational culture. The research suggests the adoption of a shared leadership style to address cultural issues at ABC Foods.

### **Researcher's Personal Biases, assumption before the research**

Before the start-up and at the initial stage of the research project, I had some presumptions and biases. These drastically changed and were modified as the research progressed. Among some of the key presumptions were about ABC Foods, its environment, and its challenges. Initially, I presumed that the project was much easier, and the involvement of other members at ABC foods was easy. I believed that the issues were embedded in management and not leadership. I presumed that the problem was more with the commitment from management and not the style and approach of leadership. I presumed that research would take 4-6 months, but it took much longer than that. I presumed that participants in the internal and external inquiry would be very easy to engage, but it was much more difficult than I imagined making the selection and getting their engagement.

Even when phase I of the research suggested a specific style of leadership as a solution, I thought the implementation would be very easy, but it proved challenging to make people realize its importance. I had a personal bias that shared style was the ultimate style, but through literature review, data obtained, and reflection through learning set discussion, I learned that it was not the only and ultimate solution for a challenging environment.

As the research project progressed, I altered my approach and had an opportunity to test my assumptions one by one. Through personal learning and reflection via the learning set, I was able to see how initial presumptions got changed or testified over time. As a result, I had to step back, ponder, and adjust my thought processes and approach.

### **Actionable knowledge - Application of the research's outcome at ABC Foods.**

As suggested by this research, the application of shared leadership was not an easy and straightforward task. Looking at the precautions and required preparedness suggested by research (e.g., Conger and Pearce, 2003; Locke, 2003; Donna, 2011; Raelin, 2010), a comprehensive plan was developed and implemented at ABC Foods. The earlier chapters outlined the steps on this journey and its outcome in detail. It required training and preparedness before success was achieved in managing ABC Foods problem. The application was itself a daunting task and as explained in the discussions and

reflections chapters, and required a series of concurrent spirals of reflections before the execution was in place. Looking at the KPIs established to see the effectiveness of this solution, ABC Foods has shown a progression indicating the concept is working and offering excellent results. The indicator of employee retention progressed from 77 % to 92 % in less than a year. In order to improve food safety culture, the site achieved GFSI certification with a 90% score in less than a year. Though this might not be just due to this research, and there might be other factors that were out of the scope of the research, it is highly likely that the change in approach was the key factor behind the change and results.

The challenges are still there, but the site has acquired a stronger and more effective way to find solutions to problems. The site has learned a new and useful approach to address problems and challenges, and the spirals of action research, as suggested in this chapter, and the reflections chapter will be able to troubleshoot ongoing issues. At this stage, it is right to state that ABC is employing the learning obtained for this AR project and monitoring the effectiveness of implementation.

To foreshadow further details in the Reflections Chapter, this AR project was a great learning experience for me as a researcher, practitioner, and future leader. At an individual level, it helped me and learning set members improve various skills, such as systems thinking, critical reflection, value and power of the right question, systems approach, inquiry and questioning, courage to challenge personal biases and prior assumptions, active listening and the value of being listened to, empathy, and effective problem-solving. The learning in this AR project may be employed at other food business operations and could enlightening to other operations that are seeking advice in organizational performance, employee retention, and food safety culture.

### **Discipline knowledge - Current Research's Contribution to Knowledge and Future Prospects**

To date, numerous food business operation practitioners and researchers (Jespersen et al., 2016; MacAuslan, 2013; Wilcock et al., 2011; Griffith et al. 2010a; Yiannas, 2009; Pilling et al. 2008; Manning and Bains, 2004) dealt with workplace behavior with a key focus on employees, workers, and subordinates. Leadership behavior and styles,

and their impact on food business organizational performance in relation to employee retention and food safety culture have not been studied.

In most of the food operations related to food safety management or food safety culture literature, researchers have attempted to understand food safety culture through the fundamentals of food safety systems. Mostly the term leadership has not been used. Instead, the words management, senior management, top management, executive management have been employed. Apparently, researchers have tried to explain the role of key decision-makers and key managers, but the fundamental concept in their research had been participation and collaboration in general and not the decision-making process.

Among the principal researchers, Griffith et al. (2010a and 2010b) stressed the value of employees' behavior and their collaboration; Yiannas (2009, p. 15-16) suggested moving away from traditional approaches in food safety management, but his key focus remained on employee food handling behaviors and not the role and the style of leaders. The concept and impact of behavioral changes are outlined, but the discussion focusses more on workers' attitudes and behaviors and not on leadership style and leaders' behaviors along with association and impact on the workplace.

Mostly, earlier researches cited above in this chapter perceived food safety culture issues as concerning general management, employee motivation, employee behavior, and level of ownership and factors that cause bottlenecks in the achievement of food safety culture. My research explored leadership behavior impacts instead. These aspects will enhance the value of the understanding of the role of leadership and its style in managing food business organizations.

The key contribution of this current work is that it constitutes the first attempt to study leadership behavior in food business operations. It also constitutes a maiden effort to explore organizational performance about leadership style, and especially investigate aspects of shared leadership style. As per the outcome of my literature review, no one has ever studied leadership behavior concerning employee retention and food safety culture in food operation related research. The studies have always been conducted about workplace factors that cause employee turnover issues.

In highlighting the key contribution of this research, an important factor is its application to a real-world management problem at ABC Foods. The discipline-based knowledge resulting from this research has been implemented at the individual and organizational levels in a sustainable manner. Implementation is ongoing, and early results are encouraging. The discipline-based knowledge also offers promise for uptake and implementation on an industry-wide basis.

I am of the opinion that motivation is among the key pre-requisites of a healthy food safety culture, and to achieve this, there is a need to change workplace behavior, of both employees and managers, followers, and leaders. It is probably important to state that the leadership approach is equally important as employees' behavior in enhancing motivation and a safe food culture that ultimately leads to improved organizational performance.

This absence and scarcity of relevant references and available research work to food business operations in relation to the study add value to the importance of this research. The research is a unique effort of its kind since it explores leadership, shared leadership, organizational performance, employee retention, and food safety culture in food business environments. Another value that current research will add will be the application of action research and action learning in understanding organizational environments in the food business. The aspects of the application of action research in problem-solving in food business operations are expected to be a vital step.

### **Future Research Possibilities**

I have learned from the available literature that aspects of leadership and collaborative approaches have not been widely studied in food business contexts. As discussed above, a significant amount of research is available on employees' behavior and roles in the food industry in relation to the attributes of food safety management.

Furthermore, a considerable amount of empirical work has been accomplished on management commitment, employee participation, shared responsibilities, leaders' commitment, and employees' role and behavior. However, there is little direct research reported that offers an understanding of the ways in which leadership style and approaches can engender change, especially in food business environments. In

particular, the way in which leadership behavior impacts food business operations remains unexplored.

No first-hand insight was gained regarding the way in which workplace democracy, shared decision-making, collaborative, and shared leadership styles could impact food business operations' performance. It may be possible for food operation researchers to gain insights from other disciplines to shed further light on the future of food business environments. Raelin (2010) offered the concept of "leaderful practice," and future researchers may try its application and implications in food business environments.

