How do the "Big Five" Personality Dimensions impact employee selection and the creation and performance of teams?

A Qualitative Review

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Abstract

Personality as a construct is subjective in nature (Atwood and Tomkins 1976) and brings with it many inconsistencies in findings throughout the literature base. Quantitative studies in this area have been examined extensively so this research was carried out qualitatively to uncover the underlying themes that reveal the true nature of what happens when people that are diverse in personality work together on a project. This research assesses some of the findings on personality both at the individual level and when it comes to creating a team and addresses some of these irregularities. It also discusses the common issues that arise from working with a team diverse in terms of personality centred around Goldberg's (1990) "Big Five" Model. Seven people managers based in Ireland participated for the purpose of this study and semi structured interviews were carried out virtually with them to take an exploratory approach to this topic. A thematic analysis was carried out on all the data collected. It was found that an understanding of personality on a team can be a useful tool in getting to know and developing your team in terms of blind-spots or areas of opportunity, but many psychometric assessments, including the Big Five test only provide a small snapshot as to what someone is like and more rigorous tests are needed to gain a better understanding of employee personality today. This paper adds to the knowledge of personality at work by teaching managers how personality and background diversity on a team can work in their favour when done correctly but management have a huge role to play in ensuring congruence amongst team members. The implications for these findings are discussed and recommendations made for practitioners going forward to be aware of. Future research directions have also been suggested following the results analysis and a personal learning statement has been noted at the end to meet the CIPD requirements for this project.

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Abbreviations

National College of Ireland – NCI

Openness to Experience – OE

Big Five Model of Personality/Five Factor Model of Personality/Big Five – FFM

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development – CIPD

Human Resources – HR

United States - US

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to Study

This study seeks to understand the nature of personality at work and its effect on both individual and team performance to assess what produces desirable outcomes. The focal point of this paper is Goldberg's (1990) "Big Five" Model of Personality (FFM) and that will also be the instrument referenced for the purpose of the interviews being undertaken for this study. Cheng, Liang and Mark (2014) posit that personality plays an important role in boosting employee job satisfaction which further leads to elevated performance, so it is vital for practitioners to be knowledgeable on this. An individual's desire to learn and/or be motivated to do well at work is connected to the personality type they have and as a result the line of work they gravitate towards. Individuals who exhibit traits associated with a strong sense of purpose, obligation and persistence generally perform better than those who do not. Additionally, it has been noted that people who are well engaged with their companies and aim to achieve success in their professional life possess certain psychological competencies which is influenced by their personality (Luthans 2002). Organizations today need to be aware that without having a highly skilled, and motivated workforce their ability to compete on the market is significantly handicapped (Kontoghiorghes 2001). Ergo, it has become increasingly important for leaders of organisations to ensure they are choosing candidates that are a good fit for their role, thereby motivating them to perform better and having knowledge of personality types can assist with this. This position is also in accordance with Neubert, Hunter and Tolentino (2016) who note that in contemporary organisations of today, employee selection and promotional decisions may be made based on their personalities.

Methodology

The proposed methodology for this study is of a qualitative nature due to the current research on the field being saturated with quantitative studies. The researcher believes this is a gap in the literature to which practitioners would benefit from learning more about. Additionally, given the inconsistencies on the field regarding this topic, interviews are semi-structured and exploratory to uncover underlying themes that even the researcher might be unaware of. It is the intention that this approach will give a more holistic view of the findings that practitioners can put into action in their own organisations. For this study, there is no one specific organisation being focused on and all participants from those organisations that have agreed have requested their personal information to be kept anonymous however all were based in Dublin, Ireland and had worked with teams of five or more people.

Research Questions

The project aims to give researchers and practitioners a better understanding as to the extent that people managers agree with the literature surrounding this topic and assess their experience in dealing with personality makeup on teams as the current research on this field varies considerably between experts. Some of which noting that extraversion is the most valid predictor of performance (Barrick and Mount 1991), others that conscientiousness predicts success at work as it is significantly related to job satisfaction (Royle 2016, Judge, Heller and Mount 2002) and others believing it is agreeableness (Barrick, Mount and Stewart 1998) or openness to experience (Adoluju 2020, Greenhaus *et al.* 2010). Following that, the question emerges as to what combination of individuals with differing levels of these traits equates to superior performance? Contemporary research seems to show that individuals similar in demographics and levels of personality traits on a team reduces the possibility of conflict, thereby improving team performance (Molleman 2005). Interestingly one notices that the same authors often contradict themselves in terms of deliberating what trait most accurately predicts performance hence the need for clarification on this field. This raises one of the primary purposes of this study which is to decipher if the linkages between personality and performance are dependent on the task being undertaken. A sub-theme throughout this research will be on team diversity ranging from differences in personality to demographics and whether this has a positive, negative or any effect on team functioning. As Jung, Lee and Karston (2012) suggested, it is more likely the extraverted team members will become team leaders so naturally one would assume that having a team full of extraverts is counterproductive as the entire team cannot be leaders. This links in with a concept which will be dissected throughout the interview process which is the idea that introverted team members are thought not to typically be good leaders. One study suggests the adoption of a process known as "seeding", whereby organisations systematically place people on teams based on their level of a particular personality trait (Humphrey, Hollenbeck, Meyer and Ilgen 2007). This research similarly suggested that perhaps there is "no best way to make placement decisions", a theory which also becomes evident through this research. The "undesirable" trait of neuroticism which correlates with bullying at work and has negative effects on employee performance will briefly be taken into consideration however for the purpose of interviews this topic will not explicitly be discussed due to its controversial nature. This study is of an exploratory nature so it is difficult to provide a solid hypothesis, however it could be hypothesized that managers will agree with the predictive abilities of personality when it comes to employee selection and performance but that it is dependent on the work that person or team has been tasked with doing. Additionally, managers participating in this study may believe that a

multitude of factors combined, including a person's previous experience, their knowledge, skills, and abilities are also important determinants of occupational performance in conjunction with personality.

Structure of Paper

The manuscript proceeds as follows: it will start with an overview on the literature surrounding individual personality traits, looking at the characteristics associated with each of the FFM traits and describing how these traits influence individuals' working behaviours and their effect on employee performance and overall job satisfaction. Following that, the research will delve into a discussion on the task of creating teams with said personality traits and how people with differing levels of these traits interact when assigned to work together. This discussion will include how individual personality traits influence both the formation and performance of teams and how by getting this right, companies can optimise the performance of the team and ensure desirable outcomes. The manuscript then describes how the researcher proposes to answer some of the questions needed for a thorough understanding of this subject. Following an in-depth analysis of the research outcomes, the paper closes with a discussion on final thoughts surrounding the research, the limitations and strengths of the study and recommendations for practitioners to take into consideration when using personality assessments to justify employee selection. Finally, the paper ends noting the practical and financial resource implications of said study on organisations today and a short, reflective piece on the researcher's personal learnings from the research experience in compliance with CIPD requirements.

The findings of this study are beneficial to researchers and practitioners, both at management level and employees alike. As previously mentioned in Neubert (2016), given that promotional decisions these days in some organisations are based in part on personality, employees would do well to understand their own strengths and weaknesses and see where they have a gap in their knowledge which may be filled through engaging in personality or emotional intelligence and sensitivity training and developmental activities. Any findings surrounding the nature of teams is also important as the effects of team personality on organisational outcomes can be substantial (Le Pine, Methot, Buckman and Crawford 2011).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Personality has been defined in many ways by experts on the field throughout the literature. According to Costa and McCrae (1989), personality is an enduring, interpersonal, motivational style that explains individual differential behaviours and reactions across different types of situations. Whereas Funder (2006) notes that personality is characteristic patterns of thought emotion and behaviour. Given this, it inevitably has an effect not only on how a person lives their personal life, but also how they work. Costa and McCrae (2012), note that to understand what a person does, it requires an understanding of what the person is like, hence the criticality of identifying personality when it comes to employee working habits. Equipped with this knowledge, managers will be at an advantage when it comes to selecting personnel for their teams and they will be better able to optimise group performance, as individuals perform better in environments that are congruent with their personality (Curseu, Ilies, Virga and Maricutoiu 2018). According to Royle (2016), understanding and measuring personality is still of use to organisations and is not likely to become less important in the future so it is imperative that HR practitioners, and those involved in recruitment of staff understand this. The review will conclude with a statement regarding the overall position of the literature surrounding this topic, why this research is worthy of study and the gaps evident in the field that need to be addressed and how the researcher plans to combat them.

The "Big Five" Model of Personality (Goldberg 1990)

For the purpose of this paper, the literature will centre around Goldberg's (1990) "Big Five" Model of Personality (FFM). In his review, Goldberg suggests there are five primary facets of personality present in human beings: Extraversion-Introversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism/Emotional Stability and Openness to Experience. Each of these five traits will be discussed in relation to their corresponding characteristics and subsequent effect on performance at work. Particular attention will be paid to Extraversion/Introversion and Conscientiousness as they are vital for the purpose of interviewing, however reference will also be made to the remaining three traits as they may surface as important during participant questioning. The FFM is a tried and tested method of assessing personality and according to Barrick and Mount (1991) its "robustness allows it to provide a meaningful framework for formulating and testing hypotheses pertaining to assessment of individual personality differences". It is most often used by practitioners as part of their selection process due to its direct and indirect relationship with assessing future job performance and other behaviours that may predict a candidate's suitability to a job (Devaraj, Easley and Crant 2008). The FFM has also frequently been used by working professionals to operationalize

and optimise team personality composition to produce best results (Berry and Gardener 2011). That said, research has provided mixed reviews as to the predictive abilities of this model primarily in relation to the nature of the task being carried out by the individual in question. What is ultimately most important when it comes to forming a team is getting the right combination of traits together which this research aims to get clarification on with the intention of adding to the literature in this field. Research however has also pointed to the possibility that personality is an ineffective and inadequate indicator of performance (Davis-Blake and Pfeffer 1989) so a qualitative review as to the extent that people managers agree or disagree with the validity of personality at work is needed in the field.

Extraversion/Introversion

A person's level of extraversion is characterised by their tendency to be optimistic, outgoing, good at forming and nurturing social relationships (Watson and Clark 1997) and they are often dominant in nature (Barrick and Mount 1991). Extraverts are reported as being particularly important in customer-facing, sales roles as they are better suited to handle social demands at work (Judge, Piccolo and Kosalka 2009, Mount *et al*. 1998). Even today the same is said with regards to extraverts with Alsuwailem and Elnaga (2016) who found in their study that extraversion was the most significant indicator of performance. Given their proclivity towards experiencing more positive emotions than others, researchers have argued that extraverts possess higher job satisfaction (Judge, Mount and Heller 2002). Even outside of the work environment, extraversion is related to the performance of students as students' ability to form friendships and collaborate increases the likelihood of earning superior final grades, a practice which comes easier to extraverted people (Thiele, Sauer and Kauffeld 2018). A major limitation to Thiele *et al.'s* (2018) review is the fact that it was only carried out on students, so the researcher questions whether these findings are applicable to employees who are similarly participating in a learning situation at work. The importance of extraversion is well known amongst high level business management as it can foster a working environment favourable to knowledge exchange amongst employees, thereby benefiting the organisation as a whole (Fernandez *et al.* 2017) yet unfavourable elements of extraversion have also been demonstrated. It has been noted that persons high in extraversion may lack listening skills and can be perceived by other team members as talking too much and not contributing effectively to the team (Curseu *et al.* 2018) and they have been shown to lack skills in attention to detail when it comes to working (Judge and Zapata 2015). This is something the researcher aims to delve deeper into and assess whether the same is true for managers in Ireland dealing with extraverted employees on their teams. While Barrick and Mount (1998) identified extraversion as being the most consistent personality predictor

of positive interpersonal interaction in teams, the question remains as to the extent to which it is a beneficial influence in a team scenario.

Introverts on the other hand who are shyer in nature, reserved and less willing to engage in social interaction are thought to collaborate more effectively in a team situation than an extravert as they are less likely to become distracted by external stimuli (Craciun and Sofian 2015). However, they have been cited as not possessing great leadership skills due to their perceived inability to communicate effectively (Craciun and Sofian 2015). This is a controversial concept and one that is worthy of further study, so the researcher aims to investigate this through the research by questioning managers operating in Ireland. This brings into question a concept that will be explored in more detail further on, that is the accuracy of personality for performance prediction as subjective dependent on the nature of the work being done. Such an example was demonstrated in Denissen *et al.* (2018) when they found that extraversion was more beneficial in some work contexts than in others. In the field of development, the question is also raised as to the ability of managers to develop their introverted, high performing members towards social skills and team coaching as it has been suggested that developing teams this way helps them to become more socially cohesive (Radovic, Sladojevic and Opacic 2020). Based on the above information, extraversion-introversion will be deliberated on further throughout the process of interviewing.

