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The impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee engagement: A South African Telecommunications study

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ABSTRACT

Studies in the area of employee engagement (EE) became popular in the late twentieth century. Over the past two years, Covid-19 has shone the spotlight on the topic once again due to mega trends such as the “great resignation” and “quiet quitting”. The pandemic also caused shockwaves in economies around the world and resulted in increased competition in markets. Employees contribute to the competitive advantage of an organisation and firms are looking into employee engagement to enable staff retention.

Many studies have been conducted on the factors that influence EE and have mainly looked into the impact different leadership styles have on EE. This study aimed to investigate the impact that a leaders’ emotional intelligence (EI) has on the EE of their workforce.

The research investigated the impact that the 5 dimensions of EI (self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, empathy and social skills) has on EE. A quantitative methodology was adopted to test hypothesis. A cross-sectional survey questionnaire was used to collect data. The data consisting of 184 items was collected and analysed using statistical correlational tests.

The research concluded that there are significant positive correlations between each of the five dimensions of EI and EE. This study contributes to the body of knowledge within the area of EE, EI and leadership.

Keywords

Employee engagement, emotional intelligence, leadership.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EE	Employee engagement
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EQ	Emotional Quotient
EQI	Emotional Quotient Inventory
HR	Human Resources
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MAR	Missing at random
MCAR	Missing completely at random
MNAR	Missing not at random
MSCEIT	Mayer Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test
SA	Self-Awareness
SR	Self-Regulation
VUCA	Volatility, uncertainty, complexities and ambiguity

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is set out to afford a level of context for the research project. It examines both the business and theoretical significance of this study. It presents the research problem, scope and purpose as well as outlining the chapters that follow.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The Covid-19 pandemic has spurred a drastic decline in economic activity and even resulted in job losses. It has also accelerated the adoption of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), driving the automation of processes and potentially resulting in further job losses (Karr et al., 2020). To adapt to the post-pandemic economic environment (the so-called new normal), companies will need to restructure and re-organise (Karr et al., 2020). On the other hand, certain companies were able to harness the power of 4IR and manage their Covid response through digital communications, creating platforms to disseminate advancements in understanding Covid and accelerating research and treatment (Mhlanga, 2022). The world economic forum notes that new prospects are developing through Covid and businesses need to reframe themselves to endure and profit from new income streams (Busch, 2020).

The world as we know it including business practices are constantly evolving. This dynamic nature creates rapid changes in technology, ways of working, changes in consumer demand due to new types of products and constant innovation. In the age of digital disruption and 4IR, businesses need to be able to create a level of competitive advantage to survive.

Most of the world is in recovery from Covid-19 and experts have noted a trend of unprecedented employee departures termed the Great Resignation (Stein et al., 2021). The Bankrate's August 2021 Job Seeker Survey presented that 55% of the American workforce are expected to look for a new job within a 12-month period (Foster, 2021). The survey further noted that during Covid, employees who worked from home experienced a shift in mindset regarding their work and were inspired to make changes.

The 2022 State of the Global Workplace report noted that only 24% of the workforce in South Africa exhibit employee engagement (Gallup.com, 2022). A remarkable 76% of employees are not engaged.

1.3 RESEARCH PURPOSE

This study examines the impact that a leader's emotional intelligence has on the employee engagement of their workforce. This study is designed to build on the body of knowledge on EE and factors that promote or enhance EE. There is a vast body of literature which examines different leaderships styles and their resulting effect on EE, with most research favouring transformational leadership (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Bakker and Demerouti (2017) have emphasised the importance of examining relationships between EE and other leadership related constructs. Hiendel (2009) asserts that there has been minimal studies in the area of improving EI to encourage EE factors.

1.4 BUSINESS RELEVANCE

Emotional intelligence (EI), often called EQ, has become an important leadership skill over time. Leadership within companies help cultivate the tone of those enterprises. If these leaders have lower EI, it could result in lower employee engagement and high staff renewal rates (Landry, 2019). EI is not just seen as important for leaders only but for followers as well. A leader may be technically proficient; however, if they are unable to effectively interact and collaborate with followers, it could lead to stagnation within the organisation (Landry, 2019).

EI is a significant trait in assisting with conflict resolution, as leaders possessing higher EI can navigate difficult situations, bring disagreements to the forefront and discuss viable solutions which are satisfactory to all parties involved (Ottawa University, 2020). Leaders with higher EI will be able to reduce conflict in teams and ensure staff are focused on their tasks.

Even in the greatest of circumstances, keeping emotionally engaged with your team and managing yourself can be difficult. The complexities around Covid-19 further exacerbate this issue. Strains of work from home and social distancing, which is highly unnatural, create barriers to relationship building within teams (Nevins, 2020). Covid-19 has created a level of anxiety and stress within teams as people are constantly being told of the dangers of working in close proximity to each other. EI training has been lauded as a useful tool to re-integrate teams and help leaders manage the anxiety teams experience (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2021).

A survey of over 2 600 hiring managers revealed that 71% of them stated that they valued EQ over IQ (Landry, 2019). The findings of the survey are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reasons HR managers choose EQ over IQ

	Reasons HR Managers choose EQ over IQ
1	High EQ employees are better at staying calm under pressure.
2	They listen as often or more often than they speak.
3	They lead by example.
4	They make more thoughtful business decisions.
5	They take criticism well and admit their mistakes and learn from them.
6	They keep their emotions in check and can discuss tough, sensitive issues thoughtfully and maturely.
7	They can effectively resolve conflict.
8	They are empathetic to co-workers and react accordingly.

Source: Landry (2019)

Covid-19 has caused economic disruptions on a magnitude not seen since the Great Depression and beyond the degree experienced during the global financial crisis from 2008 to 2009. It was more than a mere economic shock and directly jeopardised both the public and private sector business models (Elali, 2021). Organisations, therefore, need to reform, make bolder decisions and create a greater level of adaptability to weather the storms in their environment of business and operate with greater agility. “In a turbulent age, the only dependable advantage is a superior capacity for reinventing your business model before circumstances force you to” (Hamel & Valikangas, 2003, p. 52). This thus creates a critical need for businesses operating in such climates to develop strategic agility.

Business leaders have realised the importance of reformulating organisations by implementing new operational models which enable enhanced speed and flexibility within decision-making to address issues such as Covid-19, globalisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Kosack et al., 2021).

The telecommunications industry is characterised by a high level of competition, and this creates an inherent challenge to engage and retain employees (Sharma & Nargotra, 2018). Therefore, employee engagement and retention can be used to create a competitive advantage in the industry. Employees within the telecommunications sector display lower levels of employee engagement and commitment (Ranga et al., 2019).

During the Covid pandemic two grand phenomena took place in the world of business which are the “great resignation” and “quiet quitting”. Quiet quitting is where an employee disengages from their work by doing the bare minimum, barely meeting task

objectives which can lead to lower firm performance (MacDonald, 2022; Schneider et.al., 2018). This is especially important in the South African context as South Africa has one of the lowest EE scores in the world (Naidoo et al., 2019). While some employees engaged in quiet quitting, others elevated their response to actually resigning which spurred on the mass exodus from firms known as the “great resignation” (Formica & Sfodera, 2022). In the 2022 Gallup state of the workplace report, it was noted that disengaged workers resulted in a loss of R132,5 trillion due to lower productivity (Gallup, n.d.). EE is thus a significant area for research to enable business to retain their talent in the midst of harsh economic climates as well as cut-thought competitive environments.

Peters and Waterman (1982) mentioned that “success in business is 15% technology and 85% emotional intelligence”.

1.5 THEORETICAL RELEVANCE

Academics and business strategists are debating the appropriate best practices for commercial organisations to thrive in the face of volatility, uncertainty, complexities and ambiguity (VUCA) (Bennet & Lemoine, 2014; Elali, 2021). Research has shown that EI is a significant skill for managers and thus needs to be developed within the leadership arena (Barry & Plessis, 2007). This study intends to contribute to the existing body of knowledge addressing factors which influence EE at a construct level.

In the 1970s and 1980s, companies were concerned with the level of employee satisfaction at their firms, even though it had minimal effects on their productivity (Akter et al., 2022). The focus swiftly shifted toward employee commitment (Aktar & Pangil, 2018). Employee engagement emerged in the 1990s and positioned itself as a “positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind” (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Academics view EE as a critical factor for firm success (Akter et al., 2022). An engaged workforce results in enhanced productivity, improved customer satisfaction and lower turnover rates (Aktar & Pangil, 2018; Hizam & Osman, 2020).

Studies have concluded that leadership plays a significant part in generating employee engagement (Wallace & Trinka, 2009; Shuck and Herd, 2012). “A leader’s emotional intelligence has been shown to support the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement” (Milhem et al., 2019).

1.6 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The scope of this research project is limited to a large JSE listed company within the Telecommunication's Industry. Although the concepts of EI and EE are not restricted to specific industries, a single large company was chosen to ensure that the data which forms the critical findings are homogenous. The research will be limited to junior staff, lower and mid-level management to observe the effect that leadership EI has on these staff levels.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTION

The overarching research question is as follows: Is there a relationship between the emotional intelligence of leaders and their employee's level of engagement? The research questions which follow from this are:

- Is there a significant relationship between a leaders' self-awareness and employee engagement?
- Is there a significant relationship between a leaders' self-regulation and employee engagement?
- Is there a significant relationship between a leaders' motivation and employee engagement?
- Is there a significant relationship between a leaders' empathy and employee engagement?
- Is there a significant relationship between a leaders' social skills and employee engagement?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 delivers a literature review of the major constructs of the study. It endeavours to provide an in-depth view of definitions, history of the research area, models and frameworks, benefits and disadvantages of the concepts.

2.2 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT (EE)

EE is an important and highly relevant topic in the area of HR and management. There are, however, divergences with scholars in the area of concepts, frameworks, influence factors and beneficial areas.

2.2.1 Definitions of employee engagement (EE)

EE is defined differently by several researchers, businesses, and nations. The idea of EE was initially described by Kahn (1990) as “self-employment and self-expression of individuals physically, intellectually, and emotionally in the context of the workplace and refers to the harnessing of organisation members” identities to their work roles. Subsequent to Khan (1990) introducing this topic, many scholars have provided various definitions in attempting to deal with the many concepts that are associated with EE. However, this has left a level of uncertainty among people leaders on whether EE improvement initiatives can be successful in all organisations. EE can be seen through the lens of four meta categories: EE is a multifaceted construct, “EE as a dedicated willingness, EE as a positive state of mind and EE as the opposite of burnout” (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). a

2.2.1.1 EE: A multi-faceted construct

Employee involvement, as presented by May et al. (2004), involves feelings and actions, and not merely thoughts. EE is a blend of “commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership” (Wellins & Concelman, 2005). Saks (2006) views EE as a a “different and distinct idea made up of knowledge, emotion, and conduct” . EE was described in the work of Cha (2007) as the worker’s involvement in their work including physiological, cognitive and emotional condition components. This explanation is conceptualised by three components being work engagement, corporate recognition and a feeling of the worth of one’s effort. EE is a wide-ranging notion that includes several categories of engagement that require their own unique understanding such as “traits engagement, psychological state engagement, and behavioural engagement” (Macey & Schneider,

2008). Bakker (2011) suggests that EE is a pleasant, energetic emotional disposition with elements of vigour and high levels of contribution.