This research may also be extended and refined by the level of respondents, type of respondents, grouping based on the type of food manufacturing, the gender of respondents, geographical regions, type of corporations and finally leaders/respondents background and type of food operations like food service, manufacturing, hospitality, food warehousing, and retail. The scope of this research did not offer me ample opportunity to associate the same concepts with gender and background of the internal and external interviewees regarding cultural association or regional link or whether the participants were multi-cultural or not. Perhaps, for future research, further exploration of these lines could be interesting. The Appendix G also highlight additional themes which were isolated in this research. These additional themes can provide direction for future research on the subject.

### **Limitation of this Research**

As summarized earlier in this research, one of the key issues the researcher had was finding relevant references to food business environments in respect of the impact of leadership style and its links with organizational performance, employee retention, and food safety culture. Consequently, research was analyzed and perceived through studies done in other fields. These references were used with a sense that there could be similarities in organizational behavior and aspects of leadership – follower relations and organizational cultures. To conclude, based on findings of interviews, analysis, and discussion in light of available literature and reliable references, this research suggests the use of shared leadership for ABC Foods in solving its organizational performance problem.

Another limitation of this research is embedded in the notion of generalization linked with qualitative research. Though this research tends to suggest a positive relationship between shared leadership and organizational performance that could be a source of enlightenment for other business operations, but conditions at other food operations might be different from ABC Foods. In such conditions, the outcomes of this study might not be directly applicable. Although this knowledge will remain there as a base for such operations to build on, one might have to assess new conditions before this learning is employed.

Due to the limitations of the length of the study, the scope in this study was specific and limited. I presume, the same study may produce different outcomes if the leadership style is assessed through the lenses of the gender of leadership, the maturity level of the organization, or the multi-cultural background of the leadership or the subordinates.

In addition, my sample size and type in the internal and external inquiry was specific. This is just one study. As we attempt to do further research and repeat similar aspects, a future researcher may explore other aspects and interrelationships. I employed some specific approaches, tools, and data gathering methods to explore this subject. There are many other tools and methods, both qualitative and quantitative, which may be helpful in exploring this subject and adding further clarity. Alternative methods and techniques may augment my findings or offer new dimensions, but repeated research with diversified methods on the subject will offer further trustworthiness.



## **Chapter 6**

### **Reflections**

#### **Employing Action Research in this Research Project**

The theme of this chapter is learning in action throughout the action research (AR) project. As an AR study, learning and reflection were embedded at every step of the way. Right through initial engagement and conceptualization of the project, problem identification, development of the learning set to refine and reframe problem, and finally employment of learning acquired through available earlier data, internal and external expert interviewers, and reviewing the impact of the execution of this learning, the concept of action research remained the focus. As also outlined in earlier chapters, the overall project was divided into three phases, where phase I had further subparts.

#### **Spirals of Learning and Reflection.**

The research project revolved around first-person, second person and third-person practice. First-person involved the researcher's own beliefs, values, ways of thinking, assumptions, strategies, and behaviors. The researcher's first-person practice was the centerpiece of this inquiry.

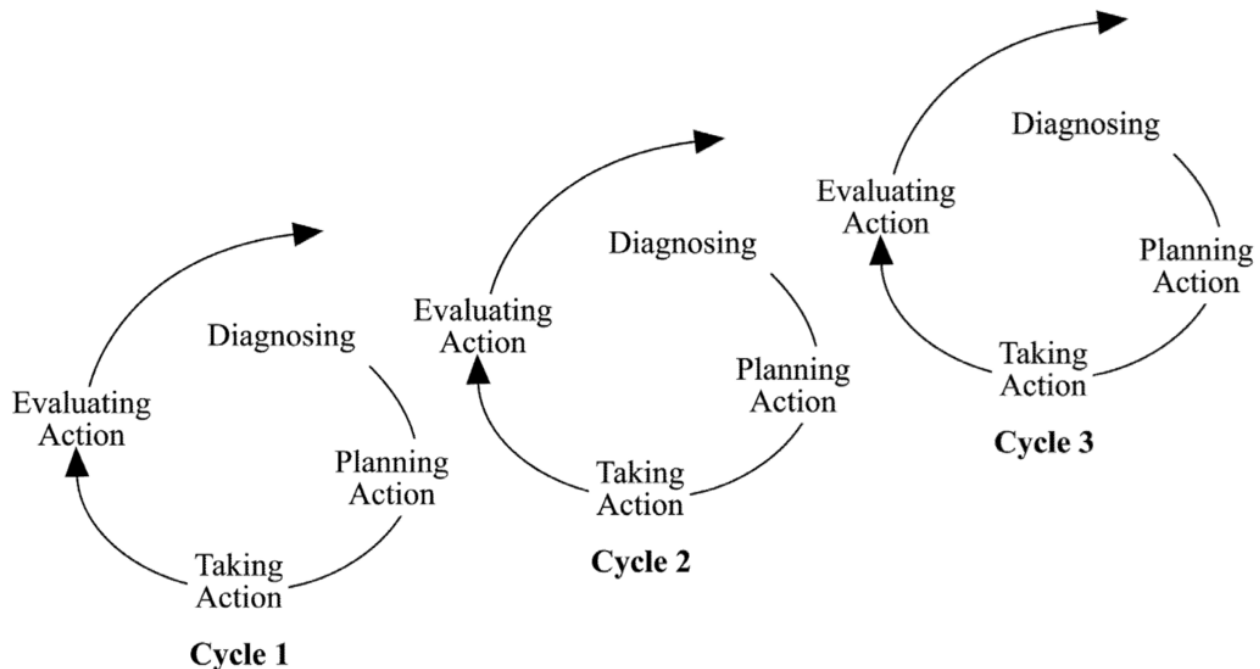
The second-person was where members of the organization came together in joint enquiry. Collaboration between organizational actors was an essential feature in second-person inquiry. The challenge was engaging others in a useful inquiry and reflection. The success of AR may be grounded in second-person practice. Second person practice relates to peers, colleagues, management team, and project teams. The key was to engage the process in double-loop learning (Argyris et al. 1985).

On the other hand, the third person inquiry (Hynes 2012, p. 54) "looks to dissemination of findings to a wider audience". It seems to extend outward from a single project/ case inquiry towards creating larger impact. This allows not just simple information sharing but allows to shared valuable knowledge that may broaden the focus and impact of action research. In the external inquiry, through PAR interviews and observations, insight was gained by collecting third-person data (i.e. the perspectives of external

food industry experts).

In this action research project, all the developments, actions, and learning happened in numerous spirals, called spirals of learning and reflection (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Raelin, 2010). Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p. 12) explained AR as a series of spirals working in sequences. As explained, these spirals may be sequential or occur concurrently. There could also be more than one spiral working at any given time and cycles could be at different stages. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) referred to these as concurrent cycles of action research.

