



The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Managing a Remote
Team during the Covid-19 Crisis.

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Abstract

The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Managing a Remote Team during the Covid-19 Crisis by Amy Hughes.

This research project set out to understand the impact that emotional intelligence has on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis. Through qualitative method of research the author conducted semi-structured interviews with managers of remote teams during the Covid-19 crisis. Each manager had knowledge of emotional intelligence and were able to give their perspectives and opinions around the questions posed during the interview. As a result of these perspectives and opinions, the research was able to draw on research findings around the matter and establish conclusions and recommendations through in-depth analysis of the findings.

Of the research objectives set out at the beginning of the project the author concluded that emotional intelligence does in-fact have an impact on managing a remote team during Covid-19. It helps to overcome barriers to communication and aids in the awareness of extra effort to be made around levels of empathy, self-regulation, motivation and social skills.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the subject area

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Increased importance of Emotional Intelligence in the workplace.

Singh (2015) discussed how critical emotional intelligence is in determining ones potential to learn the practical skills at hand in the workplace. Singh (2015) takes customer service and trustworthiness as workplace examples of emotional intelligence competencies which are translated into on-the-job capabilities. Obtaining high levels of emotional intelligence allows both employees and managers to create a harmony between acknowledging and addressing ones weakness as well as instilling confidence in areas linked to their strengths (Singh, 2015). In addition, the findings from Druskat, Mount & Sala (2013) found that individuals who are more emotionally intelligent are better equipped to perform significantly better in the workplace. Druskat et al (2013) also argued that high levels of emotional intelligence were also linked to leadership potential.

1.1.2 Covid-19 global pandemic changing the working environment

Having first been detected in Wuhan, China, the Covid-19 pandemic soon spread to over 190 countries across the world and in January 2020 was declared a global public health emergency crisis by the World Health Organisation (Agba, Agba & Chukurah, 2020). Due to the risk of exposure to the Covid-19 virus many workplaces were forced to either close completely or become decentralized which resulted in changes to

processes, work practices and the physical working environment to ensure that workers were equipped to safely perform their tasks from home (Agba et al, 2020). Where possible, many organisations adapted a work from home and remote working policy which increased the use of teleworking significantly (Agba et al, 2020). As argued by Ancillo, Nunez and Gavrilla (2020), Covid-19 triggered a worldwide transformation which affected the workplace in particular. Companies were not prepared to switch from office based to a work remotely from home setting so abruptly however, Ancillo et al (2020) state that the workplace will not be as is was pre Covid-19 nor will it remain as it current is – it will inevitably be a balance between both that both employees and management have to adjust to.

1.1.3 Remote work challenges for both managers and employees

Cook (2019) discusses how the main challenge for managers when managing their team remotely is the lack of physical presence as team members are no longer physically present together in the office. In this case the manager cannot rely on the traditional monitoring of time spent at work and instead is force to measure outputs or outcomes. As a result, this increases the significance of trust and empowerment between the manager and their employees to complete the task at hand (Cook, 2019). Managers need to be clear in communicating what is expected of employees so that the agreed outcomes can be measured and clear consistent communication can take place based on the agreed expectation (Cook, 2019). Cook (2019) also expresses concern around feelings of disconnection and a loss of team cohesion should regular communication be at loss due to the remote nature of work. In this case, it is important that the manager works to ensure the team still feel connected. In addition, Morgan

(2018) argues that due to a lack of human connection in a virtual world employee engagement has decreased along with higher levels of job dissatisfaction and employee turnover.

1.2 Gaps in the Literature

1.2.1 The link between emotional intelligence and managing a team remotely

As outlined by Cook (2020) and Morgan (2018) above there are significant barriers to overcome in order to have a successful team working in a remote environment and avoid high levels of dissatisfaction while ensuring productivity levels remains high. Many of the difficulties faced can be overcome by increased awareness of emotional intelligence and putting its competencies into practise within a team. The literature showed little correlation between levels of emotional intelligence improving remote working environments. As a result the author's research aim is to fill this research gap by exploring the impact emotional intelligence can have on successful management of a remote team.

Throughout the literature Goleman (2015) has outlined the competencies of emotional intelligence and his framework has underpinned the research approach. There are some links throughout the literature to the importance of emotional intelligence in managers, but none aimed at a remote management setting in particular. Dierdorff et al (2019) discuss the importance of emotional intelligence for the overall functioning of a team. Furthermore, the literature shows the importance of managing stress and pressure faced by those in manager positions. However, there is a significant gap

between controlling and being aware of ones emotions while supporting team members in doing the same in a remote work environment.

1.2.2 The presence of emotional intelligence when overcoming the challenges faced by the workplace in the Covid-19 crisis

Nikolaou & Tsaousis (2002) discuss how emotional intelligence can help to monitor stress levels and manage the negative emotions it can bring on. The abrupt change and uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought about huge stresses for people on both a work and personal level. This research project will address this gap in the literature, by investigating the impact that being an emotionally intelligent manager has on a team working remotely during Covid-19. Klopotek's (2017) arguments around the difficulties faced by remote workers does not relate to Covid-19 in particular. Klopotek (2017) states that individuals can often feel social isolation and struggle to separate home life from work life. In addition to these struggles, individuals are facing social distancing measures due to Covid-19 and not only have they lost their workplace interaction, many social settings have been taken away from them also which adds to the challenges being faced. To fill this void of social isolation individuals have taken to technology to communicate both socially and for work, according to Molino et al (2020) this has led to increased levels of technostress and overuse of technology. Literature specific to emotional intelligence does not explore its impact or importance around the workplace shift due to Covid-19 and how high levels of emotional intelligence could be critical to managing remote teams for successful productivity and maintaining a connection within teams.

1.3 Research Justification and Rationale

A review of literature and research to date around emotional intelligence has proved that the impact of emotional intelligence in managers of a remote working team during Covid-19 in particular is under-researched. The gaps in the literature showed areas that need to be addressed.

As argued by Ancillo et al (2020), working remotely is going to be the new way business's will operate going forward and in order for it to be successful employees need to feel connected and engaged. Managers need to be aware of the importance of emotional intelligence so team cohesion can still be experienced despite the lack of physical presence in an office setting. Davies (2021) poses the question around how the previous temporary transition to working from home or in remote locations will shape future employment opportunities now that it is becoming more of a permanent arrangement. Davies (2021) further observes the benefits of working remotely which include time saved on commuting, increased proximity to family life, autonomy of work schedules as well as increase quality of life. Soon these will be demands of employees applying for jobs or benefits of the job for companies looking to hire people so it is in managers best interest to be aware and improve their levels of emotional intelligence so they can have an impact on the working life of the people on their team who may be working remotely.

1.4 Overall aim of the study

This study will aim to address the gaps in the literature by achieving a comprehensive understanding of the impact that having emotional intelligence has on managing a

remote team during Covid-19. The research study will focus on primary data collection which will involve interviewing managers of remote teams during Covid-19 who have knowledge of emotional intelligence. The following research questions have been set out to achieve this outcome.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions below aim to explore the gaps outlined in the literature to date and serve as the basis for the research objectives outlined in Chapter 3.

1. What impact does self-awareness have on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis?
2. What impact does empathy have on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis?
3. What impact does motivation have on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis?
4. What impact does self-regulation have on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis?
5. What impact does social skills have on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis?

