

**THE TALE OF TWO CRISES- THE FINANCIAL
CRASH IN 2008 AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

**STRATEGICAL CHANGES TRIGGERED BY
MACROENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTY.**

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DECLARATION

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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DEDICATION

Dedicated this thesis to my lovely children: Samuel, Lucky, and Genevieve, who gave me the courage and inspired me to push myself to reach my daily goals. It has never been easy for us, with many ups and downs, but I thoroughly believe that this new chapter is an exciting new beginning.

"Dream big and never stop believing in yourself no matter how long it will take. Never lose
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ABSTRACT

This thesis will display the comparative study of two crises, the Global Financial Crises (GFC) of 2008 and the Covid-19 pandemic in Irish aspect of the events. This research explores in-depth the economic and social behaviour phenomena of organisational change. The GFC has been destroying Irish businesses so deeply, leaving the country in a devastating state of recession for a long time. However, the most recent Covid-19 pandemic crises disturbed or suspended Irish economy operations for some time, displaying more intensity of the event but some sufficient organisational changes. The organisation's strategy has been identified appropriately during both crises, and the evidence of those changes can be used as comparisons focusing on the macroenvironmental uncertainty to determine trends of those changes.

The paper seeks to investigate the trigger of organisational changes and the effects on organisational operations using secondary data collected by the research organisations, the Irish statistics office, and academic journals investigating the events. The study discovered difficulty in finding and supporting evidence of what strategical changes were established during the GFC in 2008 as opposed to the Covid -19 pandemic. The researcher discovers differences in response and support from the government highlight the significant impact of macroenvironmental uncertainty as the vital factor of the political and government policy to support and rebuild the Irish post-crisis economy.

The crisis necessity generates opportunities and threats for each economy. The research highlights the value of small and medium-sized enterprises in driving innovation, development, and R&D for the country. It also highlights their vulnerability to macroenvironmental uncertainty and needs for support during the crises as Irish business depends on their well-being in 68 per cent of the private sector.

Keywords and phrases: organisational structure, organisation strategy, environmental uncertainty, adjustment.

Introduction

Background to Study

The rationale for the research

The crisis has a critical impact on businesses, especially SMEs, as they play a significant role in global economies. SMEs through driven innovation, development, and growth for each country, creating employment mostly in the private sector. Common, SMEs are more vulnerable during a crisis than the large organisation as it has weak financial structure depending on credit terms, and cash flows generate difficulty in diversifying or cutting cost, exposing difficulty to keeping supplier as the demand for goods and service significantly dropping, increasing the risk of defaults or even bankruptcies (Lawless et al., 2014)

The Covid-19 Pandemic is a Global crisis stating interfering with business and social behaviours since December 2019. The national survey conducted by the Central Statistics Office Ireland (COE) analysing Covid-19 impact on SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprise) in Ireland in 2020, with a sample size of 8,000 Irish enterprises collaborated across all business industries, proved that 56% of enterprises reported close at list once during the Covid-19 Pandemic due to Government restriction, reduced demand, difficulty with cash flow and positive Covid-19 cases in the workplace. According to COE (2021), the most affected business sectors are hospitality, including accommodation and food service, entertainment, and construction.

The underlying magnitude of the health crisis (Covid-19) on the business rationale for the research goal is to explore organisational behaviour during the last Global Financial crisis in 2008. Ireland was exposed to a fast-increasing recession in 2009 due to the clops of financial and construction sectors. Emphasises that 99.8 per cent of Irish Enterprise at that time was SMEs contributing 68.6 per cent of employment and 50 per cent of Irish economy turnover seems the fairest comparison of change and approaches adopted by the firms.

Objectives:

The phenomena of the research methodology allow researchers to conduct their information by formulating the problem and objective and providing study results. By choosing explanatory research, this paper aimed to emphasise deeper describing and explaining knowledge about the organisational change to the strategy and structure. The objective is to provide the information to help future businesses adapt and respond during a highly uncertain events such as the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Financial Crisis of 2008 in Ireland. Comparison of both crisis research objectives focus on different environmental factors and the effects of responding. In order to comply with the objective of the study, it seems quantitative and qualitative research methods are applicable. (Adams et al. 2014)

This research investigates the adjustment, changes and level of adaptiveness introduced during the crises to the Irish SMEs.

Therefore, data gathering using a qualitative method will allow us to distinguish how the organisations have been affected by environmental uncertainty factors and forces to change and adapt to the conditions created by the highly uncertain events. The paper aims to discover the trigger of environmental uncertainty focusing on how political and government policy influence business changes during the crisis and the macroenvironmental factors that trigger the organisational changes during those events.

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Organisations are constantly evolving. Over the years, many scholars have tried to explain why organisations are changing and the factors that trigger and determine the changes. One of the most important phenomena of strategic management is the relationship between organisational structure and strategy, which displays how organisations operate and becomes an essential element in explaining the organisational change.

Another critical element is the environment. Environmental characteristics impact and affect the relationship between organisational strategy and structure. It creates opportunities and threats for the business, which may affect the strategic decisions of the organisations. Depending on the organisation's competitive advantage, most firms use environmental dynamism to increase firm efficiency and effectiveness and positively respond to environmental changes. Unfortunately, the relationship between organisational structure and strategy is more complex, especially because of uncertainty.

The most important finding on the relationship between the organisation structure and strategy shows that it takes many years to realise that the relationship is more complex than primarily suggested. The analysis of environmental characterising serves to identify how the nature of the environment triggers an organisation's strategic processes. More details particularly concentrate on environmental uncertainty, which led to the research question: How do organisations change during environmental uncertainty. Using the example of two crises: the Financial Crises of 2008 and the Covid-19 Pandemic, examine and compare the events by identifying the differences and similarities in perceptions of environmental uncertainty. The findings show that environmental uncertainty forces change in businesses, but depending on the physical characteristics and prediction, each crisis's organisations respond differently.

2.2 The contingency approach to the structure and strategy

The first significant contribution to strategic management was studies conducted by Burns and Stakler (1961), who focused on two organisational forms: the mechanic and organic, suggesting the organisational accessibility to change. The mechanic form is characterised as a centralised and bureaucratic structure, and the organic form appears decentralised with a more

flexible structure. Management perceives the environmental and technological changes by displaying the contrasts between mechanic and organic organisational forms. According to Burns and Stakler's (1961) discovery, we know that the organic organisations associated with an uncertain environment had positively responded to the technological changes. Stable situations surrounded the mechanical organisational forms, and settled management struggled with change.

Following the content of change, Chandler's (1962) conceptual work put a new perspective on organisational structure and strategy. The first definition of the structure is explained as the design of an organisation fulfilling an administrative role, where the strategy is described as the set of long-term goals, objectives, and purpose of the firm by placing policy and action plan using the resources to fulfil those goals.

Chandler (1962) states that firms grow in a coordinating mechanism and control pattern. Propose three major organisational structures: simple structure, functional structure, and multidivisional structure (M-form), giving the healthy choice of choosing a strategy to achieve the fit between structure and strategy. Proposing that the simple structure should choose between a focus strategy or business level strategy; the functional structure has a choice of the strategy depending on the specialisation, degree of centralisation and formalisation, proposing the cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy or integrated cost leadership/differentiation strategy; the M-form based on the company size and the level of diversification should operate through divisions. Focusing on the growth factor of divisionalized and diversification Chandler (1962) described the change as a need to implement structure and strategy to match strategy. Chandler's model defining organisational structure and strategy was quite simple, including only organisation size and diversification level to match the strategy given. Organisations have only chosen to match organisation form with one of the suggested strategy models. The nature of the environment was not included in the change.

However, Hage's (1965) continued examination of a change factor in the organisation's life cycle proposed the axiomatic organisation theory. Highlight that adaptiveness is critical in aligning organisational structure and environment to improve firm performance. His work combines Burns and Stakler's (1961) studies, confirming that organic structure matches the dynamic environment and the mechanic suits the stable condition. The founding was within Chandler's (1962) organisational change over the life cycle but improved by environmental alignment and organisational structure requiring improving performance. The context of the

environment becomes deeper analysed by another contingency school; for example, Lawrence and Lorsh (1967) focus on the external environment and the local condition in which the firm operates. They discover that the organisation must provide the ability to integrate and differentiate accordingly with the environment to become successful. Also, they described the organisation as a system of interrelated behaviour of people performing assigned tasks, differentiating into different subgroups across the organisation. Each group of tasks are integrated to achieve effective firm performance.

The work of Lawrence and Lorsh (1967) has been expanded by Galbraith (1974), who shows consistency with their findings of differentiation and integration and to the assumption of Chandler's (1962) work that the strategy is given. Galbraith's (1974) studies also focus on the uncertainty of tasks and the amount of information required to make decisions to achieve performance. Those studies show how the relationship between the structure and strategy is developed over time. His discovery emphasises the importance of uncertainty in planning. It highlights the significance of organisational flexibility and the ability to adapt by using information processing capability to coordinate the change by establishing the rules and programs, hierarchy, and goals settings. Uncertainty is an essential component of technological change, requiring the organisation to adapt to the information process to increase performance. Galbraith (1974) considers environmental changes as ongoing, proportionally influencing the relationship between structure and strategy, suggesting their connection as reciprocal.