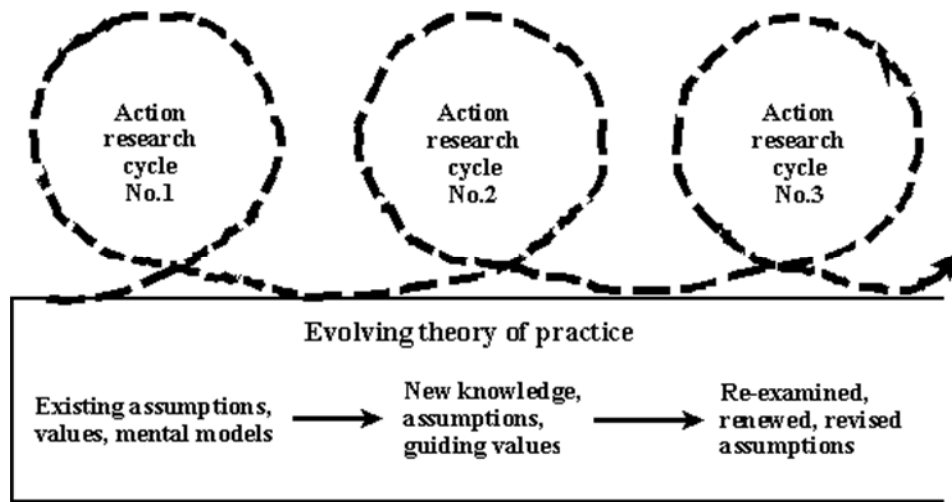
Cycles of learning follow the stages of plan, do, study and act (PDSA) (Deming, 1950). These are the cycle of reflection and learning. The key focus in each cycle is understanding the issue, proposing action and solutions, taking actions, and evaluating the course of action and its outcome. The moment one cycle fails to produce results after evaluation, a new cycle starts, the process of continuous improvement going on until the problem is resolved. Figure (F7) below shows these cycles.



Figure, F7 - Spirals of Inquiry in AR by Coghlan and Brannick, 2014

The figure above explains just the cycles, but the figure below (**Figure F8**) explains the sequence of my research and spirals involved. The image has been taken from the

work of Damme (1998). It just not explains the evolution theory of practice but also elucidates a sequence that was employed in this project.



Figure, F8 - The iterative nature of action research (Source: Damme 1998)

## **Action Research (AR) During Phase I**

### **Start of Action Research Project;**

#### **Setting the Terms of Reference with Owners/ Executive Management**

Though there were a lot of discussions and interactions before the project started, and that took months, the AR project formally started on in January, 2106. The initial tasks were to set up an overview and dimensions of the research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). Organizational commitment (Marquardt et al., 2013) and readiness (Pedler, 2008) for learning and change through action research were acquired following discussions with stakeholders.

ABC Foods did not have any prior experience with action research, so it was a daunting task to gain agreement on employing AR as a mode of inquiry and problem-solving. To assess readiness of ABC Foods culture for an AR project, Pedler (2008, p. 21) suggested using a questionnaire. The management at all levels was involved in completing the survey. The site needed to score between 20 and 40 to qualify to meet the threshold for the study. It (Coghlan and Brannick (2014) scored 33 in this questionnaire and thus declared itself ready for the intervention.

## **First Cycle of Learning**

In this phase, I passed through the first cycle of action research. I understood the problem, its context and significance of the problem, and all the implications linked with this problem. As Coghlan and Brannick (2014) advocate, after I understood the problem, the next task was to assess and seek who could help in this situation to solve it. The question was who should be engaged and how could they help? This was in itself a real question since AR engages people who are linked to the workplace problem through ways in which they could be helpful in exploring the problem and helping me to follow the later steps of AR. This was accomplished through the development of the learning set.

## **Learning Set Development, Training, and Engagement**

The process of development and qualifications of the learning set is explained in the research methods chapter. December 02, 2016, was the day when at ABC Foods, the learning set concept was introduced, and the first learning set was established. After the selection of the learning set, a protocol and step-by-step procedures were followed to explain the LS's role, obligations, rights, and authorities to its members. The details are outlined in earlier chapters. Now the LS was ready to facilitate the AR project.

Initial training and learning were undertaken to enable the LS to understand the concept of AR and how it could play its role effectively. Training included explanations through case study analysis and references from the literature. I also presented several videos to show and explain the concept.

## **Exploration of the issue and Defining the Problem**

After the initial interaction, in the third session, the problems associated with ABC Foods were presented to the LS. Looking at the current situation and concerns at ABC Foods, one vital task was to understand the complexity of the problem and its implications. In order to understand various facets of ABC Foods concerns the LS decided to engage all stakeholders in the organization. The researcher needed to learn about the problem from those who are involved with the problem and those who had concerns (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). In this way management and employees were engaged to

understand their perspective.

During engagement with the organization employees and management members were interviewed individually, and in addition four group sessions were arranged to get group insights. Executive management was also invited to explain the issues at ABC Foods from their perspective. To ensure that no employees were overlooked open suggestion boxes were placed at different locations to obtain anonymous inputs. All of these avenues generated a lot of insight. It was a daunting task for me to screen this input. The learning set had to have numerous sessions to gain clarity. All of these groups had different ways to present issues and many of them were more interested in sharing solutions or causes than actual problems.

The learning set was also given access to the site's management reviews, improvement meetings records, consultation notes and external expert surveys from archives. This helped LS to expand the horizon and understand the problem. The problem was discussed in light of these insights.

In addition to looking into various sources of data available at the time, it was decided to conduct internal interviews from executive management, management, and employees. A list of interviewees was prepared, and interviews were conducted. The selection process and the outcome are explained in earlier chapters.

### **Problem Statement**

Based on learning from various stakeholders, and discussions within the group, the LS presented its first draft of the problem description on December 21, 2018. It took four more sessions in reframing before the final problem statement was finalized and issued. By the end of week 1 (December 28, 2018), the learning set issued the problem statement.

*"What is the right leadership style that could help to enhance organization performance."*

Since this research was proposed to study and view leadership-related challenges, to explore the problem and find the right solution, three research questions (RQs – explained in earlier chapters) were developed.

The learning from internal interviews was brought in and discussed with the learning set before the course of action was established for phase 2 and three. As explained

earlier, this was the time when it was decided to take insight through external interviews. This concluded the first spiral of learning and reflection.

## **Action Research in Phase 2 of the research**

### **Strategy Development and Implementation**

In this phase the researcher had two significant tasks. First, understanding the learning from phase 1 and developing a strategy to implement this learning. Second, implementing changes in line with the strategy. The researcher, after interaction with the LS after phase one, decided to implement a collaborative, participative, and shared leadership style at all levels.

