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**Article**

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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A new strategic leadership model for surviving and coping: Lessons from Canada's leadership approach to COVID-19

Bayan Farhan<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:** In order to improve leadership effectiveness, it is critical to highlight leadership approaches and practices that contribute to improving situations of uncertainty and instability. This paper investigates and reviews Canada's leadership at the federal level during the COVID-19 pandemic to propose a new leadership model that explains what leadership looks like and how it can make a difference in a time dominated by uncertainty and instability. The primary benefit of this new model is identifying leadership practices for coping and surviving unpredicted crises through four stages: Gathering, Protecting, Challenging, and Integrating. This novel focus on the specific situation of the COVID-19 crisis has important implications for leadership effectiveness and development.

**Subjects:** Economics and Development; Strategic Management; Leadership

**Keywords:** Canada's government; COVID-19; leadership practices; leadership approaches

## 1. Introduction

Economic uncertainty and social instability during the COVID-19 crisis have affected people worldwide and received significant media attention. While suffering from these challenges, people are

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Bayan Farhan is an Assistant Professor at the College of Business, Al Ain University since 2015. She holds a Doctorate in Leadership from the University of Calgary, Canada, and MA in Economic Policy and BA in Economics from McMaster University, Canada. Dr. Farhan teaches courses in leadership and management. Her fields of research interest include leadership development, strategic leadership, and economic perspective of leadership. Her research often integrates these areas to explore the leadership effectiveness and consequences of "strategic leadership". Her current research is on how strategic leadership can make a difference in the time of dominant economic uncertainty and social instability. Also, part of her research has focused on the leadership of higher education, and competition and the use of competitive strategies in the Canadian higher education market. Dr. Farhan has published in leading peer-reviewed journals. She has also presented her work at several academic conferences.

## PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to investigate leadership practices during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 that could be foundational to a new strategic leadership model. In doing so, I examined Canada's leadership practices at the federal level by focusing on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. In other words, the model proposed here is based on a case study of Canada's leadership experience during the COVID-19 crisis. It answers the research question of what leadership looks like and how it can make a difference in a time of economic uncertainty and social instability. This study aims to examine crisis leadership and provide new insight regarding leadership practices to manage unpredicted crises. This novel focus on the specific situation of the COVID-19 crisis has important implications for leadership effectiveness and development.

considering the importance of rebuilding their world and shaping their future. The development of a new strategic leadership model is urgently needed to deal with the crisis. This study sought to investigate specific leadership practices that can be utilized at a national or organizational level by answering the question of what leadership looks like and how it can make a difference in a time dominated by uncertainty and instability. In other words, what kind of leadership practices and approaches should be utilized during the crisis to actually improve the situation?

To answer this research question, I used a case study of Canada's leadership at the federal level to understand the impact of leadership practices and approaches to managing the COVID-19 crisis. Using this research method, I aimed to examine crisis leadership and provide new insight regarding leadership practices to manage unpredicted crises. Further, I sought to use this analysis to reach some conclusions about leadership practices and approaches that can form the basis of a new strategic leadership model. By proposing a new strategic leadership model, I want to highlight best practices in leadership to overcome the current challenges of economic uncertainty and social instability, as well as help keep the focus on improving the situation over the long run. Drawing from Canada's leadership approaches during the pandemic, the proposed model is organized into four stages: Gathering, Protecting, Challenging, and Integrating. I also highlight the economic results achieved by the Canadian government within 6 months, from March to September 2020, which help to evaluate the proposed model and its four stages.

Many scholars have discussed the characteristics of leaders. Being able to drive the change, having confidence and optimism, and having concern for employee well-being are essential aspects for leaders (Austin, 2013; Boyatzis et al., 2006; Yukl, 2010). Yukl (2010) stressed that integrity, empathy, and consideration of people's needs and feelings are important for leadership effectiveness. Other aspects, like emotional intelligence, that facilitate the development of effective relationships, as discussed by Nahavandi (2014), are also key for leadership effectiveness. In this case study, Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau shows his humane-oriented behavior through encouraging mutual trust and team building. This is evident when he follows his vision of Canada as "a country where everyone has a real and fair chance to succeed" (Office of the Prime Minister, n.d., para. 2). He shows his commitment "to make Canada a place where everyone has the opportunities they need to thrive" (Office of the Prime Minister, n.d., para. 2), as well as his respect to diversity and freedom. Team building as one of prime minister's leadership aspects was shown when "he worked closely with his team to build a plan to create jobs, grow the economy, protect the environment, and strengthen the middle class" (Office of the Prime Minister, n.d., para. 8). I have selected Canada as a case study because of its significant efforts in coping with the effects of the pandemic crisis in comparison to other nations' leadership. According to Wilson (2020), poor leadership at the beginning of the pandemic has contributed to the spread of the crisis:

US President Donald Trump, unsurprisingly, continues almost daily to set new lows for reckless incompetence amongst world leaders ... he is not alone in failing to act as a responsible leader should. Severe missteps have also been reported in the approaches taken by Boris Johnson in the UK ... Shinzo Abe in Japan ... Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil. (p. 280)

## 2. The study

This evaluation study is a form of applied research using both qualitative and quantitative data to explore and understand how Canada's leadership perspective has made a difference in people's lives during the COVID-19 crisis. This mixed-method study begins with a qualitative case study based on data primarily consisting of direct quotations from Canada's prime minister about his actions, practices, feelings, and opinions. Qualitative data were obtained through reviewing Canada's leadership activities, practices, and actions as recorded in official government documents and media channels. According to Sharan and Tisdell (2015), qualitative data collection is about "asking, watching, and reviewing" (p. 105). The qualitative data analysis aimed to derive meaning from the data. As well, quantitative data were collected to highlight economic trends and the

impact of leadership conducted practices for a period of 6 months, from March to September 2020. The data analysis process helps answer the research question about what leadership looks like and how it can make a difference in a time dominated by uncertainty and instability.

### 3. Discussion: Canada's leadership approach to the COVID-19 crisis

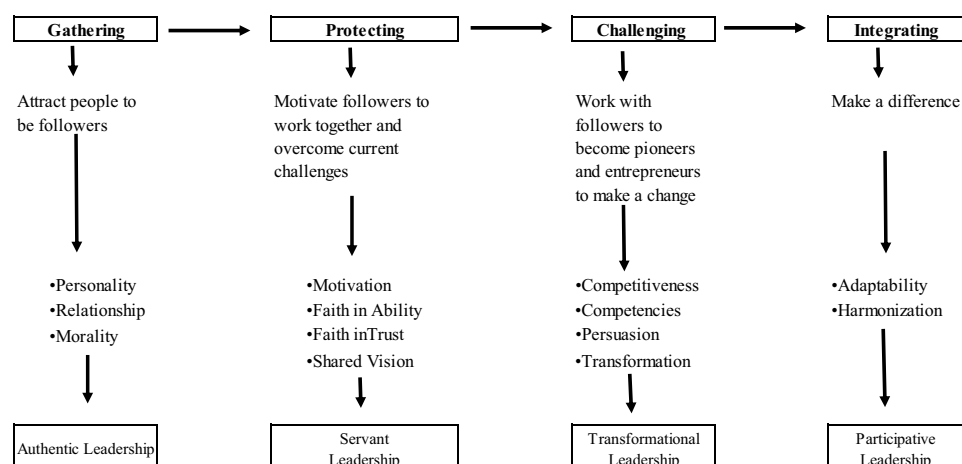
In order to propose a new strategic leadership model, it is critical to investigate a real case of strategic leadership that contributed to management of the COVID-19 crisis. In this paper, I advance the discussion by first explaining the proposed model, and then identifying and explaining the model stages. I review and match Canada's strategic leadership practices during the pandemic to the model stages in order to identify the proper leadership approaches for improvement and development.

The proposed strategic leadership model includes four stages: Gathering, Protecting, Challenging, and Integrating (see Figure 1). Each stage shows specific strategic leadership practices that are essential to facilitate leadership and make a difference in communities and organizations. The four stages show the role of strategic leadership in improving the situation gradually. The following paragraphs explain the proposed model and its stages while highlighting key leadership practices and leadership approaches adopted by Canada's prime minister, Justin Trudeau, and his team.