1.6 Research methods

Given the exploratory outlook of the research questions posed above this study will be of a qualitative nature. Qualitative research was found best suited to the proposed research questions due to its association with interpretative philosophy (Saunders et al, 2019). Critical to a qualitative research approach is the analysis of human experience (Silverman, 2013). As outlined previously the gaps in the literature around remote working in a Covid-19 context allow this study to investigate the perceptions and opinions of managers on what impact they believe emotional intelligence has on managing a team remotely through their own experience.

Through a mono method of qualitative research and in conducting five semi-structured interviews, the author has alluded to an interpretivist and inductive research methods approach to the study which is developed further in the methodology in Chapter 3.

1.6.1 Primary Research Sample : Managers of remote teams during Covid-19

Critical to this study are the perspectives of managers on the impact of emotional intelligence when managing a remote team during Covid-19. According to Dhingra & Punia (2016), when leaders understand the emotional reactions of employees and are able to empathise and respond appropriately it makes for a more comfortable and positive outlook on the change process - the change process in this instance being the implications of Covid-19. Jamshed and Majeed (2018) purport that based on their conducted research it would suggest that managers of teams should consider their team level development of emotional intelligence by leveraging their teams development to adhere to a culture which is supportive of innovation and interaction.

In this case the development of the team stems from the manager’s awareness and understanding of the overall impact.

Interviewee	Gender	Managed a remote team during Covid-19 ?	Knowledge of Emotional Intelligence ?
Interviewee 1	Female	Yes	Yes
Interviewee 2	Male	Yes	Yes
Interviewee 3	Male	Yes	Yes
Interviewee 4	Female	Yes	Yes
Interviewee 5	Male	Yes	Yes

Figure 1

1.6.2 Scope of the Study

The author conducted five semi-structured interviews with managers who had sufficient knowledge of emotional intelligence, as outlined in Fig 1 above. Although the sample size was small it allowed for an in-depth analysis of the findings produced. The questions were posed around the research objectives and were prepared in advance of the interviews. This mono method of qualitative data collection was best suited due to the conversation style approach to the questions which allowed the author to gain an understanding of the perceptions of the managers around the research topic.

1.7 Overview and Structure of the Research Project

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter includes a summary of the chosen research area, including its research aim and a justification for the study. It highlights the background to the study and includes an examination of the research gaps observed in the literature.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter provides an in-depth review of the current academic literature relevant to the research topic. The literature includes areas around the competencies of emotional intelligence and managing a remote team and the challenges that come about.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter includes a detailed description of the approach to the research study. It includes the research objectives and research approach as well as those considerations which were found unsuitable for the study and thus rejected. Within this chapter are details of how the primary data was collected.

Chapter 4 – Research Findings and Discussions

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the data collected through the interview process. By closely linking the findings to the research objectives an in-depth discussion is found in this chapter around the perspectives of the participants.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

This final chapter addresses the conclusions drawn from the analysis in Chapter 4 and ascertains whether the research aims and objectives have been accomplished. Within this chapter there are also recommendations for further research based on the findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the existing literature around emotional intelligence in the workplace. It first examines and defines the different elements associated with personal and social competences. In addition, a further examination of the literature is provided which reviews the importance of emotional intelligence in management and the significance of emotional intelligence in managing change in the workplace. The author next explores the benefit of individuals exhibiting emotional intelligence within their team and how this aid team dynamic and morale. Finally, the difficulties faced by remote working are addressed and how elements of emotional intelligence can aid this transition to becoming naturally digital in our workspace.

2.2 Emotional Intelligence

According to Krén and Séllei (2021) emotional intelligence accounts for effective emotional and social problem solving. Kewalramani et al (2015) argue how critical emotional intelligence is, not only for leaders, but also in day-to-day life practices. It is only recently that psychologists have proposed that having an understanding of your own and other people's emotions is key to a satisfying quality of life that is more fulfilling and productive (Kewalramani et al, 2015). Daniel Goleman further purports how all valuable leaders are alike in one key way - they have a high degree of emotional intelligence. It does not always come down to intelligence (IQ) and a person's technical skills for them to be best fit to a job role, these are just skills acquired

in order to meet entry level requirements (Goleman, 2015). Emotional intelligence allows for successful leadership and the ability to differentiate between scenarios in business contexts and their call for a certain leadership style (Goleman, 2015). Critical to Goleman's studies Kewalramani et al (2015) state how his measure of Emotional Intelligence determines the potential for learning the practical skills that are based on its five elements. These elements include Self-Awareness, Motivation, Self-Regulation, Empathy and Adeptness in relationships which is also referred to as Social Skills. A high level of emotional intelligence does not exactly mean a person will have learned each of the emotional competencies, it only means that they have excellent potential and the capacity to learn them. The five elements are further classified by Goleman into Personal Competencies and Social Competencies (Kewalramani et al, 2015). Goleman (2015) argues that although the elements of emotional intelligence can often be genetic it is true to say that nurture can also play a role and the essence of emotional intelligence can be learned should the individual be open and willing to do so. Kewalramani et al (2015) discuss how Goleman's view on emotional intelligence is critical to the belief that the emotional competencies build on each other in a hierarchy. One must be able to identify their own emotions in order to manage them which in turn results in entering into a drive to achieve certain emotional states. When these three abilities are applied then to other people it allows for the ability to read and influence positively other people's emotions (Kewalramani et al, 2015).

2.2.1 Personal Competencies

2.2.1.1 Self-Awareness

Self-awareness can be described as having a deep understanding of one's strengths, weaknesses, needs, drives and emotions (Goleman, 2015). In critique of Goleman's description, Eurich (2019) mentions how research suggests that when we are able to see ourselves more clearly and understand our emotions we are more confident and more creative. People with a high level of self-awareness are realistic in their expectations while being honest with themselves and others, they are neither overly critical or unrealistically hopeful (Goleman, 2015). According to Goleman (2015), people who have a high level of self-awareness will have the ability to recognise how their feelings affect them, other people and their job performance. A person who is highly self-aware has a great understanding of their values and goals. The decisions of self-aware people tend to be closely linked to their values and as a result of their choices they can find themselves in more fulfilling and energising environments which meet their needs (Goleman, 2015).

In order to recognise self-awareness in oneself it is important to assess yourself honestly and realistically. An individual with high self-awareness has the ability to speak in an open and accurate manner due to the self-confidence they've attained through being candid (Goleman, 2015). Goleman (2015) states how one of the acute hallmarks of someone who is highly self-aware is a sense of self-deprecating humour. Self-aware individuals have the ability to be open in admitting their failures and more often than not will address them with a smile (Goleman, 2015).

Eurich (2019) differentiates between two critically broad categories of self-awareness. The first being internal self-awareness, which relates to how we perceive our own values, passions, aspirations, our fit within our environment, actions and impact on others. This aspect of self-awareness was positively linked to a high relationship and job satisfaction whilst reducing negative aspects of anxiety, stress and depression. The second category Eurich (2019) mentions is external self-awareness which is an understanding of how other people view us in terms of similar factors previous listed – including values, passions aspirations etc. Eurich (2019) explains how if we have an understanding of how others view us it allows us to be better equipped to show empathy and take other people's perspective's on board. The research undertaken by Eurich (2019) and her team found no correlation to suggest that having a high aspect of internal self-awareness would result in you having a high level of external self-awareness – they found no relationship between them. It is important to value both internal and external self-awareness by actively working on seeing oneself clearly and obtaining feedback to understand others perspective of them (Eurich, 2019). Dierdorff et al (2019) examined how team members' self-awareness can influence the overall team-level functioning. They further reiterated how even in team contexts, self-awareness is an individual-level descriptor for each member of the team. It is the individual who is self-aware or not, as opposed to the overall team but in the end collectively they have the ability to understand one another (Dierdorff et al, 2019).