At this stage the learning set and executive management were asked to facilitate in developing the strategy to address the problems at ABC Foods. The implementation strategy was established, keeping an eye on the various challenges outlined by various researchers (Conger and Pearce, 2003; Locke, 2003; Donna, 2011; Raelin 2010). The site leadership was informed about the final outcome and the proposed remedy. The site's executive management agreed with the proposal and showed excitement. This was another vital step in our action research cycle. It started a planning and execution phase. The key was preparedness to this change (Conger and Pearce, 2003). To create the environment of shared leadership a training and learning program was suggested, this being agreed by executive management. The site leadership decided to invest significant resources in training employees and to develop a timeline so that the concepts of shared leadership concepts must be introduced and employed.

### **Plan for Change**

#### **Creating a Shared Vision**

This part of the AR study included implementation. It was the most demanding of all the phases in my action research project. The key challenge was preparedness to change and mind making at different levels. As part of the strategy, it was decided to create awareness at levels and offer education to all stakeholders within the organization. We named this step the development of a “shared vision throughout the organization”. This step was more general than later training and education about

specific leadership roles.

To spread the shared vision a shared vision statement, together with shared values, were developed to incorporate the message within the company's existing values. It was promoted to embrace shared values and collaboration at all levels and to reinforce our commitment to making decisions and taking responsibility for the outcome of these decisions. ABC's leadership visited and spent time with employees and management in order to break down the old myths and current norms and to set the tone for future expectations.

In addition to awareness sessions we developed posters, display signs, slogans and mascots. Teams and groups were formed to create further awareness and a sense of belonging to the shared visions. We initiated an organization-wide television (TV) service to create awareness of shared values and our role in organizational citizenship. TVs were installed at different locations including lunchroom and break areas. Regular programs were broadcasted, especially during lunchtime and break hours. Materials were printed and provided to employees.

The teams were also involved with workplace-related tasks where we could enhance awareness about our shared vision. Seminars and workshops were arranged, which employees stated were helpful. We used quizzes, short tests, quick interviews, and focus groups to understand the level of understanding.

The most challenging part was dealing with disagreements while creating a shared vision in the organization. We developed and trained a conflict resolution team to manage issues. Everyone who as observed not to be in agreement was listened to and the value of embracing this shared vision was explained to them.

Individual employees, employee groups and union representatives had reservations about their contribution to this new era of shared leadership to solve ABC Foods problems. All reservations were listened to and the real focus was clarified. After the interaction, the disagreeing elements offered more support than we expected after our initial discussion. While, these disagreements slowed the progress for a while it did not affect the overall timeline.

## **Role-Specific Training**

Training and educating all the stakeholders and leadership groups at the organization about newly selected collaborative and shared leadership style was not easy. I arranged at least seven sessions with different layers and possible leadership candidates. Two sessions were conducted with top management. Similar sessions were conducted at all levels to explain the concept of shared leadership and how it will work at ABC Foods. To educate and offer clarity about the expected role, the leadership at different levels was involved in case studies and actual scenarios so the concept was truly understood. In this process external help was also obtained. I also arranged to train the trainer sessions, so the required awareness and training did not rely on one person. On the basis of feedback from participants these train the trainer sessions helped ABC Foods a lot. We also developed quizzes and one-on-one sessions to monitor the training effectiveness. The learning set was heavily involved with the propagation of shared leadership, creating a shared vision and its application.

The mindset to accept the change, capacity building and preparedness through training were not the only tasks that were required for effective implementation. Besides, the organization's ownership and executive management before training allocated resources and assigned a budget to attain our objectives. A well-structured plan was developed (T17), and milestones were set up to monitor the status of the effectiveness of the implementation phase. A team lead by the researcher was established to ensure compliance and troubleshoot where required. We had a lot of issues and resistance from a few groups in terms of accepting the proposed leadership style. It was expected, as reported by Locke (2003) and Conger and Pearce (2003). We were prepared and were able to find solutions, convince management and persuade employees at ABC Foods to get on board. The site effectively completed the execution step in July 2017. This concluded our first loop of spirals in action research. Apart from the major cycle in the action research project, many concurrent learning cycles were running side by side as Coughlan and Brannick, (2014) suggested. These cycles were managing allied problems, like how to convince various groups about action research, to create consensus on interview strategies since some members of the opinion to have a survey,



and how to execute this learning since some members of the group wanted extensive implementation while others wanted step-by-step execution and many others. While these spirals were executing Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) suggestions were very useful since without running these concurrent cycles the resolution and timely completion of this research project would never have been possible.

Table, T17 - Training Plan included the following key subjects

#	Training Needs	Focused Participants
1.	Value of having a Shared Vision and shared values	Executive Management, Senior Management, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
2.	Initial Training on Shared Leadership requirements	Senior Management, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
3.	Intermediate Training for supervisor, manager	Senior Management, Managers, Supervisors
4.	Training for Senior and Executive Management	Executive Management, Senior Management
5.	Shared and Collaborative Thinking	Executive Management, Senior Management, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
6.	Finding a leader in you and others	Executive Management, Senior Management, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
7.	Leadership within the team	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
8.	Critical Thinking for leaders	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
9.	How shared leadership is different from teamwork and collaborative teams	Teams, Groups, and their leaders
10.	Shared decision making, benefits, and pitfalls	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
11.	How to manage pitfalls of shared decision making	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
12.	When might shared leadership, not work?	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
13.	Comparison of leadership style – Pros and Cons	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
14.	Why was shared leadership selected for ABC Foods?	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
15.	Problem Solving and conflict resolution through Shared Leadership	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
16.	Responsibilities of a shared leader	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, Lead-hands, and employees in a leading role and employees
17.	Role of facilitators in Problem Solving and promoting shared leadership at different levels	Executive Management, Senior Management, Tram Leaders, Managers, Supervisors, and selective facilitators

## **AR Project Implementation Phase**

After the shared vision was created the teams, managers and leaders were now aware of their roles and responsibilities. The key focus of the project was explained. The change was organization-wide and expected to change the mindset and culture over time. The immediate focus of the research was reiterated to actors and monitoring of the success of this change commenced. As per the AR project, monitoring occurred through the attributes of employee retention and food safety culture. In order to monitor performance and success of implementation key performance indicators for employee retention and food safety culture were established.

### **Learning and Reflection – AR Phase -III - Sustaining the change and Monitoring its impact**

The total project timeline was 2-3 years during which the research project entered the sustaining phase towards the end of the year 2017, six months after initial implementation. In accordance with the plan the researcher decided to monitor performance every six months. The latest report was issued on July 31, 2018. To see the effectiveness of the changes introduced as a result of this action research intervention and adoption of a shared leadership style, and as discussed above various KPIs for employee retention and food safety culture were established.

### **KPI for Employee Retention**

For this, an employee retention index/stability index was established as an indicator to see how ABC foods was doing after the change. This indicator calculation was easy to calculate. It was a simple percentage of employees retained by the ABC Foods and was calculated monthly. ABC Foods referred to this index as the stability index. The current monthly rate of retention was 77 %. Out of this only, 1 % was not a problem since these employees were asked to leave due to multiple reasons to safeguard company interests. Gradual Goals were set. It was decided that the company could sustain an overall 2-3 % turnover rate. The target was set that after 12 month of the start of the action learning project execution, the site must be able to retain at least 97 % of the employees. The table T18 shows KPIs for the August 2017 to July 2018.