#### 3.1. First stage: gathering

This first stage is an initial step towards achievement and improvement, which require specific leadership practices such as trustworthiness and morality. At this stage, a leader's ethical and positive personality can work to attract people and gather them to be followers. It is about establishing an open and trusting relationship with followers to motivate them to accept a leader's vision, strategies, and philosophy. Gathering becomes a strategic target because people cannot work together without having the same intent, and leaders cannot accomplish a goal without enhancing loyalty among followers. This stage highlights the importance of using an authentic leadership style to attract people. Authentic leaders "bring people together around a shared purpose and a common set of values and motivate them to create value for everyone involved" (Landesz, 2018, p. 40). The link between authentic leadership and morality is explained by Hunt (2017), who stated that authentic leadership has solid ethical grounds. It represents the quality of the process of doing things; authentic leadership focuses on having trusting relationship with others, being open and honest, and giving weight to ethical values that are consistent with behavior (Hunt, 2017).

**Figure 1. A new theoretical model of strategic leadership.**



Gathering is a fundamental stage for improvement and change. A leader's moral actions and ethical conduct lays the groundwork to gather people's trust and confidence. According to Northouse (2016), ethics are significant to leadership and leaders need to show moral behavior. Moral behavior includes, as Hunt (2017) stressed, being fair and humble, showing appreciation and respect of people, improving the welfare of society, and focusing on long-term success. Ethical leaders who have ethical values, as discussed by Brown and Treviño (2006), are characterized as fair, caring, honest, practicing what they believe and influencing others because of their trustworthy role model. Arguably, the first stage of gathering and the use of an authentic leadership style helps people to understand their leader, who the leader is, and what the leader tries to do and why.

In the case of Canada's leadership, the first stage of Gathering is observed; an authentic leadership style is used. Prime Minister Trudeau showed his fairness, humbleness, and recognition when he met one of Canadians racial group on July 20, 2020. "Today, Muslims in Canada and around the world ... celebrate Eid al-Adha. ... Today, we recognize that service and the many contributions that Muslim Canadians have made, and continue to make, to our communities and to our country" (Trudeau, 2020a, paras. 2, 5). His recognition for their contribution to their society was shown when he said,

The values at the heart of Eid al-Adha have never been more important. Whether it is supporting a local charity, being there for neighbours, or helping those who are more vulnerable, Muslim Canadians continue to show us what it means to serve our community. (Trudeau, 2020a, para. 4)

The prime minister also showed his respect and appreciation when he met and talked to refugees in Canada in 2015: "In the years to come, Canadians will look back with enormous pride on the contributions made by Syrian refugees and how they have made our country even better" (Trudeau, 2015, para. 6).

During the COVID-19 crisis, an authentic leadership approach and moral practice have been demonstrated. Prime Minister Trudeau has a clear target of improving the welfare of society and took actions to become a shared value. He has been improving societal welfare by supporting the policy of minimum wage and increase its rate at provincial level. He also created three new ministries: Ministry of Middle Class Prosperity; Ministry of Seniors; and Ministry of Families, Children and Social Development. These ministries work together and with other ministries such as the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance. All focus on social development-related commitments such as first-time homebuyer incentives, middle-class tax breaks, the implementation of a national pharmacare plan, and improved financial literacy among Canadians (Aiello & Turnbull, 2019).

Authentic leadership style is strongly related to significant positive performance. As discussed by Landes (2018), when authentic leaders behave based on their ethical values, this motivates others to act alike and thereby impacts subordinates' performance. According to Brown and Treviño (2006), people "will pay attention to ethical leaders' modeled behavior" (p. 597). Indeed, the Gathering stage explains the need for authentic leadership to reestablish trust and confidence to cope with emerging challenges. This has been seen in Canada during the pandemic when Prime Minister Trudeau modeled working from home; on March 27, 2020, he stated that "we are asking Canadians to work from home wherever possible, we're asking people to stay self-isolated as much as possible, to not go out if not necessary. And I am happy to continue to do this" (Aiello, 2020g, para. 4). He announced major policies to address the pandemic from outside of his residence, and all meetings with counterparts ran by phone or video conference.

Because people worldwide have the same economic and social challenges, there is a need for leaders who have the social ability to construct a shared vision and shared culture, to work

towards establishing teams, and to believe in team achievement and shared responsibility. The target here is to attract people to trust leaders and accept the vision of the leader. At the same time, leaders need to gather people to cope with challenges that they have, and also show their insistence and decisiveness.