Three dimensions were established by Soane et al. (2012) as part of their model of EE which includes “a work role focus, activation, and positive affect” . EE was categorised into four areas by Xu et al. (2013) consisting of “organizational identity, work attitude, mental state, and responsibility efficacy” . Xiao and Duan (2014) theorised EE using five key dimensions of “initiative, loyalty, effectiveness, identification, and commitment” . Lastly, Liu (2016) posited that the five facets that are central to EE are organisational identity, commitment, absorption, vigour and pleasant harmony.

2.2.1.2 EE: A dedicated willingness

Looi et al. (2004) conceptualised three features which depict an employee’s level of motivation and dedication to the organization. The first is “Say” where workers communicate positively in relation to their leaders, co-workers and function. The second is “Stay” where an employee is embedded within the organisation and wishes to serve a long tenure instead of using the organisation to catapult them into their next vocation. The third is “Strive” where workers go the extra mile and exceed expectations in efforts to promote growth at the company. EE is divided into two types: “sensuous engagement and rational engagement” , according to Borah & Baruah (2014) which defined it as the lengths that employees would be enthusiastic about going to in order to help the company flourish.

The link amongst individuals and organisations, which includes the level of employee comprehension of their individual and organizational duties, is typically at the centre of rational engagement. Employees will feel more rationally engaged if their employment has the potential to provide them wealth, professional skills or other advantages. Sensuous engagement revolves around employee contentment, including a feeling of self-accomplishment in their duties and function at a company (Fang et al., 2010). EE, according to Xie (2006), is a worker’s devotion to a profession, encompassing diligence, commitment to the business, loyalty to their employer and self-assurance.

2.2.1.3 EE as a positive state of mind

Schaufeli et al. (2002) described EE as a pleasant, satisfied mental position related to one’s job and can be described by “vigour, dedication, and absorption” . EE was described by Harter et al. (2002) as the “person’s interest in, contentment with, and excitement for work” . EE, as described by Zeng and Han (2005), is characterised by a

persistently optimistic emotional condition which creates an inspiring feeling about one's profession which is characterised by pleasing, satisfying and encouraging work encounters.

2.2.1.4 EE as the opposite of burnout

Maslach et al. (2001) characterise burnout and EE as being on the opposing ends of a spectrum where EE is described by enthusiasm, involvement and effectiveness and burnout being described as "exhaustion, cynicism, and diminished professional efficacy" . Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) concluded that "vigour and dedication are polar opposites" to the dimensions of fatigue and pessimism. However, a slightly contrary view by Demerouti et al. (2010) denotes that although "cynicism and dedication" are on opposite ends of the identity dimension, fatigue and vigour are not sustained as polar ends of the energy dimension.

The definition used to underpin this study is that EE is described using three distinct dimensions of "Vigour, Dedication and Absorption" (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigour is characterised as being energetic and displaying mental resilience while on the job. Dedication is described as feeling a sense of importance, having eagerness, motivation, honour and a level of challenge while working while absorption is described as being completely immersed and captivated in a job and having a strong sense of connectedness to the work (Shaufeli & Bakker, 2004) (Figure 2.1).

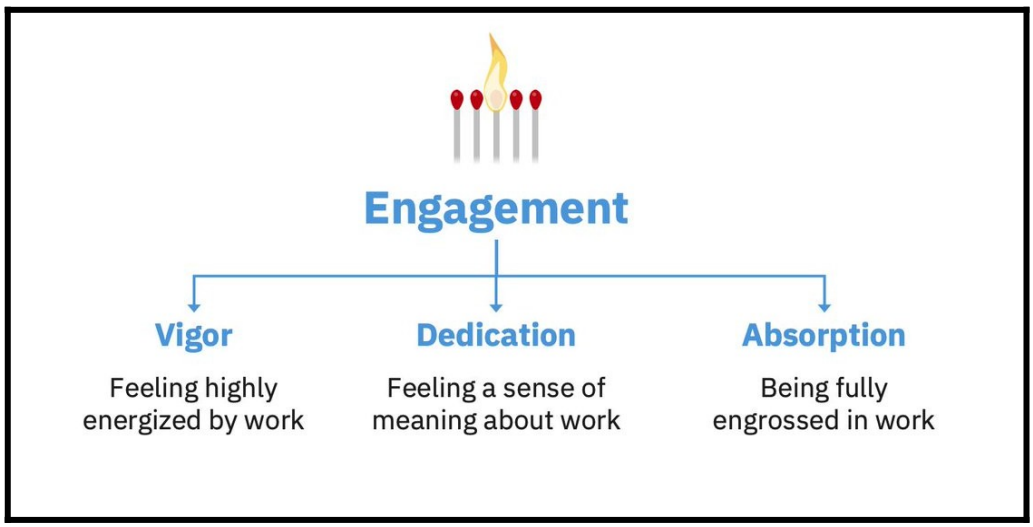

Figure 1: The components of engagement

Source: Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)

Table 2: EE definitions summary table

Author	Definition	Facet
Khan (1990)	"Self-employment and self-expression of individuals physically, intellectually, and emotionally in the context of the workplace and refers to the harnessing of organisation members"	Multi-faceted
May et al. (2004)	Involves feelings and actions, and not merely thoughts	Multi-faceted
Wellins & Concelman, (2005)	EE is a blend of "commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership"	Multi-faceted
Saks (2006)	EE is a "different and distinct idea made up of knowledge, emotion, and conduct"	Multi-faceted
Cha (2007)	Worker's involvement in their work including physiological, cognitive and emotional condition components	Multi-faceted
Macey & Schneider, 2008	"Traits engagement, psychological state engagement, and behavioural engagement"	Multi-faceted
Bakker (2011)	EE is a pleasant, energetic emotional disposition with elements of vigour and high levels of contribution.	Multi-faceted
Soane et al. (2012)	EE includes "a work role focus, activation, and positive affect"	Multi-faceted
Xu et al. (2013)	"Organizational identity, work attitude, mental state, and responsibility efficacy"	Multi-faceted
Xiao and Duan (2014)	EE has five key dimensions of "initiative, loyalty, effectiveness, identification, and commitment"	Multi-faceted
Liu (2016)	Five facets that are central to EE are organisational identity, commitment, absorption, vigour and pleasant harmony	Multi-faceted
(Fang et al., 2010)	Sensuous engagement revolves around employee contentment, including a feeling of self-accomplishment in their duties and function at a company	Dedicated Willingness
Xie (2006)	Worker's devotion to a profession, encompassing diligence, commitment to the business, loyalty to their	Dedicated Willingness

	employer and self-assurance.	
Schaufeli et al. (2002)	EE as a pleasant, satisfied mental position related to one's job and can be described by "vigour, dedication, and absorption"	Positive state of mind
Harter et al. (2002)	"Person's interest in, contentment with, and excitement for work"	Positive state of mind
Zeng and Han (2005)	Persistently optimistic emotional condition which creates an inspiring feeling about one's profession which is characterised by pleasing, satisfying and encouraging work encounters.	Positive state of mind
Maslach et al. (2001)	EE is described by enthusiasm, involvement and effectiveness	Opposite of Burnout
Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)	"Vigour and dedication are polar opposites to the dimensions of fatigue and pessimism"	Opposite of Burnout

2.2.2 EE conceptual frameworks

Numerous theoretical frameworks have been used to explicate EE. Scholars have depicted EE using varying conceptual standpoints. Currently, there is no consensus on a single conceptual foundation to explain EE. This research study reviews three of the most popular EE frameworks namely the needs satisfaction framework, the JDR model (JDRM) and the social exchange theory (SET) in its attempt to explain EE.

2.2.2.1 Needs satisfaction framework

Kahn (1990) theorised that workers display higher levels of engagement in their jobs when three distinct psychological requirements are fulfilled. These dimensions are:

> meaningfulness (sense of return on investments of self in role performance), safety (sense of being able to reveal and use self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career), and availability (sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances).

Employees have a greater tendency to disengage from their work in aid of self-preservation when these factors are not provided to them by their employers. Meaningfulness is regulated by the features of a specific profession including its pursuits, positions and interrelationships. The cultural climate, interpersonal connections,

intergroup dynamics, leadership and firm philosophy have the greatest effect on psychological safety. Lastly, “availability depends on the personal attributes” that individuals carry to their jobs such as mental state, emotional state and insecurities (Khan, 1990).

2.2.2.2 Job Demands Resources Model (JDRM)

Job demands and resources influence EE (Bakker et al., 2005; Salanova et al., 2005 ; Salminen et al., 2014). The JDRM posits that various entities may encounter unique work environments; however, the attributes of these ecosystems are categorised into two broad groups: job demands and job resources, representing an all-encompassing model which can be applied many different work contexts irrespective of the specificity of demands and resources involved. Job requirements include physical, psychological and social factors or any combination thereof.

Examples include strong job pressure, heavy workloads, poor environmental circumstances and reorganisation-related issues. “Job resources are physical, psychological, social, or organisational components of the job which are either: (1) useful in attaining work objectives; (2) minimise job demands; or (3) encourage personal growth and development” (Bakker et al., 2003). The JDRM therefore helps describe the hypothesis that workers exhibit higher engagement at their jobs when the firm provides them with job-related resources.

2.2.2.3 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The SET offers a greater conceptual justification for grasping EE. Levinson (1965) noted that employment consists of a trade-off between work, devotion, interest and social benefits. The connection between workers and employers has a level of mutual exchange where tasks and requests have reciprocal benefits for the parties irrespective of who attains the favourable outcome.

Masterson et al. (2000) argued that an individual anticipates a future return after rendering their duties. Additionally, the party who has received favourable value develops an obligatory notion to repay the benefit. This further entrenches the element of reciprocity.

Numerous researchers have examined the interaction between an organisation and its employees using social exchange theory. Workers have a level of dedication to a company and tend to work diligently to receive social and economic gains, so “forming

the employer-employee relationship" (Masterson et al., 2000). Eisenberger et al. (1986) argued that "greater levels of perceived organisational support obligate individuals to repay the organisation", thus, exhibiting a positive mindset and conduct toward the company.

Saks (2006) claimed that a person's "degree of participation is one method they might repay their organisation" , meaning that workers will adjust their engagement degree based on the resources by their employer. Table 3 provides a summary and a comparison of the frameworks.

Table 3: Framework Table summary

Author	Features	Framework
Khan (1990)	Meaningfulness, safety and availability	Needs satisfaction
Bakker et al. (2005)	Job demands and Job resources	JDRM
Levinson (1965)	Level of mutual exchange (reciprocity)	SET
Masterson et al. (2000)	Future return and reciprocity	SET
Eisenberger et al. (1986)	Perceived organisational support obligate individuals to repay	SET
Saks (2006)	"Degree of participation is one method they might repay their organisation"	SET

2.2.3 Factors affecting EE

The EE precondition variables fall into three categories: organisational factors, work factors, and individual factors. Harter et al. (2002) noted that a work environment, the direct manager, the leadership and colleagues impact EE.

Salanova and Schaufli (2008) theorised that EE "is influenced by job control, job involvement, job feedback, job rewards, job security, and supervisor support" . May et al. (2004) reported that "job enrichment, work role fit, rewarding co-workers, a supportive supervisor, and self-awareness affect EE" . Zhang and Gan (2005) "found that support, a sense of justice, interpersonal interaction and conflict impact EE". According to the findings of Langelaan et al. (2006), neuroticism, agreeableness and flexibility impact EE.