Conscientiousness

According to Barrick and Mount (1991), conscientiousness is the most consistent predictor of both academic achievement and superior job performance. People with high levels of conscientiousness tend to be diligent, organized, hard-working and prudent (Schmidt 2018). They also find value in developmental activities at work which expands their capabilities so they can become more effective for future work endeavours (Srikanth 2020). This from a management perspective is important given the increasingly competitive employment market today. Having such high achievement orientation however suggests they may be tempted more by opportunities that present themselves in other companies. They also tend to be rigid, inflexible, and never satisfied that they have reached their career destination (Judge *et al.* 2002). Individuals low on conscientiousness on the other hand are likely to have a lower threshold for dealing with stress and exhibit lower levels of self-control (Wilson and Nagy 2017).

Since a vast majority of the literature points to the fact that conscientiousness is the most valid predictor of individual performance, it begs the question as to how they operate in a team situation. There is undoubtedly a requirement for a level of adaptability on teams so one questions whether having a high number of conscientious individuals on teams will produce effective outcomes as rigid persons tend to be

head-strong, view uncertainty as a threat and generally will have a low tolerance for ambiguity (Driskell, Goodwin, Salas and O'Shea 2006). Meta-analyses show that while conscientiousness is important in a team, it may be even more important on virtual teams than traditional ones as the efficient and proactive nature of persons high in conscientiousness allows them the ability to achieve thorough and complete objectives and follow strict procedures needed on virtual teams (Cogliser, Gardner, Gavin and Broberg 2012). Given the current working environment in 2021, it is of no doubt that this asset is of grave importance to managers today that are required to operate almost entirely virtually. The present research therefore aims to question people managers on this concept and assess the degree to which they find this trait a promoter or inhibitor of performance on their teams, especially in the virtual world of today.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness reflects an individual's need for harmonious relationships and a desire to help and support others. They are often characterised as being excellent types of candidates for team purposes as they create positive work environments and focus more on co-operation than competitions with others in teams (Cogliser *et al.* 2012). It has been widely suggested that agreeableness may predict job success as individuals with high levels of agreeableness have effective interpersonal relations and co-operate well with others which consequently helps them to perform better (Mount, Barrick and Stewart 1998, McCrae and Costa 1997). According to Hogan and Holland (2003), if successful team performance requires getting along then agreeableness along with emotional stability and conscientiousness will predict performance as these people are pleasant to be around, positive, predictable, and sensitive to others. Having agreeable members on teams may benefit the team as agreeable individuals through their even-tempered nature may balance out the more dominant nature of extraverts. However, it has been thought that the inclusion of too many agreeable persons can lead to no one taking up a leadership position in the group. It may also have detrimental effects on the success of the organisation if such an individual, particularly if in a leadership position bends to everyone's will, including customers, other business partners and stakeholders (Antoncic, Antoncic, Grum and Ruzzier 2018). Interestingly, Judge and Zapata (2015) state that agreeable individuals are best suited to dealing with difficult customers due to their desire to nurture relationships however the researcher must question this position as constant conflict and negativity may be too much for a highly agreeable individual to handle. This again highlights the question– is personality predictive of performance but only when the task compliments the traits associated with that personality facet? While it is clear agreeableness is good for a team, is that only up to a certain point? It can have a positive effect on organisational performance as it has been thought that when it comes to team building,

the more similar a team is in agreeableness the better they will perform (Peeters *et al.* 2006) but too much of the same thing is not always a good thing.

Openness to Experience (OE)

Openness, often referred to as intellect notates an individual's intelligence, their desire to be creative, and to explore and try new things. Schmidt and Hunter (2004) state that even if open individuals are not overly satisfied with their jobs the fact that they are typically more intelligent than others makes it easy for them to adapt and perform better at a variety of work tasks which makes them crucial to organisations. Adoluju (2020) reported that OE is one of the most important traits when it comes to insurance sales in Nigeria, along with Emotional Stability. There is a question however as to the generalizability of those results globally given that the study was only carried out in Nigeria with Nigerian participants. Openness is also a critical trait for those working in high technology fields in order to remain relevant in a competitive and constantly changing market, and those being considered for expatriate assignments due to the need to be able to adapt quickly to alternative cultures and ways of living (Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk 2010). Individuals high in openness are keen to learn and motivated to seek out developmental experiences (Maurer, Lippstreu and Judge 2008) so when working in a team setting, they can be beneficial in assisting knowledge sharing back to the group. They crave work autonomy and task variety so can have a positive impact on the group due to their ability to work efficiently and carry out a range of different tasks outside of their core work. Therefore they are seen as being very flexible, a characteristic organisations seek in their personnel selection. Similarly, OE is required for working in a virtual environment as this often calls for creative problem solving and communication techniques that would not exist in traditional settings (Bosch- Sijtsema 2007). While OE will not be explicitly questioned in the interview stage, managers unfamiliar with the terminology on personality may refer to such people with this trait on their teams without their knowing so information on this trait is needed to provide a contextual basis for the purpose of the review.

Emotional Stability/Neuroticism

It is generally agreed throughout the literature that emotional stability is a non-negotiable in organisations so a large amount of time will not be spent on discussing this trait. However, it is important for practitioners to be aware of it as ignorance of it entirely can have detrimental effects on morale in an organisation. Neurotic individuals are often targeted for bullying due to their vulnerability (Wilson and Nagy 2017) and it has been suggested that those low in conscientiousness, are more likely to exhibit lower level of self-control that can often cause them to be the perpetrators of bullying. Therefore, an awareness

of the dynamic that has the potential to increase the incidence of bullying is critical for hiring managers seeking to create a team. It is the belief of the researcher that questioning research participants on their experience with bullying in teams may be too controversial and that they may not be comfortable discussing it so for that purpose it will be omitted from questioning. Yet the concept is still of importance in the field as eliminating those likely to display bullying tendencies from the candidate pool, which would become evident through a pre-recruitment personality screening assessment, can lead to the construction of highly cohesive, productive teams that are more committed to achieving organisational goals together (Privitera and Campbell 2009).

Navigating personality on teams – Formation, Diversity and Performance

When it comes to the formation of a team, management need to be cognizant of getting the right combination of people together that will co-operate with one another as teams are generally created for the purpose of organisational success (Molleman 2005). Team composition in that way is of great practical concern as it can be strategically manipulated depending on the organisation's focus criterion at the time of recruitment through staffing practices and approaches (Le Pine, Buckman, Crawford and Methot 2011). One of the most significant contributing factors to how well a team performs is the level to which team members communicate effectively with one another (Dillon *et al*. 2020). Given that personality contributes significantly to how humans communicate, it is of critical importance when attempting to create a high-performing team. Therefore, before any selection decisions are made, the personality trait levels and combination apparent in individuals being considered for the role must be taken into consideration.

 In a multicultural environment, due to their high sociability, extraverted employees may help individuals on a team develop good relations with one another that come from different backgrounds and help them understand each other better which can bring with it higher job satisfaction (Bhatti and Alshagowi 2019). Conversely, Bell (2007) stated that while extraverts are an important facet of a team, having too many extraverts present on one team can be counterproductive as they tend to interact for social purposes which may lead to a decrease in performance. Additionally, due to their tendency to be more dominant than others, the presence of too many dominant individuals may lead to increased conflict. Again, the topic of extraversion both at the individual level and team level are noted throughout the field so the researcher finds it important to gain further clarification on this through this research. Witt, Barrick, Mount and Burke (2002) alternatively suggest that a combination of both conscientiousness and agreeableness on a team is preferable when it comes to performance indicators. Moreover, a team that is too high in openness can become distracted, only focusing on what is interesting and new while not

displaying as much focus on the task at hand which can lead to decreased performance (Bell 2007). Research shows that moderate levels of all the FFM traits on teams produces more desirable results and organisations should make efforts to directly encourage and facilitate a shared leadership structure through training of individuals (Bell 2007). Similarly however, research has demonstrated that when composing teams, homogeneity with respect to demographic characteristics on teams may be more attractive as it reduces the possibility of further diversity in the group (Molleman 2005).

As per Motowiollo and Schmidt (1999), working effectively in teams requires individuals to use well-developed, interpersonal skills, as well as be able to help their teammates and co-operate with others. From what has been discussed in the section above, we know that these traits do not come as naturally to some people as they do others so what happens when these people are forced to work together on a project? The research aims to address this issue that team managers often must deal with. Based on the above, one can see there are certainly some similar, yet differing opinions on the field and personality as a construct is subjective in nature so it can be difficult to accurately study. It could be suggested that both researchers and practitioners need to be aware that perhaps there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach when it comes to forming teams (Llopis *et al.* 2017) and this may well be the case that comes to light throughout the course of this research upon speaking to participants.

Conclusion

From what has been discussed, it is clear that the research is in favour of some personality types over others but what does personality really mean in relation to team formation and what does a team with a complex group of personality types result in? It begs the question as to what happens when individuals with differing levels of each of these personality traits come together to form a team and to what extent do managers in Ireland believe that personality can even be considered as a valid indicator of performance? These are some of the questions this study hopes to address. Additionally, research points to the assumption that much of what we know about teams and how they work today is preliminary and requires further study (Driskell, Driskell and Salas 2018) so it will be the aim of this research to gain further insight into this. Molleman (2005) similarly suggests that the influence of individual personality traits on team performance is somewhat limited and that further work should be focused on investigating this relationship further and determining the strategic core of a team. According to Le Pine *et al.* (2011) it is imperative for researchers to focus their attention on the linkages between team member personality and team processes and that studies outlining the advantages of hiring those with higher levels of some of the FFM traits is lacking which is where this research can add value to the field and to practitioners and

academics alike. Due to the inconsistences throughout the literature base, the field has consequently called for the need for the validity of personality tests for personnel selection to be assessed (Llopis *et al.* 2017, Lundgren, Poell and Kroon 2019, Hogan and Holland 2003) in order to accurately predict the creation of a successful team so it is the hope of this research to also achieve this.

Taking all of this into consideration, it must also be noted that personality alone cannot drive a team's performance (Le Pine *et al.* 2011). It is important for practitioners to consider the experiences and skills of employees, but personality is a good starting point when given the task of creating a high-performing team. The previous section has covered why this topic is worthy of study and the literature that has influenced the decision but now we move to detailing the intended research questions and the method being used to gather and analyse this information to answer these questions.

Chapter 3: Research Objectives

Based on the discussion in the previous section, there are several topics worthy of study for the purpose of this research. The primary objective is to assess the nature of the "Big Five" (Goldberg 1990) personality dimension and its effect on employee behaviours and subsequent team assemblance, communications and operations. Within that however, there are a series of sub-themes that the researcher would like to gain a deeper understanding of to provide further clarification on the topic overall.

In short, the research aims and objectives for this study being explored from the point of view of people managers today are as follows.

- Explore what personality traits produce the best outcomes on their teams.
- Address how diversity both in terms of personality, demographics and backgrounds impacts team formation.
- Assess the degree of suitability of personality tests in assisting for personnel selection and whether the results provide accurate predictions.
- Find out managers opinions on extraversion vs introversion on their teams and the outcomes each produces.
- Learn the role of management in dealing with personalities on their teams and how working from home impacts day-to-day operations and team performance.

The answer to these objectives combined will give us a more rounded understanding of how personality, specifically the "Big Five" (Goldberg 1990) impacts the creation and performance of teams.

Based on the research in this field, it is evident the traits of extraversion and conscientiousness are considered the most valid predictors of individual performance in employees (Fernandez *et al.* 2017, Srikanth 2020, Barrick and Mount 1991) so questions surrounding these traits will take place throughout the interview process. This research intends to delve deeper into the benefits associated with extraversion vs introversion in an employee as this is a point of contention throughout the literature and is subjective based on the participant's perception of the traits and the nature of the work the individual or team does. Per Jung *et al.* (2012), extraverts produce more unique and diverse ideas than introverts but only under moderate to high stimuli conditions which is not always the average setting for organisations. This questions whether having high levels of extraversion on a team is sustainable for the group to consistently perform. This appears to go in contrast to the plethora of research that demonstrates that extraversion is a reliable predictor of performance and job satisfaction (Watson and Clarke 1997, Le Pine *et al.* 2011). Therefore, the research will aim to investigate if managers in Ireland find this of their extraverted

employees and whether their performance is relative to the nature of the job they are doing and if a constant high level of energy has a positive effect on team morale. Alternatively, do managers find that their extraverted employees are too dominant in nature (Barrick and Mount 1991), easily distracted and unable to focus on the task at hand (Curseu *et al.* 2018).