2.2.1.2 Self-Regulation

Goleman (2015) describes self-regulation as a component of emotional intelligence that is similar to an on-going inner conversation that frees us from being prisoners of our own feelings. Critically, it is the ability to control and channel your emotional impulse to your advantage. People are able to build a trusting and fair environment when they have the ability to self-regulate and control their impulses and feelings (Goleman, 2015). In addition, Baumeister et al (2007) argue how self-regulation allows for increased flexibility and adaptability of human behaviour which enables people to adjust their actions to match a broad range of social and situational demands. Critical to this argument, in such an environment of security, productivity is much higher as talented people are more likely to enjoy the environment and remain involved for a longer period (Goleman, 2015). In addition, people who have control over their emotions are better equipped to master change. Baumeister and Vohs (2007) describe how regulation in essence means change, particularly change to bring about a behaviour that is in line with a standard such as an ideal or a goal. Goleman (2015) describes an individual with high self-regulation as someone who exhibits integrity, thoughtfulness, and reflection, aiding in an ability to say no to impulsive urges which can often times lead to major issues down the line. However, it is important to note that having a high level of self-regulation and such a propensity to reflect and not act on impulse does not always mean that the person shows little passion. The outbursts and fiery temperaments which are often hallmarks of charisma and power in great leaders are not in fact beneficial to the organisation. Goleman (2015) emphasises the importance of steadiness in mastering your emotions and overcoming negative

emotions to exhibit good leadership which is critical to this research study of the impact of emotional intelligence in the management of remote teams during Covid-19.

Baumeister and Vohs (2007) detail four component parts of self-regulation. These include standards, monitoring, self-regulatory strength and motivation. To begin with, self-regulation requires a particular clear and well-defined standard that is required as different standards require different emotional reactions and behaviour processes (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). In addition to this, Baumeister and Vohs (2007) describe how it is impossible to regulate ones behaviour without keeping track of it. Self-regulatory strength involves having the willpower to change and alter oneself in line with standards, this in turn requires a motivation from within to strive and want to meet the goal or standard at play (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). However, if motivation is high and the person feels strongly about measuring up to a particular standard, this may compensate for a lower than usual level of willpower or a greater difficulty of monitoring (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

2.2.1.3 Motivation

According to Goleman (2015) the key word linked to all aspects of motivation is the word achieve and the ability to do so beyond expectations. People can be motivated in a work environment by external factors such as salary and a certain title linked to a job while many others are intrinsically motivated and will have an embedded desire to achieve, simply for the sake of achievement (Goleman, 2015). Effective leaders will possess this motivational drive to achieve – they will encompass a passion for the

work itself to be done at its best and seek out creative challenges along with a love for learning and pride in their work (Goleman, 2015). These achievements will in turn generate the need for tracking progress and recognising the success's. Goleman (2015) emphasis's how motivated leaders with a love for their work will be more committed to the organisation and not be tempted by higher offerings to new positions by competitors for a higher salary when their current role is filling their intrinsic needs.

2.2.2 Social Competencies

2.2.2.1 Empathy

Goleman (2015) describes empathy as the most easily recognised dimension of emotional intelligence, it involves considering employee's feelings – alongside other factors – while making intelligent decisions. It is evident that empathy is particularly important element of leadership in today's world due to the increased use of dynamic teams, the need to retain talent and also the rapid pace of globalisation occurring and the diversification of the workforce (Goleman, 2015).

An effective leader must be able to consider the viewpoints and opinions of everyone on their team, whether that be 2 or 15 people. Emotions are high among people in teams who have clashing agendas and different opinions but who, if effective, still need to collaborate and work together (Goleman, 2015). Goleman (2015) further argues the importance of empathy as an antidote to miscues and misunderstanding relating to cross-cultural dialogues as a result of globalization. A leader with a high level of empathy will be sensitive to indistinct subtleties in body language when

communicating and will have a deep understanding of the importance and existence of ethnic and cultural differences (Goleman, 2015). Goleman explains how empathy is key in retaining talent in an organisation – effective leaders need to engage in coaching and mentoring to achieve an increased sense of job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover which helps maintain knowledge within the company itself (Goleman, 2015).

2.2.2.2 Social Skill

Goleman (2015) describes social skill as effectively friendliness with a purpose. It involves moving people in the direction you desire – which in terms of business leadership and management is considered a very valuable trait. Socially skilled people are great at building rapport with those around them, they understand and work to the assumption that nothing gets done alone and will have a network built, ready and in place for a time when action is required (Goleman, 2015). The possession of social skill is a culmination of each other dimension of emotional intelligence. According to Goleman, people are much stronger at managing their relationships with others when they have the ability to understand and control their own emotions and motivators while empathizing with the feelings of others (Goleman, 2015). A leader's job is to get work done through other people, having strong social skills allows for the relationships that are necessary to achieve this to be built (Goleman, 2015).

2.3 Emotional Intelligence in Management

Senior leaders play a central role in guiding the direction of an organisation and as a result play a critical role in determining the performance of an organisation (Zhang et al, 2018). Goleman (2015) states how emotional intelligence is of critical importance to effective leadership. Leaders who exhibit a high level of emotional intelligence are better equipped to praise and influence their followers emotions which in turn creates a safe, supportive working environment for everyone (Goleman, 1998). Management in an organisation face a more demanding, ambiguous and uncertain task environment than other work groups (Duncan, 1972). Zhang et al (2018) emphasise how such an environment and high levels of uncertainty places huge pressures on cognitive demands. Zhang et al (2018) further discuss how critical it is to manage these pressures and stresses. Failure in the successful management of stress can result in negative impacts on performance (Zhang et al, 2018). Nikolauo & Tsaousis (2002) are critical of stress and the negative emotional reaction it embodies. They discuss how stress results in frustration and defensiveness yet acknowledge how using emotional intelligence as a framework can allow individuals to cope with and control their stress induced emotions. Bar-on (2006) further mentions the critical importance of being able to harness emotional intelligence under stressful work conditions – such as that exhibited by a manager.

Zhang et al (2018) undertook research which suggests that a combination of high emotional intelligence and high levels of IQ functions well at senior management level to produce success – it does not always solely come down to a person's relevant experience and IQ. As a result, it is critical to consider high levels of emotional

intelligence as important criteria during the selection and promotion of senior management. Goleman (2015), purports that's emotional intelligence can be trained and developed. Critical to this statement, Jordon et al (2002) have completed research which specifies that such training and development can take place through coaching to improve the lower levels of emotional intelligence within a team and embody a more safe and self-aware environment for teams to work in harmony through the organisation.

2.4 Emotional intelligence and managing change

Martincic (2017) examines the critical need for emotional intelligence in the nature of managing change within an organisation. Business's in today's modern ever changing world need to undergo change in order to survive and remain competitive but it is critical to consider the most effective way to implement such changes (Martincic, 2017). Dhingra & Punia (2016) reiterate how change management skills incorporate a critical role in dealing with the emotions of others and oneself when moulding change in favour of the organisations competitive advantage.