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), Bakker and Demerouti (2008), and Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), the accessible job resources are the most significant determinants of EE. Farndale's (2015) research shown that various employment

resources (monetary rewards, company culture and involvement in decision-making) favourably influence EE. Individual resources, such as positivity, self-efficacy, self-esteem, perseverance, effective coping methods and demographic characteristics appear to differentiate committed workers from other workers. Personal resources may assist devoted employees in controlling and influencing their work environment, hence fostering employee devotion.

In their research of female school principals, Bakker et al. (2006) found that resiliency is a personal characteristic that increases EE. Xanthopoulou (2009) also investigated items related to self-efficacy, self-respect, and positivity as significant predictors of participation. Rich et al. (2010) found a favourable correlation with self-appraisal (which is made of "self-esteem, self-efficacy, control points, and stable emotion") and EE. Christian et al. (2011) found an association between accountability, happy emotions, pleasant character and involvement. Gan and Gan (2014) theorise that extroversion and conscientiousness have a positive effect on engagement via work needs or resources. Roof's (2015) research revealed a correlation between spirituality and vitality and commitment. Table 4 reflects the antecedents of EE.

Table 4: Table of antecedents

Author	**Antecedent**
Salanova and Schaufeli (2008)	"Job control, job involvement, job feedback, job rewards, job security, and supervisor support"
May et al. (2004)	"Job enrichment, work role fit, rewarding co-workers, a supportive supervisor, and self-awareness affect EE"
Zhang and Gan (2005)	Support, a sense of justice, interpersonal interaction and conflict impact EE
Langelaan et al. (2006)	Neuroticism, agreeableness and flexibility impact EE
Schaufeli and Bakker (2004)	Accessible job resources are the most significant determinants of EE
Farndale (2015)	Various employment resources favourably influence EE
Bakker et al. (2006)	Resiliency is a personal characteristic that increases EE
Xanthopoulou et al. (2009)	Self-efficacy, self-respect, and positivity
Rich et al. (2010)	Self-appraisal (which is made of "self-esteem, self-efficacy, control points, and stable emotion"
Christian et al. (2011)	Accountability, happy emotions, pleasant character and involvement

Author	Antecedent
Gan and Gan (2014)	Extroversion and conscientiousness
Roof's (2015)	Spirituality and vitality and commitment

2.2.4 EE measurement scales

A small number of instruments employed by academics to assess the degree of engagement among employees reflect the uniformity of concepts: Different variations of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) created by Schaufeli and Bakker of Utrecht University (Schauffeli et al., 2002) were used in 82% of the studied articles. In its initial version, the index comprised 25 items connected with the EE dimensions identified earlier, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. These are measured using a 7-point scale, where 0 means "never" and 7 means "always". Participants in the study award each statement a point value. The most widely used form of the index in the research reviewed is the UWES-9, which allocates three items to each component. This variation appeared in 48 of 71 publications.

Other popular EE scales used are the Saks Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006) and the Gallup Workplace Audit (Harter et al. 2002), which each consist of 12 Likert-scaled questions. In several instances, the writers employed a mix of many tools.

Table 5 presents a comparison of the measurement scales commonly used for EE.

Table 5: EE Measurement scales

Measurement scale	Details
UWES-9 (Schaufeli et al., 2002)	Survey includes 9 items using a 7-point Likert scale which measures Vigour, Dedication and Absorption.
UWES-17 (Schaufeli et al., 2002)	Survey includes 17 items using a 7-point Likert scale which measures Vigour, Dedication and Absorption.
Saks Engagement Scale (Saks, 2006)	Survey includes 12 items using a 5-point Likert scale which measures Job engagement and Organization engagement.
Gallup Workplace Audit (Q12) (Harter et al. 2002)	Survey includes 12 items using a 5-point Likert scale which measures employee perceptions of job characteristics

Measurement scale	Details
Job Engagement Scale (Rich et al., 2010)	Survey includes 18 items using a 5-point Likert scale which measures physical, emotional and cognitive engagement items.
ISA Engagement Scale (Soane et al. 2012)	Survey includes 9 items using a 7-point Likert scale which measures intellectual, social and affective engagement dimensions.
JRA EE Scale (JRA, 2007)	Survey includes 6 items using a 5-point Likert scale which measures cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions.
Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2003)	Survey includes 14 items using a 7-point Likert scale which measures harmonious passion and obsessive passion dimensions.

Source: Adapted from Motyka (2018)

2.2.5 Benefits and disadvantages of EE

Current studies on EE outcomes focus primarily on two facets: individual performance and organisational performance. Recent research has focused on the link between EE and organisational performance.

Individuals who are said to be committed to their jobs display higher engagement, are healthier and more productive (Susana et al., 2007). Compared to non-committed employees, devoted employees experience superior work fulfilment, more organisational dedication, and have less propensity to leave the business (Yang, 2005). Positive conduct is characterised by devoted employees (Wilmar & Arnold, 2006). Overall, devoted workers exhibit more proactive organisational practices and are prepared to pay more. This is supported by research in the Netherlands which demonstrated that engaged employees work longer hours than disengaged employees (Sonnentag, 2003).

Salanova et al. (2005) investigated interconnections amongst organisational resources, EE and employee performance. Using a poll of 342 workers from 114 hotels, organisational resources were shown to have a beneficial effect on EE, which in turn had a favourable effect on staff performance (Salanova et al., 2005). Saks (2006) stated that employee involvement had a beneficial effect on corporate citizenship behaviour.

A number of empirical studies have demonstrated a link amongst EE and organisational success. According to Harter et al. (2002), there is a 0.30 association between EE and

employee attrition, a 0.33 correlation among EE and customer satisfaction and a 0.17 correlation amongst EE and employee profitability. Through an analysis of the excellence of hotel and restaurant operations, Salanova et al. (2005) found that EE may have an effect on a company's service atmosphere and, in turn, the performance of workers and brand loyalty. According to a study conducted by Wyatt Consulting, EE is strongly correlated with company profits. "Within three years, the annual growth to shareholders for workers with low engagement, medium engagement, and high engagement is 76%, 90%, and 112%, respectively" (Zhao & Sun, 2010). According to Xanthopoulou et al. (2009), EE can have a favourable impact on a company's monetary success. After years of econometric investigation based on human abilities, Harter et al. (2002) demonstrated that EE is a "soft index" which influences organisational functions and is associated to the "five main organisational performance indicators of productivity, profitability, customer loyalty, employee retention, and security" . Table 6 presents a summary of the outcomes of EE.

Table 6: Outcomes of EE

Author	**Outcome**
Susana et al. (2007)	Individuals are healthier and more productive
Yang (2005)	Superior work fulfilment, more organisational dedication, and have less propensity to leave the business
Wilmar and Arnold (2006)	Positive conduct
Sonnentag (2003)	Devoted workers exhibit more proactive organisational practices
Salanova et al. (2005)	Favourable effect on staff performance and brand loyalty
Saks (2006)	Beneficial effect on corporate citizenship behaviour
Bakker and Demerouti (2008)	Favourable influence on the performance of employees
Harter et al. (2002)	Employee attrition, customer satisfaction and employee profitability
Zhao and Sun (2010)	Strongly correlated with company profits
Xanthopoulou et al. (2009)	Favourable impact on a company's monetary success
Harter et al. (2002)	Linked to "productivity, profitability, customer loyalty, employee retention, and security"

2.3 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI)

2.3.1 EI History and Definitions

Over the years, interest has grown within the area of EI, largely due to the popularisation of the work done by Goleman (1996). This has resulted in numerous scholars researching the area and subsequently releasing articles and books on the topic which delve into the applications and development of EI in context of individuals and organisations.

Business interests are firmly linked to investigation methods of gaining a competitive edge, which may be achieved by focusing on people concerns (Higgs, 1997; Kay, 1993; Sparrow et al., 1994; Ulrich and Lake, 1991). It is asserted that the idea of EI is supported by substantial scientific and empirical data (Goleman, 1996; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997). Nevertheless, minimal research has been undertaken in the context of a firm setting, and most existing studies have been derived from advances in physiological and educational studies (Goleman, 1996; Steiner, 1997). Corporate implications of EI are often supported by derivational reasoning and experiential case studies.

The research in this emerging area contains a variety of confusing terms, such as EI (Goleman, 1996; Salovey & Mayer, 1990); “emotional literacy” (Steiner, 1997); “emotional quotient” (Goleman, 1997; Cooper & Sawaf, 1997); “personal intelligences” (Gardner, 1993); “social intelligence” (Thorndike, 1920); and “interpersonal intelligence” (Thorndike, 1920). Goleman (1997) provided a useful explanation of the concept of EI, which entails: “knowing what you are feeling and being able to control them without letting them overwhelm you” ; being capable of motivating oneself to complete tasks, be imaginative, and operate at your best; and perceiving how others are feeling and maintaining good relationships successfully.

According to a more condensed definition by Martinez (1997), EI is “an array of non-cognitive talents, capacities, and competences that impact a person’s capacity to deal with external factors and stresses” (p. 72).

It is important to have a somewhat succinct description of EI for directing our thoughts and comprehension, but a more in-depth study of the concept’s breadth and significance is required for its investigation. Goleman has always been considered the originator of the notion of EI, but it was recognised by Goleman (1996) and Steiner (1997) that Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first to designate the idea as such and that it has its origins in prior research into “social intelligences” (Thorndike, 1920).

The apparent inadequacy of standard gauges of logical thinking (e.g. “IQ testing, SAT scores, grades, etc.”) to identify who would be successful in life appears to have been the impetus for the invention of the idea of EI (Goleman, 1996). Research conducted by Goleman (1996) revealed that IQ provides at most 20 percent of the elements that affect life success. This position is consistent with the findings of academics who have a fundamental conviction of the importance of IQ (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994). Bahn (1979) focused on evaluating the efficacy of IQ testing in predicting executive or managerial competence. It was observed that leadership leans toward being smarter than the average team member, however, not the smartest. This analysis of the relevant research suggested that a specific minimum IQ level is required for optimal performance.

The quest for factors other than IQ that adequately explain disparities in performance is not a new phenomenon. Thorndike (1920), in an assessment of the predictive value of IQ, introduced the notion of “social intelligence” to explain variances in outcome measures that were not explained by IQ. Gardner and Hatch (1989), originated as well as examined the notion of many “intelligences” and discovered no substantial connections with IQ measurements, reigniting interest in a larger perspective of intelligence as a whole. This resulted in the deduction that Gardner’s “other intelligences” were an entirely separate concept from IQ.

In establishing plausible explanations for “interpersonal intelligences,” a predominant model has is noted as “meta-cognition” (i.e., knowledge of one’s mental functions) opposed to the examination of a complete spectrum of emotional capacities (Goleman, 1996). In recognising a variety of emotional capacities, Goleman emphasised the need to move beyond “meta-cognition” and investigate a notion called “metamood” (an “awareness of one’s feelings”) . Moreover, he emphasised the significance of self-awareness, which he defined as “... knowledge of both our mood and our ideas about that mood... nonreactive, non-judgmental attention to interior emotions” (p. 43). In studying EI, it is obvious that the inadequacy of IQ tests to reveal adequate variety in educational and organisational success criteria has been a primary motivator of interest.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) classified EI as “the ability to recognize, regulate, and utilize emotions that drive moods, feelings, and behaviours” This is the most widely known definition of EI. People who exhibit greater EI are able to recognise their emotions, display mindfulness of others’ emotions and reconfigure their thoughts and behaviours in light of this (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). They show superior adaptability of their emotions

to changes in their environment. Individuals with Higher EI are also able to regulate the emotions of people around them (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Goleman (1998) explained EI as “the capacity for organising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (p. 317).