There are also debates in terms of what characteristics in combination with one another in a team environment produce the most desirable outcomes and if all members of a team should be the same or diverse. It has been suggested that by staffing organisations with employees and managers that are similar, you run the risk of creating a breeding ground for poor quality interpersonal relationships between subordinates and their supervisors which can then be associated with a deterioration in employee engagement and group morale (Bell 2007). Therefore, one of the research aims will be to ascertain what factors and qualities are needed to create a successful team and how having diversity in terms of personality and demographics impacts team outputs. These concepts are of interest to the researcher as clearly there are many differing views as to the formula needed to create an effective team, thereby making this study of value to the field.

Given the calls for approval of personality-based recruitment practices (Llopis *et al.* 2017, Lundgren, Poell and Kroon 2019, Hogan and Holland 2003), the study will also ascertain whether the use of personality tests is suitable as a method of assisting in personnel selection for a role. According to Costa and McCrae (2020), it is essential for personality trait assessments to not only be comprehensive but accurate. However, personality tests reveal only what kind of a person the individual is, not who in fact he or she is. This ties into the research objective that aims to address the validity of using personality tests for recruitment. Plasticity of the human brain inherently allows us the capacity to grow, learn and adapt to changing environments (Frederico and Casey 2013) so this begs the question as to whether the promise of an employment opportunity should rest entirely on the results of a personality test? In tandem with this, the research aims to address the common issue of personality being predictive of performance, dependent on the nature of the work being carried out by that employee or team.

Finally, a minor sub theme of this study will be to explore how the current, virtual environment caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted managers and their teams, either positively or negatively as working virtually can affect different people in different ways. This will include questions surrounding how managers are finding their extraverted team members are coping given that they now spend a lot of time alone and if they find their more conscientious employees are now spending more time working past office hours due to their diligent nature? This element of the research has significant implications for

practitioners as it is likely that a vast majority of all future work will be done remotely and flexible working arrangements will become more common, even mandatory going forward.

This study adds to the field by clearing up some of the inconsistencies throughout the long history of examining this topic and gives a more contemporary view on the subject to practitioners today. The below section discusses in more detail how the researcher plans to get the information required and subsequently analyse said data and why the intended approach is best suited for this study.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Methodological Approach and Justification

Research philosophy is an understanding of ways in which data can be collected, analysed, and used to develop knowledge in a specific subject (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019) which is an important element to be taken into consideration when attempting to answer any research question. The concept of personality itself is subjective in nature (Atwood and Tomkins 1976) therefore this study has an interpretivism philosophical underpinning. This gives it a more "holistic perspective" which per Denscombe (2010) incorporates humanistic assumptions that reality is made from the different perceptions and consequent actions of social actors who do not all view experiences in the same way, a concept which is undoubtedly applicable to the intentions of this study. These ideas are applicable to this study as participants may have different opinions as to how their individual team members perform together. The participant's own personality type will influence how he or she reacts, either viewing them positively or negatively, to such dynamics on their teams. Similarly, the researcher's background, identity, values and beliefs may also have a bearing on the nature of the data collected and how it is analysed (Denscombe 2010, Braun and Clarke 2006).

The current research hopes to gain a deeper understanding as to practitioners' real-life experiences in dealing with people of alternate personality types and how it influences the type of work they do so the approach to be used in this study will be of a qualitative nature. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings where human behaviour and events occur (Creswell and Creswell 2018). This qualitative research approach is unique in that much of the research on personality at work has been carried out quantitatively both at the individual level and team level. It is the author's opinion that this is a major gap in the literature. Radovic and Sladojevic (2020) provided useful insights into the field as they were able to quantitatively measure the connections between team personality composition against team performance and behaviours which confirmed the importance of team members personality and their compatibility for desirable team outcomes. However, insight into why this team member relationship is important and how members interact is needed to provide a more comprehensive picture to explain these results which qualitative research would bring forth. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the above phenomena further qualitatively in an Irish context and assess the degree to which the participants agree or disagree with the results of quantitative research previously carried out in this field. The research also has the intention of exploring the underlying themes that appear when working with people with differing personalities on teams. By doing this, the study fills in some of the gaps left by quantitative studies and addresses the inconsistencies in the research that only exploratory, qualitative research can do. The

researcher wants to find out what the common themes are that come up in relation to the topic of personality at work, rather than measure them so the study must be flexible to adapt to the participants' responses which a qualitative review will allow. Srikanth (2020) calls for more qualitative research into work experience when it comes to personality assessment in human resources (HR) in a quantitative review carried out in India. This will be achieved but in an Irish context and not limited to the HR department as that may yield insufficient or biased results not generalizable to the organisation as a whole.

There are other ways in which the study could be carried out however it is the researcher's view that semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate to attain the research objectives as they allow researchers to collect "rich and detailed data" (Harvey-Jordan and Long 2001) and give the researcher more control over the line of questioning (Creswell and Creswell 2018). One method considered was to approach the study quantitatively. However as previously mentioned, the researcher is looking to explore the themes on this field, not measure them. Quantitative studies cannot accurately assess the perceptions and underlying emotions of the people who work with and lead these teams as qualitative reviews can. In a study by Virgal *et al.* (2014) researchers quantitatively measured how relationship conflict stemming from personality differences in a group lead to a negative shift in mental models. However, the data was collected via a self-reporting questionnaire and does not tell the reader the exact causes of the relationship conflict and which traits specifically engage in differences of opinion between one another or provide reasons as to why. There is also the issue of personality "faking" and inaccurate self-assessments when relying on data from self-reported questionnaires (Le *et al.* 2011).

An alternative approach for this study may have been to use a structured, in-depth interviews however the researcher identified that the underlying thoughts and issues surrounding this topic would not be unveiled through a strict process of questioning, that does not allow for further exploration of the topic through participants answers. The researcher needed to ask open-ended, probing questions that were not satisfied by a yes/no answer, so this rigid format was unsuitable. An observation study may have been completed to see these teams in action from point of candidate selection during recruitment to visualising how they consequently work together as a team. However, due to the limited timeframe the researcher had to carry out this study it was not applicable in this situation but may be suggested as an approach for future studies by other researchers.

Finally, the researcher could have put the questions from the interview into survey format and send out qualitative questionnaires to be completed by all participants. This method is the closest in terms of the

results it could have produced to the interviews as it could pull in a range of diverse feedback from participants that yes/no surveys could not. However, surveys are not typically good for exploratory research (Saunders *et al.* 2019) and applicants may feel restricted in how much information they can leave in the space allotted for answers or may feel they are being coerced towards answering the question in a particular way (Denscombe 2010). Virtual or in-person interviews allow for more information to be received from the participant. Additionally, given the limited time given to do this research, the researcher could not be sure that if participants were sent a survey to fill out that they would return it in time for sufficient analysis so scheduling virtual interviews allowed the researcher to ensure the data was collected within a suitable timeframe. Carrying out interviews also allowed the researcher to ensure that all questions were understood by participants to collect essential, and accurate data from their answers. Were participants left to their own devices through answering a survey, it may have distorted the data thereby affecting the reliability of the findings.

Research Sample

To complete the proposed objectives, the researcher needed to access approximately five to ten people managers based in Dublin, Ireland that were involved with creating and leading teams of five people or more. Nonprobability, purposive sampling was used as participants were hand-picked due to the qualities they possessed and experiences they had. The chosen participants were most suitable as they had people management experience, were actively involved in the recruitment and selection of employees and subsequent assemblance of teams and they were residing and working in Dublin. Interviewing managers without any people or team management experience would not suffice as they would be unable to share the required data regarding the creation of teams and how employees on a team operate when they differ from one another in terms of personality or demographics. The target population this sample was selected from and to whom these results apply to is all people managers or team leaders involved in personnel recruitment working in Ireland. The researcher limited the sample to the Dublin area as it is the nation's capital and most highly populated city in Ireland and many large organisations have a presence there so the likelihood of finding interested participants was higher. Additionally, to aid with the reliability and dependability of the findings the researcher spoke to three males and four females to ensure sample equality as much as possible.

The researcher gained access to seven participants in total, three people managers working in the same organisation and four others, working in four different organisations. Participants were first approached to take part in the study by email to gauge their interest in the study and they were issued with a detailed brief of who the researcher was, the purpose of the research and what taking part would involve so that

they were able to make an informed decision as to whether or not they were interested in participating. Consent forms were also sent to participants which required their signature and the date. All participants who were approached to be involved in this study accepted the proposition to take part so non-response bias was not an issue.

Prior to interviewing, permission of access was needed from both the human resource and legal department of their companies by participants. The only condition was that the researcher was required to ensure that all information regarding the participants and the company to which they belonged was kept anonymous and not published. There were no other access issues in arranging interviews with participants. All participants were interviewed virtually via the video conferencing platform *Zoom* because of the current COVID-19 restrictions and were carried out during the weeks beginning February 22nd, 2021 until Friday March 12th, 2021. This timeframe allowed sufficient time for rigorous data analysis and noting of findings. It also left enough time for results analysis if participants needed to reschedule their interview.

Research Instrument

To obtain the answers to the intended research questions, a customised questionnaire created by the researcher centred around the personality facets of the FFM was used with all participants in the semi-structured interview. One article examined in the literature review by Berry and Gardener (2011) stated that the FFM was widely used and accepted by management professionals when working with their teams to assess what produced best results, so it felt appropriate for the research instrument questions to be focused on this model. The intention was to start with some set questions required to be answered however the aim was to engage in an exploratory discussion regarding the themes surrounding this topic and surface new information. Due to this, it was vital for the approach to be flexible enough to adapt to the participant's responses and pick up on the emerging trends that appeared throughout questioning. When carrying out semi-structured interviews following an inductive approach, the interview takes an "emergent" course of action (Creswell and Creswell 2018) to delve deeper into the subject so that the unknown themes can be unearthed dependent on what participants say. The interviewer can then pursue them further and assess whether these nuances are important for contextual understanding of the topic during the data analysis (Adams 2015). The questionnaire used was self-made as there were no suitable qualitative research questionnaires available via the NCI Database that would accurately assess the research objectives and questions needed. Prior to the interviews taking place, the questionnaire being used on participants was piloted with friends and colleagues to decipher how much time to be allotted for each participant and if any changes needed to be made to questioning which there was not. A copy of the questionnaire used for each participant is attached as an appendix with this paper (See Appendix 4).

Data Collection

As discussed, because of the restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic the researcher had to carry out all qualitative interviews for this study virtually via the online video conferencing platform *Zoom.* The researcher, using an owner account set up the meeting with all participants. This provided host privileges which allowed the researcher to record both audio and video for the duration of the meeting. Prior to the meetings taking place, the interview link was tested to ensure it was secure. Before questioning began, all participants were informed once again of their right to withdraw or refuse any question and their consent to participate and record the meeting was received again. Interviews lasted approximately thirty to forty-five minutes each with the participant speaking for most of the time as the researcher was cognizant of appearing biased (Miyazaki and Taylor 2008) so did not provide any personal opinions, reactions or engage in excessive dialogue surrounding the topic with the participant. After recording stopped, a copy of both the video and transcript was emailed to the researcher and copies of these were stored on password-protected, encrypted personal computer that only the researcher had access to. Throughout the duration of the interviews, the researcher also took hand-written, field notes with the intention of using them in conjunction with the recording and transcript to analyse the received data.

Data Analysis

The chosen method of analysis of data for any research project has significant implications on the results. According to Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2019), a lack of rigour and relevant analysis has implications in terms of the credibility of both the outcome and the researcher themselves. The approach for analysing this data was inductive as it required analysing the data with "little to no predetermined theory, structure or framework" (Bernard *et al.* 2008) and used the data collected to build a theory on the subject. Once all interviews were completed, both a copy of the interview transcript was emailed to the researcher and the raw data which included participants responses plus additional field notes taken was transcribed manually by the researcher to an excel sheet. For the purpose of the analysis the researcher used the manually transcribed data as it was clearer and captured more of the nuances of participants responses than the automated transcripts did. The primary method for qualitative data analysis is that of a *Thematic Analysis* and that approach was used throughout the course of this study as it is a flexible form of qualitative data collection (Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012). As noted in King and Brookes (2018), thematic analysis is undisputed in organisational research and is the process of identifying patterns or themes within the information received from qualitative data (Maguire And Delahunt 2017). Thematic analysis involved going through six key stages once all the data was recorded, collected, and transcribed.