Martincic (2017) examines the importance of successful change implementation through phases of pluricentric dispersion of employee emotions throughout the organisation. All elements of emotional intelligence contribute to the source of dispersion of positive emotions regarding the organisational change. Emotional awareness will allow for the ability to disperse positivity and reassurance surrounding the change to all employees (Martincic, 2017). Furthermore, once this dispersion has been achieved and the elements of emotional intelligence have been reinforced

throughout the organisation an emotional landscape is achieved. From this a strong foundation for the growth and development of emotions among employees concerning the change is created and a final transmission of positive emotions is embedded in employees regarding the change (Martincic, 2017).

Martincic (2017) argues the critical importance of the elements of emotional intelligence as unless they have been adopted in managers, the risks and apprehension around the effective organisational change implementation increases extensively. Mossholder et al (2000) consider the importance of the strength of reactions attached to organisational change rather than typically focusing on problem-based models which can often underestimate the importance and impact of emotions. George & Jones (2001) purport the critical need for such emotional intelligence in employees undergoing change as it allows them to better adapt to their emotional reactions and moods having understood their source. Ashford (1988) describes change as a source feeling of uncertainty, pressure, frustration, isolation and anxiety. Change is generally stressful for those involved as people move from the known into the unknown and take on new roles or responsibilities and come up against new challenges (Dhingra & Punia, 2016).

By having a better understanding of emotional intelligence in an organisation it makes the change process more effective. When leaders understand the emotional reactions of employees and are able to empathise and respond appropriately it makes for a more comfortable and positive outlook on the change process (Dhingra & Punia, 2016). This atmosphere of co-operation and trust can result in a critical re-evaluation

in employees of their possible negative feelings and emotional reactions towards the change (Dhingra & Punia, 2016).

2.5 Emotional Intelligence in Teams

Jamshed and Majeed (2018) discuss the critical development of emotional intelligence in a group setting through social interactions that occur while sharing team relevant information. Druskat and Wolff (2008) argue that the team culture has a significant influence on the group's overall emotional intelligence. In order to develop on this, an expressive culture may need to be implemented into the team which allows for a more mindful approach to one another's emotions as well and one's own (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019). Furthermore, Jamshed and Majeed (2019) purport the critical importance of team emotional intelligence as a predictor of team performance. Ghuman (2011) critically assess the important link between a team's collective emotional intelligence and their overall synergy and relationship. One could describe collective emotional intelligence as the ability of a team to collectively embed a set of norms around managing and expressing their emotions in a safe environment. As a result, the team will have formed stronger relationships and are better equipped to recognise the positive contribution this collective emotional intelligence has on their performance.

Jamshed and Majeed (2019) conducted research which suggested that leaders and managers of teams should consider their team level development of emotional intelligence by leveraging their teams development to adhere to a culture which is supportive of innovation and interaction. Should team performance need to be enhanced a manager must design strategies' to strengthen team members ability to

understand their individual emotions (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019). It is also important to note that should there be individuals within a team who lack high levels of emotional intelligence it can have a negative impact on interpersonal relationships within the team thus hindering the teams overall performance. All levels of emotional intelligence within the team must be considered for development (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019).

The literature suggests that there is a critical link between emotional intelligence and embodying the social skills necessary for effective team-work. It allows for the management of relationships, communications and network building while recognising others feelings. A strong existence of emotional intelligence in a team can allow the members to navigate and leverage any conflicts that may arise. Black et al (2019) discuss key findings of their research which suggest that individuals with high levels of self-awareness and self-regulation do well in team settings and get along with others. This emotional well-being of the team members generates a supportive environment which in turn results in a significant increase in performance.

2.6 Difficulties faced by remote working

G.S and Sangeetha (2020) examine remote working and discuss how allowing for work to take place outside of a unique location allows for more productivity. Klopotek (2017) conducted research which concluded that the most significant difficulties faced by remote working include difficulty separating home life from ones professional life, social isolation and the requirement of greater organisation skills. Despite the countless number of tools to communicate in a remote working environment it is evident from Klopotek's (2017) research that young people in particular appreciate face-to-face interaction with their co-workers.

Spagnoli et al. (2020) examined the effect of management on a remote working functioning team and the connection between workaholism and technostress. Salanova et al. (2015) highlighted the negative consequences of remote working, these include discomfort, anxiety and stress due to the constant use of technologies to communicate. This formed the basis of the research project at hand due to the requirement of the manager to be able to recognise and address these struggles with their employees. These negative associations linked to constant use of technology can also be referred to as technostress (Molino et al. ,2020). The stress is caused due to an array of application multitasking alongside the feeling of constant connectivity (Molino et al. ,2020).

The in-depth critique of the literature review proved to form a strong case for the research question. The author made use of Daniel Goleman's framework around emotional intelligence and its personal and social competencies to influence the methodological approach to the research question. Each of the competencies which are outlined throughout the literature review underpinned the research questions, which in turn served as a basis for the five research objectives outlined in Chapter 3. Identified gaps in the literature include a particular link to emotional intelligence and its impact in managing a remote team during covid-19. The author established many arguments as to why emotional intelligence is important in a manager but none around the impact that it can have in managing a remote team due to the communication methods and lack of human connection. In addition to this, taking the context of Covid-19 in particular there is a greater need for managers to be able to empathise with their employees as well as manage and regulate their own emotions due to the experience.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) define research as a systematic process with a clear purpose that results in particular findings. Within the systematic process data is collected and then interpreted to form a conclusion. Research that is undertaken will effectively involve an explanation of the methods used to collect data and have a strong argument as to how meaningful the results are and further discuss any limitations (Saunders et al, 2019). Critically, Wilson (2014) further mentions how research is all about getting answers to questions, which helps advance one's knowledge in the specified area.

3.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The author's main aim of the research was to investigate the impact that being an emotionally intelligent manager has on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis. Fisher and Buglear (2010) explain how a research methodology aids in the identification of techniques best suited to the research topic proposed. Emotional intelligence and its importance are commonly used in relation to management and is more important than ever in the current context of Covid-19, with employees having to work remotely. The research sought out to investigate how important emotional intelligence is in building relationships and continuing to be successful when managing employees.

Saunders et al (2019) discuss how critical it is for research objectives to be precise in clarifying what is going to be investigated in the study. In addition, Wilson (2014) argues how the research objectives provide strength to and in effect underpin the research questions. Daniel Goleman's framework around the competencies of emotional intelligence has underpinned the research objectives outlined in this research study. The author has taken each of the components that relate to both a personal and social aspect and looked to gain a perspective on these competencies in the context of Covid-19 and a remote work setting.

Research Objective 1: To investigate the impact of self-awareness on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis.

Research Objective 2: To investigate the impact of empathy on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis.

Research Objective 3: To investigate the impact of motivation on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis.

Research Objective 4: To investigate the impact of self-regulation on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis.

Research Objective 5: To investigate the impact of social on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis.

3.3 Proposed Research Methodology

The aim of this research study was to understand the importance of emotional intelligence in an apparent more digitally focused workplace following the Covid-19 crisis. Critical to the research was the perspective of managers and how effective management of teams can still take place. This chapter discusses a range of methods and methodology's that were considered over the course of the research and why alternative comparatives may have been rejected.

In order to determine an appropriate research design the author made use of the Research Onion as seen in Fig 2 (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This concept of the research onion acted as a guidance towards the chosen qualitative methodology in this study. Critically, Saunders et al (2019) discuss how the onion consists of six layers in total, each layer must be unwrapped and understood in order to justify the central core of the research methodology and how one decides to collect the required data.