2.3.2 EI Models and Frameworks

Given that “life success” is determined by a mix of IQ and EI (Goleman, 1996), the issue arises regarding whether it is possible to assess EI. Studies on this subject tends to be polarised. There seems to be a prevalent opinion that the fairly complicated and diversified character of EI impedes its accurate evaluation. Goleman (1996) stated: “Unlike traditional IQ tests, there is no single pencil-and-paper exam that measures EI, and there may never be one” (p. 44).

Others seem to share this viewpoint (Steiner, 1997). While it is commonly accepted (Goleman, 1996) that there is no research-based method/test for evaluating EI, the hunt for such a method/test continues.

Due to the complexity of EI and its evaluation, a pencil-and-paper exam may not be suitable for measuring it. “Although there is an abundance of research on each of its EI components, some of them, such as empathy, are best measured by a person’s actual performance on the task,” Goleman (1996) stated.

In examining the measurement of EI, Martinez (1997) drew on Goleman’s findings and indicated that “feedback from superiors and subordinates may be a more acceptable method” than pencil-and-paper examinations.

Three major frameworks have been developed over the past three decades which attempt to model EI. These are the Mayer and Salovey ability model (Figure 2.1), the Reuven Bar-On Emotional Social Index trait model (ESI) (Figure 2.2) and the Daniel Goleman mixed model which combines both trait and ability (Figure 2.3) (Fernandez-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006).

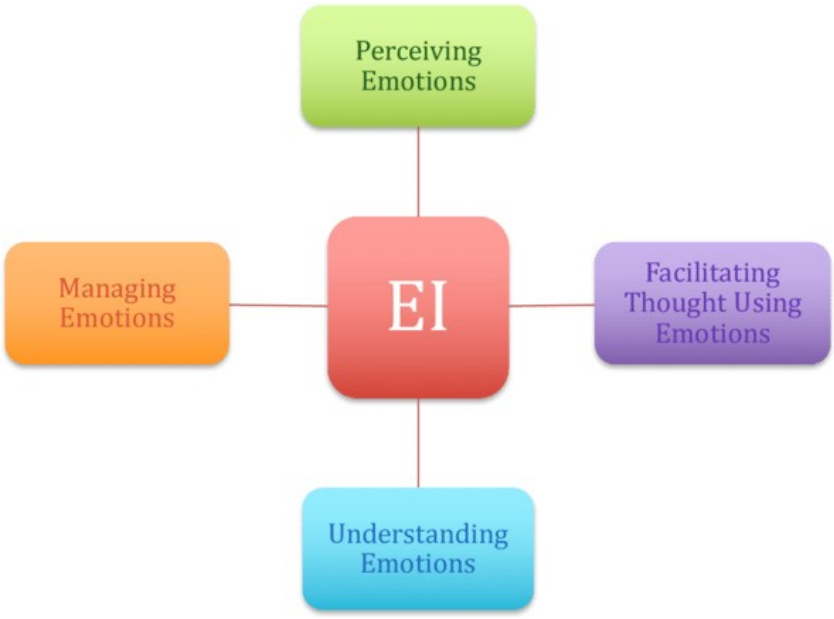

Figure 2: Salovey & Mayer's model of EI

Source: (Salovey & Mayer, 2004)

Salovey and Mayer's model is described by four dimensions of "perception, assimilation, understanding and regulation of emotions" (Salovey & Mayer, 2004). Perception is the ability to distinguish the emotions of self and others. Assimilation is the skill of harnessing emotion in decisions and communications. Understanding emotions is the ability to grasp and appreciate emotions. Emotion regulation is when a leader is able to monitor and control their emotion in their communications.

Components	Sub-Components
Intrapersonal	Self Regard Emotional Self-Awareness Assertiveness Independence Self-Actualization
Interpersonal	Empathy Social Resonsibility Interpersonal Relationship
Adaptability	Reality Testing Flexibility Problem Solving
Stress Management	Stress Tolerance Impulse Control
General Mood Components	Optimism Happiness

Figure 3: Bar-On's model of EI

Source: Baron-On (1997)

Bar-On's (1997) conceptual model includes both social and emotional competencies. These are described by five dimensions which are "intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and general mood" .

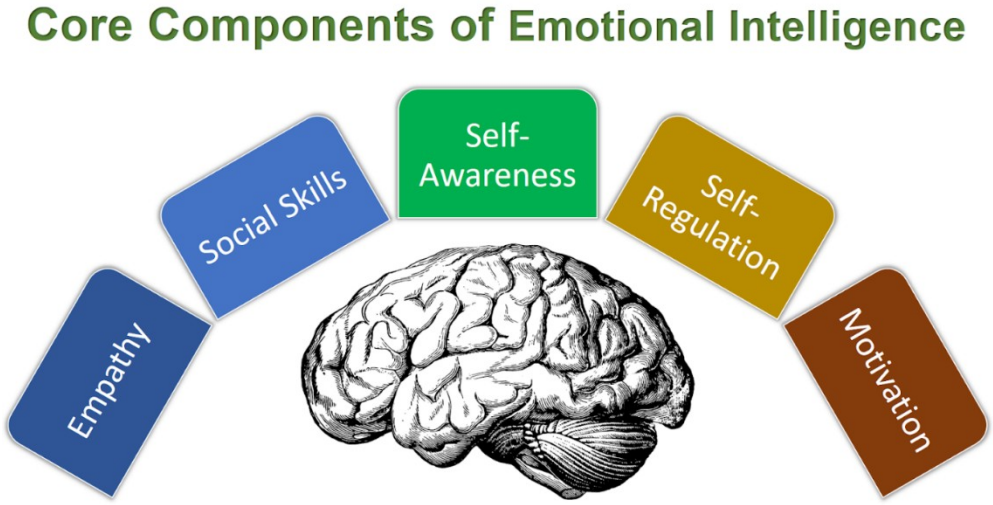

Figure 4: Five dimensions of EI

Source: Goleman (1996)

The diagram is explained below.

1. Self-awareness is the capacity to recognise which feelings, moods, and impulses a person is experiencing and why. It involves a person's knowledge of how his or her emotions affect others.
2. Self-regulation is the capacity to control "one's own emotions and impulses", to maintain composure in potentially explosive situations, and to retain composure regardless of one's feelings.
3. Motivation is the capacity to maintain focus on objectives despite failures, to operate from "hope of success rather than fear of failure", to defer gratification in order to achieve objectives and to embrace change.
4. Empathy refers to the capacity to comprehend the emotions communicated via "verbal and nonverbal" communications, to offer emotional support to those in need, and to comprehend the emotional and behavioural linkages between others.
5. Social skills refers to a person's capacity to cope with difficulties without degrading co-workers, to prevent bad emotions from inhibiting collaboration, and to handle emotional conflict with tact and diplomacy.

2.3.3 Benefits and disadvantages of EI

The research that informs the idea of EI is predominately educational and physiological, but corporate has been the primary arena for the increase of attention in EI and the assertions of its usefulness. However, the underlying research can be seen as limited where most claims are derived using subjective case studies and unsupported models.

Much of the popular book by Goleman (1996) on EI contains instances of educational study results. In an examination of emotion and learning in institutions, Hopfl and Linstead (1997) found that children can at a young age develop key components of EI in the form of interpersonal skills, empathy and social skills.

Other academics who have written on the subject of EI likewise emphasise the significance of IQ and EI in tandem for predicting effective performance outcomes (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Steiner, 1997). The fundamental assertions appear to be as follows: (1) the combination of IQ and EI explains more variance in outcome criteria than IQ itself; and (2) a minimum IQ threshold is required before the coupling of EI results in differential achievement of outcomes.

Unfortunately, the relevance of these key ideas is disguised by hyperbole in much of the popular literature on EI (Hein, 1996; O'Brien, 1996). In this literature, there is a growing consensus that EI is more essential than IQ in and of itself.

Rarely has there been substantial research demonstrating the relationship between EI and workplace effectiveness and performance. Significant research conducted by Kelley and Caplan (1993) on research teams at Bell Laboratories supports the potential of EI to distinguish between excellent and mediocre performance. Even though all squad individuals had extremely high IQs, only a few were recognised as "stars". IQ did not distinguish between "stars" and the rest of the group based on their star ratings. Academic ability was not shown to be a reliable indicator of star rating or success. It was, however, shown that the interpersonal methods adopted by individuals within the group were differentiators. Similar findings were reported in other studies (Martinez, 1997; Thompson et al., 1996).

The idea of "group intelligence comprises both IQ and what has been termed social intelligence", according to other research involving groups (Williams & Sternberg, 1988).

The notion of productive workforces needing more than just high IQ existed for decades. Key studies on team management showed the lack of success of high IQ teams which

led to the development of the “team role model” which incorporated “interpersonal intelligences” within the team (Belbin et al., 1976). Higgs (1997) revealed the significance of “managerial team interaction” procedures in influencing the “performance effectiveness of these teams”. Thus, although not explicitly addressing EI, implicit evidence may be found to reinforce the concept in a team situation.

From a very modest number of research papers to the position of EI as crucial to the creation of an “organisation’s competitive advantage” is a major jump (Harrison, 1997). Hopfl and Linstead (1997) provided a concise summary of restricting effects of the “rational organisational paradigm” on research into substitute methods: “It is almost certain that organisational emphasis on rationality has led to the relative neglect of emotional issues in organisational life” (p. 5)

In the context of management conduct and how it is taught within a company, there is a growing recognition that emotions are an integral element of the learning experience and not only a consequence (Fineman, 1997; Hopfl & Linstead, 1997). According to Fineman, “managerial learning is emotional, and the traditional cognitive approach to management has disregarded the presence and significance of emotion” . This notion could be a contributing reason to the frequent dysfunctionality of the management learning process. Other academics and authors have also investigated the importance of emotional rather than intellectual responses in connection to management success, and they have urged leaders and firms to give due consideration to the emotional aspects of performance (Kolb et al., 1994).

Considerations of organisational environment are grossly underrepresented when examining EI and its possible advantages for both employees and employers. Downing (1997) noted, however, that emotions and learning are framed as part of the corporate environment. Moreover, it is demonstrated that the increase in attention to these emotional aspects is related to increased firm contextual instability and transformation, and it is further noted that organisational change is typically accompanied by emotive or interpretive struggle. The observations pertaining to change management and teamwork give typical instances of the argument for EI based on change (Farnham, 1996; Goleman, 1996). Exemplary testimonials of EI are statements from prominent business people. For instance, Cooper (1997, p. 31) cites Nick Zenuik, a previous head of Ford Motor Company’s executive team: “EI is the competitive edge that is concealed. If you take care of the soft things, the hard things will take care of themselves”. Other writers argue, based on data from other fields of research, that an emphasis on EI can

contribute to the development of a competitive edge (Cooper 1997; Cooper and Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1996).