These six steps are outlined in Braun and Clarke (2006) as *familiarisation with the data, coding of data, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining, and naming themes and writing up the analytic narrative.* Thematic analysis offers an accessible and flexible approach to analysing qualitative data (Braun and Clarke 2006) which is exactly what this research requires to draw up accurate conclusions.

Other approaches, namely template analysis and narrative analysis were considered to interpret the data however it was determined thematic analysis would best suit this study. Template analysis is a specific type of thematic analysis, whereby only a certain proportion of the data is coded, hierarchically rather than the entire data set as when doing a thematic analysis. While this too is a flexible approach whether the study adopts an objectivist or subjectivist stance, it is better established in the healthcare qualitative research field and not so much in the business and management field and has been criticized for its lack of rigour in analysing large amounts of rich qualitative data (Waring and Wainwright 2008). As thematic analysis takes into consideration and codes a broader data set, it gives a more comprehensive overview of results and can therefore be considered a more rigorous approach for this study and allowed the researcher to ensure credibility and dependability of the research findings. With regards narrative analysis, it is not necessarily generalisable across organisations as it focuses on participants "self-generated meanings" (Flick 2014). It provides the researcher with useful tools to comprehend the diversity and different levels involved in participant's stories (Flick 2014) however it requires a more in-depth focus on the narrative. Given the time constraints associated with this study, and the fact that thematic analysis is a more widely accepted approach the researcher felt this was the most appropriate as it would aid the validity and reliability of the results.

Limitations

As with any research, there are aspects in how this is carried out that may limit the degree to which the findings are generalizable. While a prominent attribute of the study is that it draws data from actual employees in organisations, the study used only samples based in Dublin so further research is required to assess the generalizability of findings to a wider range of cultures – for example, in other areas of Ireland, the rest of Europe or non-English speaking countries.

The virtual method of data collection is a limitation as it can be difficult to pick up on physical queues such as body language that would otherwise have been noticed were the interviews carried out in person as was originally planned.

The "Big Five" (Goldberg 1990) as a model itself also has some limitations. While it is an important model of personality and represents a major landmark in the study of human behaviour, it has been critiqued as

not "comprehensively capturing all possible dimensions of personality" and that inclusion of other variables is warranted for a more thorough representation of human personality (Smith and DeNunzio 2020). A more expansive study covering all facets of personality may have included taking models such as the HEXACO, Myers-Brigg Typology or Insights Discovery into consideration for analysis so this is a potential direction for future researchers to take.

Finally, not all participants were familiar with the Big Five model specifically or its exact terminology. While a brief explanation of each trait was described at the beginning of interviews, inferences had to be made by the researcher as to which FFM trait participants were referring to when speaking about their experience in dealing with different types of people.

Ethical Considerations

As with any study involving people, their personal data and privacy rights, there are several ethical concerns that needed to be taken into consideration. All the ethical principles as noted in Sieber and Tolich (2013) were applicable to this study including ensuring the safety of the researcher and participants and compliance in the management of data. Most notably was concerning protecting the privacy of all participants involved in the study. To start, anonymity and confirmation of no internal company data being used was required from the organisations before being allowed access to interviewing any employees which was a term of their agreement to being in the study. Consent forms were sent to all participants and requested to be signed and returned to the researcher prior to participation in the study. They were then stored on the researcher's password-protected, encrypted personal computer and only the researcher had access to them. The anonymity rights of all participants were respected throughout the course of the study, so any participant quotations are referred to as "Participant 1, 2, 3…7" throughout the findings and discussion sections. Each participant was issued with a copy of the research briefing detailing the purpose of the research, how data would be collected, used, and subsequently destroyed. Participants were reminded that they were under no obligation to participate in the study and were free to withdraw or refuse any question at any time without retaliation whatsoever. This information was also detailed on the consent form participants signed. A copy of the research information sheet and consent form that was sent to all participants have been attached as appendices to this paper (See Appendices 2 and 3). All questions asked were necessary for the purpose of collecting data and the researcher was aware that there were implications for asking said questions. Throughout the course of interviewing, each interview was required to be recorded to transcribe the data received and analyse the information. Consent was received for this both at the time of setting up the interview, on the consent forms and again at the beginning of the interview prior to the beginning of questioning. A copy of each recording was emailed to

the researcher upon completion of the interview and recordings were once again stored on the researcher's password-protected, encrypted personal computer. Only the researcher had access to these files and the assigned NCI dissertation supervisor should they so request. Participants were informed that all information would be retained and subsequently destroyed in accordance with the NCI data retention policy and would be kept for up to two years post-graduation or only until is necessary and that it was the responsibility of the researcher to adhere to this and to analyse and report findings as they are given. The researcher reminded participants of how the data would be used to write up the dissertation. The researcher was also cognizant of avoiding the topic of conflict in a team when speaking with participants as it may have had ethical implications were interviewees to name any employees involved in conflict at work due to personality differences with teammates. Therefore, interviewees were reminded not to directly name any employees with whom they are drawing their experience of dealing with to ensure the safety of those employees.

NCI Ethics Committee

Ethical approval for this project was given by the NCI Ethics Committee upon submission of the research proposal in December 2020. A copy of this NCI Ethics application form outlining the details of this study and the approaches used has been attached as an appendix to this paper to acknowledge full adherence of the researcher to the ethical guidelines of the National College of Ireland (See Appendix 1).

Chapter 5: Results Analysis and Findings

A thematic analysis was carried out on the answers received from participants during the interview process. Once all interview recordings were manually transcribed and understood, the researcher began coding all the data received and grouped similar codes together. The thematic analysis revealed six primary themes that appeared throughout the interviews which will be discussed below along with the findings for each theme in order of importance.

Theme 1: Openness to Experience as the most significant indicator of performance.

Tommi, Timo and Edwin (2019) state the importance of selecting the most suitable personality type for the job so one of the objectives of this research was to explore what traits produce the best results both at the individual level and on a team. Results indicated that openness to experience is the most important trait, regardless of the role. Participants also referred to the importance of conscientiousness and emotional stability in tandem with openness as being very significant indicators that a person would do well. Based on the interview data, the following codes were generated to indicate the significance of openness in relation to performance; *displaying a propensity or willingness to learn/the importance of being flexible and open to change/being adaptable/strategic, creative thinking/ openness is the most important characteristic.* The over-arching view of participants displayed that especially in this environment, employees need to be open to things changing both at the individual level and when part of a team.

"The most important factor is their willingness to learn new things, be curious and be independent and adept to change. In a tech company, technology advances quickly. Someone who is set in their place can and does become an issue." (Participant 2)

During a period of change in the organisation it is critical to have open individuals on a team as they lean into uncertainty and are more resilient as a result. One of the most common challenges that people managers came up against is when there is change in the organisation and it is met with resistance. In tandem with this, the following was mentioned when it came to openness with respect to organisational change.

"Fear of the unknown comes from not being open. Curiosity and grit or desire to take on a challenge comes from being open." (Participant 3)

Participants also discussed the nature of conscientious individuals on their teams and noted that this can be difficult as their attentive to detail, diligent nature can cause them to become stuck on the smaller

details with participant 6 mentioning that conscientious individuals get "*analysis paralysis*" which impacts speed and therefore productivity of a team.

"Employees need to be "open to failure, tolerant of ambiguity and understand things don't always go perfectly." (Participant 5)

The resolution that became of this issue from participants was that individuals need to possess a balance of openness and conscientiousness and that they need to be "organized out of chaos" (Participant 3) to best deal with issues and succeed on a team. Finally, it was noted that in tandem with openness to experience, emotional stability is a crucial element to success. In a fast-paced sales or tech environments where the chosen participants were working, things change daily, and targets need to be met regardless of external influences.

"The people who are most not necessarily just the best performers but the ones that are the most consistent, are the ones that are resilient and emotionally stable." (Participant 1)

Based on the above, it was clear that openness is the most important trait for success. However, the ideal combination both on a team and in individuals is openness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability to be able to effectively contribute to organisational goals.

Theme 2: Personality test relation to performance in a team

As previously explained, there is widespread subjectivity around the usefulness of personality tests to assist in personnel selection (Llopis *et al.* 2017, Lundgren, Poell and Kroon 2019, Hogan and Holland 2003). It is not yet universally agreed that personality tests are valid or accurate in helping to select the right candidate for a role and whether they give a true representation of how an employee might behave in a job. Driskell *et al.* (2006) also note the effects of team member personality should be examined with respect to what the team does which calls into question whether personality is a good or subjective indicator of performance in a role. Therefore, the researcher wanted to get a clearer picture as to the validity and accuracy of these tests in predicting consistent performance from an employee. This aim correlates with the hypothesis put forward that personality may be predictive of performance, but it is dependent on the task the individual or team is carrying out. Given that the use of personality tests gives managers an overview of what a person might be like, the predictive ability of tests on performance warrants its own theme. Examples of codes used to develop this theme are noted as follows; *cautious approach to the use of personality tests/personality tests being mis-used/employee development benefits of personality tests/hiring manager biases/ personality "faking"/work vs personal persona/ more*

contemporary research needed on them to reflect personality in today's world. Results indicated a moderate support of this hypothesis as most participants stated personality may be important in predicting suitability to a role but that is depending on the nature of the task.

"The predictivity of personality on performance depends on the job you are hiring for and the scenario the person is working in." (Participant 5)

They also saw the benefits of using personality tests to predict this performance. However, participants explained that tests are more helpful in providing a general awareness to their teams as to the different personality types and preferences, and that they acted as a great learning and development tool for employees more so than as a tool for recruitment. They see the benefit in using them to look out for and develop potential employee "blind spots" (Participant 5) once they are in the role. However, as a method of personnel selection they were not convinced of its rigour. According to participants, hiring managers and often the wider organisation can have their own biases and may be tempted to create a team of people like themselves unintentionally. They were also cautious of not pigeon-holing people in because personality can change over time and it can be hard to get an accurate picture of someone based on a thirty-to-forty-five-minute personality test so they would caution people managers not to limit individuals to the results of their test.

"Tests can definitely be a help in giving an overview, but I would be wary of using these types of models and frameworks that you don't box somebody in. You run the risk of making assumptions about someone that are not necessarily accurate. It might be someone's preference to possess higher levels of some traits but doesn't mean they can't act in another way when they're at work." (Participant 4)

Instead, managers find personality tests useful tools for learning how to communicate effectively with their team and generally how best to manage them.

"I used them more on how to set up weekly 1:1s, how to better message things in quarterly reviews, how to explain things and to send feedback emails." (Participant 5)

Participants were cognizant of "personality faking" (Participant 2) and have often found that a personality test does not accurately predict how a person may perform once in the job. The concept of a personal vs work persona was mentioned repeatedly. This is mostly seen in an employee's level of extraversion vs introversion as they can explicitly see these characteristics in an employee's behaviour in comparison to the other traits. Results showed that just because someone is more introverted at work does not mean that they cannot tap into their more extraverted side if the job requires them to. They often found that

while a candidate may score very well on a personality test, on the job they may be slower to learn and adapt to change, which highlights the inaccuracies of these tests. As a result, participants felt that people, regardless of their extraversion or introversion can tap into other areas of their personality when needed.

"What we really look for is; Are you able to put on that work persona and do the job? Even if it is false." *(Participant 2)*

Another interesting revelation found throughout the course of interviewing was that while they were unsure of personality's predictive abilities of performance, participants reported that certain elements of an individual's personality can make parts of a job easier for some people more than others. This again ties in with the importance of diversity on a team. For example, a person who is high in conscientiousness but low in extraversion may find the paperwork side of a sales role easier, but that does not mean they cannot effectively hold a sales position.

"Different personalities can excel at different points of a job, but I don't think there is an ideal makeup. Definitely there are parts of your personality that can mean certain aspects of your job are easier at certain points." *(Participant 3)*

Theme Three: The benefits of extraversion and introversion on a team

One of the most recognizable characteristics in an employee is their level of extraversion vs introversion and many references were made to this during interviewing that can add to the knowledge surrounding the "Big Five" (Goldberg 1990) traits. What was intriguing was that results indicated that there is no specific benefit to extraversion vs introversion on teams but that introverts are often their best performers. The codes seen to generate this theme included *introverts can be great leaders/introversion does not impact your ability to lead/extraverts tend to be less focused, lack attention to detail and are not consistent/introverts think before they speak/ introverts' thoughts are clear.*

Per Craciun and Sofian (2015) there is much deliberation surrounding the specific skills of introverted vs extraverted leaders and that introverts are often seen as not being effective leaders but that they possess skills in other areas of leadership which perhaps extraverts do not. This prompted the researcher to delve into these issues further. Unanimously, participants in this study were opposed to this view and agreed that introverts can be excellent leaders, perhaps the greatest leaders.