The starting point of this study lies in the two outer most layers of the research onion which involves examination of research philosophy and approaches to theory development (Saunders et al, 2019). Following on from this, the next three layers examine methodological choice, strategy and time horizon. This chapter discusses the critical aspects within each layer that need to be examined and considered systematically in order to determine the best methodological approach for the study.

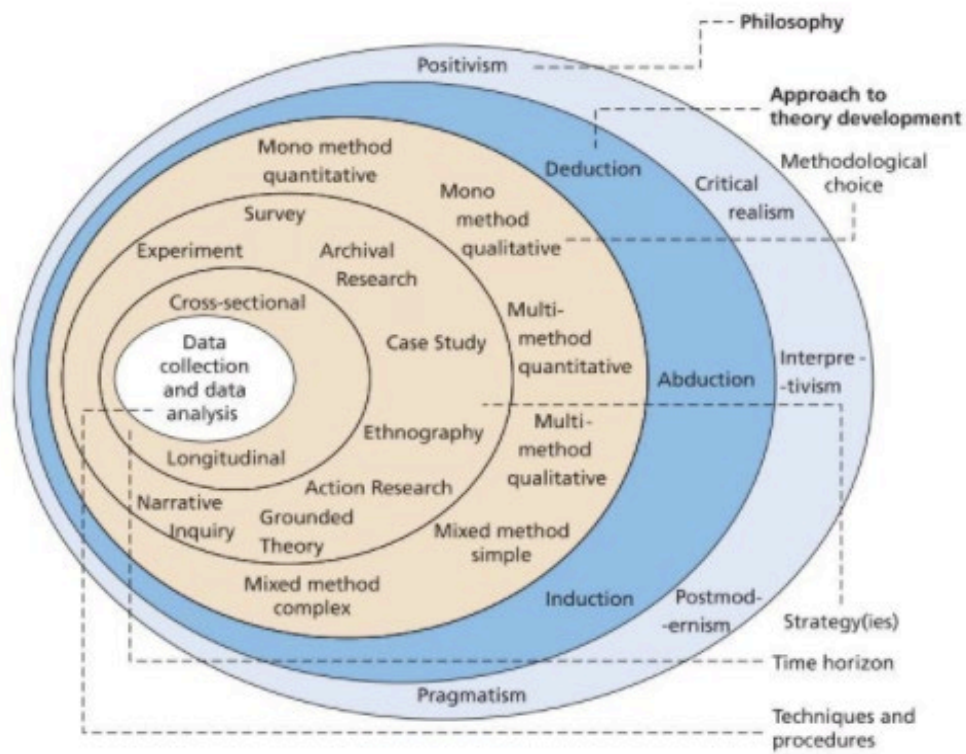


Figure 2

3. 4 Research Philosophy

Saunders et al. (2019) refers to research philosophy as a foundation of assumptions and beliefs about the development of knowledge. Critically, Wilson (2014) further argues that what one thinks might constitute knowledge will impact the way one undergoes research. Because of this, it is important to fully understand research philosophies to remain unbiased and identify which might be of best fit (Wilson, 2014). Saunders et al (2019) discuss the importance of differentiating between the different research philosophies. In order to make this distinction between each, one must

initially examine three types of research assumptions. These include ontology, epistemology and axiology.

3.4.1 Ontology, Axiology and Epistemology

Ontology refers to the nature of reality and what way one considers the world to be (Wilson, 2014). Critically, Saunders et al (2019) state how one's ontological assumption determines the way in which one undergoes a research project. On the other hand, axiology is a philosophy which refers to the roles that values and ethics take throughout the study (Saunders et al. 2019).

For this research project the above two research assumptions were rejected on the basis that the research was based on knowledge and exploring opinions of those involved in the study. As a result, the chosen method and arguably the most suitable approach was epistemology. Wilson (2014) describes epistemology as the way in which we conceive our surroundings.

3.4.2 Interpretivist, Positivist, Pragmatism and Realism

According to Saunders et al (2019) the research philosophy of positivism relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist that all concepts or beliefs stem from experience. Saunders et al (2019) further describe realism as underpinning the positivist philosophy. Realism states that what you see and experience through your

senses is how the world is accurately portrayed (Saunders et al, 2019). Both of these approaches were rejected on the basis that they are more scientific approaches than what was best suited to this explorative research study.

For this research, the most fitting approach fell under epistemology and is known as interpretivism. Arguably, this approach is better suited than realism and interpretivism as it takes a more meaningful approach to human perspectives (Saunders et al, 2019). Critical to this study in particular are the meanings and perspectives of the individual participants rather than a factual scientific approach.

Saunders et al (2019) critically state how the aim of interpretivist research is to explore new understandings and interpretations of different contexts.

A further approach in addition to positivism and realism which was rejected is pragmatism. This is an approach one might find suited if neither positivism or interpretivism related to the study being undertaken (Saunders et al, 2019).

3.5 Research Approach

Saunders "research onion" includes a layer which defines ones approach to theory development once the philosophies have been critically considered and compared (Saunders et al, 2019). These two approaches to theory development are known as inductive and deductive methods. Saunders et al (2019)emphasise how critical the

extent to which ones research is more aligned to theory testing or theory building raises significant questions regarding ones research study design.

Saunders et al (2019) describe a deductive approach as being associated with quantitative research where a conclusion is obtained from a logical outlook on a set of premises derived from theory.

In contrast, inductive theory is best associated with qualitative research. As this research project's main aim is to examine and explore the perspectives of managers and their opinions an inductive approach is found most appropriate. Critical to the research, an inductive approach allows for a gap in the logical stance between the conclusion and premises observed. It is particularly concerned with the context and finds the subjective interpretation of the interpretivist philosophy to be critical in the research.

3.6 Research Strategy

In line with this study's research strategy the two primary data collection methods considered were quantitative and qualitative research. Bryman and Bell (2007) describe a research strategy as a general approach to the execution of research.

3.6.1 Qualitative vs Quantitative

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) the difference between quantitative and qualitative research stems deeper than the presence or absence of quantification. In addition, Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that quantitative and qualitative research have

different epistemological foundations. Saunders et al (2019) state the critical differentiation between quantitative research and qualitative research is the presence of numeric data and non-numeric data.

In relation to this particular study, qualitative research was found best suited to the proposed research objectives due to its association with interpretative philosophy (Saunders et al, 2019). Silverman (2013) discusses two features which are critical to qualitative research being human experience and human perceptions of those experiences. In addition, Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that qualitative research emphasises an inductive approach where themes are generated through the collection and analysis of individuals perceptions of their social world. Supporting this, Kahlke (2014) also mentions the main aim of researchers undergoing a qualitative method is to examine how people interpret their experiences and the meaning they give to these experiences. This research is an exploratory study of the insights the participants give to their knowledge of emotional intelligence and its impact on managing remote teams during Covid-19. Through a mono method of qualitative research and in conducting semi-structured interviews, the author has supported their choice of interpretivist and inductive research methods found best suited to the study.

The semi structured interviews mentioned above as the chosen qualitative approach took place as outlined below:

- 5 interviews were conducted in order to collect data required
- Each interview took between 30-45 mins

- The participants were all managers of a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis and had knowledge of emotional intelligence
- The questions posed in the interview were derived from the research question and objectives. The questions were set out to understand the impact that the participants felt the presence of emotional intelligence had on managing their team remotely during Covid-19

3.7 Qualitative Primary Data Collection

In arguing the importance of integrity through the research, Bryman and Bell (2007) emphasis how qualitative researchers can often employ similar approaches around reliability and validity to quantitative researchers. However, critical of a realist approach, Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue against this and believe that when assessing the reliability and validity of qualitative research it is impossible to take a simple application as there is no single absolute account of the social reality being measured. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that there can be several accounts of findings from qualitative research.