Weinzimmer et al. (2017) noted that EI is linked to a greater level of work performance as individuals with high EI can control the emotions which directly impact their performance. Goleman (1996) argued that EI accounted for 67% of the skills which are required for superior leadership and further argued that EI is more important than traditional intelligence in this regard. There have also been studies carried out on leader-employee relationships and the effect that EQ has on performance. Leaders who have higher EI can cultivate positive behaviour in their subordinates and create a working atmosphere that is conducive to better employee performance (Vidyarthi et al., 2014). EI has also been used as a predictor for high academic performance. A meta-analysis conducted by MacCann et al. (2020) showed that individuals with higher levels of skills-based EI displayed greater academic performance than lower EI counterparts. In addition, it has been inferred that higher levels of EI in individuals are also linked to enhanced overall well-being (Lenaghan et al., 2007) as well as improved work-life integration for sustainability (Carmelli, 2003). Although most research in this field hails EI as being prosocial, there is also evidence which reveals that individuals with high EI may use their skill by emotionally manipulating others in a self-serving manner (Moeller & Kwantes, 2015).

2.3.4 EI Development

The research assertions suggest that EI is an important differentiator in terms of “life success” and subsequently commercial success (at similar levels of IQ). Then, the question arises as to whether EI is a basic personality trait or can be developed. There is widespread agreement in the academic literature that EI is a trainable feature or ability (e.g. Cooper, 1997; Goleman, 1996; Hopfl and Linstead, 1997; Martinez, 1997 Steiner, 1997). In fact, a significant portion of the literary works is dedicated to discussing techniques or methods aimed at assisting individuals in developing EI (e.g. Martinez, 1997; Farnham, 1996; Harrison, 1997; Cooper, 1997). However, there are concerns regarding the stage of a person’s life where these learnings can prove most fruitful (Goleman, 1996). While the usefulness of learning interventions throughout childhood is supported by review of literature, questions are raised about the effectiveness of learning interventions at later stages of life (Goleman, 1996). Emerging within the framework of management learning is the notion that, despite the fact that the essential

emotional competencies are acquired throughout childhood, they are malleable and hence there is potential for development (Fineman, 1997; Hopfl and Linstead, 1997).

2.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 established an overview of the major constructs of the study being EE and EI. The definitions of EE were explained followed by a study of the conceptual frameworks, the factors affecting EE, different measurement scales used along with the benefits and disadvantages of EE. The review went on to the history and definitions of EI, examining EI models and frameworks, delving into the benefits and advantages of EI and lastly investigating EI development.

CHAPTER 3: HYPOTHESES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to evaluate if a leaders' EI has an impact on their employee's engagement. The impact of each of the five variables which comprise EI will be evaluated against employee engagement. Refer to Figure 5 below:

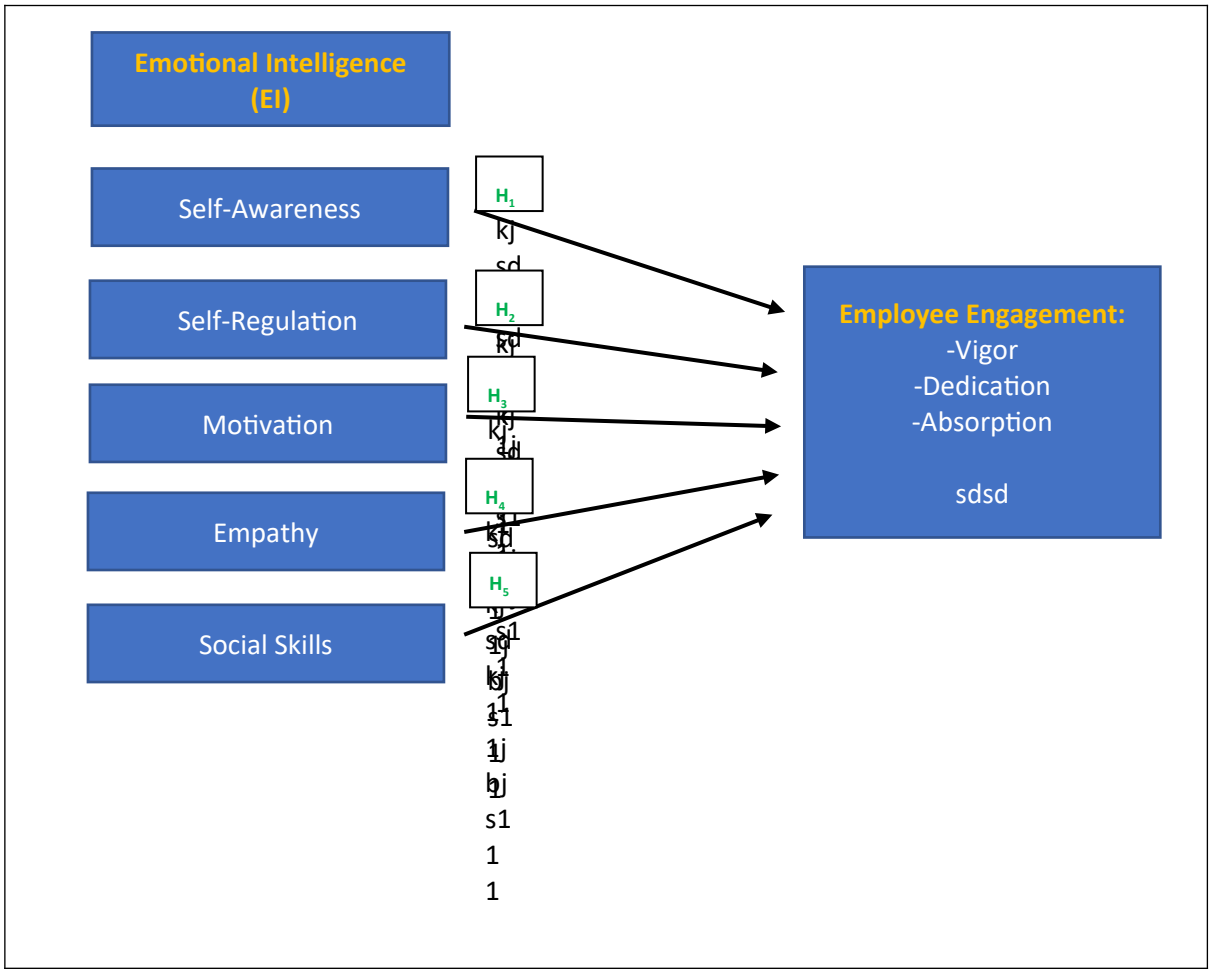

Figure 5: Visual representation of hypotheses

3.2 HYPOTHESIS

3.2.1 Hypothesis 1

The objective of Hypothesis 1 is to determine whether a relationship exists between a leaders' self-awareness and employee engagement.

H_1: There is a relationship between a leaders' self-awareness and employee engagement.

H_0: There is no relationship between a leaders' self-awareness and employee engagement.

3.2.2 Hypothesis 2

The objective of Hypothesis 2 is to determine whether a relationship exists between a leaders' self-regulation and employee engagement.

H_1: There is a relationship between a leaders' self-regulation and employee engagement.

H_0: There is no relationship between a leaders' self-regulation and employee engagement.

3.2.3 Hypothesis 3

The objective of Hypothesis 3 is to determine whether a relationship exists between a leaders' motivation and employee engagement.

H_1: There is a relationship between a leaders' motivation and employee engagement.

H_0: There is no relationship between a leaders' motivation and employee engagement.

3.2.4 Hypothesis 4

The objective of Hypothesis 4 is to determine whether a relationship exists between a leaders' empathy and employee engagement.

H_1: There is a relationship between a leaders' empathy and employee engagement.

H_0: There is no relationship between a leaders' empathy and employee engagement.

3.2.5 Hypothesis 5

The objective of Hypothesis 5 is to determine whether a relationship exists between a leaders' social skills and employee engagement.

H_1: There is a relationship between a leaders' social skills and employee engagement.

H_0: There is no relationship between a leaders' social skills and employee engagement.

3.3 CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 set out to present the five research hypotheses which are core to this study and provided a framework to view the potential relationships between the construct variables.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methodology of this study.

4.2 CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Purpose of Research Design

This study intended to assemble quantitative data on the constructs to understand if there is a relationship between EI of leaders and Employee engagement. This research, therefore, followed a descripto-explanatory approach (Roberts-Lombard & Petzer, 2018). This research did not intend to advance into the area of new theory development and therefore cannot follow an explanatory approach (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.2.2 Philosophy

The research philosophy chosen to direct this study was positivism (Johnstone, 2014). The research intended to study the observable phenomenon and perform investigations and analyses on these phenomena. There are numerous bodies of work covering these constructs and the intention was to investigate causal relationships between these constructs (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

4.2.3 Approach Selected

A deductive research approach was adopted and directed by the positivist philosophical framework adopted. The research involved the testing of theories and a deductive stance was taken in the relationship between the theory and research (Bell et al., 2019).

4.2.4 Methodological Choices

A single method approach, more commonly known as the mono-method was adopted (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Data was gathered via a single method as this was deemed most appropriate to the population being tested.

4.2.5 Strategy

A research strategy of surveys in the form of structured questionnaires was performed as a data collection tool. This was aligned with the descripto-explanatory approach adopted (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). This method allowed for the inclusion of a wide population as part of the study and leant toward being more efficient while curating accurate data, especially considering the limitations of Covid-19.

4.2.6 Time Horizon

Longitudinal studies gather data on the study over an extended period of time and can be quite time-consuming (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Due to the time limitations of the research, a cross-sectional time horizon was adopted to gather data at a single point in time. Previous similar studies also made use of the cross-sectional time horizon (Rahim et al., 2002)

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.3.1 Population

The population is the targeted group that is included as part of this study (Krishnaswami & Satyaprasad, 2010). The population consisted of followers employed in a large telecommunications enterprise in South Africa. This included but was not limited to executive directors, management (junior, middle and senior) as well as functional employees. The targeted groups included followers who evaluated their leaders with varying levels of EI. These were ranked based on a 7-point Likert scale measuring EI (Rahim et al., 2002).

4.3.2 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was considered to be “the right person, group or organisation to be studied” (Ghauri et al., 2020). The unit of analysis chosen was leaders with varying EI levels. Their EI was measured as part of the survey to deduce if there was a linkage between their EI and the level of employee engagement of their staff (followers).

The analysis was performed at an individual level and the EI of leaders was evaluated by their followers and not directly by the leaders themselves. These followers indirectly measured the EI capabilities of their leaders within their organisations. This was in line with similar research done on the phenomenon (Xing et al., 2020; Rahim et al., 2002).

4.3.3 Sampling Method and Size

Probability sampling involves selecting a sample by making use of random selection techniques from a complete population list (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). While this may be a preferred and prudent method, it may not be attainable. The population that falls within the ambit of research includes followers from a large telecommunications enterprise in South Africa. Due to the sheer volume of the population and improbability of obtaining a complete list of the population, this method of sampling was inappropriate.

Non-probability sampling was better suited to address the population as a complete list of the population was not available at the time of the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). This study used a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was used by distributing the survey to followers at the researcher's employer; i.e. potential respondents who are managed by people leaders within the organisation. Snowballing was then used to request these followers to forward the survey link to respective candidates within the organisation who fit the requirements of the study.

Similar studies were reviewed and used as a benchmark to determine a suitable sample size for this study (Xing et al., 2020)

4.3.4 Measurement Instrument

The measurement instrument used for this study consisted of an electronic online survey. This was created and distributed for editing using the Qualtrix surveying tool.