Tushman and Nadler (1978) also analysed the uncertainty and information process concepts. They focused on organisational diversification structure, suggesting developing a feasible structural form alternative based on tense situations offering a choice of the organic or mechanical form. The organisational effectiveness depends on the fit between the information processing and chosen structure, but different coordination mechanisms and controls must be placed with environmental turbulence. The studies by Tushman and Nadler (1978) indicate that environment and managerial decisions influence chosen structure, but the design process cannot be accomplished due to constant changes in information processing. Hall and Saias (1980) also called the relationship between strategy, structure, and the environment symmetric, which could be made in both directions. It applied that a mismatch between them leads to inefficiency and that the environmental conditions should always be applied simultaneously to the structure and strategy.

2.3 Strategy and structure as a process

The significant contribution of John Child's (1972) findings proposing the emergence concept of "strategic choice" change the perspective on the relationship between the organisational structure and strategy. The complex analysis of the contextual and organisational variables examined the relationship of structure and strategy as a process, including environment, technology, and scale of operations. Child (1972) suggested that "strategic choices" is given to the organisation. It refers to a process given to the power holders within the organisation to decide about courses of action taken to many environmental conditions to structure and choose a strategy to achieve a high level of performance. According to Child (1972), "*organisational structure defined formal allocation of work roles and administrative mechanisms to control and integrate work activities including those which cross formal organisational boundaries*" (pp.2, 1972) as the organisational structure should be chosen based on the environmental conditions, organisational attributes such as technology used and size to gain a high level of performance.

The work links to the findings of (Burns and Stalker 1961; Hage, 1965; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967), emphasising the importance of structural adaptiveness to respond positively to the degree of change environment, suggesting that organisations have a choice. Indicated that a lack of structural adaptive to the context leads to lost opportunity, increased cost, and organisational problems. However, the first choice is choosing the type of environment of operations as a business and which markets they enter. Secondly, before making decisions about strategic action, businesses should have to examine the conditions of operations in the chosen market and their organisation influence which they could get by entering that market, for example, from the demand for their product. Finally highlighted that the relationship between structure and strategy is a process recognised as an adaptive learning cycle in which organisational operation constraints evaluate of organisation's position in the first step and then, based on chosen organisation objective, assume the evaluation which should be reflected in the strategic decision.

Furthermore, Child (1997) provided his previous studies on strategic choice and the related conditions between structure and strategy within the situation. Proposed the learning process seen as the ongoing dynamic process including information gathering from the organisation and environment, which evaluation generates the opportunity and problems for the firm. Through learning, given a choice for the firm to apply some changes such as internal adjustment (structure, size, or technology involvement) or changes aligned within the environment (new

product, service, suppliers, or market) generate improvement in outcome and feedback of information (Table 1.). Based on the constant new information gathering by the organisation, the process is dynamic and ongoing.

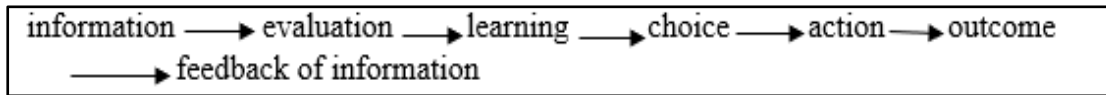


Figure 1. The ongoing dynamic process of structure and strategy. Child (1997)

Child (1997) suggests that it contains two cycles expanding on the dynamic organisational process. The first cycle focuses on organisational design, and the second cycle matches with environmental conditions to impose feasible direct action providing constant changes. The significance of the child's (1972, 1997) findings provides a new perspective on the relationship between structure and strategy, introducing the concept of strategic choice and showing that their relationship is ongoing, requiring constant evaluations and continued change internally and seeking opportunity generates form environment.

In addition, Miles et al. (1978) proposed developing a model of the adaptiveness cycle, consistent with Child's (1972) strategic choice. They focus on the complexity of the adjustment process, highlighting its dynamism of environmental changes and uncertainty. They described crucial elements of the organisational adaptation process, such as entrepreneurship, engineering, and administration. Also, discover patterns of behaviour used to adjust to the environment. A successful adaptation process requires form managers to implement organisation to the new form and provide direction and control for the employees.

However, Child's (1972) emergence process gives organisations "strategic choice", and Miles et al. (1978) adaptive cycle, which sees the organisation as the adaptive exposed to the ongoing dynamic process, seen by Mintzberg (1981) as a deeper analysis. Mintzberg (1981) differentiated organisation into three dimensions:

1. The first dimension included the crucial elements of the organisation, which determine success or failure, known as the strategic apex (the top management and support staff), the operative core (the workers conducting organisational tasks), the middle line (middle and lower level of management), the technostructure (today can be described as analytical stuff like engineering, researcher), the support staff (identified today as IT).

2. The second coordinating mechanism includes mutual adjustment, direct supervision, work process standardisation, work outputs, and worker skills.
3. The third dimension formed the type of decentralisation needed depending on the power of decision making, which could be established as vertical and horizontal centralisation (power placed at strategic apex); limited horizontal decentralisation (some power is shared to standardised work); limited vertical decentralisation (market-based units managers have delegated the power of controlling decisions in their units); vertical and horizontal decentralisation (the power of different decisions laid cross various group at different organisational level of the employees).

Following Mintzberg (1981), the elements of those three dimensions must be adapted to extend, accordingly establishing a strategy for one of the five structural, organisational forms: simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisional form, and adhocracy. Chosen based on the match between the operations' situation proposing organisations forms that match the environmental conditions like a stable or complex. The simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, and missionary configuration suggest that organisational forms are suitable for a stable environment. In contrast, a more complex environment suits forms such as the simple structure, divisionalized form and adhocracy. The discovery of Mintzberg (1980, 1981) emphasises that effective organisational structure requires fit in which strategy reflects the situation and congruence factors such as age and size, technical system, environment, and power define a strategy formation process.

Mintzberg (1990), as a first, not only look at the relationship between organisational structure and strategy as an ongoing process but also include the environmental nature of the process from the start. The phenomena explained through The Basic Design School Model (Figure 2.) describe those external and internal environments that generate threats and opportunities based on which organisation determent the strengths and weaknesses of the business, allowing create the strategy, which obligates an evaluation and implementation of the strategy respectfully to environmental changes, social responsibility of organisations and managerial value.

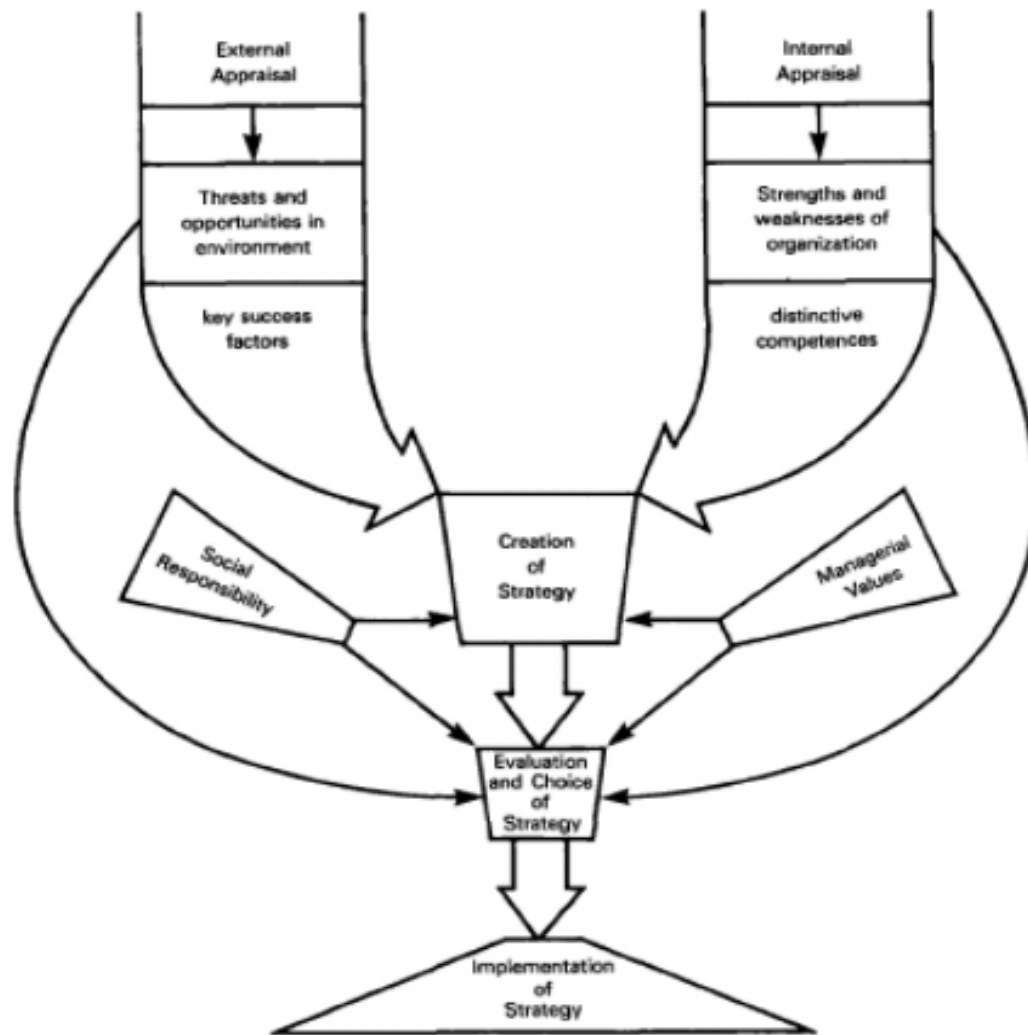


Figure 2. The basic design model (Mintzberg, 1990).