Table, T18 – Rate of Retention KPI – Post Implementation

Months	Rate of Retention	Months	Rate of Retention
<b>Current Rate of Retention/ at the start of implementation</b>	77 %	March, 2018	90 %
August, 2017	80 %	March, 2018	90 %
September, 2017	81 %	April, 2018	92 %
October, 2017	82 %	May, 2017	94 %
November, 2017	83 %	June, 2018	95 %
December, 2017	84 %	<b>July, 2018</b>	<b>97 %</b>
January, 2018	86 %		

The shift from 77% to 97% over a period of 12 months retention is large and encouraging. It is presumed that the current change engendered by the AR project is the main reason behind this big improvement. There might be other reasons causing this big change in employees’ retention pattern which were out of the scope of the AR project. However, there are no obvious reasons, other than the AR project, for the improvement. The learning set had discussions on this tremendous improvement. The scope of the AR project was limited to internal factors within the organization so it is difficult to see the improvement through a different lens.

The retention rate might not sustainable over time and may be as a result of overwhelming environment at the site. As the time passes, it will be standardized. Once a year or so passes, it will be normalized and the final sustainable number will be available. However, early results are encouraging.

### **KPIs for Food Safety Culture.**

For food safety culture it was decided to achieve an advanced food safety management

system certification within 6-12 months' period. This was based on the notion that obtaining certification would represent a significant change in organizational culture, in particular food safety culture. GFSI benchmarked schemes were selected for the certification. Also, ABC Foods decided to go for SQF food safety certification for manufacturing (Level 2) in 12 months and SQF Food Quality (Level 3) within 24 months of the execution date. Many researchers (e.g. Yiannas, 2009; Griffith, 2010) assume that compliance and independent third-party certification to any of the GFSI Benchmark schemes (BRC, SQF, IFS, FSSC 22000) are indicators of success in establishing the requirements of an adaptive food safety culture so these are appropriate indicators. Another reason to make certification a KPI was linked with customer requirements. Key customers wanted a culture of food safety, and the SQF was suggested as an indicator. To meet this customer requirement the site had made an attempt prior to the research project but did not succeed. On the previous occasion the site had a critical and major non-compliance that resulted in a failing score.

### **The current status of the Action Research Project**

Though the full-scale effectiveness results will only be available after a 12 months period interim results are available.

### **Stability Index – Employee Retention - KPI compliance status**

The site has achieved a big success in this indicator. The actual retention rate has tremendously improved. Just in the first six months, the site not just achieved the required results but surpassed planned targets. It had unsatisfactory results in the beginning for the first three months but later picked up once the environment became certain, and employee confidence increased. The site's current KPIs indicator in the month of July 2018 was 97 %.

### **Food Safety Culture – KPI compliance status**

This aspect was the toughest to achieve since it had a history of unsuccessful attempts. A lot was required to be done to established food safety management system requirements and pass the certification process. The site recommenced working on SQF requirements in July, 2017. After initial development a gap analysis was done in

August, showing a significantly large gap, which delayed the desk audit process. The site expanded its team, trained and engaged new members before a further gap analysis with an improvement in the gap analysis the site applied for certification in January, 2018. A desk audit took place in February, 2018 and a site audit was completed on March 30, 2018. Though the timeline for the process still had a few more months to run it was expedited due to a customer requirement. The attempt was successful. Though the site did not score as high as we would have liked, and did not achieve an ‘excellent’ rating, it was a great success that ABC Foods attained the certification in its first attempt this time around. If the site had taken more time, a better audit score and rating was probable. The site scored 90% and rated ‘good’ in the SQF final audit. The score reflects that the rating did not reach the top level of ‘excellent’ but it does reflect a tremendous improvement and promise has been shown by the team and ABC Foods environment that can offer the base for organizational sustainability and viability. The facility has already received SQF system certification, but as per the timeline, for the true adoption of a shared leadership model in which all stakeholders genuinely become part of the decision-making process, the facility has a timeline of 2–3 years. The site has decided to use the Food Safety Culture maturity model (Appendix E) to see the level of compliance and change required to see improvement in food safety culture. The site will complete this review by the end of the year 2018.

### **Ongoing Cycles of Inquiry and Learning**

In the execution phase, sustainability phase and effectiveness monitoring phase I had to run many concurrent cycles of action research. The particular strategy that was devised for execution did not work in many cases necessitating re-runs and re-formulation. The timeline proved to be a challenge. Spirals were run to resolve problems in these phases. Resistance and employee silence were the key questions that we met during the implementation and maintenance of the shared leadership initiative. We had resistance even from external contractors and consultants since the concept of shared leadership was new to them. We had to run the cycle of learning and reflection to address these questions.

The job is not over. We are continuously running new spirals since the challenges are

new and ask to engage the internal team in the resolution process. The site has adopted the concept and induced a changed organizational culture. The site has decided to run another great cycle of action research after year one of the execution based on the results. The cycle of learning and reflection has become part of the site's routine. It has become like a shared vision. These cycles are not just at the management level. These spirals are running at all levels and internally known as Continuous Improvement Spirals (CIS). Embedding the cycles of learning and reflection will ensure sustainable outcomes at ABC Foods.

## **Learning and Development in Action Research Process at ABC Foods**

### **Learning as an individual & Learning for learning set members**

Action research and action learning is just not helpful in solving problems, its key focus is the learning and development of individuals and organizations (Pedler, 2008 and Revans, 2011). This action research project was really insightful and helpful in developing me as a researcher and practitioner. I firmly believe that my voyage through various stages in this research was vital. I happened to review a lot in the literature review that itself had a source of enlightenment and inspiration to be a better professional, practitioner and leader for tomorrow.

The key learning for me was about the process of learning and the outcomes of the learning. The learning and development as a practitioner were real since it was hands on and learnt through action. Though I already had a grip over action research and action learning I lived in action that was very different and insightful. I did not just learn better to question my assumptions but came out equipped with rich understanding of professionalism and leadership. I gained confidence and led from the front. In a nutshell, these interactions added value to my learning and provided essential ideas and skills to grow as a better leader for tomorrow's challenges.

This project was new for most of the members in my learning set. The interaction did not just offer them insight about action learning concepts but also about action learning in practice. It also offered an opportunity in development as an individual and a team. Among the key learnings as an individual that the set members had was understating the value of being a member, the value of reflection and questioning, seeing

assumptions being challenged and a process of analysis to come to a conclusion. The set members developed as better professionals and team members. Members gained understanding of how problems could be solved in an effective way.

As individuals learning, set members learned and improved skills such as critical reflection, systems thinking, systems approach, inquiry and questioning, value and power of the right question, sensemaking, the need to challenge prior assumptions and personal biases. Challenging and being challenging for the right reasons, self-awareness, active listening, empathy, effective problem solving, strong decision making, value in being listened to, presenting and facilitating, and working in a team for the shared goal. Some of the key learnings for me as a practitioner and researcher, and also group members, was the learning process where as an individual I was able to step back as necessary and challenge my assumptions, earlier beliefs, and values.