The study followed a deductive approach and drew on well-established measurement instruments such as the Rahim EQi index and the UWES. Questions for the measurement instrument were sourced from credible journal articles based on a thorough literature review of the constructs. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A consisted of demographic questions designed to gain an understanding of the sample population. Section B consisted of questions designed to understand the people leaders' level of EI. The Rahim EQI index as developed by Rahim et al., (2002) was used to measure EI using a 7-point Likert scale. Section C consisted of questions designed to measure the level of engagement of followers. The shortened version of the Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES) as developed by Schaufeli et al. (2006) was used to measure employees' level of engagement using a 7-point Likert scale (Maurer & Pierce, 1998; Petrides & Furnham, 2006).

4.3.4.1 Employee engagement instrument

This study made use of the UWES which was established by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). In this scale, work engagement is categorised using the dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption. The initial scale developed made use of 24 items measuring the aforementioned dimensions. A study was done by Schaufeli et al. (2006) using a large international database to create a more pragmatic scale for research purposes. This was done to reduce the number of items required in the instrument while maintaining a reliable measurement scale. The result was the shortened UWES-9 scale, used as part of this study, which consists of 9 questions covering the three dimensions

of vigour, dedication and absorption. This scale was regarded as more suitable than the initial longer version of the scale (Kulikowski, 2018). The shortened version was also used to achieve a greater response rate on the survey.

4.3.4.2 EI instrument

Scholars have long debated the most appropriate measurement instruments for EI. There are two schools of thought that emerged from the research on EI.

The first is the ability model which arose from the original definitions of EI in the seminal studies of Salovey and Mayer (1990). This resulted in the development of the Mayer Salovey Caruso EI Test (MSCEIT). The proponents of the ability model argue that the MSCEIT measurement is more “scientifically derived and psychometrically independent” (Nel et al., 2015).

The second school of thought is the mixed model which was derived by Goleman (1996;1998) This is the foundation for the development of the Emotional Quotient Inventory scale (EQI), the Schutte self-report emotional scale (Schutte et al., 1998) and the Emotional Competence Inventory (Sala, 2002). The proponents of the mixed model argue that the measurement scales which hinge on the mixed model are aligned to organisational outcomes and provide better insight into leadership development (Nel et al., 2015).

The Rahim EQI scale takes cross-situational consistencies in behaviour into account (Petrides & Furnham, 2000). It is a scale which is appropriate for the South African context and takes into account aspects of well-being, happiness, personal success and cognitive behaviour (Nel et al., 2015). Between the different variants of the Rahim EQI scale, the 22-item questionnaire is considered both efficient and the best fit for evaluating EI at organisations (Nel et al., 2015). The 22-item Rahim EQi scale was thus best suited for this study.

4.4 SURVEY PILOT STUDY

The survey questionnaire was submitted for ethical consideration and approved prior to being distributed. The ethical clearance approval is provided in Appendix A. After ethical clearance was received, a pilot study was initiated to obtain feedback on the design and appropriateness of the survey. The survey was sent to a small subset of colleagues and 15 responses were received. The results from the pre-test of the survey provided insights which led to enhancements in the survey design and structure. First, the survey

link was tested and was found to be working effectively. The wording of the demographic questions were then adjusted to provide clearer instructions to the respondents. The question relating to the management level of people leaders was changed to tick box inputs as opposed to input cells, based on knowledge of the target firm.

The 15 responses from the pilot study were solely used for development of the final survey instrument. These responses did not form part of the results and analysis for this study.

4.5 DATA GATHERING PROCESS

Data was gathered primarily through the use of the Qualtrix survey platform which is an internet-based application. A link to the survey was distributed to correspondents via online platforms, primarily making used of email lists and WhatsApp. Postal and courier distribution were not considered due to higher costs, low turnaround time and lack of efficiencies in the process. Discrepancies between data collected on digital platforms versus traditional methods were considered and found to be immaterial to the results of the survey (Deutskens et al., 2004).

The data collected was collated for the purpose of this study only and was regarded as primary data. Correspondents' personal details were not collected to adhere to the principle of anonymity.

The researcher made use of professional networks at his current employer and distributed the surveys through the help of people leaders to their employees. A request was made that once complete, the survey should be sent to other followers within the organisation, thus initiating the snowballing process.

The source data was then stored on a Google drive which is a cloud-based storage service with a high level of security through secure passwords and data encryptions.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

4.6.1 Data Transformation and Cleansing

The survey data received was in the form of Likert scales which classifies it as quantitative, numeric and discrete (Wegner, 2016). The Qualtrix platform which hosted the survey allowed the data to be extracted into Microsoft Excel on both an aggregated and individual data level. The Excel file consisted of numeric values for the Likert scales and strings of text for certain demographic questions. The data was coded to facilitate

statistical and descriptive analysis. Refer to Annexure B for the data codebook. The raw data extracted from Qualitrix was then prepared for analysis by coding the data per the codebook.

4.6.2 Missing Data

The data set prepared had certain fields which were missing as a result of respondents not filling them in. For various statistical tests to be performed successfully, the data set needs to be complete, meaning that the data set should not include missing values (Blunch, 2012). Therefore, analysis needed to be carried out into the missing data elements and the best methods of dealing with them.

Missing data can be categorised into three distinct categories which are missing completely at random (MCAR), missing at random (MAR) and missing not at random (MNAR) (Rubin, 1976). The missing data in this study fell into the category of MCAR and the blank cells were not related to a specific value, element or grouping. There are three ways to treat data that falls into the MCAR category. The first is mean substitution, the second is imputation by regression and the third is listwise deletion methods (Olinsky et al., 2003). When less than 3% of data inputs are missing, it is better to use the single mean substitution (Shafer, 1999). The missing data represented less than 2% of data inputs in the study. The mean substitution method was thus used for the data set and the imputed mean was used to replace the missing data as part of the data cleaning process.

4.6.3 Validity

Validity includes testing the precision of the measurement scales used to collect data as part of the study (Hair et al., 2014, pp. 3-4). Although the measurement instruments used for this study were well researched and widely used, they were still validated for the context of this research study. Before any validity tests were performed, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartletts Test of Sphericity were performed to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Validity was confirmed by executing a bivariate correlation test in IBM SPSS to determine internal validity of the scale.

4.6.4 Reliability

For both the EE and EI constructs, the internal consistency of the items measured was assessed through a Cronbach’s alpha statistical test (Lavrakas, 2008). To place

reliability on the measurement scale, a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.7 needed to be achieved (George and Mallery, 2003).

4.6.5 Dimension Reduction

Once validity and reliability tests were complete, factor analysis was used to reduce the construct dimensions for efficient data analysis. As a pre-requisite for factor analysis to be considered, both the KMO and Bartlett's test required outputs of at least 0.5 (Blunch, 2012). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to group questions for descriptive statistics (Hair et al., 2018). The number of loaded components was determined using the eigenvalue rule (Pallant, 2011).

4.6.6 Descriptive Statistics

The demographic information captured by respondents allowed the researcher to gain valuable insights into the behaviour of the elements within the constructs measured as part of the study. The median, mode, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were also evaluated. The results are recorded in Chapter 5.

4.6.7 Hypothesis Testing

The study made use of Likert scales to collect respondents data on the constructs. Likert data that comprises "five or more groupings can be treated as continuous data without impairing the analysis" (Norman, 2010; Sullivan & Artino, 2013). As 7-point Likert scales were used for this study, it therefore met the criteria.

Hypothesis H1 to H5 set out to investigate if a relationship existed between the antecedents of EI (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills) and EE. The study made use of the Pearson's correlation co-efficient to test if a relationship existed between the constructs. Additionally, the strength of the association between the variables was deduced using Cohen's d. A confidence level of 95% was used. These tests allowed the researcher to extract meaningful insights from the data analysis process.

4.7 QUALITY CONTROLS

A pilot study was conducted with a small group of respondents. This was used to determine and improve the quality of the survey questions sent out to respondents. Initial screening questions were performed to ensure that only relevant respondents are included as part of the study. The final survey data extract from Qualtrix was inspected

for missing data items. This was then investigated and appropriate steps were taken in the treatment of missing data.

The suitability of data in terms of sample sizes was determined by comparing it to sample sizes used to make conclusions in other published research (Xing et al., 2020.

4.8 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Based on the extensive literature reviews on the constructs, an assumption was made that a basic relationship between the EI of leaders and engagement of followers exist. Another assumption is that the sample was restricted to the target telecommunications firm when convenient and snowball sampling techniques were used to distribute the survey at the firm.

The first limitation arose due to a leader's EI rank being perceived indirectly by their followers. This may have resulted in a social desirability bias occurring (Nederhof, 1985).

Second, the nature of the research questionnaire being in an online platform resulted in limitations in terms of bias which may affect the strength of findings (Doyle et al., 2016). This may occur as a result of the self-reporting manner of response from participants (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015).

The third limitation arises due to the survey questions in this quantitative study being close-ended to facilitate homogenous responses for ease of coding (Ekinci, 2015).

Additionally, due to time constraints, a cross-sectional method was chosen over a longitudinal study. This creates a bias as results may be affected by certain factors present in the short term that may not be present in the long term and therefore a long-term study may give a fairer view of the phenomenon (Shin et al., 2015). Therefore, the change in EI and employee engagement over time cannot be evaluated.

Lastly, the study also has geographical and industry limitations as initial surveys were sent out to people who were in the immediate professional network of the researcher.

4.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 detailed the choice of methodology, research design and data analysis process. It depicted the methods used to conduct the statistical analysis of the data including descriptive statistics. It then presented the statistical hypothesis tests used for each hypothesis described in Chapter 3. Lastly, the quality controls, assumptions and limitations of the study were discussed.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS/RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the statistical analysis in accordance with the research methodology in Chapter 4. It outlines the data transformations and cleansing before providing an understanding of the demographics of the sample which was surveyed. Reliability and validity tests were then conducted on the measurement instruments included in the survey before performing descriptive statistical analysis on the sample. To conclude this section correlation and regression was performed for each of the five hypotheses.

5.2 POPULATION DESCRIPTIVE

The data collected consisted of 233 responses from the telecommunications sector in South Africa. A total of 29 respondents were removed and not included for consideration as part of descriptive the sample analysis. These respondents have accessed the survey but did not answer any of the questions on the survey and were thus removed. These items therefore did not provide additional data and could be removed without having effect on the results. A population sample of 204 items were thus used for the analysis of the sample population.

5.2.1 Worked in a Virtual Environment

Figure 6 shows the distribution of survey respondents who worked in virtual environment over the past years versus those who have not worked from the office over the past year.

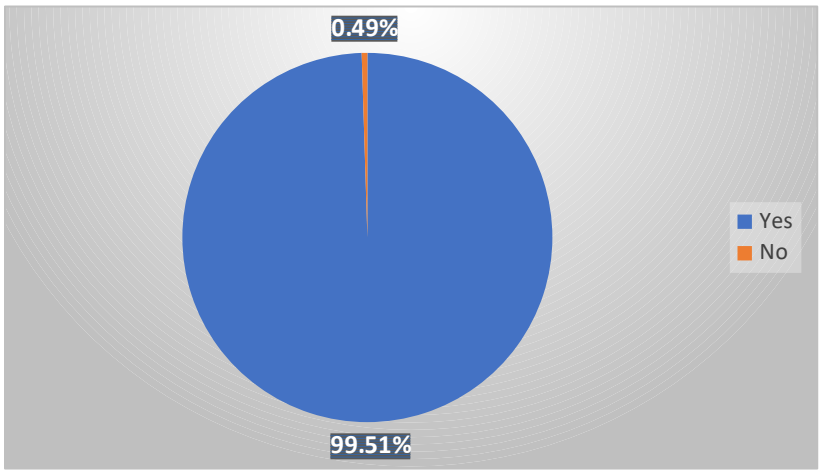

Figure 6: Working in a virtual environment over the past year

The survey responses indicate that 99,51% of respondents have worked in a virtual environment over the past year while only 0,49% have worked from the office. This translates to only one respondent working full time at the employer's office over the past year. This was due to the work from home and hybrid working policy of the target firm.