The basic design model clarified the importance of environmental nature in strategic management. The strategy is consistent form. The process is ongoing due to environmental changes. The strategic planning introduced by Mintzberg (1990) is based on daily coordinated activities such as forecasting, planning, organising, commanding, and helping make decisions aligned with the external environment to reduce uncertainty. Mintzberg (1999) sees the organisational structure and external environment as essential elements of creating strategy. The process is complex and requires constant implementation due to the nature of the environment.

In conclusion, Chandler (1962) proposed the aphorism that "organisational structure follows strategy", but his research was conducted in a more stable environment, where the opportunity and threats created by the macroenvironment were much slower. His theory considers macro-

environmental changes as an influence but not a strategy component. Currently, the environmental dynamism is much faster, and the opportunity and threats generated by the macroenvironment have a deeper impact on businesses. Mintzberg's (1993) Design model is more relevant to the current time. His theory of strategy formulations describes its continuing process and mostly involves macro-environmental changes in the planning process from the beginning, where organisational strategy is formed. The organisational structure is seen as a part of the strategy, and all the changes emerge during the implementation process involving every part of the planning strategy. Additionally, the environment becomes an essential part of the planning process, which does not consider influencing decision-making like in Chandler's time.

Finally, for this research focusing on strategic changes, the Mintzberg (1993) view is the most relevant, explaining the importance of environmental changes on decision-making during the planning and implementation strategy.

2.4 Environmental changes

The environmental changes have been classified into three dimensions: dynamism/ uncertainty, hostility, and heterogeneity/complexity. The studies of Miller and Friesen (1983) focused not only on the relationship between strategy and structure; environment and structure, but descriptive examination of the environment classified environmental changes into subcategories such as:

- *Environmental dynamism or uncertainty* seems like the industry's rate of change and innovations and the level of unpredictable customers and competition. Linked to the findings of Burns and Stalker (1961) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967).
- *Environmental hostility*, level of threat from the competition and industry.
- *Environmental heterogeneity or complexity*, the level of need for diversification, link to Chandler (1962).

Miller and Friesen (1983) suggest that information processing generates the ability to respond to environmental challenges. It requires organisational structure changes and revising organisational strategy to cope with environmental challenges; it discovered that innovation helps firms overcome environmental challenges.

The alternative suggestions have Miles et al. (2000) imply that environmental dynamism affects the relationship between the organisational strategy and structure and suggests that organic structure in dynamic conditions emphasises strategic fit with the environment to positively influence firm performance. Some similarities can be found in the research of Lo (2013). They focused on the impact of the external environment on the organisation. They discovered that it affects organisational structure and resources by adopting different strategies, amassing resources, and increasing performance.

Organisational flexibility concept

The environmental changes trigger strategic changes in the business. Hofer and Schendel (1978) confirmed that the changes are part of a strategy linked to the firm's resources and competitive advantage. Many scholars highlight that the factor that effectively allows firms to respond to environmental changes is organisational flexibility. The scholars propose using different organisational forms, allowing increased flexibility in the firm. Organisational flexibility is a multidimensional concept that reflects an organisational capacity to respond quickly and effectively and adapt to environmental changes. (Stachova and Stacho, 2017; Ionescu et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2010) depending on the agility to change, innovation and novelty.

Furthermore, equal flexibility exploits the new opportunity created by environmental changes, allowing the firm to modify the processes and effectively accommodate the changes (Sharma et al. 2010); improve controllability for the firm (Volberda, 1996). Maximova (2020) also argues that an organisation requires flexibility to outlast in a dynamic environment without dropping the stability in-process and maintaining fit. The dynamic and unpredictable environment generates challenges for organisations. Besides, flexible organisations develop new products and enter new markets and industries to effectively respond to any customers or market demands (Sharma et al., 2010).

Therefore, we found multiple propositions for introducing modern organisational structure to effectively adapt to a turbulent environment. Stachová and Stacho (2017) recommend temporary units or teams operating in the departmental structure; Page et al. (2016) propose that organisations focus on areas requiring agility and offer new ways of working by selecting self-managed networked teams focalising on outcome-empowering collaborations and talent.; Maximova (2020) suggesting pursue agility by applying the project structure and adhocracy; O'Reilly and Tushman (2004) imply that it is achievable for the organisations within a

traditional structure to successfully react to environmental uncertainty by traditional exploratory units and allow exploitative units for more modern form within the tight relationship between units and the organisation's senior-level- integrate senior teams transforming into ambidextrous organisations focusing on incremental innovation. More than less, flexibility is the tool which helps an organisation respond to the challenges generated by strategic change.

2.5 Uncertainty

The environmental characteristic has been identified since the 20th century. Knight (1921) highlights risk and uncertainty between production and consumption with the prediction of profit as a first defined uncertainty as an unknown event. Since then, many scholars have referred to environmental uncertainty emphasising its impact on business. The first defining characteristic of the environment was its dynamism. For example, Burns and Stakler (1961) described its conditions as a stable or dynamic match particular organisational form based on environmental dynamism. The thoughts were also followed by Hege (1965), suggesting that organisational structure must align with the environment, and Lawrence and Lorch (1967) focused on adapting organisational structure within environmental uncertainty. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) propose the first approach to measure perceiving uncertainty, focusing only on the clarity of the job, the degree of difficulty trying to accomplish the job, and, on time, -taking to receiving performance information is no longer valid.

However, Durcan (1972) first defines environmental uncertainty as a lack of information on the event, making it impossible to predict what external changes may impact the business decision. At first, Durcan attempted to find how environmental uncertainty could be measured. The proposed five external environment elements distinguish the perceiving uncertainty, including customers, suppliers, competitors, and social-political and technological factors. Unfortunately, he contained all elements into a single scale.

Miller (1993) provided the most complex view on environmental uncertainty, defended as the *"unpredictability of environment or organisational variables that impact corporate performance"* divided into three categories of how the managers can perceive uncertainty: *environmental uncertainty, industry and firm-specific variables uncertainty"* The level of uncertainty determines the strategic decision of the company and the risk involved in the firm response to environmental changes presented in Figure 3.

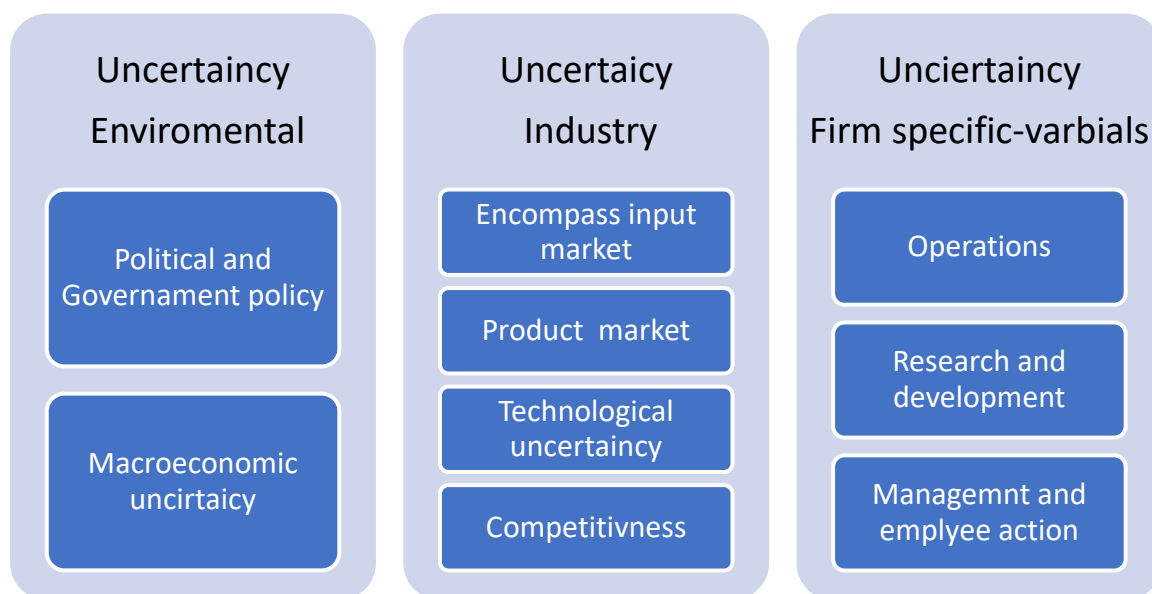


Figure 3. Uncertainty model, Miller (1993)