### **3.2. Second stage: protecting**

The second stage focuses on the way that leaders serve and motivate people to overcome challenges. The Protecting stage shows leaders' ability to motivate people through serving people's needs of social stability and economic prosperity. Arguably, at this stage, leaders show their ability to create a new culture of care and ethics, and show the importance of trust and teamwork. This stage highlights the importance of servant leadership style. Servant leaders, as discussed by Andersen (2018), follow moral rules and have high ethical standards. Servant leadership style shows love, trust, and empowerment (Hunt, 2017), and serves others regardless of their position and agreement. According to Nathan et al. (2019), servant leaders "develop followers on the basis of leaders' altruistic and ethical orientations" (p. 111). Servant leaders also focus on the personal development of their people and the sustainability of people's well-being and growth (Nathan et al., 2019).

The second stage of Protecting and the adoption of a servant leadership style have been noticeable in Canada during the pandemic. Prime Minister Trudeau made an important plan to take care of Canadians called the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), which served people who lost their job or were forced to stay home with no income as a result of COVID-19 (Aiello, 2020d). The prime minister showed his servant leadership style by serving people's needs of social stability and economic prosperity through the provision of \$500 a week for 28 weeks. As well, a servant leadership approach also focuses on building trust, which is shown by the prime minister when he said, "We're not looking at punishing people who made honest mistakes [in applying for CERB], obviously. This is a time for us to pull together as a country" (Aiello, 2020h, para. 2).

The adoption of a servant leadership style can enhance people's commitments, motivation, and services. According to Northouse (2016), servant leadership can motivate people by supporting them in their personal or professional development. Servant leaders need to show both task- and people-oriented behavior, which explains their two roles: a task accomplishment role and a team member satisfaction role. Prime Minister Trudeau filled the two roles to serve people in Canada. For example, on 25 March 2020, he explained how the federal government continually focuses on getting the work done, and on enhancing people's satisfaction level:

If you lost your job because of COVID-19, whether you are full time contract or self-employed, this new benefit will be there for you. If you are sick or quarantined looking after someone sick, or at home taking care of your kids. It is there for you. And even if you are still employed but not receiving income because of this crisis, the CERB is there for you. (Aiello, 2020d, para. 5)

At the same time, as a servant leader, Prime Minister Trudeau stressed the importance of supporting vulnerable and underrepresented groups, stating,

Throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen first-hand how critical the work of immigrants is to our country, especially in our health and long-term care systems. As we make every effort to ensure a robust economic recovery and protect Canadians' health and safety, the Government of Canada will continue to welcome newcomers through immigration and refugee resettlement ... we must also find ways to continue to protect refugees fleeing war or violence, and those persecuted for their faith, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. (Trudeau, 2020b, paras. 5, 6)



As well, servant leaders focus on people's commitments, motivation, and well-being, which is shown by the prime minister when he said, "As a country, we opened our arms and our hearts to people and families fleeing conflict, insecurity, and persecution ... the Government of Canada will continue to provide humanitarian support and international protection for people fleeing Syria, as well as assist them through resettlement" (Trudeau, 2020b, paras. 2, 4). In addition, the Protecting stage addresses how servant leaders need to show their expertise in their business and their skills and knowledge in professional way. Prime Minister Trudeau discussed with experts how to combat the challenge of COVID-19 in Canada. He said that "we have taken some very strong measures, and we are not taking anything off the table, we are looking daily at next steps that we might take, or we should not take and those conversations continue" (Aiello, 2020i, para. 3).

Finally, at this stage, servant leadership needs to show the importance of loyalty, moral values, and courage, and there is no room for giving up in order to serve the purpose of surviving and coping. Servant leaders, as discussed by Nathan et al. (2019), depend on spiritual insights as a source of influence. Prime Minister Trudeau, from the beginning of the crisis, encouraged Canadian to be loyal, moral, and brave when he asked them to take responsibility in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 by keeping a safe physical distance from people, while reassuring them that more financial help was coming to families and workers (Aiello, 2020i). This demonstrates how "a servant leader creates transforming effects on their followers, changing followers' mindsets and behaviors" (Nathan et al., 2019, p. 118).

### 3.3. Third stage: challenging

The third stage of Challenging focuses on leaders' ability to improve people's mindfulness, attentiveness, and competitiveness. This stage focuses on how to promote followers to be pioneers and entrepreneurs, competitive and competent enough to overcome current and future challenges. For example, Prime Minister Trudeau and his administration promoted creativity and innovation by supporting Canadian scientists with about \$192 million to develop a COVID-19 vaccine (Aiello, 2020c). In addition, Jim Balsillie, chairman of the Council of Canadian Innovators, encouraged the government to stop a brain drain of top talent Canadian and asked government to depend on innovative ideas from Canadians to build the country; he said that "the closure of the Canada-U.S. border, for instance, should spur the government to create a program to put Canadian innovation students to work domestically, with many having seen their co-op placements in Silicon Valley evaporate" (Press, 2020, para. 3).