"By being introverted you listen more and absorb more information, speak when the time is right and are slower to share your thoughts. When you do, your opinions are more thought through." *(Participant 1)*

With respect to their more extraverted counterparts, participants agreed that both types can be good leaders but generally speaking, extraverts may be better when it comes to inspiring their workforce rather than focusing on details. It was also mentioned that while both types can prevail in leadership positions, at a certain level you need to be a leader for all employees and cannot lean into your introversion or extraversion.

With respect to extravert's consistency in terms of good performance as stated by many researchers in this field (Watson and Clark 1997, Le Pine *et al.* 2011) the results indicated mixed feelings around this. It was noted that while extraverts are great in social contexts and in engaging in positive relationships with their fellow teammates which can subsequently produce desirable results, most participants stated that their extraverted employees struggle with the finer detail-oriented aspects of a job. They get easily distracted and do not bounce back from failure as well as introverts do.

"Extraverts are not as focused, their attention to detail can be weak sometimes and their resilience can be challenged." (Participant 7)

That said, a common insinuation was that in the bigger picture, a candidate's level of introversion vs extraversion does not matter. What is important is an employee's skills, congruence in values with the organisation and commitment to the success of the organisation and a candidate's abilities and previous experience is also taken into consideration in addition to their personality. This makes for the best performance both at the individual level and team level. This position indicates support for the second hypothesis put forward that a variety of characteristics are important prerequisites for performance when considering employee selection for teams aside from personality alone.

Theme Four: The importance of diversity in team composition

Mohammed and Angell (2003) posit that an increasingly diverse workforce coupled with greater use of teams in organisations emphasizes the importance of further research into internal team composition and that organisations should seek not only the best individuals for the job, but the best combination of individuals for the team. Diversity works to the advantage of a team as it allows members to learn from each other and generate new ideas by combining their skills, abilities, and qualifications (Jackson 1996) and it appears many organisations are keenly interested in hiring a more diverse workforce (Barrick and Mount 2005). However as discussed previously, research also points to the enabling effect of diversity and incompatible personalities on conflict in teams (Chen *et al.* 2011). These contrasting views prompted the researcher to delve into this concept and get a clearer picture on the influence of diversity on teams in Ireland. Unanimously it was found that consistent with research on the field diversity is an important part

of team success and organisations miss out on talent and competitiveness without it. The following codes were generated with respect to this theme that led to confirmation of its importance; *the need for diversity as nothing improves if everyone is the same/diversity brings the benefit of diversity of thought/organisations need diverse skills, backgrounds, personality traits and perspectives/diversity helps teams come up with more creative processes/diversity challenges teams.*

Throughout the study, it was agreed that diverse teams can view problems from more than one perspective, and this inspires more creative and efficient problem-solving. It brings to the forefront new ideas and encourages other members to think in a way they would previously not have considered. The below quote was taken from one participant however all participants expressed similar sentiments.

"*Everyone on a team shouldn't be the exact same. If everyone were - nothing would ever change. Even if the team is performing well, you always need to be challenged.*" *(Participant 6)*

Participant's view was that organisations cannot stick to the status quo and expect any improvements to happen, and that diversity encourages the merging of thoughts and challenges teams to get to the next level. A diverse team is also a reflection on the level of a team's intelligence or openness which, as previously discussed, is a key factor in team creation and success.

"A highly diverse team is a highly intelligent team mostly because it is only very high intellects that can hold two diverse points of view in the same brain and not be conflicted." (Participant 6)

Participants also emphasised that a healthy mix of team members with differing levels of personality traits creates a balance in that some members fulfil what others may lack. This creates greater opportunities for learning and development for the team which inspires methods of improvement and efficiency. As a result, it was noted that when it comes to the creation of a successful team there is no one recipe of traits working best in tandem with one another but that:

"Not everyone has to be calm, even-tempered, or reserved, but people need to be open. To get the best results you need a curious, open team who are driven and solution-focused and feedback driven." (Participant 4)

This again highlights the importance of openness of an individual and on a team environment. That said, it was found that diversity can bring with it "personality clashes" and "issues of correctness and who should speak" (Participant 2). In this case it is the role of management to provide psychological safety for employees to ensure that conflict is minimized.

Theme Five: The supportive and educational role of management

An unexpected theme which appeared throughout the course of interviewing was the role management has when faced with diversity and opposing personalities on teams. A sub-theme surrounding this is the impact that working virtually from home has had on employees and how management needs to take a tailored approach for employees in tackling the effect it has on them. The codes seen throughout the interview transcripts and that reflected the importance of this were: *how management check in on and support staff/ management giving employees their space and the opportunity for their voice to be heard/ educating employees to recognize and understand different personality types and effective communication strategies/ the effects of burnout/mental health concerns due to working from home.*

It was evident that management have a major role to play in developing employee knowledge on different personality types so that they can learn to work efficiently with those people on teams. It was found that it is inevitable that there will be conflict on all teams, but it is the handling of that conflict by management that makes the difference. Participants all provided general awareness to their teams about the differences of others whether through classroom-style training or by sending out a personality test for them to complete. This educational piece is a crucial step in minimizing any conflict that may arise.

"Employees need to be given the tools to understand that personality type and learn how to communicate with that person. If you have a very open, team relationship where you all communicate how you like to communicate and receive feedback the way you like it, differences in personality or background shouldn't be an issue." (Participant 4)

Participants explained that managers should make use of all resources at their disposal, particularly in a virtual environment to not only make sure everyone is heard but to ensure they feel safe to voice their concerns and opinions in their own way. Managers also need to empathize with their employees, hear what they are trying to say and create the space for them to come forward in private if they do not feel comfortable to do so in a group setting.

One of the biggest challenges for managers working virtually with their teams is the effect burnout is causing and the mental health concerns surrounding that. Participants stressed that it has been more difficult to monitor who is working late and not switching off at the end of the day and that they notice their conscientious team members are more inclined to do this regularly. Participants noted that their extraverted team members are the ones struggling the most as they are finding it harder to concentrate without the excitement of the office to motivate them but that now, everyone was tired and in need of human connection. Introverts on the other hand have been given the opportunity to flourish in this

environment but the opportunity for collaboration with other teams and innovation has significantly decreased which is a concern for managers.

"Working from home is taking a toll on more sociable, extraverted colleagues. They are not as emotionally resilient as the introverted team members and are experiencing burnout as a result." (Participant 1)

Based on the above it is clear that management have an imperative role in providing that educational piece to their employees when it comes to working in a team to get best results. They also need to recognize that everyone experiences changes differently and to keep an eye out for the extreme cases of highly extraverted or conscientious employees and the effect changes may have on them.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This study has added to the knowledge in this field by giving a holistic view of how personality impacts employee selection, team creation and performance and the subsequent effect it has on an organisation post-recruitment. With regards to the "Big 5" (Goldberg 1990) traits, the study shows that managers see the developmental benefits associated with knowledge of employee personality to determine how they might interact with others in a team. However, as a tool for recruitment they are sceptical due to its subjective nature. While personality has an influence on selection for team creation it is not a deal-breaker for management and a personality test only gives a small picture of a candidate's abilities. The research calls for a more inclusive, and flexible model of personality to address the nuances of personality at work in the 21st century as many of the personality tests used on the field, such as the FFM are decades old. The findings in comparison to present research on the topic, future research directions and implications for this study are outlined below.

How personality tests impact selection and performance

Results showed participants were apprehensive over the use of personality assessments for employee selection due to their inconsistency, and inaccuracies in predicting who would be a good fit. This hesitation surrounding personality testing was previously seen in Bleidorn *et al.* (2020) whose findings were limited by the fact that the use of any single instrument to represent all facets of personality can be a challenge for organisations. Personality tests in this sense can only give a small indication as to how a person may act in a job but there are many other factors to be considered. Managers in Ireland are also vigilant about not pigeon-holing candidates into a particular category based on the results of a personality test as it can end up both limiting individuals psychologically with respect to their abilities and challenging their confidence levels. Carter *et al.* (2016) similarly emphasized that over-reliance on traditionally desirable personality traits, such as conscientiousness or extraversion, can lead to unexpected behaviours and potentially fewer desirable outcomes. This is especially true in a team situation if employees feel there is favouritism of one person over another. From the point of view of the test-taker, Lundgren, Kroon and Poell (2019) also found that personality tests can be met with hesitation and lack clarity of purpose, so it is important to keep an open mind when using them for recruitment purposes and decision-making. In agreement with Bergner (2020) participants shared the view that the nature of personality is undefined and there is so much more to any person than his or her personality. To combat the inconsistencies in personality tests and lack of rigour in assessing fit for a role, Shukla, Adhikari and Singh (2015) emphasize the creation of a

model based on personality and engagement for effective contribution in hiring and selection process as well as in creating and sustaining a highly engaged and committed workforce.

One of the findings of the study was the ability of your personality to make certain elements of a job easier than others. This validates how diversity adds value to a team environment as management can make up what some on a team may lack through the traits others may possess. Lau and Jin (2019) similarly stated that task type has a moderating effect on group performance due to members having differing personality types making them better at different points of the task. Once again this highlights the importance of taking into consideration employee personality in a team environment and ensuring there is a balance on the team but also being wary not to use that as the only benchmark for selection of a candidate as personality is not always predictive of how a candidate will perform.

Important personality traits

Overwhelmingly, participants agreed that Openness to Experience (OE) was the most significant indicator for success both individually and on a team no matter what the role. In conjunction with this, reference was also made to the criticality of emotional stability in employees, particularly when they are involved in fast-paced sales roles that are constantly changing. These findings align with Aduluju (2020) who found that OE and Emotional Stability are the most important characteristics employees should possess for success in sales roles. This is especially true today now that rapid change and diversity are the norm in organisations, therefore OE is an increasingly important characteristic in explaining work-related outcomes and behaviour (Hough and Furnham 2002). This was an interesting result as it goes against many of the previous findings which suggested extraversion was the most important trait (Srikanth 2020, Alsuwailem and Elnaga 2016, Barrick and Mount 1991). It also rejects Barrick and Mount (2003) findings that openness is a valid predictor of performance but depending on the role. Similarly, Luthans and Church (2002) noted that managers look for optimistic, energetic, therefore extraverted, individuals because these people who are well engaged with their organisations achieve success. A possible suggestion for this belief per the researcher may be that people do not fully understand what it means to be an extravert and often misinterpret what it means to be an introvert, a concept which was echoed by a participant during the study. This misconception of introversion can cause people to believe that if you are not extraverted you are perhaps not as enthusiastic about your role or the company you work for. Rather, introverts are just as capable of being passionate about their positions they just choose to express themselves in a different way.

"Being an introvert doesn't mean you want to want to sit in a dark room by yourself all day by yourself and not talk to people." (Participant 4)

This result with regards to OE tells the researcher that in Ireland, an employee's ability to take on a challenge, how they approach tacking that problem and how they deal with failure is more important than their personality. It leads the researcher to believe that if an employee has high levels of OE, they can be trained on any areas of improvement and most importantly, they will be open to and receptive to that training and learning opportunity as Craciun and Sofian (2015) found "individuals who score highly on OE are more likely to have positive attitudes toward learning experiences". This also correlates with Maurer, Lippstreu and Judge (2008) who noted that individuals high in openness are motivated to learn and work on developmental experiences. Additional training for people who are open to receiving it will have monumental, long term benefits for the organisation as high-quality learning and development helps to improve bottom line performance and employees are more productive, co-operative and customer-friendly when constantly educated (Vnouckova 2016). While reference was made to the importance of employees being diligent, thoughtful, and attentive to detail especially when it comes to the admin side of work, conscientiousness did not come across as being the most important characteristic an employee should possess. This rejects that of Penney, David and Witt (2001) who posit that conscientiousness is consistently found to be linked to individual performance across different situations and countries and Barrick and Mount (1991) who, as previously discussed, consider conscientiousness as the most important indicator of performance so it was an interesting and unexpected result. Alternatively, this complements Le *et al.* (2011) and Driskell, Goodwin, Salas and O'Shea (2006) who explain that conscientious individuals are often intolerant of ambiguity and at a certain point, conscientiousness stops being a promotor of good performance because conscientious individuals can be rigid, inflexible, and compulsive perfectionists which was quoted by participants throughout interviewing as a concern.