Individual set members had the same learning in terms of challenging personal biases.

Leadership skills (Marquardt et al. 2013; Raelin, 2010) were another set of skills that individual and learning set members learned through action research and the action learning process. The process of engagement, problem-solving, decision making, and other aspects associated with the learning process helped group members, including me, build emotional intelligence (EI). This learning around EI offered five essential skills: self-awareness, ability to managing emotions, keep motivating myself, empathy and skill in handling relationships.

Researchers (Marquardt et al, 2013; Marquardt, 2011; Greenwood and Levin, 2007) believe that action research and action learning has the ability to develop seven traits in the leader which match the characteristics of future leaders. Among those attributes are being a: systems thinker, change agent, innovator and risk-taker, servant and steward, coordinator, teacher, mentor, coach and learner, and visionary and vision-builder.

Based on my experiences all of these traits were among the lessons learnt in this project.

### **Learning as a Group and Learning for ABC Foods as an organization**

As an organization the action research project did not just help solve the problem but also improved the leadership quality and approach in the workplace. It helped the

organization grow a style of leadership that could fit their needs and make it sustainable. The site is experiencing ongoing benefits in terms of learning and revenue. Individuals and groups are part of the organization. The learning as an individual and as a group adds to organizational learning. This project did not just add to set members' individual and group learning; at the same time, it built ABC Foods into a better learning organization. Being a learning organization, the company increased learning abilities and enhanced capacities, transformed organizational culture and structure to improve business outcomes for stakeholders. As a companywide change and involvement of the entire business chain in the learning process the capability of the organization to manage knowledge has been increased.

The concept of shared and collaborative leadership was employed throughout the organization. It was not just adopted only in teams, but the concept was also embraced in decision-making at different levels. The site developed learning set concepts at various levels and adopted a reliable and effective problem-solving culture. The concept of shared leadership and collaborative problem solving became sustainable assets to the company.

Action research helps companies develop an influential learning culture. This research project offered ABC Foods an opportunity to run and learn through a companywide change initiative. It did not only help the organization to know an answer to their problem but also created knowledge and learning of the principle of excellence in the workplace. The organization embraced a cohesive approach, through a shared leadership style, that is proving vital in improving performance to make the organization viable and sustainable.

The trend in the first year of work shows that action research results, and the changes that these results brought, are sustainable. Although it is not always necessary to produce positive results in action research the current outlook supports the suggestions that my research produced a positive impact on organizational performance, and that change worked for the organization. The key learning for the organization is not just that the change worked in their favor, but that it is embedded in the ways that ABC Foods learned to manage change and learned to engage in critical reflection through an



action learning process. The skills developed to understand change and spirals of learning is the key to ongoing success and effectiveness. If future results turn out to be suboptimal the organization can always challenge them by engaging in ongoing spirals of learning that can lead the organization back to performing.

In March, 2018 ABC Foods issued a report to show how learning has affected the outcome of their initiative. Among the additional benefits and effects of shared leadership are those listed below.

These were not in the project but resulted from the research:

1. Increased productivity
2. Line Efficiency
3. Reduction in breakdown
4. Effective problem-solving atmosphere
5. Collaboration
6. Engagement
7. Ownership
8. Openness to change
9. Less employee silence

Besides the above benefits the key learning for the organization is the change in the culture. That has taken a pro-active route and changed from a correction and time passing approach to a proactive one. The spirals of reflection have become essential parts of the site's professional life. These spirals are running not just at a higher level but are running at every level. These cycles are internally named as Continuous Improvement Spirals (CIS). Action learning has changed the ways this organization approaches issues.

### **Learning at the Food Industry Level**

The action refers to third-person practice. This is about writing the research thesis and publishing this research for the public and especially for food business environments. The results of this action research project are really insightful and useful for the food

industry and profession. The food industry now has a source of information to know that a shared leadership style has the ability to resolve organizational performance woes.

Application of a collaborative and participative decision-making and shared leadership style may be useful in managing not just organization performance in general, but it also is effective in retaining employees and cultivating a long-lasting and robust food safety culture. It offers insight for the food industry and the general public that through action research, organizational capacities may be enhanced. It also offers insight that collaboration and participation in the problem-solving process could be a way to go to solve workplace problems.

As a side note, and as foreshadowed above, the results of embracing shared leadership as an approach at ABC Foods had not just impacted on organizational performance in terms of employee retention and food safety culture. It also had additional benefits like productivity, line efficiency, reduction in breakdowns, effective problem-solving atmosphere, collaboration, engagement, ownership, openness to change, and less employee silence. It also increased awareness of the benefits of shared leadership. These were some of the additional benefits which were experienced at ABC Foods. The researcher presumes that if shared leadership may offer these additional benefits at ABC Foods, then the rest of the food industry may also expect such additional benefits if a shared leadership style is truly embraced.

It's beginning of a research on a subject that was not much explored earlier in the specific context of food business operations. It opens up an avenue where future researchers may add further to understand "the impact of leadership style on employee retention and food safety culture" or explore other aspects (e.g., motivation, commitment, productivity, regulatory compliance, effective compliance to GMPs, compliance to food safety management systems, and numerous others) of food operation's management which could be affected by food business leadership style. This research may pave the way for other researchers to see the value of leadership style and explore its impact on Food business performance. There is always a first time for something.



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Appendix A - A List of documents examined at ABC Foods and during external interviews.

1. Gap Analysis – Where to Where? ABC Foods – 2014
2. Customer Survey Reports – ABC Foods
3. ABC Foods External Consultants Environment Analysis – 2014-15
4. Management Review Reports
5. CEOs records of Improvement
6. Quarterly Improvement Meeting Reports – Year 2014
7. Quarterly Improvement Meeting Reports – Year 2015
8. Quarterly Improvement Meeting Reports – Year 2016
9. Food Safety Initiative – Executive Summary of findings and Compliance Status
10. Internal management – employees meeting records – 21 meeting minutes
11. External meeting – local surveys, Case studies – external interviews