The third stage, arguably, highlights the role of transformational leadership in encouraging synergy, inspiring self-leadership, and improving self-confidence to motivate people to show their creativity. "Transformational leaders influence the development and transformation of their followers" (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020, p. 3). The transformational leadership approach is noted when Prime Minister Trudeau encourages people to apply their competencies in new situation. He asked Canadian researchers, life-science companies, universities, and colleges to participate in finding a long-term solution to COVID-19, saying that "we need all hands on deck" (Aiello, 2020c, para. 5). Further, transformational leadership motivates subordinates to perform beyond expectations, as discussed by Mesu et al. (2015), which is appropriate at the Challenging stage. At the same time, "transforming leadership appeals to the moral values of followers in an attempt to raise their consciousness about ethical issues" (Yukl, 2010, p. 263). This was seen when Prime Minister Trudeau explained the consequences of violating public health guidance about physical distancing: "If you choose to ignore that advice you are not just putting yourself at risk, you are putting others at risk" (Aiello, 2020c, para. 12). The Challenging stage shows the importance of enhancing people's awareness and willingness to cope with challenges, as well as setting rules and policies to avoid chaos.

Further, this stage requires knowing of current internal and external challenges to set a proper strategic plan and put it to work to overcome accelerating challenges of economic uncertainty and social instability. Prime Minister Trudeau asked banks to reduce credit card interest rates to help



Canadians during the crisis (The Canadian Press, 2020). The federal government has also spent billions to help corporation, small businesses, farmers, and workers who have lost their income due to the pandemic (Aiello, 2020f). More direct help was offered to those who do not qualify for the CERB, such as students and those who have job but are working less than 10 hours per week (Aiello, 2020f). In addition, the prime minister and his team raised their concerns about internal challenges such as Canadian mental health pressures and made an announcement regarding the availability of “a free national app that Canadians can download and connect with mental health services directly” (Aiello, 2020c, para. 28). Indeed, the Challenging stage enhances people’s creativity, competencies, and knowledge sharing, which are essential for surviving and coping with unpredicted crises.

### **3.4. Fourth stage: integrating**

The fourth stage focuses on making changes to improve the situation at a national organizational level. This stage highlights the importance of teamwork and the word “we.” Prime Minister Trudeau sent a personal message to Canadians: “I want you to remember that we will get through this, together” (Banger, 2020, para. 12). In addition, the Integrating stage shows the need for leadership practices such as adaptability and harmonization, which require sharing knowledge, experience, and information. In the case of Canada, information sharing was shown during the COVID-19 crisis when Prime Minister Trudeau announced that “the entire world was unprepared to have enough protective equipment, and the only option Canada has right now is to produce as many supplies as quickly as possible” (Aiello, 2020j, para. 4). He signed some deals with domestic manufacturing companies to make COVID-19 supplies. Knowledge sharing was also noticed when the prime minister asked Canadians to listen to experts for a faster recovery: “If Canadians stay home as much as possible, are vigilant with their physical distancing, and wash their hands, this will be the first and worst phase that we go through as a country.” (Aiello, 2020a, para. 2).

Furthermore, Prime Minister Trudeau showed the participative leadership elements of involvement, adaptability, and coordination, which is essential at the fourth stage of Integrating. The prime minister showed involvement when he stated:

We do not need a pandemic or a special day to recognize your essential contributions to this country, but I hope all Canadians will join me in expressing our deepest gratitude ... to thank the public service that has been working around the clock to process these [CERB] claims. (Aiello, 2020j, para. 28)

By sharing the following, the prime minister showed adaptability:

If we want life to get back to the way it was exactly before, it won’t. ... There will be differences, even a few years from now, that we will have learned from dealing with this global pandemic that I think will be important lessons. (Gilmore, 2020, paras. 2, 3).

Coordination was demonstrated when the prime minister participated in a global meeting to discuss how to defeat the COVID-19 crisis. He has focused on vaccines and treatments and committed to contribute \$850 million to research and development to fight the coronavirus. He stated:

In the fight against COVID-19, our first focus will always be here at home, but this is a global challenge. To keep Canadians safe and restart our economy, we need to defeat this virus not just within our borders, but wherever it is found. (Aiello, 2020e, para. 3).