5.2.2 Age

Figure 7 shows the survey respondents by their age category.

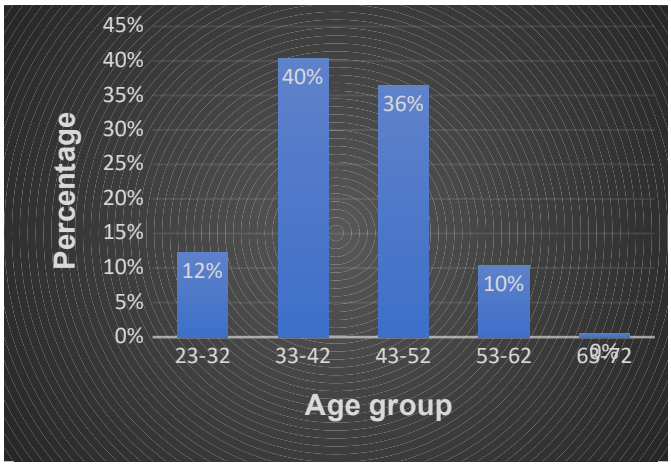

Figure 7: Age distribution

The majority of survey respondents fell into the age categories 23 years to 32 years and 33 years to 42 years. This showed that the majority (76%) of respondents are at a mature age in their career, with a good level of work experience.

5.2.3 Length of Reporting to Line Manager

The survey measured length of time that an employee reported to their line manager. Refer to Figure 8 below for a summary of the responses.

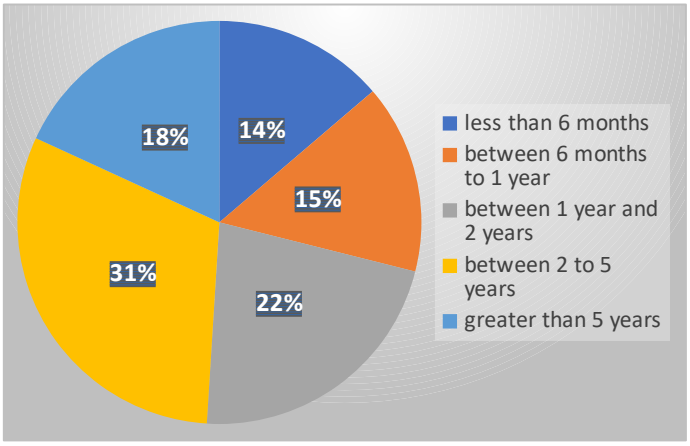

Figure 8: Length of time reporting to line manager

The findings indicate that 22% of the population have reported to their line manager for between 1 and 2 years, 31% have reported to their line manager for between 2 and 5 years and 14% have reported to their line manager for more than 5 years. This shows that 67% (two-thirds) of the population have reported to their line managers for more than 1 year.

5.2.4 Division/Department

Figure 9 shows the divisions which the respondents are employed in within the company.

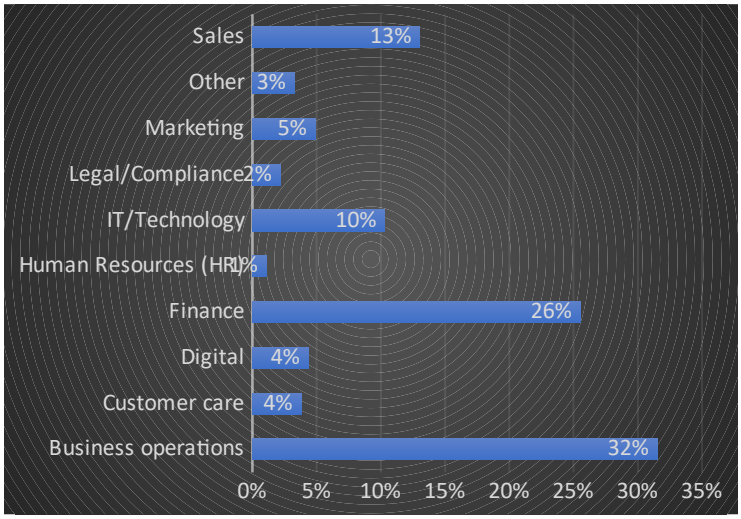

Figure 9: Distribution per division

A large majority work in business operations (32%), followed by Finance (26%), Sales (13%) and IT/Technology (10%). The balance of the respondents was from Marketing, Legal/Compliance, Human Resources, Digital and Customer care. There is however representation of all divisions within the entity within the sample population. The good distribution between departments removes the bias of culture within a certain area.

5.2.5 Management Level of People Leader

The leadership level of the employee's direct manager was surveyed as part of the study.

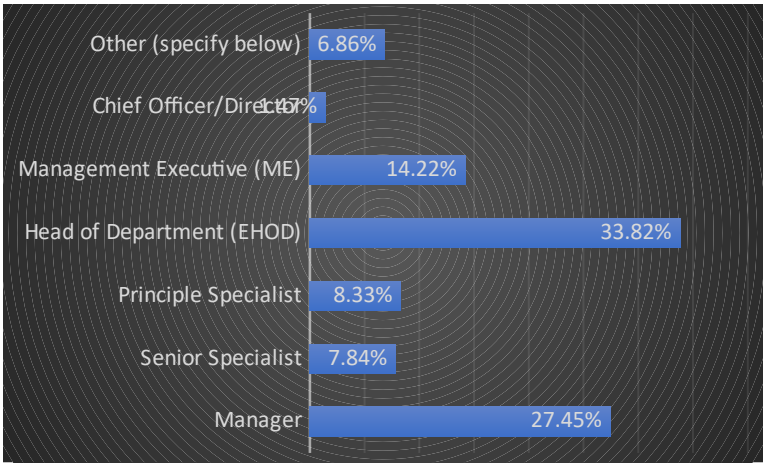

Figure 10: Leadership level

The responses revealed that 33.82% of respondents reported to executive heads of departments, 27.45% reported to a manager, 14.22% reported to management executives, 8.33% reported to principle specialists, 7.84% reported to senior specialists, 1,47% reported to a Chief officer/Director and 6.86% reported to another level of management.

5.2.6 Summary of Demographics

The data collected through the surveys on demographic information revealed that almost all of the respondents (99.51%) have worked from home over the past year, a majority of the respondents were mature and fell within the age category 33 to 52 years (76%) and two-thirds (67%) of the population have reported to their line manager for more than a year. In addition, majority of the responses came from three major divisions which are business operations (32%), Finance (26%) and Sales (13%). Lastly, almost half (44.51%) of respondents report to very senior level people leaders consisting of executive heads of departments, management executives and Chief officers.

5.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

5.3.1 Testing of Constructs for Validity and Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha statistical tool measures the internal consistency of a set of survey questions that correlate (Lavrakas, 2008). The Cronbach's alpha varies between 0 and 1, where the greater number represents a "higher level of internal consistency" and hence reliability within the survey instrument. (Gilem & Gilem., 2003).

Table 7: Cronbach's alpha ranges

Cronbach's Alpha range	Rule of Thumb
> 0.90	Excellent
0.80 - 0.89	Good
0.70 - 0.79	Acceptable
0.60 - 0.69	Questionable
0.50 - 0.59	Poor
< 0.50	Unacceptable

Source: adapted from George and Mallery (2003)

Construct validity is determining whether the survey instrument is collecting information that is intended to be measured on the respective construct (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). As part of the process of determining the validity of the research instrument a bivariate correlation was performed in SPSS on at a construct level. The score of each question was evaluated against the item total score. If there was a significant correlation then the question is deemed valid. All variables would need to have at least one correlation above 0,3. The next step is to run the KMO and Bartlett's test. The KMO test needs to be at least 0,5.

Table 8: KMO values and interpretations

KMO Value	Interpretation
0.90 - 1.00	Marvellous
0.80 - 0.89	Meritorious
0.70 - 0.79	Middling
0.60 - 0.69	Mediocre
0.50 - 0.59	Miserable
0.00 - 0.49	Do not factor

Adapted from Beavers et al. (2013)

The Bartlett's test of sphericity needs to have a significance value of less than 0,05. These indicate that factor analysis is applicable to this data set. The next step is to interpret the total variance explained output from SPSS using the eigenvalue 1 rule to determine how many components will be extracted.

This is essentially the number of factors that the construct was reduced to using factor analysis. The rotated component matrix table from SPSS was then used to determine which items from the measurement scale belonged to each component identified by the component matrix table. This was done by identifying the component with the highest

load value per question. The questions were then categorised into their component areas for analysis.

5.3.2 EE Reliability and Validity

The survey instrument used to measure the levels of employee engagement was the UWES-9 scale which was developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). Table 9 shows the questions used, coding as well as subconstructs targeted by the questions.

Table 9: Employee engagement questions, codes and subconstructs

EE Questions	Code	Subconstruct
6. “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”	EE1	Vigour
7. “At my job, I feel strong and vigorous”	EE2	Vigour
8. “I am enthusiastic about my job”	EE3	Dedication
9. “My job inspires me”	EE4	Dedication
10. “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work”	EE5	Vigour
11. “I feel happy when I am working intensely”	EE6	Absorption
12. “I am proud of the work that I do”	EE7	Dedication
13. “I am immersed in my work”	EE8	Absorption
14. “I get carried away when I am working”	EE9	Absorption

Source: Shaufeli and Bakker (2004)

The Cronbach’s alpha measurement for the above employee engagement scale is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Reliability statistics: employee engagement scale

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.905	.904	9

A Cronbach’s alpha of 0.905 was reported which indicates that the measurement scale displays an excellent level of reliability per Table 10. Thus, the UWES-9 scale is a reliable measure of employee engagement.

As part of the determination of validity the bivariate correlation shown by Table 11 was analysed and all survey items had at least one correlation above 0.3 which deems the UWES-9 scale as valid in measuring employee engagement.

Table 11: Bivariate correlation matrix for EE1 – EE9

Correlation Matrix

		EE1	EE2	EE3	EE4	EE5	EE6	EE7	EE8	EE9
Correlation	EE1	1.000	.743	.626	.509	.665	.413	.310	.293	.308
	EE2	.743	1.000	.734	.602	.658	.492	.378	.434	.353
	EE3	.626	.734	1.000	.748	.698	.532	.439	.560	.467
	EE4	.509	.602	.748	1.000	.683	.439	.572	.670	.422
	EE5	.665	.658	.698	.683	1.000	.582	.454	.503	.422
	EE6	.413	.492	.532	.439	.582	1.000	.452	.425	.428
	EE7	.310	.378	.439	.572	.454	.452	1.000	.635	.328
	EE8	.293	.434	.560	.670	.503	.425	.635	1.000	.476
	EE9	.308	.353	.467	.422	.422	.428	.328	.476	1.000

The KMO and Bartlett's test run and the results are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.882
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1002.606
	df	36
	Sig.	<.001

The value for KMO was 0.882 which falls into the higher range of 0.8–0.89 indicating that the KMO result for this scale is "meritorious." The Bartlett's test of sphericity revealed a result of <0.001 which is less than 0.5 and thus indicating the factors forming the employee engagement scale are satisfactory. The results of the KMO and Bartlett's test indicated that factor analysis is applicable to this data set.