## Appendix B - Internal Interview and Questionnaire Guide

### Internal Interview Questionnaire Guide

#### Interview Type - In-depth semi structured

Interviewee's Name	Date of Interview	Purpose of the interview explained Y/N	Recorded or notes taken
Place of Interview	Time of Interview	Ethical bindings and Interviewee Rights Explained and Consent for recording obtained Y/N	In person or over the phone
Explained the Research focus, purpose of the activity and value of this interview in the research		YES/ NO	
<b>Basic Introductory Questions</b>			
Q1	Interviewee's background details – Including, organizational in past, current role in the company, career profile.		
<b>Key Research Question</b>			
Q1	How long you are in the organization?		
Q1A	Explain your role in the organization over the year		
Q1.1	Were you ever involved with managing ABC Foods issues?		
Q1.2	What do you know about ABC Foods organizational challenges and issues?		
Q1.3	What would be the possible cause (s) of ABC Foods Challenges?		
Q1.4	Are these issues linked with leaders, managers, supervisor or employees?		
Q1.5	Who do you think is more responsible for issues related to employee retention and food safety culture?		
Q1.6	Why do think this is the possible cause (s) of ABC issues related to employee retention and food safety culture?		
Q1.7	Do you see leadership or leadership style being a challenge in managing issues at ABC Foods?		
Q1.8	If so, why you think, ABC Foods challenges are linked to leadership and leadership style?		
Q1.9	Based on your experience and knowledge, why you think leadership and its style is the main issues behind employee retention and food safety culture issues?		
Q1A	What is the current style of leadership at ABC Foods?		
Q1A.1	Why do you think this is the style of leadership at ABC Foods?		
Q1A.2	What was the most prominent style of leadership when you joined and during your years of service?		
Q1A.3	Why the earlier style of leadership did not help ABC Food in solving its problems?		
Q1B	If the style of leadership may solve ABC Foods problem than what type of leadership may be effective?		
Q1B.1	Why do you think, this style works better, explain?		
Q1B.2	What are the benefits of using your suggested style in your organization?		
Q1B.3	Do you see any pitfall of using your suggested leadership style?		

Q1B,4	Did this style of leadership was every employed at ABC Foods?	
Q2A	Does Leadership and Leadership Style affect Employees Retention? Explain	
Q2.1	How does Leadership Style may affect Employees Retention, explain with your experience in general and in reference to your current organization? If it does not affect, why you think so? Explain.	
Q2.2	Is there any one style or combination of leadership styles that you think could affect Employees Retention in food business operations?	
Q4B	Do you think, Leadership and Leadership Style may affect Food Safety Culture in food organizations?	
Q4B.1	If so, how does Leadership Style may affect Food Safety Culture explain with your experience in general and in reference to your current organization? If you don't think so, please explain and support with examples.	
Q4B.2	Is there any one style or combination of styles that you think could affect Food Safety Culture in food organizations?	

**Note:** The above questionnaire is just a guideline to get relevant details. During the interviews, to keep the proses on track and get relevant details additional questions may also be asked without going out of topic. The duration of interviews may vary depending upon flow of relevant details. The designed and anticipated interviews duration is in between 30-60 minutes.

Appendix C - List of all the internal interviewees and their details

<b>Interviewee #</b>	<b>Interviewee's Title/ Role</b>	<b>Assigned pseudonyms</b>
1.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Bill
2.	Employee	Joe
3.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Jen
4.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Lil
5.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Ambik
6.	Employee	Sandy
7.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Kim
8.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Len
9.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Mell
10.	Employee	Miggi
11.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Jamy
12.	Employee	Nasir
13.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Shoa
14.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Sanj
15.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Sam
16.	Senior Manager/ Manager	Banny
17.	Employee	Kardi

## Appendix D - External Interview Questionnaire Guide

### External Interview Questionnaire Guide

#### Interview Type - In-depth semi structured

Interviewee's Name	Date of Interview	Purpose of the interview explained Y/N	Recorded or notes taken
Place of Interview	Time of Interview	Ethical bindings and Interviewee Rights Explained and Consent for recording obtained Y/N	In person or over the phone
Explained the Research focus, purpose of the activity and value of this interview in the research		YES/ NO	
<b>Basic Introductory Questions</b>			
Q1	Interviewee's background details – Including, organization, role in the company, type of operation, career profile, Type of Organization, Style of Leadership in organization I General.		
Q2	Interview's History of Leadership role and style of leadership, Interviewee's age, years in Leadership role.		
<b>Key Research Question</b>			
Q1	How long you are in leadership role?		
Q1.1	Explain your style of leadership?		
Q1.2	Did you experience evolution in your leadership style over time and how?		
Q1.3	What style of Leadership you prefer and why?		
Q1.4	May we link leadership to Organization performance and managing organizational issues?		
Q1.5	How we could link leadership and leadership style to Organizational Performance and its ability to manage organizational issues? Would you able to give some examples from your experience?		
Q1A	Explain how leadership style may affect Organizational Performance? If it's not, explain why not.		
Q1A.1	Based on your experience which leadership style could fit best to manage organizational challenges.		
Q1A.2	Why do you think, this style works better, explain?		
Q1A.2	How does leadership and leadership style affect organization challenges? Explain in general and through your experience in this leadership role or earlier roles.		
Q1B.1	What are pitfalls of using shared leadership style in enhancing organizational performance?		
Q1B.2	As explained earlier in the interview – we have two sub elements in this research to explore.		
Q2A	Does Leadership and Leadership Style affect Employees Retention? Explain		

Q2.1	How does Leadership Style may affect Employees Retention, explain with your experience in general and in reference to your current organization? If it does not affect, why you think so? Explain.	
Q2.2	Is there any one style or combination of leadership styles that you think could affect Employees Retention in food business operations?	
Q2B	Do you think Shared or collaborative Leadership Style may affect Employees Retention?	
Q2B.1	If so, how Shared Leadership style may affect Employees Retention? explain with your experience in general and in reference to your current organization. If it does not affect, why you think so, explain and give examples.	
Q2B.2	Are there any pitfalls of using shard leadership style in enhancing employee retention organizations? If so, explain and give examples if possible.	
Q4B	Do you think, Leadership and Leadership Style may affect Food Safety Culture in food organizations?	
Q4B.1	If so, how does Leadership Style may affect Food Safety Culture explain with your experience in general and in reference to your current organization? If you don't think so, please explain and support with examples.	
Q4B.2	Is there any one style or combination of styles that you think could affect Food Safety Culture in food organizations?	
Q4B.3	Do you think, Shared Leadership Style may affect Food Safety Culture?	
Q4B.5	If so, how Shared Leadership style may affect Food Safety Culture? explain with your experience in general and in reference to your current organization. If you don't think so, please explain and support with examples.	
Q4B.6	Do you see any pitfalls of using shared leadership style in strengthening food safety culture in food business organizations?	

**Note:** The above questionnaire is just a guideline to get relevant details. During the interviews, to keep the proses on track and get relevant details additional questions may also be asked without going out of topic. The duration of interviews may vary depending upon flow of relevant details. The designed and anticipated interviews duration is in between 30-60 minutes.