Further, Prime Minister Trudeau stated, “As a global community, we must work together to make sure that people around the world have access to vaccinations—especially the most vulnerable” (Blanchfield, 2020, para. 4).

#### 4. Results

This section highlights the economic results achieved by the Canadian government within 6 months, from March to September 2020, which help to evaluate the proposed model and its four stages. The model includes four stages—Gathering, Protecting, Challenging, and Integrating—each of which shows different leadership practices and different leadership approaches that, arguably, have been instrumental in supporting economic and social improvement. The stages include leadership practices of attracting people, motivating them, encouraging talent and creativity, and then making a difference. In the case of Canada’s leadership, the analysis shows the gradual adoption of authentic, servant, transformational, and participative leadership styles during the COVID-19 crisis.

The adoption of the four stages and leadership practices creates opportunity to support people and minimize harm to society and economy. The pandemic and resulting economic crisis affected Canadians strongly, with employees being laid off and workplaces shutting down. From March to May 2020, “the Canadian economy has about lost three million jobs, according to Statistics Canada, while millions of other Canadians have seen their incomes drastically reduced as a result of nearly all non-essential businesses being closed” (Aiello, 2020b, para. 3). The positive effect on the Canadian economy and society of the gradual implementation of the four stages of Gathering, Protecting, Challenging, and Integrating and the associated several leadership approaches can be seen in Table 1.

For example, the unemployment rate improved from 13% in April 2020 to 9% in September 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2020a; see Figure 2).

In addition, the Canadian labor market gained thousands of jobs within a span of months (Statistics Canada, 2020b), including 952,900 new jobs in June, 418,500 in July, 245,800 in August, and 378,200 in September (Statistics Canada, 2020c; see Figure 3).

Furthermore, retail sales increased by about 19% in May and 26% in June (Statistics Canada, 2020d; see Figure 4).

Finally, the country’s gross domestic product grew by about 4.8% in May, 6.5% in June, and 3.1% in July (Statistics Canada, 2020e; see Figure 5). Canada’s economy is slowly recovering.

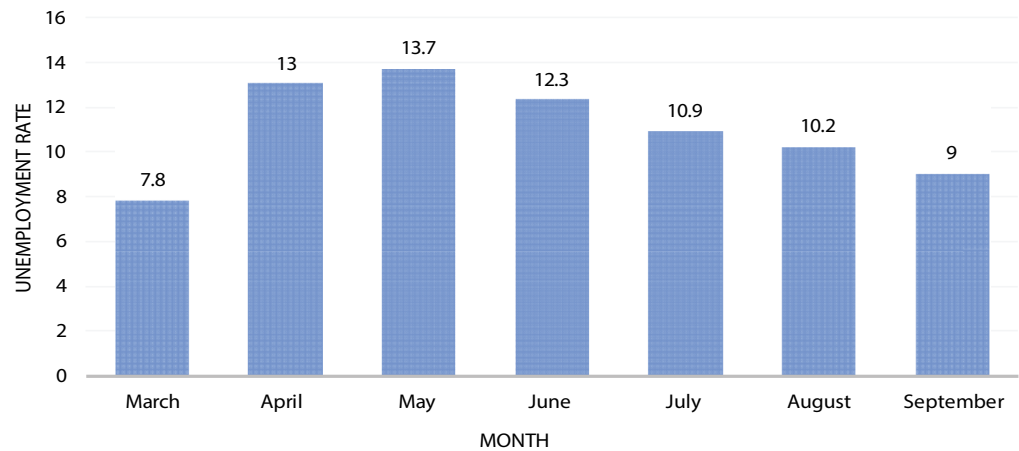
**Table 1. Economic indicators for Canada, March to September 2020**

Economic indicator	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
GDP	−7.30	−11.60	4.80	6.50	3.10	1.20	0.80
Unemployment (%)	7.80	13	13.70	12.30	10.90	10.20	9
Retail Trade (%)	−10	−25	19	26	1	0	2
Employment (x 1,000)	18178.7	16184.9	16474.5	17427.4	17845.9	18091.7	18469.9
Jobs (x1,000)		−1993.8	289.6	952.9	418.5	245.8	378.2

*Note.* From Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices, by industry, monthly, growth rates (x 1,000,000; Labour force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted; Retail trade sales by industry (x 1,000); by Statistics Canada, 2020a, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3610043402&pickMembers%5B0%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=3.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=05&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200501%2C20200501>); <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028703&pickMembers%5B0%5D=3.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=4.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=06&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200601%2C20200601>); <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=2010000802&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=01&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&cubeTimeFrame.endMonth=07&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200101%2C20200701>). In the public domain.