"Our employees cannot be such perfectionists that they get frustrated when things go wrong. We need a balance of delivering results and being okay with having things change." (Participant 2)

An explanation of the results seen here could be down to the possibility that due to constant changes in the external environment, employees will always require additional training and upskilling in different areas of the job, particularly in a fast-moving industry such as technology so they will need to be open to accepting that change and receiving the training. On the flip side, even if you have a talented employee that is perhaps highly conscientious and requires little training, when you are recruiting and retaining top

talent it is important that those individuals stay talented and are constantly being improved and upskilled in order to provide the organisation with their competitive advantage.

"As a tech company we are always attracting top talent, therefore we want to make sure they are staying motivated and are constantly learning for retention." (Participant 6)

If these gifted employees are not open to learning, it can become a challenge for managers. Therefore, an employee that is open to receiving any training help or additional support provided is critical for success of the team and the organisation.

Extraversion vs Introversion

One of the aims of this research was to assess the differences in extraversion vs introversion on teams and how managers perceive staff with these traits and how that correlates back to their performance. As highlighted above, all participants agreed that introverts could be excellent leaders if not the best as they take the time to consider the bigger-picture and allow time for thought and reflective processes but there are other factors taken into consideration once you get to leadership level.

"Being introverted doesn't mean you don't have the skills, or you don't care about your team or that you're not driven or motivated. There are other skills that are more important, and I don't think being extraverted or introverted really plays a role." (Participant 4).

This contradicts the findings of Craciun and Sofian (2015) who were not convinced of introvert's inspirational leadership abilities. It might be considered an outdated concept that only extraverts can lead and inspire people, and this was seen to be the case throughout the course of this research. It also goes against an element of Curseu *et al.* (2018) who suggest that due to their lack of willingness to engage in social interaction, introverts may not be seen as contributing to teamwork. What this data tells us is that contrary to opinion, differences in performance outcomes with respect to an employee's level of extraversion or introversion are miniscule. Contrary to Piccolo and Kosalka (2009) findings who stated that extraverts are better suited to handle social demands, it was found that the emotional resilience of extraverts can often be challenged and complimenting Judge and Zapata (2015), extraverts' attention to detail can be lacking. They can also engage in excessive social interactions to the detriment of their productivity (Curseu *et al.* 2018). Having said that, the intensity of extraversion required of the role is to be taken into consideration. For example, for people involved in events promotion or roles requiring a very high level of human interaction, extraversion would be more important. Yet this again brings into question personality faking and being able to act the part when required of you in a role. This insinuates that

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provided an individual can put on the mask and complete the tasks assigned to them their level of extraversion vs introversion is of little importance. However, as noted in Tuovinen, Tang and Salmela (2020) and re-iterated by participants of this study, introverts cannot consistently give out a lot of energy without feeling exhausted and need to balance out their energy after social situations.

"It depends on what type of leader is required by your organisation. If you need someone to constantly provide a lot of energy to your team - by definition, introverts cannot do that consistently." (Participant 6).

Therefore, it is important for managers to ensure that employees are in roles reasonably suited to their personality type and abilities to avoid the occurrence of burnout and be cognizant of having a mix of abilities on their teams to optimise outcomes.

Management's Role

The findings significantly highlighted the importance of managers to be cognizant of and minimize any conflict that arises within the team which could hinder group performance in accordance with Driskell, Driskell and Salas' (2018) stance because teamwork is difficult enough to attain, and harder to maintain.

"The role of management is to facilitate team member relationships and identify the different personality types to ensure the team can be cohesive with results in mind. When we have a team target and are working together, we need to get on." (Participant 4)

There is a reasonable consensus that certain personality factors promote effective teamwork but that should not act as an excuse for members not to get along. Leadership inclusiveness in this aspect is crucial for success of a diverse team as it has the potential to influence how members collaborate towards both effective decision-making and performance. This in turn improves the psychological safety of employees which per Ostermeier, Davis and Pavur (2020) can improve team performance and stimulates team learning. Additionally, in accordance with Le Pine *et al.* (2011), it was noted that it is imperative for management to be aware of the personality types present on their current team when recruiting new candidates to ensure a healthy and diverse group with varying traits, backgrounds, and skills to attain optimum team dynamic. This research also emphasizes that because of differences in personality, employees will not only act and think in different ways, but they will also most likely not all have the same internal motivators and will need to be encouraged and incentivised differently. Therefore, knowledge of personality provides a great building block to learning more about a team. Barrick and Mount (2003) alluded to this when they stated that personality may act as the critical "dispositional basis" for determining how an individual will interact or be motivated provided they have chosen an environment

that is consistent with his/her interests so managers would do well to ensure this happens on their teams and avoid any mismatches. The present research conducted also referred to the importance of management providing educational opportunities for employees to learn from one another to inspire more creative thinking and encourage acceptance of diverse opinions.

"Companies need people thinking in different ways to achieve the most creative results, but different personalities can clash. Therefore, employees need to be given the tools to understand that personality type and learn how to communicate with that person." (Participant 5)

Strengths/Limitations

The primary strength of this research was the richness of the data collected. The researcher was able to gain access to seven participants who all shared a wealth of knowledge on the subject and provided insight into their many experiences dealing with personality on teams. This however is coupled with a weakness because given the vast amount of data received, it was difficult to go into detail on all aspects within the limited timeframe and word count, but the topics presented here may be used as a basis for future research to explore further.

A potential limitation to this study concerns the discussion around extraversion being an indicator of consistent performance. It could be a limitation that may have been improved with the addition of more questioning surrounding job satisfaction among extraverts. Research shows that job satisfaction improves performance (Watson and Clark 1997, Royle 2016, Judge and Mount 2002) and given extraverts tendency to experience positive emotions, this may have increased results in favour of extraverted employees as consistently good performers. As a result, this may also be a suggestion for any future researchers to include as part of their study.

Finally, only one participant had actually used a personality test as a mandatory part of their recruitment process so all other statements from participants regarding test accuracy in talent selection were speculative as they had only been used for employee developmental purposes.

Directions for Further Research

The developmental aspect of personality test-taking amongst employees was an unexpected result that emerged from the research and requires further research into. For example, how exactly employees learn from these tests and what they learn would be an interesting topic to undertake. Given the limited time frame for this study only one personality test was taken into consideration. Future researchers may delve

deeper into what tests are best, whether it is the "Big Five" (Goldberg 1990), Insights Discovery or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator which was suggested as being "too optimistic" (Ludgren *et al* 2019).

Future researchers may also extend the knowledge on this area, both research into personality and management research, and add to the validity of this study by replicating it and expanding the participant demographic range to cover more of Ireland, the UK, Europe, or other non-English speaking countries to assess its credibility outside of Ireland; especially since a lot of these types of studies have previously been carried out in the United States that is notoriously pro-extraversion (Cain 2013).

Finally, further research is needed to gain a clearer picture into the impact of COVID-19 and its effect on work outcomes with certain employee personalities as at the time of writing this paper the full extent of its impact was not known and is a reasonably novel concept.

Some final thoughts on this research including the practical and financial implications, recommendations for practitioners to take away and a reflective personal learning statement now follows before closing out the paper.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research intended to provide an overview as to the intricacies of navigating personality on teams through the lens of managers in Ireland. It presented findings from seven interviews carried out with people and team managers based in Dublin, Ireland. Using a qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews with participants, the researcher was able to acquire insight into how teams in Ireland operate and with respect to personality, how employees are selected and developed. The thematic analysis then highlighted the key areas for practitioners to focus on when dealing with different personalities on their teams, individually and when the group are working together on a project. This analysis offers insights and opportunities for managers of teams in that it provides them with the chance to understand their employees at a different level to their performance alone. An understanding of who they are and how they work, can help to provide practitioners with an explanation for employee work outcomes, whether they are positive or negative and how leadership should approach communications around that.

Based on the study, a clearer image of the effect of the Big Five personality traits, primarily Extraversion/Introversion, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness was given to the researcher. Key findings suggest that when it comes to team composition, it is important that employees are diverse in terms of personality, skills, and backgrounds. However, in terms of personality, relative outcomes depend on the nature of the task being performed by the team. This finding is partially in line with Bowers (2000) who found that there are no significant advantages of homogeneity or heterogeneity of attributes but that specific results depended on the nature of the task. One can also see that OE, or a balanced combination of OE and Conscientiousness produces desirable outcomes as these types of people manage change well while also remaining diligent and thorough enough to be able to keep up with the pace of change. This was a highly interesting result as the researcher had not planned this personality trait would bear much significance throughout the course of questioning. As managers approach the use of personality tests overall with great caution, it could be suggested that this type of psychometric testing is a good way of replacing "gut feelings" as an appropriate method of assessment when interviewing candidates for a role and it helps to provide more validity for selection (Fichter, Bernstorff and Rohrmann 2020). Extraversion vs introversion had little to no impact on a manager's decision regarding candidate selection, but they remain conscious of keeping a balance of both extraverted and introverted member on their teams. Introverts were found to be excellent leaders and complimenting this, it has been found that in a dynamic, unpredictable environment, introverts are often more effective leaders (Grant, Gino and Hofman 2010) which could explain why many of the senior leadership teams of large, multinational, technology companies are introverted. Extraverts while good performers were not found to be consistently good

performers as would suggest much of the cited research discussed previously (Watson and Clark 1997, Barrick and Mount 1998) due to their tendency to often get distracted by external forces. Finally, it was seen that virtual working is taking its toll on outgoing people more and introverts now have an opportunity to provide more value to the organisation without distractions from others, but managers are cognizant of checking on employees staying online longer to ensure they do not end up being burned out. Management is also critical in minimizing and ending any conflict that may arise due to incompatibility of personality on teams which is where the educational, developmental piece of understanding team personality comes into play. The fact of the matter is that understanding the relation of personality traits and job performance is difficult and from what has been discussed above, personality certainly has a chequered past in predicting work outcomes (Barrick and Mount 2005), but practitioners would benefit from having some, even if minor prior knowledge of what a person is like before committing to making them an addition to their workforce.

Recommendations

Based on the above study, the researcher's knowledge on this subject matter has increased exponentially and it would be of great benefit for practitioners and academics alike to take into consideration some of the findings. The results have caused the researcher to think differently about and be cognizant of the way employees react to certain situations at work, how they interact with others, and how they carry out their jobs with respect to their personality type. Were the research to be conducted again, it would be suggested to focus on speaking to participants who had specifically used personality tests as part of their recruitment process so that the effect it has on employee selection and performance could be visualized and the follow-through displayed for participants to share with the researcher. Also, given that the purpose of this study was to obtain a master's degree and therefore subject to strict timescales, this study may have been too broad to really delve into a rigorous analysis on how each individual personality facet impacts employee behaviour which is something the researcher would like to have discussed in more depth but is also a recommendation for further research to concern itself with. Further research may also replicate this using qualitative surveys across a larger number of participants to gain more insight into the nuances of the topic.

Practical Implications

The practical implications are concerned with the relationship building benefits this has for teammates. When employees understand, respect each other, and communicate the way everyone likes, it improves the quality of team relationships. This in turn causes the team to trust each other more and they will then

be more committed to working together to achieve their common goal – success of the organisation. This is in alignment with Dillon *et al.* (2020) who found that teamwork was significantly associated with communication for the team so team members and managers alike would do well to take the time to engage in training and learn to understand one another. Practitioners are thus encouraged to provide employees with knowledge of the different personalities possibly as a developmental activity to ensure they understand how to communicate effectively and respect each other's space when working together.

The practical implications of this for team managers include having a better understanding of your team and the qualities each person possesses so that you can optimise team performance and communications and make smarter hiring decisions that complement the rest of the team and make up on any qualities that may be lacking on your team. It would also be important for team managers to be cognizant of the extreme cases of any of the personality traits discussed, but particularly extraversion as they tend to experience burnout more frequently and its effect on them is greater than their teammates, but also conscientiousness as they may find it more difficult to switch off outside of work hours.