Miller (1993) develop a model to measure uncertainty perception. The questionnaire designed by Miller, known as the scale, to measure PEU (perception environmental uncertainty), includes the elements of environmental uncertainty, allowing managers to evaluate the predictability of dose components ranking on Likert-type scales from 1 to 7 (where seven means unpredictable). The PEU instrument distinguishes a multidimensional approach to how the uncertainty is perceived, allowing organisations to physically grade and adjust the challenges and opportunities generated by the environment and respond to them. Lewis and Harvey (2001) analysed the (1993) Scale to Measure PUE and identified that the model required modification to a particular industry sector. The scale to measure PUE of Lewies and Harvey (2001) introduced more subcategories. The findings suggest that environmental uncertainty in customer preferences, competitors' actions, and product development directly affects the firms' competitive advantage. The high-level uncertainty experience at the executive level may be challenging to integrate strategy formulation and strategic decision-making.

However, this thesis follows the Milers (1993) scale model to measure PEU. We assume that environmental uncertainty affects business decision-making and the change introduced to the business force by environmental insecurity (López-Gamero, al el. 2011). Moreover, the level of uncertainty is different depending on the type of crisis, the intensity of the crisis, such as national level or global level, the type of industry in which businesses are operating, and many

additional factors that could cause determent on the decision-making and method used to respond to the crises. It seems impossible to generalise an organisation's behaviour during crises due to too many factors. Nevertheless, it is possible to coper the similarity and differences of the characters in particular circumstances to identify the most common changes introduced during the crises.

Businesses exposed to a high level of uncertainty often are a force to change. Depending on the intensity of the environmental changes and the level of uncertainty businesses, factors that could predict upcoming change, and the rationale of the crises, businesses respond each time differently. Fewer businesses exposed during economic downturns imply changes in their business model as they face many management challenges (Kuckertz et al., 2020; Kren, 2021). The necessity for surviving and embracing opportunities created by those changes requires increased organisational adaptability and flexibility to overcome those obstacles. (Katare et al. 2021; Kuckertz et al. 2020; Eggers, 2020). Therefore, the research examines how organisations change during highly unpredicted events triggered by macroenvironmental changes applying two crises, the Global Financial Crises 2008 (GFC) and the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Global Financial Crises 2008

The Global Financial crisis (GFC) in 2008 resulted from the endogenous shock in the economy, which truculence began in the US mortgage market. The collapse of Lehman Brothers destroyed the global financial system, which transmitted a lack of liquidity to the European market, starting the debt crisis. Unstable mortgages and credits have destroyed Irish banks. (Allen-Coghlan and Varthalitis, 2020) The bankruptcy announced by the largest Irish banks created a deficit of 467.5 billion. Government must borrow money from the European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund. The crisis for recession reached 15.6 per cent in 2010, and permanent business closures peaked at 13.5 per cent in 2009 (Power et al. 2020)

The SMEs experienced the most challenges during the economic downturn based on their resource constraint and low barging power; lack of external financial support seems to be the most vulnerable during GFC compared to the large Enterprise possessing resources and competencies granting stronger competitive advantage (Smallbone, D. et al., 2012).

Covid-19 Pandemic Crises

The covid-19 pandemic is an unexpected global public health crisis that began from an exogenous shock economically, leading to callops in supply and demand. The pandemic outbreak caused by the new virus Covid-19 forced the Irish Government to introduce infection control measures such as social distancing, the mandatory wearing of face cover to contain the spread of the virus, and the most devastating lockdown of the country instigated an economic crisis (Kuckertz et al. 2020). The largest monthly unemployment rate in April 2020 resulted in 1.1 million people receiving the State support intensive- Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) and the Temporary Wages Subsidy Scheme (TWSS). Tourism, hospitality, food service, retail, and construction are the most affected business sectors (gov., i.e., 2021). The Covid-19 crisis significantly impacted the Irish labour market, indicating the unemployment rate at 15.9% in September 2020, showing a fall to 10.0% one year later in September 2021 (CSO (Central Statistics Office), 2021). Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) has mostly affected the crises in every industrial sector. Irish business activity involves 99 per cent built from SMEs, of which 68per cent provide private sector employment. The crises significantly affect business, decreasing turnover across 70 per cent of SMEs in Ireland and forcing permanent closures of 10 per cent of the business (Cso. i.e., 2021).

Conclusion

The changing factor has been recognised in strategic management since Chandler (1962) implies a change in size and diversification as organisations grow bigger and older. The environmental dynamism was stable, and organisations were changing much slower than today. Businesses are currently surrounded by a more complex environment changing much faster than in chandler's time. Mintzberg (1993) proposing the design model provide powerful tools to help create a strategy for the organisation. Since we know that strategy is an ongoing process, including macro-environmental changes across all planning processes involving consistent implementation. The environmental changes create opportunities and threats for the business. Following Durcan's (1972) description of environmental uncertainty as an event taking place without any information provided make it difficult to predict the impact on a business decision, suggest that managers can perceive uncertainty in areas such as customers, suppliers, competitors, and social-political factor seeking to deeper analysing how organisations are responding to such as events. Each event has a different beginning, and some crises show a sight, suggesting upcoming equilibrium. Focusing on the most current crises, the

Covid-19 pandemic and the most disruptive the Financial Crises 2008, analysis seeking identifies how organisations react and respond when the event occurs. Those events increase perceiving uncertainty in a firm variable such as operations, research and development, management, and employee action.

Research Question

This thesis's chosen methodology is a case study of two events, first undertaken in 2008, known as the Global Financial Crises, particularly affecting the Irish banking system. The second event undertaking, the Covid-19 Pandemic, impacted all business and social lives.

3.1 Research Aims

This research investigates how organisations change during environmental uncertainty by analysing two critical events: the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 and the Covid-19 Pandemic that began in 2019.

This thesis aims to understand how businesses react and respond during those events. Consider the significant differences in economic progress at those events and examine the business's implications. Focus on the challenges and opportunities created by those crises to distinguish the areas of those changes and business responses.

3.2 Research Objectives

The research objective emerges from the aim of the research. First of all, the main objective of the research is to compare the Financial Crises of 2008 and the Covid-19 pandemic by investigating the differences and similarities between those events to identify how a business reacts and impacts during the crises.

The research will examine how the Irish Government supported businesses during both crises. This research will aim to discover differences in the incentive significantly impacting how changes were implemented.

Finally, examine whether those changes affect business operations. Especially focus on the management and employment actions, particularly on the nature of those changes- temporary or permanent measures, by identifying the opportunity created in both crises to recognise if businesses could take advantage of them respectfully to the time horizons of the event.

3.3 Research Questions

The research questions were developed to achieve the research objective utilising the main topic from the field of study – the organisational strategy and structure process and more specific environmental changes focused on environmental uncertainty (How organisations change during highly unpredicted events triggered by macroenvironmental changes).

The research goal is to answer the following question:

How do Irish organisations change during the crises? How organisations change during highly unpredicted events triggered by macroenvironmental changes

Sub questions:

- How do the businesses react and impact the crises (highly environmental uncertainty events)?
- How does the political and governmental policy impact the implemented business changes?
- Do the environmental uncertainty factors affect business operations?

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The methodology is a selection of techniques and tools to design the study's approach. Through the methodology, the researcher explains the need for carrying out the project by creating a logical and systematic plan to resolve a research problem. The research approach ensures that the project addresses the aim and objectives. It incorporates the data choice, what and who the data be collected from and analysed. The research methodology provides authenticity, and systematic findings, as Saunders et al. (2018, pp.5) recall research as "something that people undertake to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge".

The insight research process is defined through three major perspectives: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Explore and understand the social phenomena allowing choosing the study's approach. Cotty (1998) suggests that the research process involves four basic elements: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2018) describe the research process in the model of several layers. The Research Onion proposed by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2018), presented in figure 1., includes several layers of consent to develop multiple assumptions leading to the process choice of the philosophy, selecting the research approach, matching research strategy, choosing research methods leading to data collection and conducting final analysis.

This study will follow the research Onion as a construct allowing progression through developing the research methodology.

4.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is driven by how the data should be collected, analysed, and used to provide the findings about a phenomenon decided to be explored by the researcher to develop new knowledge.

Saunders et al. (2018) refer to research philosophy as a system of belief and assumptions allowing develop new knowledge. The research requires several assumptions to understand the research question by choosing the methods, designing the research strategy, data collection, and interpretation (Crotty, 1998). The research philosophy involves three major assumptions, which significantly impact the research procedures, including determinate: ontology,

epistemology, and axiology (Figure 4.). It distinguishes the differences and similarities contained in all aspects of the project.