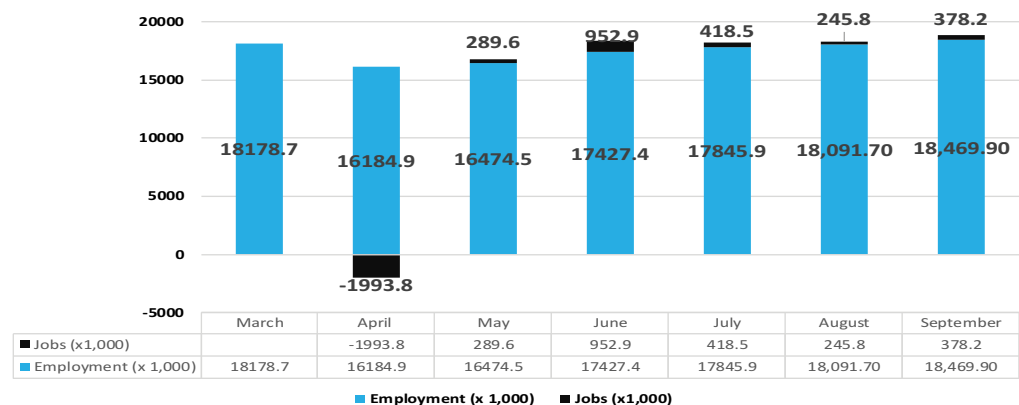
**Figure 2. Canada's unemployment rate in 2020.**

Note. From Table 14-10-0287-03: Labour force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted [Customized table], by Statistics Canada, 2020a (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028703&pickMembers%5B0%5D=3.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=4.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=07&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200701%2C20200701>). In the public domain.



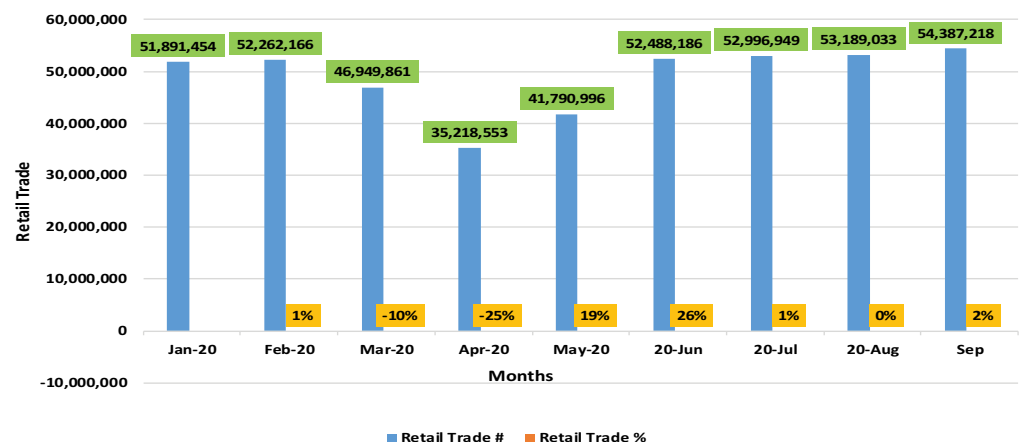
**Figure 3. Canada's employment and jobs improvement in 2020.**

Note. From Table 14-10-0287-03 Labour force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted [Customized table], by (Statistics Canada, 2020c) (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028703&pickMembers%5B0%5D=3.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=4.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=06&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200601%2C20200601>). In the public domain.