Financial Implications

The researcher is aware that any addition of psychometric testing to an organisation's recruitment process can have significant financial and time sensitive implications for the company and that this may not be an addition that companies are willing to invest in. Also, based on the above research managers are conscious of taking a broader range of factors into consideration outside of personality assessments. That said, knowledge of who may be a good fit for your role and your company ahead of time can positively affect organisational finances as it can decrease employee turnover thereby reducing recruitment, onboarding, and training costs. It has been suggested that the cost of a bad hire is estimated to be 1.5x the employee's salary plus benefits (Stabile 2002) and companies should also look to avoid the financial cost of high employee attrition and turnover. The costs of psychometric testing vary significantly depending on the size of the organisation and the type of subscription required but it can range from £15 to £50 per candidate to implement or if companies are looking to focus specifically on the Big Five model, it can cost up to £1500 per annum depending on the subscription (van Bommel 2020). In the US, Dibra (2013) suggests that companies spend approximately $400 million annually on employment tests of all kinds and that major organisations such as McDonalds swear by using predictive abilities tests. Depending on the organisation's needs the benefits associated with introducing this as part of the recruitment process may outweigh the costs. If this is not a practice an organisation could implement immediately, in the short-term, organisation leaders could prioritise using personality assessments with their current teams as a developmental,

activity for six months to one year or however long is needed to weigh the pros and cons before committing to including it as part of the interview and recruitment process. Leadership can then assess whether this practice adds value to their team's productivity and improves how managers speak to, provide feedback to, and generally motivate their employees.

Personal Learning Statement

Undertaking this master's course part time while also working full time was a demanding and challenging task to take on but one that has provided me with many learning experiences and new ways of thinking. This research study has broadened my understanding not only in how to approach carrying out qualitative research but also how managers consider the selection of their employees and how they can understand them on a different level with knowledge of their personality type. I also learned a great deal about myself, my learning style, and many other transferable skills such as time management, organisation and prioritization of tasks, meeting deadlines and communicating expectations with stakeholders.

To start, pursuing this research has taught me how to organise and present a thesis paper and how to evaluate both information from other researchers and the data received from my participants in a clear and concise manner that is digestible and provides a logical flow for the reader. It also helped me to understand how to choose a suitable methodological approach and data analysis techniques to carry out any intended research going forward. As this project focused on one specific approach, knowledge of other methodologies and analytical techniques will be useful for any future research projects I decide to undertake.

This project significantly improved my organisational and time management skills which will undoubtedly be of use to me as I progress throughout my career. I met with my supervisor, Frances Keating monthly and communicated via email almost daily. Together we came up with realistic and achievable deadlines for me to submit writing excerpts to her. My writing was generally split up by one or two chapters at a time and we were then able to review work and set new timescales for the following month at each meeting. I also learned to organise my work schedule to complement what writing was to be completed for the dissertation and schedule meetings with my supervisor during my days off work to allow time for implementation of any feedback given to me.

If I were to re-do this project again and time was not an issue, I would have taken many more models of personality into consideration such as Myers-Briggs Typology, Insights Discovery and HEXACO Model and carried out more extensive interviews with my participants. I also would have considered an employee's level of emotional intelligence as a facet in explaining employee behaviour and performance. This was something I felt warranted consideration and would allow for very interesting topics to be discussed in conjunction with employee personality but unfortunately, I did not have the scope to include it as part of this research project.

Some challenges presented themselves throughout the course of researching and writing this dissertation which with the help of my supervisor I was able to overcome. Frances provided me with clear and timely feedback on my writing and the information that was missing and needed to be included in my writing in the hopes of securing a good mark. There were also some challenges with regards to allowing reasonable but flexible timescales for scheduling of interviews should someone need to reschedule so that I would still have enough time to carry out an effective analysis on my results. Some participants did in fact need to reschedule meeting with me either by a few hours or days which I was able to overcome thanks to my generous interview timeline and it did not affect or alter the deadline date I was expecting to have all interviews completed by. It was also a challenge for me to find the right balance between working full time and giving the right attention to my studies while also finding the time to rest and look after my health and wellbeing as this thesis was written in the middle of a pandemic. However, by remaining diligent and sticking to my submittal deadlines, I was able to satisfy all responsibilities without feeling overwhelmed.

Overall, I found the experience of completing a master's degree and this dissertation to be very enlightening and it provided me with a great basis for any endeavour I take on within the remit of human resource management going forward. The information I received from this particular research project may prove to act as a critical starting point for any future research that I undertake should I choose to progress my studies further than masters' level. Finally, it must be noted that completion of this research project and the two-year postgraduate-masters course has certainly provided me with competitive advantage for any future career opportunities I may consider pursuing. It has also given me talking points to bring up throughout the course of interviewing with hiring managers that would be of interest to future employers all of which I am incredibly grateful for.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: NCI Ethics Committee Application Form

National College of Ireland

Human Participants Ethical Review Application Form

All parts of the below form must be completed. However in certain cases where sections are not relevant to the proposed study, clearly mark NA in the box provided.

Part A: Title of Project and Contact Information

Name

Michelle McGrath

Student Number (if applicable)

19160577

Email

x19160577@student.ncirl.ie

Status:
Undergraduate   ☐
Postgraduate   √
Staff   ☐

Supervisor (if applicable)

Frances Keating

Title of Research Project

Do managers in the tech industry in Ireland believe a diverse set of personalities on teams produces the best results? A Qualitative Study

Category into which the proposed research falls (see guidelines)

Research Category A √
Research Category B ☐
Research Category C ☐

Have you read the NCI Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants?
Yes   √
No   ☐

Please indicate any other ethical guidelines or codes of conduct you have consulted

N/A

Has this research been submitted to any other research ethics committee?

Yes   ☐
No   √

If yes please provide details, and the outcomes of this process, if applicable:

This research has not been submitted to any other research committees.

Is this research supported by any form of research funding?

Yes ☐
<mark>No</mark> √

If yes please provide details, and indicate whether any restrictions exist on the freedom of the researcher to publish the results:

This research is not supported by any form of research funding.

Part B: Research Proposal

Briefly outline the following information (not more than 200 words in any section).

Proposed starting date and duration of project

Starting Date: January 2021. Duration of project: 4 months. Submission Date: 5th May 2021

The rationale for the project

To obtain a Master's degree in Human Resource Management

The research aims and objectives

To get managers in Ireland's views on personality at work overall and their experiences managing teams with diverse personality sets and how they work together and perform as a group. It will also aim to assess whether or not managers agree that personality is a valid indicator of employee performance either pre or post recruitment stage and if they agree with some of the literature in this field based on their experience with employee personalities. (Eg. Are their more extraverted staff the highest performers as per the literature?)

The research design

 Qualitative design. The researcher will attempt to interview 5-10 middle level people managers and ask them a series of approximately 5-10 questions surrounding 1) personality in employees in general and what do they look for when recruiting and 2) how those personality groups interact when put onto a team together in order to get a full understanding as to the extent to which Irish managers agree with the literature surrounding certain personality types at work and whether/not personality in their opinion is an accurate predictor of performance at work. Interviews will be carried out via the video conferencing platform Zoom and the results will be analysed via a thematic analysis based on the answers they give. Interviews will be recorded with their permission and interview transcripts will be used to interpret results.

60

The research sample and sample size
Please indicate the sample size and your justification of this sample size. Describe the age range of participants, and whether they belong to medical groups (those currently receiving medical treatment, those not in remission from previous medical treatment, those recruited because of a previous medical condition, healthy controls recruited for a medical study) or clinical groups (those undergoing non-medical treatment such as counselling, psychoanalysis, in treatment centres, rehabilitation centres, or similar, or those with a DSM disorder diagnosis).

Sample size: 5-10 middle managers as it is a qualitative study and will need to interview that size in order to gather enough data that can be analysed and compared to the research. Age range will be between 30-40 years old given the need to study middle level managers. None will be a part of medical group, receiving treatments or have disorders.

If the study involves a MEDICAL or CLINICAL group, the following details are required: <mark>N/A</mark>

a) **Do you have approval from a hospital/medical/specialist ethics committee?**
If YES, please append the letter of approval. Also required is a letter from a clinically responsible authority at the host institution, supporting the study, detailing the support mechanisms in place for individuals who may become distressed as a result of participating in the study, and the potential risk to participants.
If NO, please detail why this approval cannot or has not been saught.
b) **Does the study impact on participant's medical condition, wellbeing, or health?**
If YES, please append a letter of approval from a specialist ethics committee.
If NO, please give a detailed explanation about why you do not expect there to be an impact on medical condition, wellbeing, or health.

The nature of any proposed pilot study. Pilot studies are usually required if a) a new intervention is being used, b) a new questionnaire, scale or item is being used, or c) established interventions or questionnaires, scales or items are being used on a new population. If no such study is planned, explain why it is not necessary.

A pilot study will not be used in this research. The intended research is relatively straight forward and does not require a mathematical analysis as to whether the approach is feasible or not. As the researcher is looking for experience-based answers from a small sample of managers, the data gathered at the time of interviews will be sufficient and not need to be altered. The intended study detailed above is feasible, manageable and will not require many resources.

The methods of data analysis. Give details here of the analytic process (e.g. the statistical procedures planned if quantitative, and the approach taken if qualitative. It is not sufficient to name the software to be used).

A thematic analysis will be used to analyse the results. I will read the transcripts that will be provided via the video conferencing platform being used and identify the most common codes that come up. I will then create themes from those codes in order to compare and contrast the research with the literature in the field.

Study Procedure
Please give as detailed an account as possible of a participant's likely experience in engaging with the study, from point of first learning about the study, to study completion. State how long project participation is likely to take, and whether participants will be offered breaks. Please attach all questionnaires, interview schedules, scales, surveys, and demographic questions, etc. in the Appendix.

Participants will first learn of the study via email and be asked if they wish to participate. They will be provided with a full brief as to the nature of the study and a consent form to sign if interested. The interviews are expected to be carried out throughout the course of 3-4 weeks in order to give enough time to analyse and interpret results. They will be carried out via the video conferencing platform *Zoom*. The interviews will not last more than 30 minutes so it is not expected breaks will be necessary unless the participant requests so. No questionnaires or surveys have been decided at this point in the research process but expect to be completed by end of January 2021 at the latest in order to start the interviews.

Part C: Ethical Risk

Please identify any ethical issues or risks of harm or distress which may arise during the proposed research, and how you will address this risk. Here you need to consider the potential for physical risk, social risk (i.e. loss of social status, privacy, or reputation), outside of that expected in everyday life, and whether the participant is likely to feel distress as a result of taking part in the study. Debriefing sheets must be included in the appendix if required. These should detail the participant's right to withdraw from the study, the statutory limits upon confidentiality, and the obligations of the researcher in relation to Freedom of Information legislation. Debriefing sheets should also include details of helplines and avenues for receiving support in the event that participants become distressed as a result of their involvement in this study.

No potential for physical risk. No potential for social risk. No potential or participants to become distressed as a result of the research however the consent for will state their right to withdraw at any point during the course of the study. No debriefing sheet has been created at this point of the study yet but will be provided prior to conducting the study.

Do the participants belong to any of the following vulnerable groups?
(Please tick all those involved). N/A

☐ Children;
☐ The very elderly;
☐ People with an intellectual or learning disability
☐ Individuals or groups receiving help through the voluntary sector
☐ Those in a subordinate position to the researchers such as employees
☐ Other groups who might not understand the research and consent process
☐ Other vulnerable groups

How will the research participants in this study be selected, approached and recruited? From where will participants be recruited? If recruiting via an institution or organisation

other than NCI please attach a letter of agreement from the host institution agreeing to host the study and circulate recruitment advertisements/email etc.

The participants for this study will be selected through my organisation and through my managers contacts at similar levels in the tech industry in various other tech companies based in Ireland. My organisation's HR department will be informed of this study and I will attach a letter of agreement upon approval as this has not been completed at this stage of the study yet. No recruitment advertisements advertising the study will be necessary. Emails with the details of the study will be sent to prospective participants early in the new year. Approval is required from supervisor when assigned of intended study so for that reason I will not be attaching examples of consent forms/briefing guides at this point in case the study changes upon supervisor assignment.

What inclusion or exclusion criteria will be used?

Inclusion criteria will be that participants must be people managers, living and working in Ireland in the tech industry. Exclusion criteria will be people with the title manager but are not managers of teams or people.

How will participants be informed of the nature of the study and participation?

Participants will be approached via email first to gauge their interest in taking part and then a full briefing of the nature of the study, how the data will be collected, used, analysed and destroyed will be sent to them. If they are interested in participating in the study, a consent form will be issued to them that will also inform them that participation is not mandatory, and they can withdraw at any time. No interviews will be carried out before signed consent forms are returned to the researcher.

Does the study involve deception or the withholding of information? If so, provide justification for this decision.

This study does not involve deception or the withholding of information.

What procedures will be used to document the participants' consent to participate?

Consent forms will be emailed to all and collected by the researcher prior to the interview taking place. No interview will be carried out without a returned copy of the signed consent form from the participant.

Can study participants withdraw at any time without penalty? If so, how will this be communicated to participants?