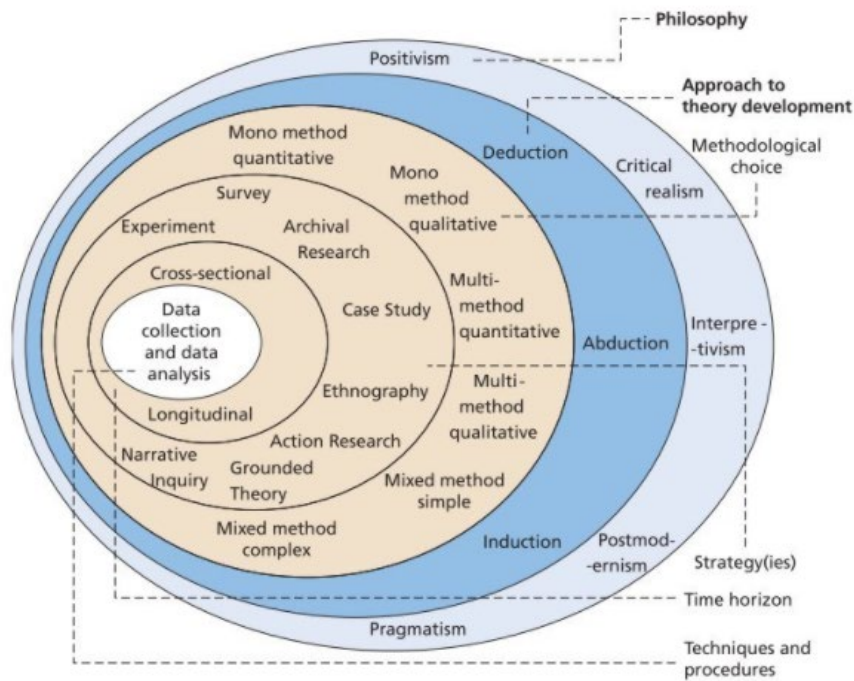


Figure 4. The Research Onion, source Saunders et al. (2018)

To choose the philosophy of the project researcher requires to understand of the methodological assumption:

1. **Ontology**- "The study of being" is explained by Crotty (1998), addressing the questions of the nature of reality and the nature of the world. It addresses the question of nature, such as what is real and what evidence is the fundamental ontological assumption that helps researchers understand existence.
2. **Epistemology**- Its defined as sufficient knowledge, the construct of knowledge, and how knowledge is created (Cotty, 1998).
3. **Axiology** - The axiological assumption determines the research's essential values and beliefs, enabling within chosen methods and the research findings (Saunders al el., 2019).

The philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology distinguish between opposite extremes known as objectivism and subjectivism, leading to the five major

philosophies in business research: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism (Sanders et al., 2018).

The selection of project philosophy determines the choice of research approach leading to the choice of research design and methods described in detail:

- Positivism undertook that ontological assumption that is only one truth about the aspect of the study, leading to a constant epistemological assumption since it is measurable, observable, and generalised, involving numbers. The axiological assumption is neutral to avoid the influence of the findings (Crotty, 1998). The methods required deductive research based on testing the hypothesis, which is more likely to involve qualitative analysis and a large sample. (Saunders et al., 2018)
- Critical realism philosophy explains what we see and experience and focuses on observation and knowledge. Bhaskar (1978) proposed that the critical reality stratified ontology examines the empirical event, the actual event and the significant situation directly involved in-deep historical analysis of social and organisational structure.
- Postmodernism highlights the power of language and relationships, seeking social construct through relations. It focuses on interpretations leading to reflexive value construct. Required typically qualitative method analysis.
- Pragmatism focuses on experiences; the process leads to problem-solving, driving value into the research. Requiring research problems and questions emphasising solution as an outcome suits a range of methods.
- Interpretivism assumes social construction through culture and language using means full of interpretation. It emphasises humans differently than the phenomena highlighting differences between the culture and circumstances, particularly on time horizontal, creating different meanings. It develops a deeper understanding of social events within the context from different perspectives, which interaction generates a value of culture, history, and language (Crotty, 1998). It requires an inductive approach and qualitative methods analysis within the range of data interpretation.

The research question is a complex problem requiring multiple interpretations; experience is a social construct – ontology is a subjective perspective. This thesis examines the framework through many theoretical views and aims inside how organisations respond to environmental uncertainty and change; interpretivism seems the fittest choice. Interpretivism, as a chosen research philosophy, emphasises differences between humans and physical phenomena, seeking a distinct perspective of the people and a deeper understanding of phenomena of strategic change in organisations. The researcher's goal is to discover how crises trigger organisational changes in Ireland, focusing on factors created by the environmental uncertainty of those changes. The interpretive approach is the most reasonable choice for studying business contexts.

4.2 Research Approach

The research project required choosing the approach for the study in line with the question and theory, displaying two constrained approaches: deductive and inductive.

The deductive approach focuses on logical explanation to defend the conclusion of the thrust, whereas the inductive approach occurs based on observation and provides a subjective conclusion.

Identify and analyse the differences between approaches; the most suitable approach for this research will follow the **inductive approach** to reasoning. Saunders et al. 2018 permit different views on phenomena in examine events to emphasise the subjective interpretation informed by the interpretivism philosophy. It seeks to identify and explain patterns based on the data collection and existing phenomena. The purpose is to better understand the nature of the problems created by those critical events.

4.3 Research strategy- Case study

The chosen research strategy for this project is case study analysis, as Yin (2009) explained, allowing the researcher to investigate empirical phenomena in a real-life context where the boundaries between an object of the study are not necessarily clear. The situations seeking to explain current circumstances using the questions: "ho" or "wh" allows extensive "in-depth" explanation of the social phenomenon.

According to Dul & Hank (2008), methodological characteristics provided by Yin (2009) are too basic, as a case study definition could include a single case or a small number of cases, such as the comparative approach to obtain their real-life context qualitatively analysing data capture. It generates an opportunity for the researcher to approach practice-orientated or theoretical-orientated objectives. Focusing on different aspects of the case study allows for multiple sources of data collection and the method of data analysis.

Additionally, a case study relies on multiple sources of evidence that comprise different models of inquiry, giving the researcher a multiplatform of data collection tactics. Common features of the case study enable theoretical analysis and focus on mapping common patterns and mechanisms between the chosen events or situations. It creates an opportunity to examine unique, rare organisations and complex and dynamic events and processes, generating the possibility of testing theories in social, cultural, and economic aspects simultaneously by using in-depth description and context (Mills et al., 2010).

The research aims and objectives are to explore and understand how contemporary phenomena like crises such as sudden, unpredictable, uncontrolled events such as Financial Crises and Covid-19 Pandemic reshape and impact businesses allowing the researcher to conduct an in-depth description of the social phenomenon (Yin, 2009).

4.4 Data analysis method and access

Data collection 1 - a survey method- primary research

Qualitative and quantitative measures can conduct the primary research. The researcher's primary attempt was to collect data using quantitative methods through an online survey. The researcher created an online survey asking employees for anonymised feedback on the impact of Covid-19 on business sharing on the multiplatform such as student emails, LinkedIn profiles, and WhatsApp messages. The researcher outlines its purpose and objectives of it. Unfortunately, the results show that most respondents worked at the lower management level. Due to a lack of access to the middle and senior managerial level, the data collection will not be included. It fails to provide an insight view across all working groups. It recalls as a failure.

Data collection 2 – Secondary data as the primary

The researcher has chosen data collection will be the secondary data, which are collected and published through primary sources for their research. The sources of pre-existing data sets materials include journals, newspapers, books, and online articles published by research institutions available by libraries, websites, government agencies, or non-government agencies. The information collection was general use for no specific research purpose, like a national census. The data can be found in qualitative and quantitative forms. The researcher summarised and collected secondary data but used it as primary data to provide the answers to the research question. Utilising existing data generates an option for the researcher to flexibility viable method utilises the information. Providing new data analysis to generate insights for the case study subject.

According to Milles et al. (2010), secondary data is used as primary features trends or patrons, analysing research gaps. Can also conduct the risk of taking for granted assumptions about the matter. Therefore, focusing on the access factor, particularly considering the time gap between both events and the scale of data findings provided by the research institution such Central Statistical Office (CSO), The Economic and Social Research Institution (ESRI), the European Commission, Irish Central Bank and other it seems to be the most valuable way to generate important data information to explain the research problem and question.

Regardless of the subject matter of the thesis, it has been chosen to use pre-existing quantitative and qualitative data sets to conduct a primary in-depth change analysis. The main use of data collection was conducted from the Governments reports, the Central statistical office, and professional researchers' data finding such as PwC.ie and KPMG.ie.

This thesis insight analyses how organisations change during crises. Explore how different macroenvironmental factors change and carry out different impacts and responses on the business.