Critical to qualitative research is collection of data around real-life experiences of individual's who can relate to your area of study (Yin, 2016). When undertaking this study, the author's primary aim was to accurately and reliably analyze the interviewees responses and thoughts around the questions posed to them during the interview process. As a result of qualitative research being concerned with words and not numbers, the author chose to apply semi-structured interviews when undertaking this

study (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The questions relating to the research topic were thought through and prepared in advance. Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence framework around the five competencies underpinned the research questions. Critical to the study, the participants were encouraged to share their opinions and points of view around the matter of emotional intelligence and managing a remote team during Covid-19 based on their own experience and opinions. The nature of the semi-structured interview allowed the participants to be flexible in their responses (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Structured interviews did not suit the research approach of this study as they relate more to quantitative methods and are more strict and rigid in their responsive style to the questions posed (Yin, 2016). The interviews took place remotely and each interview was recorded for ease of analysis. After each interview recording a transcript was generated and then validated by the author in order to draw on themes to aid in analysis of the data. Critical to the research is the trustworthiness and truthful accounts of each statement by the participants (Yin, 2016).

3.8 Population Sample

A total of five semi-structured interviews were conducted. Due to time constraints, the sample size proved difficult and as discussed in the limitations should more time have been available a larger sample size would have been interviewed to gain a further in-depth analysis. The participants who were selected to take part in the research were managers of remote working teams during Covid-19. Critical to the research was the participants knowledge of emotional intelligence as a manager. Each participant had knowledge and experience in the area of emotional intelligence and were able to relate

to the questions posed which aided in the contribution of their input to the research topic. Of the five interviewees 60% were male and 40 % female.

The interviewees gave their consent to take part in the research study and for their interview to be recorded and transcribed. However, for confidentiality the participants personal information has been removed and each participant has been referred to as the interviewee to remain anonymous. Each interview took place over a scheduled Microsoft Teams call allowing 45 minutes for completion to allow for development of conversation around the questions. Consistency with the interview questions was impartial across each participant which can be examined in Appendix 1.

3.9 Analysing Qualitative Data

Data analysis is described as a process which provides meaning to the data collected that is associated with the research objectives outlined in the study (Saunders et al, 2019). Following the recording and transcription of each interview the author carefully analysed the data produced from the conversations to identify themes and any correlation to the literature reviewed. Bryman and Bell (2007) describe thematic analysis as the most common way of approaching qualitative data analysis. The inquisitive nature of the researcher proved beneficial when analysing the data and the interviewees interpretations. As argued by Heritage (1984), recording of interviews allows for a more thorough examination of what the participants have said.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Prior to approaching participants and asking each individual to be involved in the study, the author reflected on ethical conduct best practice and an ethical form was submitted to the National College of Ireland to ensure this was achieved and that the participants were treated ethically. Bryman and Bell (2007) argue that how we treat the people we conduct research on is of main concern, along with certain activities that we should not engage in our dealings with them. Furthermore, Diener and Crandall (1978) outline four main ethical principles to consider. These include; whether there is harm, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy or deception involved in the study.

3.11 Limitations to the Research

The research study has been limited mainly by time constraints, should the author of had more time a larger sample size may have been selected to provide diversification of more opinions around the research topic. A larger sample size may have removed any bias or subjectivity in the matter. Furthermore, Covid-19 implications proved difficult also as there were a number of different restrictions in place throughout the research study. Restrictions around social distancing and Covid-19 cases found the author relying on remote interviews rather than face to face interviews.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

Throughout the literature it is evident that emotional intelligence allows for effective emotional and social problem solving (Kren & Sellei, 2021). In addition, taking managers in particular, the literature suggests that all valuable leaders have a high degree of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2015). Through the perspectives of those who took part in the study the author was able to gain a better understanding of the research question “The impact of emotional intelligence on the management of remote teams during covid-19 crisis”. Daniel Goleman’s emotional intelligence framework served to underpin the research approach by examining the 5 areas that fell under social and personal competencies which include self-awareness, empathy, motivation, self-regulation and social skills. The author made use of the inductive method which allowed for knowledge and perspectives of the participants to be shared around the topic of emotional intelligence.

This chapter presents the findings from 5 in-depth interviews and examines their link to the literature. Each participant manages a team remotely and has some knowledge of emotional intelligence and the importance it has to their role. Additionally, it is important to note that 4 of the participants that worked in the same organization each made reference to both their own and their team members DISC personality profile in their answers during the interview. The personality profile analysis through the DISC model explores people’s behaviors based on the influence their priorities have (Sugerman, 2009). It has become a common language in the organization that they

work in which supports better communication between a manager and their employee and increases self-awareness, which are both important factors of emotional intelligence (Sugerman, 2009).

4.2 Objective 1 “To investigate the impact of self-awareness on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis”

Under this section the author has outlined and discussed the data collected from the interviewees under the area of self-awareness, particularly when managing a remote team during Covid-19.

4.2.1 Understanding strengths and weaknesses as managers

Due to the culture in the participants workplace, it was evident that each interviewee had a high level of self-awareness. In the context of Covid-19 pandemic in particular and the uncertainty it brought about it is important that managers are still able to successfully manage their team despite being forced to work in a remote location. Each interviewee felt that communication was a key strength of theirs when managing remotely.

“kept in regular communication with them while being very upfront with anything that’s going on in the business so that they’re aware of any changes or anything that might impact them... so they don’t feel like they’re completely in the dark” (IV 1)

Another interesting observation was the interviewee's felt that they could trust their employees to work from home to the same high performing standard as pre-covid when the team were all located in an office setting. "my concern when the pandemic hit was that we had a high performing team pre-covid so I just wanted to ensure we didn't lose that" (IV 2). Critical to any working environment, this allowed their employees to feel empowered to do their own independently with this trusting relationship, with interviewee 2 making particular reference to the important of clear and common goals being set so that each member of the team knew the priorities and felt empowered to achieve them. Interviewee 5 also stated "managing the work side of things has gone well and they can trust employees to get the job done with impacting quality"

The secondary data collected throughout the literature review found that team members self-awareness was critical to the overall functioning of the team (Dierdorff et al, 2019). As mentioned above, interviewee 1 made reference to "not being a high I" on their DISC profile which means that they are not a people orientated person, they are happy to work independently. Interviewee 1 recognized this as a possible weakness in a remote work environment as one can find themselves quite isolated if an effort isn't made to be chatty and continue to build on relationships within the team. On the other hand, interviewee 2 stated that due to their "high I" profile they missed the human element of connection and found it challenging to be isolated and so had to create a new network at home of people to meet with for coffee or lunch. Interestingly, interviewee 3 mentioned that despite their "high I" profile being an expected weakness of remote work environment they felt they could experience the same connection and interaction with people on their team through video calls.

Goleman (2015) argues how people with a high level of self-awareness have the ability to understand how their feelings affect them, other people around them and their job performance. This is evident in the interviewee's acknowledgment of their weakness and how they overcome them. Due to Covid-19 and working from home there was a lack of human contact that some participants found difficult. The isolation was found to be challenge in some cases and more effort was required to communicate with other employees on a personal level. Interviewee 5 mentioned how they a particular weakness of theirs was maintaining a team bonding environment as it was difficult to do remotely. They overcame this by putting together a social committee within the team that organized non work-related games and activities that the team could do virtually.