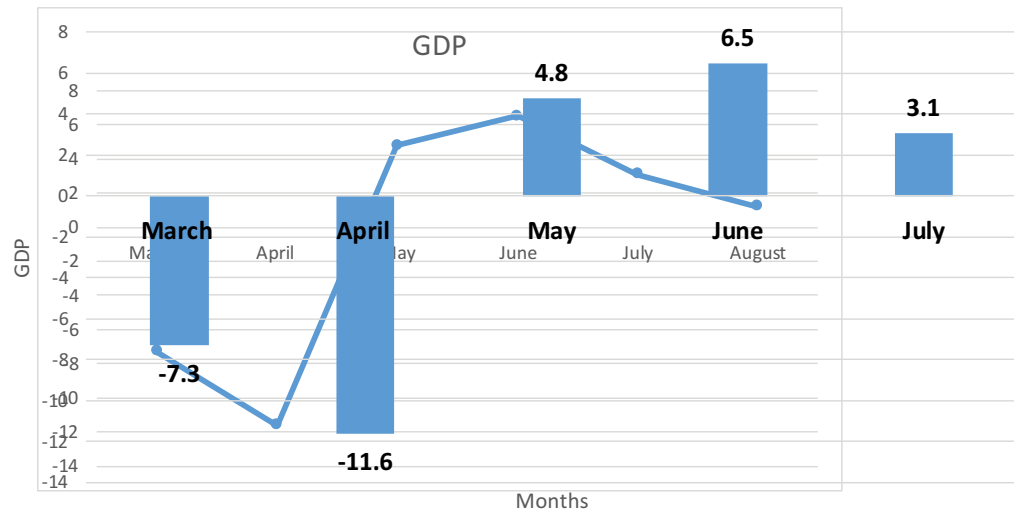
**Figure 4. Retail trade improvement in Canada in 2020.**

Note. From Table 20-10-0008-02: Retail trade sales by industry (x 1,000), by (Statistics Canada, 2020d) (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=2010000802&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=01&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&cubeTimeFrame.endMonth=07&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200101%2C20200701>). In the public domain.



**Figure 5. Canada's gross domestic product by monthly growth rate in 2020.**

Note. From Table 36–10–0434–02: Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices, by industry, monthly, growth rates, (x 1,000,000), by (Statistics Canada, 2020e) (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3610043402&pickMembers%5B0%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=3.1&cubeTimeFrame.startMonth=05&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200501%2C20200501>). In the public domain.



## 5. Conclusion

There are three levels of government in Canada—federal, provincial, and municipal—each with its own responsibilities. Provincial governments have power to make decisions that affect their province, while municipal governments are responsible for providing services that affect their specific city or town. This case study analysis focused on the leadership approach and practices of Canada's federal government because it has the power to make decisions and manage programs and services that affect the whole country directly. I investigated Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's leadership approaches and practices in response to the COVID-19 crisis. At the time of writing, Prime Minister Trudeau and his team show a commitment to establishing a shared goal of minimizing the effects of the crisis and organizing programs that enable Canadians to cope, all of which serve to build the necessary trust in leadership for overcoming the crisis and surviving. The model of strategic leadership practices drawn from this case study aims to provide practical lessons that can be applied by other leadership in communities or organizations throughout the world.

The purpose of this study was to investigate leadership practices during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 that could be foundational to a new strategic leadership model. In doing so, I examined Canada's leadership practices at the federal level by focusing on Prime Minister Trudeau's leadership approaches. In other words, the model proposed here is based on a case study of Canada's leadership experience during the COVID-19 crisis. It answers the research question of what leadership looks like and how it can make a difference in a time of economic uncertainty and social instability. The proposed strategic leadership model is based on leadership practices and approaches that have shown significant effects to support surviving and coping.

I suggest that the model can be applied not only at the national level but also at the organizational level to overcome unpredicted crises and make a difference. The model is applicable to making some positive difference to organizational performance and achievement. The model's four stages of Gathering, Protecting, Challenging, and Integrating can guide leadership actions and serve as a strategic tool not only in critical situations but also in stable ones. Following the model proposed here, leaders need to show sequentially authentic, servant, transformational, and participative leadership styles because they are, arguably, related to their performance. Leaders work, first, to attract and motivate people to accept a leader's vision, strategies, and philosophy. Second, leaders focus on the personal development of their

people, show their ability to create a new culture of care and ethics, and stress the importance of trust and teamwork. Third, leaders need to focus on creativity through identifying current challenges, encouraging synergy, inspiring self-leadership, and improving self-confidence. Finally, leaders work to improve the situation through sharing knowledge, experience, and information. Organizational leaders want to know how to compete and survive. They want to know how best to lead during unpredicted crises. They can begin by using the stages in the proposed model. There is a need for future testing of the model. Leadership researchers have the opportunity to conduct research that can test the model and improve leaders' performance at the organizational or national level.

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