4.5 Limitations to the study

During the research, the time has been discovered many limitations to the study. The most challenges were found in data about the organisational changes introduced during the crises, as the time gap between those events was more than ten years. Limited information about organisational changes during the Global Financial Crises made it difficult to compare.

Findings and analysis

Introduction

The research data analysis and finding design present two case studies. The first one, Case study 1, presents data gathering about the Global Financial Crisis in Ireland in 2008. The second Case study 2 presents data gathering about the Covid 19 pandemic that began in 2019 in Ireland. Both crises have a global scale, but for this research, the researcher focus on the effects on Irish business. Both case study analyses will highlight areas: nature of the crises, issues generated by the crises; government support given during crises; businesses' response to the crises. Researchers choose the areas to try to identify similarities and differences in organisational behaviour, and environmental factors, allowing in-depth analysis of crises. The researcher focuses on comparing case studies to highlight the main similarity and differences between the events, which establish the phenomenon of the study.

5.1 Case study 1 – Global Financial Crises in Ireland

Nature of the crises

The Global Financial Crises (GFC) roots began in the US in 2008, when the collapse of Lehman Brothers caused permanent damage to the global financial system, wiping the bank's creditability and lack of liquidity, spreading to the European financial markets triggered debt crises. Each European country was impacted differently, but the Irish economy suffered from the endogenous shock GFC in Ireland affected property and banking markets, causing banks to become insolvent and household debts to the triggering deep recession that began in 2008 (Allen-Coghlan and Varthalitis, 2020)

The Irish tax rate was set at 20% in '90, first brought down in 2002 to 16% and then in 2003 to 12.5% gain establish a foreign business in Ireland to create new employments, mostly in the service sector attracting high skilled labour (Schuman, 2014).

The fast-growing Irish economy during that period was called the "Celtic Tige" and began in 2003; attracted many international investors were attracted by the low corporation tax, such as Dell, IBM, and Coca-Cola moving their manufacture into the state, as well as pharmaceutical

companies and services such as Google and Facebook benefiting Irish economy through technology and innovation O'Toole et al., 2013; Fitzgerald, 2014).

Additionally, during the Tiger Celtic time, the construction sector expanded and contributed 20% of jobs, expanding the private and commercial market. The banks decided to lower their lending standards and regulations to attract many businesses. Many smaller businesses started investing in real estate ventures such as shopping centres; also, many first buyers led by the banks expanded into the commercial and residential property market.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of 2007, housing demand dropped, and the prices of properties stopped rising, leading the construction market to collapse. It begins the biggest recession in Ireland. The banks recalled losses forcing the Irish Government to guarantee the liabilities of the six major banks. Irish banks were supported by emergency loans from the European Central Bank O'Toole et al., 2013). Additionally, since 2003 Ireland recalled an increase in house prices, leading the construction and real estate sector to grow rapidly, creating outstanding debt for the firms and increasing household debt. Many Irish SMEs invested in the property market were left in debt during the GFC O'Toole et al., 2013).

Issues generated due to GFC

The Irish economy was exposed to the property market, banking, financial, and fiscal crises. The GFC reduced demand for goods and services in Ireland and decreased exports as many countries were affected similarly by the crises. Small businesses and SMEs suffered through the cash flow, experiencing trouble with their creditability. SMEs and entrepreneurs play significant roles in driving innovation and growth in every economy, which makes them more vulnerable during crises. They mostly operate across the private sector facing difficulty accessing finance during crises as they heavily depend on credit, low capability, a lower opportunity for diversifications or introducing new products during the crises, depending on their suppliers struggling to maintain their value chain. (Shuman, 2014; Fitzgerald, 2014)

Crash of the banking system due to the property bubbles bursting generated liability crises in Ireland. The Government faced debt in 2007 at 25.1%, which increased to 124.4% by the end of 2013 (Schuman, 2014). Irish GDP dramatically dropped between 2008-2010 by 10.3 per cent increasing unemployment from 4.8 per cent to 14.8 per cent during that period putting the country in debts generated by 60 per cent by the construction and real estate sector. The most

affected sector was construction, real estate, and hotels, causing the biggest jobs loss and recession. Most companies decided to introduce reduced employee salaries and redundancy, which caused increased unemployment.

Public finance was cutting spending. The increase in taxes and cut in expenditure generate a rapid rise in unemployment, especially among young workers. The unemployment benefit and the wages for the public service worker were cut. Government-imposed pay cuts of between 5 and 8 per cent in 2009.

Additionally, Irish businesses were exposed to significantly reduced demand, and export was in decline, leading to increased competition between the firms, which was exposed to the financial crisis by restricting their financial availability, especially for small businesses.

Gouvernante support given during GFC

The first step of Irish authorities was to implement a policy seeking to raise taxes and cut expenditures on all public finances. The budgetary adjustment included a new property tax introduced in 2013, an increase in the carbon tax, solid fuels, alcohol, tobacco, and even maternity leave benefits. Since 2008, the number of civil servants was reduced, and cut wages have been made between 5 to 10 per cent, freezing promotions of achievements for the employees, reducing staff numbers from 320,000 in 2008 to 280,000 in 2013.

Additionally, extended working hours from 35 to 37 or 37 to 39 depending on the business sector. More than less, all government social spending was cut, especially unemployment benefits, subsidies to pay electricity and rent, and establishing means-testing for the medical card service.

The EU enterprises survey states that 50 per cent of Irish businesses are SMEs that mainly operate in the private sector. The main effects of the GFC during 2009 and 2010 harmed total demand (62 % of all enterprises), forced to increase in customer payment terms (50 % of all enterprises), and experienced problems with the finance (credibility) of approximately 40 % of enterprises force firms to reduced employment by 11 per cent between 2008 to 2012 and salary reductions (Lacina and Vavrina, 2014).

The Government established a €100 million Enterprise Stabilisation Fund to help internationally trading companies rebut their business model. Enterprise Ireland established a

recovery plan between 2008-2010 to help companies with future growth focusing on: access to finance, increasing export sales, crafting competitiveness, driving innovation and R&D, and thriving entrepreneurship. Companies with robust business models that would otherwise struggle to survive the global downturn (EI, 2008)

Additionally, the "Troika" of November 2010 allows the start of the rebuilding of the Irish economy. The Irish Government borrowed 67.5 billion euros from the IMF, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission to cover 40 per cent of the Irish economy debt created by the housing crisis. The Anglo-Irish Bank (AIB) and the Irish Nationwide Building Society (INBS) announced bankruptcy after the collapse of the construction and real estate sector in 2013.

Business responds to the GFC

The decreased demand for goods and services and rapidly increases in costs pushed Irish businesses to introduce cuts such as mandatory pay cuts, redundancy and reduced working hours. The increase in unemployment, particularly in the construction sector, focuses mostly on young males after 2008.

According to Enterprise Ireland (20013), the Government recognised issues generated during financial crises and invested €8.2 billion in science, technology, and innovation between 2007-13. As a result, Enterprise Ireland provided the funding for merchandising R&D activity for Irish companies to potentially increase their performance.

5.2 Case study 2 – Covid-19 crises in Ireland

Nature of the crises

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unpredictable health crisis that emerged from outside the economic system, which structurally distorted the economy on the global level (Allen-Coghlan and Varthalitis, 2020). The suppression measures introduced to control its spread caused a collapse in economic activity in all the major global economies and Ireland during the first half of 2020. the arrival of COVID-19 in Ireland in March and the subsequent implementation of related public health restrictions caused a sharp drop in the economy. Activity, albeit with

differences in the scale and composition of the output, declined compared to the euro area and other trading partners. Adjust domestic demand shrank by 1.8 per cent at the beginning of 2020 compared to the previous year. Ireland recalls the sharpest decline in consumption and domestic demand and the strongest rise in savings compared to other European countries in 2020 (Conefrey et al., 2021; O'Callaghan et al., 2021).

In contrast, industrial output was better than other EU countries due to key MNE-dominated exporting sectors. Ireland had one of the largest declines in modified domestic demand at the beginning of 2020 but one of the smallest GDP falls compared to the other European countries leading to Irish domestic demand declining by 5.6 per cent by the end of 2020 (Conefrey et al., 2021)

The Covid-19 Pandemic impacts people's health mostly on the global economy, interfering with business operations across all sectors and stoking markets through the rapid spread and various mutations of the coronavirus, causing economic uncertainty as GDP dropped rapidly, increasing insecurity, highlighting the rapid growth of sick people (Conefrey et al., 2021; Kren et al., 2021)

The Government implemented various restrictions to reduce the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, mandatory face covering, mandatory quarantine, and several lockdowns. The safety measure absorbed additional social issues such as anxiety, loneliness, increased mental health problems and financial insecurity.

Issues generated due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

- Falls in turnover and employment
- Organisations were forced to change management and leadership approaches and introduce health and well-being measures into the workplace.
- Workforce changes by introducing online working
- Adapt communication strategy
- Develop an online learning strategy (Banks, 2021; Conefrey et al., 2021; Kren et al., 2021).