Yes. Consent forms will be provided to all participants outlining that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to and they are under no obligation to participate. This message will also be stated to them at the beginning of the video interview and their consent will be requested for the interview to be recorded also.

If vulnerable groups are participating, what special arrangements will be made to deal with issues of informed consent/assent?

No vulnerable groups are participating in this research

Please include copies of any information letters, debriefing sheets, and consent forms with the application.

Part D: Confidentiality and Data Protection

Please indicate the form in which the data will be collected.

□ Identified □ Potentially Identifiable **√ De-Identified**

What arrangements are in place to ensure that the identity of participants is protected?

All interview recordings will be stored only on the researcher's password protected, encrypted personal computer and not shared with anyone bar perhaps the researcher's supervisor should he/she request it. The names of the participants will not be stated at any point throughout the course of the research, they will only be referred to as "Manager A, B, C".

Will any information about illegal behaviours be collected as part of the research process? If so, detail your consideration of how this information will be treated.

No information about illegal behaviours will be collected as part of this research process.

Please indicate any recording devices being used to collect data (e.g. audio/video).

Zoom video conferencing platform for video and audio so that I can review the transcript provided upon recording of the interview.

Please describe the procedures for securing specific permission for the use of these recording devices in advance.

The researcher has a Zoom account and will be able to carry out the interviews with the participants consent via this platform.

Please indicate the form in which the data will be stored.

□ Identified □ Potentially Identifiable **De-Identified**

Who will have responsibility for the data generated by the research?

Michelle McGrath (researcher) will be responsible for the safe storage and handling of the data generated by the research. The supervisor to be assigned to this research project may also be responsible for the data gathered as a college facilitator.

Is there a possibility that the data will be archived for secondary data analysis? If so, has this been included in the informed consent process? Also include information on how and where the data will be stored for secondary analytic purposes.

There is no possibility the data will be archived for secondary data analysis unless requested so by the college NCI. In which case, the details of this will be outlined in the consent form given to participants.

If not to be stored for secondary data analysis, will the data be stored for 5 years and then destroyed, in accordance with NCI policy?

√ **Yes**   □ No

Dissemination and Reporting

Please describe how the participants will be informed of dissemination and reporting (e.g. submission for examination, reporting, publications, presentations)?

All information regarding dissemination of data will be provided on the research briefing form that will be provided to all participants prior to taking part in the study. This research dissemination will be used as a submission for examination however it is unlikely it will be used for any of the other above - listed purposes.

If any dissemination entails the use of audio, video and/or photographic records (including direct quotes), please describe how participants will be informed of this in advance.

Dissemination will not require video, audio or photographic records. The direct quotes of participants may be used in the research paper but the participant from whom the quote came will not be identified nor the department from which it came. This will be detailed via the research briefing form that will be sent to all participants prior to any interviews taking place.

Part E: Signed Declaration

I confirm that I have read the NCI Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants, and agree to abide by them in conducting this research. I also confirm that the information provided on this form is correct.

Signature of Applicant: Michelle McGrath

Date   08/12/2020

Signature of Supervisor (where appropriate): Frances Keating

Any other information the committee should be aware of?

N/A

Ethics Application Checklist

To be submitted alongside three printed and signed copies of the ethics application.

Please complete the below checklist, ticking each item to confirm that it has been addressed.

1. I agree to obtain informed written consent from all human participants aged over 18 who are involved in this research (or if circulating digitally, I will ensure that informed consent is completed, and will have the participants indicate their informed consent by continuing with their study engagement).	√ √
2. I agree to obtain informed written consent from the parents of anyone aged under 18 in this research (or from the schools if appropriate), and informed written assent from those under 18 in this research.	
3. I append a letter of agreement from a clinically responsible individual agreeing to (where appropriate) help me recruit/provide clinical support in the event that participants become distressed/host the study data collection.	3) N/A
4. I append a letter of agreement from an external institution or organisation agreeing to host the study.	4) N/A
5. I agree to comply with NCI's Data Retention Policy.	
6. I have appended a) information sheet, b) consent form/assent form, c) debriefing sheet.	
7. I have provided details of how non-anonymised data will be stored, in a safe and encrypted manner.	√
8. I have included my contact details and those of my supervisor (where appropriate). I have only included my NCI email address and not included any personal contact information.	6) √
9. I have given sufficient details on the proposed study design, methodology, and data collection procedures, to allow a full ethical review, and I understand that my failure to give sufficient detail may result in a resubmission being required.	√
10. I understand that if I make changes to my study following ethical approval, it is my responsibility to seek an ethics amendment if the change merits ethical consideration.	√ √ √

How do the "Big Five" personality dimensions impact employee selection and the creation/performance of teams? A Qualitative Review

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT

My name is Michelle McGrath and I am a master's student of the National College of Ireland, Dublin. I am carrying out this study to complete my thesis and gain a master's degree in Human Resource Management. The aim of the study will be to assess personality makeup on teams and how team members with differing personality traits and behavior at work co-operate and perform together in order to produce desirable results. This research is not being funded or sponsored. You have been asked to participate as you have been identified as a current or former people manager that would have personal experience and insights into the nature of how teams work. I am aiming to interview five to ten managers in order to gain a sufficient sample size so that I can analyze and therefore interpret my results. At this time, I have submitted my research proposal and am awaiting feedback from the college regarding next steps however I have been encouraged to continue with my project planning while waiting.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

Interviewees will be asked to attend one session and engage in a dialogue surrounding a series of questions in relation to the personalities evident on teams they manage or previously managed and how that team performs together. The questions will primarily revolve around the team's personality makeup including questions surrounding the level of extraversion and introversion on the team and how those types of employees work together as a group. The questions will also aim to figure out why, if at all, managers in Ireland believe that having a diverse set of personalities on their teams produces desirable

outcomes. While there will be some set questions the researcher would like to ask, the goal is to allow the participant to openly discuss the topic in an unstructured way so as to uncover and really explore the underlining issues currently unknown to the researcher on this question. The interview will take place over the video conferencing platform Zoom and are expected to last between 30 and 45 minutes, dependent on the length of the answers given and allowing some time for open discussion of the topic. Interviews will also be recorded over Zoom in order for the answers and transcript to be analyzed and the results interpreted. It is expected that the interviews will take place during the weeks Monday 22nd of February -Friday 12th March 2021 should you be available during those dates and wish to participate. A consent form will also be issued to you for your signature prior to taking part in the research in accordance with the research project ethical guidelines.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

You have been asked to participate as you have been identified as a current or former people manager that would have personal experience and insights into the nature of how teams work. You have also been asked to participate as your name was suggested to the researcher as someone who may be interested in taking part. Please note this does not affect your right to decline this request for participation. You are still free to decline this request or withdraw at any given time during the study.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation is completely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse participation, refuse any question and withdraw at any time without any consequence whatsoever.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

This research intends to gain a better understanding as to how teams that differ in personality co-operate together and act as a team in order to achieve similar goals for the good of their organizations. It will give better insight to the researcher as to how different teams operate and how important personality is when it comes to team formation, if at all. The benefits for the participant will include contributing to the knowledge in this field through your participation. I would also be happy to share the results and findings of this research with you at the end should you be interested in using it for career development purposes or sharing it with your team. It is not expected that there will be any risks associated with participating in this research however the researcher would ask that if you are giving examples of employees on your team to keep them anonymous. It is not expected that any physical or psychological harm will come to a participant as a result of participating in the research.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

All information you provide will be anonymised and stored under the names "Participant 1, 2, 3 etc. Any direct quotations that are used in the thesis text will also be stated as coming from Participant 1, 2,3 etc. The company from which you are reporting your experience about will also be anonymised and unidentifiable. Only in the unlikely event of any of the following may the researcher break confidentiality: if the researcher has a strong belief that there is a serious risk of harm or danger to either the participant or another individual (e.g. physical, emotional or sexual abuse, concerns for child protection, rape, self-harm, suicidal intent or criminal activity) or if a serious crime has been committed. Additionally, non-anonymised data in the form of signed consent forms and audio recordings are collected and retained as part of the research process and retained in accordance with the National College of Ireland's data storage policy until a grade has officially been awarded for the project.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's password protected, encrypted personal computer until after my degree has been conferred. Nobody else will have access to this data. A transcript of interviews in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years after this. Under freedom of information legalisation you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

Plans for the research results only consist of an analysis of them in order to submit for the purpose of my dissertation in May 2021. Results may also be shared with the participant once an analysis on them has been completed should you so request.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Should you have any further questions regarding the nature of this study or if any of the above is unclear, please feel free to contact either myself or my thesis supervisor at any time for more information.

Michelle McGrath
x19160577@student.ncirl.ie
085-1563957

Thesis Supervisor
Not assigned by the college yet but contact information will be provided to you as soon as this has been assigned.
Thank you.

*How do the "Big Five"
personality traits impact
employee selection and the
creation/performance of
teams? A Qualitative
Review*

Consent to take part in
research.

- I ....voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

- I understand that participation involves providing information with regards to the different dynamics on my teams in terms of their personality makeup and how that impacts performance.

- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

- I agree to my interview being audio and video recorded.

- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's personal, encrypted, password protected laptop until the National College of Ireland exam board confirms the results of the researcher's dissertation and for two years thereafter.

- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board – approximately until 5th May 2023.

- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Names, degrees, affiliations and contact details of researchers (and academic supervisors when relevant).

Signature of research participant

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Signature of participant   Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Michelle McGrath

\-   \-

Signature of researcher   Date

Interview Questionnaire

Research Question: How does the Big Five Model of Personality impact the creation and performance of teams according to people managers in Ireland? A Qualitative Review.

Sub-themes: Nature of teams overall, nature of task being carried out

Notes before starting the interview:

1. Remind candidate of the right to withdraw from study at any point or refuse to answer any question at any time without retaliation whatsoever.
2. **Get participant's consent to record the interview** and let them know that the recording will be held and destroyed in accordance with the NCI data retention policy for up to 2 years post-graduation. Only I and my supervisor will have access to this recording.
3. Reminder that all information will be anonymised, and no detail will be given as to where or what company it came from – only that it was carried out by interviewing people managers based in Ireland.
4. I have some set questions I would like to ask; I would like for this conversation to be open and exploratory so that I can identify the underlying factors surrounding this topic.
5. When answering questions, please note you can pull from any experience in dealing with managing teams of people, you are not limited to only discussing your current role.
6. My research is primarily based on the Big Five Model of Personality (Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, Conscientiousness, Extraversion/Introversion, Openness to Experience) Are you familiar with this model?

- **Agreeableness - focused on developing and nurturing harmonious relationships with others. Focuses on cooperation rather than competition. on the flip side can be seen as passive + compliant.**
- **Neuroticism / Emotional Stability - anxious, tense, unstable, nervous**
- **Openness to Experience - Degree to which they are interested in learning and trying new things and engaging in developmental activities, tolerant of ambiguity**
- **Conscientiousness - Diligent, organised, thorough, reliable, attentive to detail, disciplined**
- **Extraversion vs Introversion - energetic, sociable, prefers the company of others.**

7. I'll be taking notes while you speak so don't worry if you see me looking down

8. I would be happy to share the results with them once thesis has been submitted

Pause for Questions.

Q1. Have you previously used a personality test to assist in personnel selection for your teams? If so, what do you look for in those tests from individual persons to assemble that team?

Q2. In your opinion is the use of using personality tests for personnel selection valid/accurate?

Q3. The research varies as to what trait most accurately predicts performance. What personality traits in your opinion most accurately predict desirable performance? And what type of work did that team do?

Q4. In your opinion, can introverts be good leaders?

Q5. Are your extraverted team members consistently good performers?

Q6. What personality characteristics in tandem with one another on a team produce the best results?

Q7. To what extent would you agree that having a team made up of members that are diverse in terms of their personality traits produces the best results? (ie. Should everyone on the team be the same?) and why?

Q.8 What – in your experience, are the biggest problems people come up against when working in teams?

- **(Sub-theme: Intellectual Conflict vs Creative thinking)**

Q. 9 To what extent would you agree or disagree that the ideal makeup of teams is dependent on the nature of the task the team is performing? And why?

Q.13 How has the move to working from home impacted your team? Either positively or negatively and what types of people (personality-wise) are most affected by the change? Again, either positively or negatively. Eg. Do you find your more conscientious members are now working more because they are working from home? OR do you find the performance of your more extraverted team members has decreased due to not being around people/their team as much?

Q.14 What is the influence of a lot of highly conscientious people on a team? Are they tolerant of ambiguity/uncertainty? Do they operate well in virtual teams?