4.2.1 Approachability

Each interviewee felt that they were very approachable as a manager despite the Covid-19 pandemic and working remotely. Critical to Eurich's (2019) study, if one has an understanding of how other people view us it allows us to be better equipped at communicating with them. Interestingly, those participants who already had developed a good relationship with their employees pre-Covid-19 and working remotely felt that this strong relationship continued and their approachability as a manager was not impacted. However, some interviewees noted that they had new employees join their team during the pandemic and so such relationships were not previously established. As a result, more effort was required to build the strong trusting, relationships and allow for an approachable environment.

4.3 Objective 2 “To investigate the impact of empathy in managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis”

The data collected around the level of empathy in managers while working remotely proved to be crucial, particularly during Covid-19 and its uncertainty.

4.3.1 Empathising with employees and understanding their perspectives

Goleman (2015) describes empathy as considering employee’s feelings alongside other factors in decision making. Interestingly, one of the issues that arose for interviewee 2 was their employees feeling as though they were having too many meetings and calls to attend in relation to a project and were finding themselves unable to focus and actually do their work. Having brought this to the attention of the participant, they were able to empathize with the employees on the matter and take feedback onboard. Considering the employees perspectives, the interviewee decided to cut down on calls in relation to that particular project.

However, other participants in the research stated how they were naive to the challenges their employees were facing at the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic and working from home. They felt that it was challenging at times to read people and tell how they were doing through the brief interactions over calls so a safe environment to share challenges and build trust was necessary.

“Early on in the pandemic I realised that you can’t just assume employees don’t need extra flexibility.... so I think even to ask the question outright to really understand their perspective on the pandemic and how things are going for them...” (IV 1)

Furthermore, once their team members were able to admit area’s they were struggling a resolution was put in place. Interviewee 5 gives an example below of when childcare services not being in operation was putting pressure on their employee’s ability to attend important calls with other professionals.

“...by understanding their perspective, we were able to work around obstacles to delivering the required standard of interaction and communication” (IV 5)

4.4 Objective 3 “To investigate the impact of motivation on managing a team remotely during the Covid-19 crisis”

The outcome of this particular section was to ascertain the levels of motivation in the participants and how examine how they motivate their employees. The author focused on a remote working environment in the context of Covid-19 in particular.

4.4.1 What motivates managers

There was consistency with each interviewees views on what motivates them. Despite being in a remote working environment and the implications of Covid-19, each participant expressed high levels of motivation due to the company they work for and

its high growth and high impact environment. “understanding the impact that the work is having on the business as a whole” (IV 1). None of the interviewees expressed a lack of motivation due to not being in an office environment. “although I am not in the office my deliverables are still the same so I am still motivated to achieve my targets and deadlines” (IV 5). In fact, some stated that their new work-life balance proved to be a motivational factor in their career. In addition, the interviewees each stated that they are happy to work independently and seem to be more intrinsically motivated by their internal drive and work deadlines.

4.4.2 Motivating Employees Remotely

The participants who outlined examples of situations where they had to motivate their employees in a remote setting each mentioned that they were conscious that a bigger effort had to be made compared to being face-to-face. “making the effort to kind of pick up the phone and talk through it rather than it being something that kind of naturally happens in the office” (IV 1). However, it was noted by the interviewees that overtime people got more comfortable and despite the new virtual working environment opportunities still arouse which helped instill motivation in their employees.

Embedded in each of the participants organisations were regular one to ones with their employees. These meetings gave an opportunity for managers to provide constructive feedback to enhance their achievements. Interestingly, many of the participants also noted that having your video camera on in such instances is critical to read facial expressions and not give off the wrong impression. Consistency with feedback and

conversations around their achievements were all highlighted as important in a successful remote work setting by the participants. “Making sure they understand the value of the work that they are doing” (IV 1)

4.5 Objective 4 “To investigate the impact of self-regulation on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis”

The findings under this objective highlight the impact being in control of your own emotions and feelings have on your relationship with others. Goleman (2015) describes self-regulation as an on-going inner conversation. Due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic and the abrupt disruption of the normal working life one could find themselves experiencing an array of different emotions. Baumeister & Vohs (2007) make a critical comparison between regulation and change where one changes their behavior to bring about a certain standard or achieve a goal. The participants outlined how they remain grounded during the Covid-19 pandemic and note let impulsive emotions impact their day to day lives.

4.5.1 Controlling and channeling emotions

The participants felt that taking breaks regularly throughout the workday helped them to remain focused and feel less overwhelmed by stress. Interestingly, interviewee 2 mentioned how their work-life balance had improved significantly due to working from home and that they didn't feel overwhelmed as often due to increased levels of exercise as a result of no more commuting to work. On the other hand, interviewee 3

and 4 both mentioned that they didn't take as many breaks while working from home, particularly if they were in the middle of a big project.

Interviewee 2 stated how "prevention is better than cure" when it comes to managing emotions and levels of stress. They found that their stress levels decreased when they set boundaries between work and home life. Interviewee 1 stated how in order to remain grounded it helps them to take a step back and consider the priorities when they might have a big deadline approaching.

4.5.2 Covid-19 pandemic and its implications

The interviewee's each pointed out that they were thankful to have not been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. They each outlined how they focused on the positives and found joy in their pets, exercise, and relationships with others. This proved as an example of being able to shift negative emotions and by focusing on the positive aspects without implications. Contrasting to the literature, Baumeister and Vohs (2007) describe how a critical aspect of regulation is bringing about a behaviour that is in line with a standard such as an ideal or a goal.

4.6 Objective 5 "To investigate the impact of social skills on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis"

The objective was to gain the perspectives and insights of the interviewees around the importance of social skills as a manager, particularly in light of the covid-19 pandemic and working remotely. Interestingly, each participant in effect reiterated Goleman's (2015) description of social skills as friendliness with a purpose.

4.6.1 Rapport with a team

Interviewee 2 acknowledged that although it is difficult to build rapport with your team in a virtual setting it is more manageable on a one-to-one basis. They outlined how consistency with one-to-one meetings is key so employees feel they are important and that you are genuinely interested. Interviewee 1 has had a new member join their team since the start of the pandemic. They highlighted that it was difficult to build a relationship virtually compared to other team members who they had already established a relationship with from being in an office environment. Critical to the literature as outlined by Goleman (2015), people who are socially skilled are great at building rapport with those around them. Interviewee 1 and 2 both mentioned how important building a rapport is within the team - particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and working remotely. "it will keep the team feeling that they are part of a team and not just individuals" (IV 5). The participants collectively felt it was important to create a safe, comfortable environment which in turn would reduce employee turnover and increase the drive for productivity.

4.6.2 Management of team member's strengths

As a manager it is important to be able to get things done through your employees. Interviewee 1 outlined the significance of the personality profile analysis through the use of DISC to better understand where strengths lie within their team. "really helps to understand people's different styles and how they like to work" (IV 1).

Each interviewee highlighted that opportunities for employees to work to their strengths still arise despite working remotely. Interviewee 2 felt that structure and focus are important for employees to remain engaged in their work and maximize their personal strengths. The awareness of the interviewees around the strengths of their employees and managing them to the best of their ability correlates with the literature which stated how possession of social skills is a culmination of each other dimension of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2015).