Government support is given during crises

The government support for Irish businesses includes the Employee Wages Subsidy Scheme (TWSS), used by 120,000 businesses in Ireland, which values at € 10 billion. (Banks, 2021).

Total Government support during the Covid-19 Pandemic cost €35 billion (Central Bank of Ireland), saving 4,500 businesses from failures. The ongoing financial income subsidies include (EWSS, PUP and short-term work support) loans/grants (government guarantee scheme, business/working capital/future growth loans and general grants) and waivers/deferrals (commercial rates waiver, warehousing of tax debts, temporary reduction of VAT rate) estimate government spending for 2021 of €13 billion (Conefrey al et, 2021; O'Callaghan, 2021).

Business responds to the Covid-19

The companies were applying change by using different approaches for day-to-day operations, particularly interacting with customers and communicating with suppliers. It requires increasing the speed of decision-making and the scale of technology and innovation. The disruption evolves by Covid-19 uncertainty place key areas for the Irish business: management crises, workforce, supply chain and operations, finance and liquidity, tax trade and regulations, strategy, and branding (Banks, 2021)

Some companies display a change approach to risk management; according to PWC's 2019 Global Crisis Survey, 59% of Irish business leaders are concerned about the threat of pandemic and health crises, which results in 90% of the business planning resetting the risk assessment and introducing a new category- sudden high-impact events, 45% of Irish leaders introduced new risk management principles by introducing new activities leading to in 41% Irish businesses to increase digital transformation and in 21% increase leadership and talent development.

Combining data analytics with human insights to modernise the processes and integrate tools to manage risk by embracing continuous learning by investing in people skillset and well-being agreed by 51% of Irish CEOs that a skilled, educated, and adaptable workforce is a priority. Encourage employees to access data, share knowledge and exchange ideas by using innovative tools and technology by moving toward a hybrid workforce (Banks, 2021)

According to the Survey PWC, The research data used to focus on analysing existing data collected by the Central Statistical Office Ireland on 24 August 2020 by online survey, taking

a sample of approximately 3,000 Irish enterprises in all size classes examining the Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey (BICS) The Irish business impact of covid19 report conducted on 3th of June 2021 by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) based on the sample of 8,0000 Irish businesses confirmed that SMEs in 2020 decreases turnover more than 70% in 2020 compared to 2019. More than half of 8,0000 businesses change their operating model due to health crises. The most common changes were:

- Developing an online presence (14%)
- Increase operating hours (8%)
- Developing new products (7%)
- Introducing remote working (Banks, 2021; O'Callaghan, 2021)

Based on the government restriction and multiple locks done in the country, 56% of enterprises reported closing during the pandemic at least once, and 46% reported multiple closing down in 2020 for an average of 18 weeks. Introducing remote work helped businesses operate even during the restrictions of the sector. The less affected were the professional & IT sectors, which were able 79% to work fully or partially remotely compared to the Accommodation & Food Service Activity sector. Only 8% of the staff was working remotely. O'Callaghan, 2021). As a result of introducing new work methods, 47% of businesses confirmed that they don't report any changes in staff productivity, 7% of enterprises report inches of productivity, and only 17% experience decried employees' productivity.

KPMG 2020 CEO Outlook Ireland report confirmed that wailed range of defences between the effect of the business sector shows that transport, tourism, and hospitality was affected the most and require a plan for recovery, whereas sector such as healthcare, life sciences, technology and food shows significant change on demand, purchasing patterns and channels of purchasing – according to McGrath head of Markets with KPMG (2020)

Business challenges exposed during a pandemic:

- Retaking key employees, hiring talent, and keeping workforce productivity.

Changing or considering modifying the business models by establishing a new online business model or e-commerce. Enterprise change focuses on establishing digital engagement with customers to generate knowledge of market trends and analyse the shift in customers' needs/ demands (Kent et al., 2021).

Most businesses (79%) supply chain was impacted by Covid-19, especially the transport of goods and services. (Kent et al., 2021)

During the online transformations in training for staff working remotely, new productivity measures and employees' awareness of cyber security are common needs. The new reality of remote working increases factors such as employees' mental health and wellness, showing how important values are leadership, communication, and collaboration.

5.3 Comparisons of the case studies

The crisis has dramatically impacted GDP across every European Union country in terms of output in the short and long run, as it's impossible to predict the crisis's period and the recovery period's potential length. According to data funding by the European Commission/ Economic and Financial Affairs (2009) length of crises and recovery depends on the size of initial shocks and policy response to the crisis.

	Global Financial Crises	Covid-19 Pandemic Crises
Type of crises	Financial crises	Health crises
Economic shock	The endogenous shock in the US mortgage market suddenly affected the European banking sector.	The exogenous shock created by a public health crisis unexpectedly callops in both supply and demand.
Affected sector	Construction and financial sector causing damage to all sector	Tourism and services such as accommodation, restaurant, entertainment, and mast services close the face-to-face operation transferring to online or phone call services.
Government reposes	Increased taxes and cut expenditures on all public finances. Reduced the numbers of civil servants and cut wages between 5 to 10 per cent, freezing promotions.	Implemented various health restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus across social interaction and business trading restrictions

Effects of the crises	The rapid increase in unemployment was 14.8%, and GDP dropped by 10% at the end of 2010.	Increase unemployment, and social issues such as anxiety, loneliness, and increased mental health problems
Affected businesses	Small and medium size SMEs	Small and medium size SMEs
Business issues	Lack of access to finance, increased debts, drop in domestic demand,	The restriction placed by the Government disturbed business operations. Introducing changes to the business align with government policy. The distress of supply chains, drop in domestic demand, and high uncertainty affects cash flows. Data protection and cyber security issues due to a remote working model.
Business changes	Increase working hours, reduce pay, focus on upskilling employees,	Many businesses were forced to change their business model to develop an online business model or e-commerce. Changes in approaches to risk management via most organisations Online transformations, various flexibility such as operation hours, remote working, focus on the leadership and talent

Figure 5. Comparison of the crises GFC and Covid-19,

The GFC and Covid19 crises were initiated by different macroenvironmental factors and impacted the economy differently. During both crises, the different economic sector was impacted.

Government differently reacts to both crises, and different adjustments were introduced. The speed and volume of the Government's interference have different impacts on domestic economies and the degree of country recession.

By exploring both completely different situations, we learn that from the business perspective, the organisation size and age seem to be important factors leading to statements that SMEs are mostly exposed to crises and social-political uncertainty

. The SMEs shows many levels of variability, such as size- during the crises, larger organisation use the opportunity created by the crises by diversification, entering a new market, introducing a new product, upskills modernised service using the advantage of new technology or becoming more customer-centric for the purpose to achieve better efficiency and increase productivity leading to reduce the cost.

5.4 Findings

The main findings emerge from this thesis through the data analysis process of the data collected by the researcher.

The crises, the highly uncertain factor, greatly impact business and the country's economy. Depending on the type of crisis, the economic sector was affected, and the level of the impact is different over time. The event's level and speed are also recognised factors, especially recovery time.

Every business is affected during the crisis, non-mater of age and size, but the most variable organisations are the SEMs and the most important during the economic recovery.

An important role during each crisis is the political and Government policy uncertainty trigger organisational changes. The level of support and policy implemented during those impacts the business's strategic decision.

Organisational development, flexibility and agility generate better strategical transformation during crises and recognise and initiate organisational changes.

The main difference in response between crises is the strategic decision impacting the business changes. During the GFC, organisations mostly chose to introduce pay cuts, the number of staff offering redundancy, freeze promotions due to financial liabilities, lack of financial flow, and increased working hours. The development and innovation trends were very low. On the other hand, during the Covid-19 pandemic, strategic decisions focused on transformation; the main changes were integrating different business models, such as e-commerce and using customer focus strategy as the main objective. Main changes were triggered by the government policy,

such as implementing restrictions on limited business operations and enforcing changes such as introducing remote working, extending operation hours, and developing or updating an online presence. Most businesses focus on e-commerce, changing the business into an online business model that offers digital engagement with customers as their needs and demands have shifted.

The macroenvironmental uncertainty factors such as government policy change, business operation restrictions like lockdowns, social distance, and others trigger all organisational changes during the Covid-19 pandemic forcing online transformations for most Irish businesses. During the GFC 2008, recall cuts, redundancy, and high unemployment rates due to financial crises can only be recalled.

The findings have proven that organisations are changing during crises and the macro-environmental factors initiate the changes. The level of uncertainty and support given by the government policy seems to impact the business's strategic decisions.

Discussion

This thesis aims to answer the objective of posed research question: How do organisations change during highly unpredicted events triggered by macroenvironmental changes? To provide the answer to the objective of the thesis, investigate several sub-questions.