## Appendix E - Food Safety Maturity Model (Jespersen et al. 2016)

Stage Name (Identifier)	Stage 1 DOUBT									Stage 2 REACT TO									Stage 3 KNOW OF									Stage 4 PREDICT									Stage 5 INTERNALIZE								
Capability Area (Identifier)	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9
<b>Perceived Value</b>	Completing tasks because regulators make us do so. Food safety performance data is not collected and reported regularly to all stakeholders.									Little to no investment in systems (people and processes) to prevent food safety firefighting. Little understanding of true food safety performance.									Food safety issues are solved one at a time, getting to the root of the issue, to protect the business. Strong, data-based understanding of true food safety performance.									Reoccurrence of food safety issues is prevented by used of knowledge and leading indicators.									Ongoing business improvement and growth is enabled by food safety.								
<b>People System</b>	Tasks are only completed when senior leader's demand, without understanding responsibility, the task, or why it is important. Tasks being completed out of fear for negative consequences. Top management having to individually certify the accuracy of food safety information.									Responsibility for problems are established as the problems are discovered and solved mostly by use of negative consequences. Tools are invented as new problems arise and the tools are rarely incorporated into systems for future use.									Deeper understanding for the importance of foods safety systems, where responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated, is gained one issue at a time. Consequences are mostly managed when mistakes happen, seldom through a defined plan, with both positive and negative consequences.									Developing and assessing tools for improving processes through knowledge and data. Responsibilities and accountabilities are discussed, communicated, and assessed with patience. Processes are developed, including consequences (positive and negative), and managed preventive through communication and assessment.									Strategic direction is set across the complete organization with defined accountabilities, responsibilities, and food safety as one of the business enablers. Preventive definition and continuous improvement of specific food safety behaviours, consequences and tools.								
<b>Process Thinking</b>	Unstructured problem solving to remove the immediate pain.									"Plan, Do, Check, Act" with emphasis on control in the check phase and expectation of a immediate 100% perfect solution.									Structure problem solving with significant risk of over analyzing.									"Plan, Do, Study, Act" with emphasis on study and not control. Problem solving is accepted as an iterative process.									Horizon scanning and continuous improvement are used to identify risks. Risks inform the development and/or improvement of mitigation plans. Mitigation plans are integrated in the global business management system.								
<b>Technology Enabler</b>	Little technology being adopted and few see this to be an issue.									Responsibility is left to the individual to identify data needed and there is a high reliance on the individual to derive information from the data.									Standard technology is adopted on-going and standardized training provided to individuals as needed. It is unlikely to see that issues are prevented by use of data-driven information.									Data is collected in a precise and accurate manner to constantly improve processes. Automation is used in a limited or fragmented way.									Integrated, global information systems (e.g., ERP) are in place in the organization making it quick to adapt, improve, and use automated workflows.								
<b>Tools + Infrastructure</b>	Minimal tools in the hands of few individuals.									It takes a problem to get the right tools. This often leads to findings the right tools in a hurry and resulting in rework.									The organization invests readily in the right tools and infrastructure when solving a problem calls for it.									Food safety tools and infrastructures are in place and are continuously improved for ease of use and cost of the organization.									Investment in tools and infrastructure is evaluated long-term and prioritized along with other business investments.								



## Appendix F - Food Safety Culture Survey

Food Safety Culture Survey - Ungko Abidin Survey (Iowa state university, 2013)

### Food Safety Culture Survey

This survey investigates the role of workplace on food safety practices. Because you work in a foodservice operation, what you have to say is very important for this study. Please take a moment to complete this survey to let us know what you think of food safety practices in your workplace.

#### SECTION 1

Please read each the following statement regarding foodsafetypracticesinyourcurrentworkplace and indicate whether you: Strongly disagree (1), Moderately disagree (2), Disagree (3), Neutral (4), Agree (5), Moderately agree (6), or Strongly agree (7). If you work in more than one operation unit, please respond based on the unit where you spend most of your work time.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1. I can freely sneak up if I see something that may affect food safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I receive feedback if I do not follow food safety practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I am encouraged to provide suggestions for improving food safety practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. All managers give consistent information about food safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Management provides adequate and timely information about current food safety rules and regulations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My manager generally gives appropriate instructions on safe food handling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My manager approaches employees nicely when correcting them about unsafe food handling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Our food safety policies and procedures give detailed guidance for practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I believe that written food safety policies and procedures are nothing more than a cover-up in case there is a lawsuit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. All of the necessary information for handling food safely is readily available to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Management provides adequate training to improve employees' food safety practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Managers' actions show that providing safe food to customers is a top priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**SECTION 1 (Continued)**

<b>In my workplace:</b>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Moderately disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Moderately agree</i>	<i>Strongly</i>
13. Food safety is a high priority to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I follow food safety rules because I think they are important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I follow food safety rules because it is my responsibility to do so	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I am committed to following all food safety rules	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I keep my work area clean because I do not like clutter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. My manager always watches to see if employees are practicing safe food handling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. My manager is actively involved in making sure safe food handling is practiced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Management follows all food safety rules	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Management enforces food safety rules consistently with all employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Management inspires me to follow safe food handling practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Adequate supplies (e.g., gloves, thermometers, etc.) are readily available to perform safe food handling practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Equipment items needed to prepare food safely (e.g., hand washing sinks) are readily available and accessible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Facilities (e.g., freezer, warmer, etc.) are of adequate quality to follow safe food handling practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I am provided with quality supplies that make it easy for me to follow safe food handling practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Food safety training/education provided by management is useful in improving my practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. My coworkers are always supportive of each other regarding food safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. When lots of work needs to be done quickly, employees work together as a team to get the tasks completed safely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Employees remind each other about following food safety practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**SECTION 1 (Continued)**

<b>In my workplace:</b>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Moderately disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Moderately agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
31. New employees and experienced employees work together to ensure food safety practices are in place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. There is good cooperation among departments to ensure that customers receive safely prepared food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Employees are disciplined or reprimanded when they fail to follow food safety practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Employees are rewarded for following safe food handling practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. How well I follow food safety practices is part of my annual work performance evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Our food safety policies and procedures help to ensure that safe food handling practices are followed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Food safety inspections by health inspectors help to ensure safe food handling practices are followed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. I always have enough time to follow safe food handling procedures, even during rush hours	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. The customers have high expectations for employees to follow safe food handling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. There are adequate resources to prepare food safely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. My work load does not interfere with my ability to follow safe food handling practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. The number of staff scheduled at each shift is adequate for me to get my work done and handle food safely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. No compromises with safe practices are made when handling food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. Management has a clear picture of the risks associated with improper food handling practices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. Management will not take even a small risk when it comes to food safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. When there is pressure to finish food production, managers sometimes tell us to work faster by taking shortcuts with food safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. I am sometimes asked to cut corners with food safety so, we can save costs when preparing food	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix G - Additional Themes Highlighted during Research Interviews

#	<b>Highlighted Additional Themes</b>
1.	Leadership Style impacts Employee Motivation
2.	Shared Leadership Style impacts Employee Motivation
3.	Shared Leadership style is not suitable in all the situations
	Shared leadership Style may not be suitable in Crisis Situations
4.	Shared Leadership Style Effectiveness may depend on Preparedness and Trained Workforce
5.	At times, the use of combination of words, “Food Safety Culture” is just a buzz word in the Food Industry without perceiving its actual sense-making.
6.	The term shared Leadership style is not always perceived as sharing in decision making. Many times, its perceived just as participation in brain storming and discussions and not any participation in final decisions.