4.7 Study Limitations

The data obtained through the interviews proved to be consistent throughout each interviewee's responses and had some correlation to areas of the literature which were critically reviewed. The author relied on the knowledge and perceptions of the participants who took part in the study for their research study. As a result of this, a larger number of participants may have been beneficial to create a more in-depth review but due to time restraints limiting the study this was not feasible. However, the author set out the research objectives and the method of qualitative research proved suitable to the explorative nature of the topic of emotional intelligence.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion to the study

Following a review of academic literature around areas of remote working, emotional intelligence and its competencies the author was able to outline gaps in the literature which would allude to further research and help build research objectives for the study. The aim of this research was to establish the impact that emotional intelligence had on managing a remote team during the Covid-19 crisis. The Covid-19 crisis has proved very topical as of late due to the implications it has imposed on the world and the new ways of working it has created. In response to the research objectives laid out a better understanding of how the competencies of emotional intelligence each had an effect on the management of a remote team during Covid-19. Critical to this was Kewalramani et al.'s (2015) view on how Goleman's emotional intelligence competencies are based on the idea that they each build on each other in a hierarchy so in effect work in tangent.

The author conducted their collection of primary data for the study through a mono method of qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interviews. These interviews allowed for the comprehensive analysis of the data which was formed from responses to the research questions posed. Based on the research findings one can

conclude that having high levels of emotional intelligence as a manager is beneficial in the management of remote teams during Covid-19.

Taking the findings from the first research objective around the impact of self-awareness on managing a remote team during Covid-19 the author can conclude that having high levels of self-awareness allows both managers and employees to work to their strengths and manage their weaknesses. Taking into consideration that there may have been a shift in these strength or weaknesses now that employees find themselves in a remote work environment due to Covid-19. Another important finding is that the managers who were interviewed found themselves to remain approachable despite not being in an office setting with their employees and were able to outline the benefits of this for their employees. This supports Kewalramani et al.'s (2015) argument above in relation to each competency building on one another in hierarchy, critical to this Eurich (2019) explains how if we have an understanding of how others view us it allows us to be better equipped to show empathy and take other people's perspective's on board.

The second research objective set out was to understand the impact that empathy had on managing a remote team during Covid-19. The interviewees were able to give examples of when they had to understand employees perspective's on issues that arouse relating to remote work and Covid-19 and empathise in order to find a resolution. Goleman (2015) purports the importance of empathy in being key to retaining talent in an organisation which is in effect the main goal of a manager. This benefit was highlight when the interviewees were questioned about building a rapport within their team, each noted that it was important in reducing employee turnover.

The third research objective set out was to understand the impact that motivation has on managing a remote team during Covid-19. The participants each recognised that they were in-fact intrinsically motivated by their own drive to perform at a high level and this allowed them to continue to manage their remote teams effectively, despite the implication that Covid-19 had imposed on the work-place. As outlined in the literature motivation is a drive to achieve. Managers will encompass a passion for the work itself to be done and seek out creative challenges along with a love for learning and pride in their work (Goleman, 2015) which is reiterated in the responses of the interviewees. In addition, the participants expressed how more effort was required when motivating employees due to the virtual nature of working remotely. As emotionally intelligent managers they recognised the need for motivation to be instilled in their employees and alluded to the fact that opportunities still arise that would be motivational to staff, despite the remote work environment.

The fourth research objective around the impact of self-regulation on managing a remote team during Covid-19 found that as a manager it is important to have the ability to control and channel your own emotions. Due to the implications of Covid-19 and change of work environment the participants acknowledged ways in which they remain grounded so that their negative emotions or feelings of stress would not transfer into their team. Baumeister and Vohs (2007) have argued the importance of self-regulation in allowing for increased flexibility and adaptability of human behaviour which would relate closely to this Covid-19 context.

The final research objective set out to investigate the impact of social skills on the management of remote teams during the Covid-19 crisis. The participants reflected on the importance of managing team members individual strengths as well as maintaining a rapport within the team despite the remote setting and the benefits in doing so. In addition, some participants expressed the difficulties they faced in establishing this rapport with members of the team who had newly joined and were not part of the team prior to Covid-19 to have already built relationships in person. To reiterate the critical importance of all aspects of emotional intelligence working in hierarchy, Goleman (2015) argues that individuals are better at managing their relationships with others when they have the ability to understand and control their own emotions and motivators while empathizing with the feelings of others.

Of the research objectives set out at the beginning of the project the author concluded that emotional intelligence does in-fact have an impact on managing a remote team during Covid-19. It helps in acknowledging the importance of rapport within a team and overcoming barriers to communication. Emotional intelligence aids in the awareness of extra effort to be made around levels of empathy, self-regulation, motivation and social skills.

5.2 Recommendations

Upon completion of this study the author's initial recommendation would be that all organisations implement a coaching strategy to ensure managers are equipped with the knowledge and importance of emotional intelligence in managing their team

remotely. Particularly, in light of new ways of working due to Covid-19 and its implications on day to day life. Some of the participants organisations had done this to some effect in their reference to personality profiling through use of DISC. These participants had utilised references around the awareness of themselves and their teams profile as common language in their daily lives relating to work.

In addition, for further study I would suggest making a comparison to productivity levels pre-Covid-19 when physically located in an office against the current situation working remotely. This would allow for the impact of the presence of emotional intelligence in managers to be measured against the performance of the team. This study recommendation could take the form of a quantitative method of data collection to compliment this study and provide a deeper analysis into the area surpassing the perspectives and opinions alone by delving more into numerical data and percentages around inputs and outcomes.

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Appendix 1. Interview Questions

1. To investigate the impact of self-awareness on managing a remote team during Covid-19

- 1.1. During this Covid-19 pandemic, how do your employees benefit from working with you?
- 1.2. What is one of your weaknesses now having to manage a team remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic? How do you overcome that weakness?
- 1.3. Does your team have the ability to approach you and openly admit they need upskilling in certain areas they may be weak in – now that they're working in a remote environment?

2. To investigate the impact of empathy on managing a remote team during Covid-19

- 2.1. Tell me about a time when understanding someone else's perspective on Covid 19 and remote working helped you accomplish a task or resolve an issue.
- 2.2. Now that you're working remotely with your team are you able to notice that someone at work is having a bad day? How do you know? What do you do?

3. To investigate the impact of motivation on managing a remote team during Covid-19

- 3.1. What motivates you to do your work during this covid-19 pandemic now that you're not always in an office setting?
- 3.2. Tell me about a time when you motivated someone to accomplish a task despite the uncertainty that Covid-19 brought about. How did you motivate him or her being in a remote work environment?
- 3.3. Do you provide constructive feedback to your team regularly? How do you manage this remotely?

4. To investigate the impact of self-regulation on managing a remote team during Covid-19

- 4.1. Do you take regular breaks during your work-day? Do you feel any benefits?

4.2. How do you remain grounded when you are overwhelmed in a remote work setting?

4.3. When you experience stress or negative thoughts as a result of the covid-19 pandemic and its implications how do you deal with them?

5. To investigate the impact of social skills on managing a remote team during Covid-19

5.1. How do you build a rapport with your employees now that you aren't always face-to-face?

5.2. Giving the remote working situation, why do you feel it is important to develop a good rapport within your team?

5.3. Are you aware of your team members individual strengths? Are they maximising these strengths now that they're working remotely and may be experiencing uncertainty due to the covid-19 pandemic?