This research compares two highly unpredictable and uncertain events – the Global Financial Crises in 2008 and the Covid-19 Pandemic, which interfered not only with business operations but also with social behaviours and significantly impacted the economy, leading to economic fall and recession. Both crises were analysed only in the Irish aspect chosen to explore in-depth the impact. The data collection for this research used secondary data collection analysis as primary. The researcher discusses the main findings and the theories included in the literature review to explain those social phenomena.

The economic downturn characterised a significant drop in demand for goods and services, generating financial difficulty for the firms. As well-known organisations constantly evolve, the ongoing strategic process permits commerce changes triggered by macroenvironmental changes to increase organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Since Burns and Stakler (1961), we know the type of organisation form and surroundings (environmental dynamic) affect the speed of the change. Still, most empirical theories have proven that the organisational requiring characteristics such as adaptiveness (Hage, 1965), integration and differentiation (Lawrence and Lorsh, 1967) recognise the value of uncertainty in managing change.

Galbraith (1974) mentions that uncertainty distinguishes information required to make the decision, to plan, a great level of flexibility and the ability to establish change as the main goal of every change is to increase performance, profit, efficiency, and effectiveness. Child (1972) highlights that organisation structure can be chosen based on environmental conditions, but what happens when environmental conditions suddenly change? Don't organisations have the power and time to make some adjustments? Mintzberg (1990) states that the basic design model help organisations coordinate daily activities involving forecasting, planning, organising, and planning to make decisions aligned with the external environment to reduce uncertainty level. In normal economic conditions, firms can transform naturally, but unfortunately, findings proved that SMEs are struggling the most, especially hit by the crises. Following the thoughts of Mintzberg (1993) that macroenvironmental changes are part of the planning process and impact decision-making during implementation strategy, the finding provides evidence. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we observed considerable organisational transformation

evidence confirmed that organisations were introduced to different approaches to day-to-day operations, changing to the online business model and e-commerce. Some companies were forced to develop online presents, introducing remote working that 90% of the Irish business leaders were able to plan changes in the risk assessments introducing a new category, "sudden high impact event during the Covid-19 pandemic (Banks, 2021).

How do the businesses react and impact the crises (highly environmental uncertainty events)?

The impact of the Irish businesses was significant in both crises. The findings analysis shows that both crises had been affected by different economic shocks such as GFC- the endogenous shock, and Covid-19- the exogenous shock but both events heavy destruct Irish economy freezing demand for goods and services and additionally suppliers during Covid-19. They mainly discover that small and medium size enterprises suffer the most during the crisis as their financial accessibility is limited, lack of creditability and resources show low chances of diversification and modernisation without government anti-crises packages program. The SEMs play an incremental role in every economy as they divine innovation, entrepreneurship, and R&D. The data analysis and findings discover that Irish businesses respond more efficiently during the Covid-19 pandemic than GFC. The financial crises disturb financial accessibility causing fast-growing liabilities which make it impossible to implement fast and off business, especially the SMEs and government policy changes have been helpful. The financial support in the 2010 "Troika" program was introduced too late to prevent a deep recession. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the opposite strategy was used to support businesses from day one, embracing organisational changes and transformation supporting changes in business model, operation strategy- customer focused, digitalization like the online present, remote working and investing in development.

How does the political and governmental policy impact the implemented business changes?

The business changes implemented during both crises GFC and Covid-19 pandemic are significantly different, especially in how the Government responds to both events. During the Covid-19 pandemic combined the fiscal and monetary policies where at the time of GFC 2008, fiscal policy was restrictive to the multiannual fiscal consolidation program- sending cuts (Allen-Coghlan and Varthalitis, 2020). Countries dealt with the crisis by initiating fiscal

and monetary policy changes and offering anti-crises packages. The main purpose of it is to stimulate demand, credit measures to increase capacity for financing public and private businesses and monitor labour-market to reduce employment taxes and social security expenses (Arzeni, 2009).

First of all the lockdown restriction during the Covid-19 pandemic for the first time was introduced in March 2020, immediately followed by a large government packet to stimulate the country's economy, such as the Employee Wages Subsidy Scheme (TWSS), used by 120,000 businesses in Ireland, which is valued € 10 billion it saved 4,500 businesses from failures. Introduced the ongoing financial income subsidies such as (EWSS, PUP and short-term work support) loans/grants (government guarantee scheme, business/working capital/future growth loans and general grants) and waivers/deferrals (commercial rates waiver, warehousing of tax debts, temporary reduction of VAT rate (Banks, 2021; Conefrey et al, 2021; O'Callaghan, 2021).

However, during GFC in 2008, government policy responses were more restricted as chosen fiscal policy use implemented most spending cuts, leading Ireland to a deep recession, which can still be seen.

Figure 6. Expenditure growth by year-on-year during GFC and Covid-19

Expenditure Item	2008 %	2009 %	2020 %
Compensation of employees	7	-2	3
Use of goods and services	3	-1	40
Subsidies	7	-2	266
Interest	21	42	-14
Social benefits	13	10	28
Total	10	7	23

Source: Central Statistics Office 2021

The significant difference shown in Figure 6 displayed the best evidence of the Government's response to both events. The GFC distinguish the implementation of a policy seeking to raise taxes and cut expenditure on all public finances. The budgetary adjustment included a new property tax introduced in 2013, an increase in the carbon tax, solid fuels, alcohol, tobacco, and even maternity leave benefits. Findings recall the cut wages, reducing staff numbers and

extended working hours leading to fast-growing unemployment. The Government's action was to help rebuild businesses, not prevent their falls, such as the Enterprise Stabilisation Fund, established to help companies with future growth focusing on access to finance, increasing export sales, crafting competitiveness, driving innovation and R&D, and thriving entrepreneurship. Additionally, the Irish Government participated in the "Troika" 2010 program, covering 40per cent of Irish financial debt caused by the collapse of the construction and real estate sector and the banking crises.

Do the environmental uncertainty factors affect business operations?

The business operations are affected by the environmental bn/ uncertainty factor differently depending on the type of crisis. The highly unpredicted events, such as global crises, impact business operations, but the range of the impact is unique for each event. The construction and financial sectors were the most affected industries during the Global Financial crisis. The crises were initiated by the collapse of the financial market in the US. Where the Covid-19 pandemic was a health crisis, the enforced Government introduced safety measures, most affecting business sectors such as tourism, service, and entertainment. The findings link with Knight's (1921) and Durcan's (1972) thoughts that uncertainty is a lack of information for perceiving decisions linked to government restrictions on business operations during the Covid-19 crisis. The first lockdown in Ireland should take only 4-6 weeks to stop the spread of the virus. Still, the various government restriction and recommendations depending on the type of business and industry took nearly two years moving back and forward to be lifted. Some organisational changes become permanent for some firms, such as the remote working model or transformed into a modern form, such as the hybrid model of work blending transitional office work and work from home. The changes introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic following the scholarly findings such as Lawerence and Lorch (1967) highlighting adaptation of organisational structure with environmental uncertainty allow leaders to find clarity of the job, degree of difficulty to trying to accomplish the job, and time taking to complete the task leads to overcome the restriction and move to work from home model. Those changes could not be established without factors such as technology, policy, customers, competitors, and suppliers, as Durcan (1972) suggested.

Additionally, Lewis and Harvey (2001) applied that each crisis is different, which may require modification for the sector of the industry as findings have proven the GFC-impacted sectors

were mostly construction, real estate, and financial sector, where during the Covid-19 pandemic were tourism, hospitality, entertainment, and service sectors.

Organisations are constantly evolving during crises. Organisational changes are applied directory to the conditions and characteristics of the events. The changes can be temporary but can also transform into permanent changes. Each crisis generates threats and opportunities which the organisations can use. The ability to transform requires flexibility and agility from the organisational leaders to overcome obstacles and minimise losses (Eggers, 2020; Katare et al., 2021; Kuckertz et al., 2020).

Conclusions

This study shows that an economic crisis significantly influences businesses as demand and supply drop. The Global Financial crisis particularly hit the credit condition of the firm where the Covid-19 health crisis disturbed the economy by safety and health measures grounded to stop the spread of the virus. Both crises indicate a shock to the economy on the global level. The findings determine that the macroenvironmental factors and level of uncertainty play a critical role during the economic downfall. The study has proven that the most vulnerable during crises is the SME, and they don't have the bargaining power as the large organisations. SMEs are highly dependent on credit, which generates major issues when demand and supply drop simultaneously. The SMEs experienced the most challenges during the economic downturn based on resource constraints, low bargaining power, and lack of external financial support. The Irish SMEs took over 50 per cent of the private sector during the GFC in 2008, which increased to 68 per cent during the Covid-19 pandemic that began in 2019, leading to decreasing turnover across 70 per cent of SMEs in Ireland and forcing permanent closures of 10 per cent of the business in 2020 (COS.ie, 2021; Lcina and Vavrina, 2014; Smallbone et al., 2012).

Comparing those crises displays how important the government subsidy and policy changes are in determining if the organisations will have an off resource to introduce strategic changes. Additionally, researchers discovered that government support is given, and policy changes could influence recession and reduce the uncertainty of those crises.

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