Exploratory factor analysis tests were run in SPSS and the total variance explained in Table 13 was used to determine the number of components that would be derived for EE.

Table 13: Total variance explained for EE

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.162	57.355	57.355	5.162	57.355	57.355	3.306	36.738	36.738
2	1.078	11.979	69.334	1.078	11.979	69.334	2.934	32.596	69.334
3	.726	8.071	77.405						
4	.606	6.736	84.141						
5	.416	4.627	88.768						
6	.338	3.755	92.523						
7	.281	3.127	95.650						
8	.204	2.266	97.916						
9	.188	2.084	100.000						

Based on the eigenvalue 1, Principle EE would be represented by two components as shown in Table 13.

The rotated component matrix table (Table 14) was analysed based on factor loadings to determine which questions fell into which component based on their load value.

Table 14: Rotated Component Matrix for EE

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
EE1	.897	.094
EE2	.861	.254
EE3	.740	.477
EE4	.542	.656
EE5	.749	.433
EE6	.477	.506
EE7	.160	.805
EE8	.200	.863
EE9	.256	.606

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization[a]
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

The test revealed that component one would consist of questions EE1, EE2, EE3 and EE5. Component two would consist of questions EE4, EE6, EE7, EE8 and EE9. Based on the nature of the questions in the respective components, component one would be called vigour and component two would be called dedication for descriptive analysis purposes.

5.3.3 EI Reliability and Validity

The survey instrument used to measure the levels of EI was the Rahim EQI which was developed by Rahim et al. (2002). Table 15 shows the questions used, coding as well as subconstructs targeted by the questions.

Table 15: Questions, codes and subconstructs

EI Questions	**Code**	**Subconstruct**
15. “My manager keeps his or her distressing emotions in check.”	EI1	Self-

EI Questions	Code	Subconstruct
		Regulation
16. “My manager accepts rapid change to attain the goals of his or her group/organization.”	EI2	Motivation
17. “My manager is well aware of which emotions he or she is experiencing and why.”	EI3	Self-Awareness
18. “My manager is well aware of the effects of his or her feelings on others.”	EI4	Self-Awareness
19. “My manager is well aware of his or her moods.”	EI5	Self-Awareness
20. “My manager confronts problems without demeaning those who work with him or her.”	EI6	Social skills
21. “My manager sets aside emotions in order to complete the task at hand.”	EI7	Social skills
22. “My manager understands the feelings transmitted through nonverbal messages.”	EI8	Empathy
23. “My manager remains calm in potentially volatile situations.”	EI9	Self-Regulation
24. “My manager has high motivation to set and attain challenging goals.”	EI10	Motivation
25. “My manager maintains composure irrespective of his or her emotions.”	EI11	Self-Regulation
26. “My manager handles emotional conflicts with tact and diplomacy.”	EI12	Social skills
27. “My manager stays focused on goals despite setbacks.”	EI13	Motivation
28. “My manager provides useful and timely feedback.”	EI14	Empathy
29. “My manager understands the feelings transmitted through verbal messages.”	EI15	Empathy

Source: adapted from Rahim et al. (2002)

The Cronbach’s alpha measurement for the above EI scale is shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Reliability statistics for the EI scale

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.975	.975	15

A Cronbach's alpha of 0.975 was reported which indicates that the measurement scale displays an excellent level of reliability per Table 16. Thus, the Rahim EQI index is a reliable measure of EI. In addition, a Cronbach's alpha was measured for each dimension of the construct being tested. Refer to Tables 17 to 21. This was done to test the reliability of the questions for each dimension of EI.

Table 17: Reliability Statistics for Self-Awareness

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.927	.929	3

Table 18: Reliability statistics for Self-Regulation

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.919	.919	3

Table 19: Reliability statistics for motivation

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.857	.860	3

Table 20: Reliability statistics for empathy

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.931	.932	3

Table 21: Social Skills

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.918	.919	3

The results indicated that the measurement items for self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills displays an "excellent" level of reliability, while the measurement items for motivation displays an "good" level of reliability. As part of the determination of validity the bivariate correlation shown by Table 22 was analysed.

Table 22: Bivariate Correlation Matrix for EE

Correlations

		EE1	EE2	EE3	EE4	EE5	EE6	EE7	EE8	EE9	EE Total
EE1	Pearson Correlation	1	.743**	.626**	.509**	.665**	.413**	.310**	.293**	.308**	.735**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE2	Pearson Correlation	.743**	1	.734**	.602**	.658**	.492**	.378**	.434**	.353**	.807**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE3	Pearson Correlation	.626**	.734**	1	.748**	.698**	.532**	.439**	.560**	.467**	.861**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE4	Pearson Correlation	.509**	.602**	.748**	1	.683**	.439**	.572**	.670**	.422**	.830**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE5	Pearson Correlation	.665**	.658**	.698**	.683**	1	.582**	.454**	.503**	.422**	.848**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE6	Pearson Correlation	.413**	.492**	.532**	.439**	.582**	1	.452**	.425**	.428**	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE7	Pearson Correlation	.310**	.378**	.439**	.572**	.454**	.452**	1	.635**	.328**	.652**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE8	Pearson Correlation	.293**	.434**	.560**	.670**	.503**	.425**	.635**	1	.476**	.721**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE9	Pearson Correlation	.308**	.353**	.467**	.422**	.422**	.428**	.328**	.476**	1	.619**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EE Total	Pearson Correlation	.735**	.807**	.861**	.830**	.848**	.698**	.652**	.721**	.619**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 23: Bivariate Correlation Matrix for EI

		EI1	EI9	EI11	EI SR	EI2	EI10	EI13	EI M	EI3	EI4	EI5	EI SA
EI1	Pearson Correlation	1	.737**	.762**	.898**	1	.649**	.613**	.860**	1	.766**	.823**	.914**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EI9	Pearson Correlation	.737**	1	.877**	.939**	.649**	1	.754**	.909**	.766**	1	.854**	.940**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EI11	Pearson Correlation	.762**	.877**	1	.948**	.613**	.754**	1	.882**	.823**	.854**	1	.953**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EI SR	Pearson Correlation	.898**	.939**	.948**	1	.860**	.909**	.882**	1	.914**	.940**	.953**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184

Continued

		EI6	EI7	EI12	EI SS	EI8	EI14	EI15	EI EM
EI1	Pearson Correlation	1	.824**	.756**	.930**	1	.772**	.890**	.944**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EI9	Pearson Correlation	.824**	1	.793**	.938**	.772**	1	.797**	.917**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EI11	Pearson Correlation	.756**	.793**	1	.915**	.890**	.797**	1	.953**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184
EI SR	Pearson Correlation	.930**	.938**	.915**	1	.944**	.917**	.953**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	184	184	184	184	184	184	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All survey items had at least one correlation above 0.3 which deems the Rahim EQI index as valid in measuring EI.

Table 24: Correlation matrix for EI1 – EI15

Correlation Matrix

		EI13	EI14	EI15
Correlation	EI1	.577	.586	.679
	EI2	.613	.625	.611
	EI3	.620	.600	.716
	EI4	.687	.736	.808
	EI5	.644	.675	.799
	EI6	.639	.743	.804
	EI7	.763	.692	.794
	EI8	.723	.772	.890
	EI9	.680	.608	.730
	EI10	.754	.633	.644
	EI11	.707	.665	.772
	EI12	.708	.710	.800
	EI13	1.000	.700	.721
	EI14	.700	1.000	.797
	EI15	.721	.797	1.000

The KMO and Bartlett's test run and the results are shown in Table 25.

Table 25: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.951
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3319.014
	df	105
	Sig.	000

The value for KMO was 0.951 which falls into the mid-range of 0.90–1.00 indicating that the KMO result for this scale is "marvellous". The Bartlett's test of sphericity revealed a result of <0.001 which is less than 0.5 and thus indicating the factors forming the EI

scale are satisfactory. The results of the KMO and Bartlett's test indicated that factor analysis is applicable to this data set.

Exploratory factor analysis tests were run in SPSS and the total variance explained in Table 26 was used to determine the number of components that would be derived for EE.

Table 26: Total variance explained

Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.104	74.029	74.029	11.104	74.029	74.029
2	.709	4.730	78.759			
3	.592	3.949	82.708			
4	.500	3.333	86.042			
5	.456	3.041	89.083			
6	.252	1.682	90.765			
7	.242	1.611	92.376			
8	.216	1.441	93.817			
9	.199	1.329	95.146			
10	.169	1.125	96.271			
11	.150	1.003	97.273			
12	.124	.827	98.100			
13	.112	.745	98.846			
14	.095	.631	99.477			
15	.079	.523	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotated component matrix
a. Only one component was extracted. The solution cannot be rotated

Based on the eigenvalue 1 Principle EE would be represented by a single component. Therefore, all questions were grouped into one component namely EI.

5.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PER CONSTRUCT

5.4.1 EE Descriptive Statistics

Based on the results of the EFA, EE was separated into to variables i.e., vigour and dedication (Table 27). These were used to perform the descriptive tests.

Table 27: Statistics for vigour and dedication

Statistics

		Vigour	Dedication
N	Valid	184	184
	Missing	0	0
Mean		5.1345	5.673586362556426
Median		5.5000	5.800000000000000
Mode		6.00	6.000000000000000
Std. Deviation		1.24983	.953266259264008
Variance		1.562	.909
Skewness		-.958	-.976
Std. Error of Skewness		.179	.179
Kurtosis		.649	.554
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.356	.356
Range		6.00	6.000000000000000
Percentiles	25	4.5000	5.050000000000000
	50	5.5000	5.800000000000000
	75	6.0000	6.350000000000001

Table 27 shows the results of the descriptive tests run on SPSS. Vigour reported a mean of 5.13, a median of 5.50 and mode of 6.00. In addition, vigour showed a skewness of -0.96 and kurtosis of 0.65. These are within the range of +1.00 and -1.00 and we can therefore conclude that the data exhibits a normal distribution. Dedication reported a mean of 5.67, a median of 5.80 and mode of 6.00. In addition, vigour showed a skewness of -0.98 and kurtosis of 0.55. These are within the range of +1.00 and -1.00 and we can therefore conclude that the data exhibits a normal distribution.

5.4.2 EI Descriptive Statistics

Based on the results of the EFA, the five dimensions for EI loaded onto one component i.e., EI. This was used to perform the descriptive tests. Table 28 shows the results of the descriptive tests run on SPSS.

Table 28: Statistics for EI group

Statistics

EI Group

N	Valid	184
	Missing	0
Mean		5.329118159499486
Median		5.833333333333335
Mode		6.000000000000000
Std. Deviation		1.336613555735403

Statistics

EI Group

Variance		1.787
Skewness		-.895
Std. Error of Skewness		.179
Kurtosis		.931
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.356
Range		6.000000000000000
Percentiles	25	4.616666666666666
	50	5.833333333333335
	75	6.133333333333330

EI reported a mean of 5.33, a median of 5.83 and mode of 6.00. In addition, EI showed a skewness of -0.89 and kurtosis of 0.93. These are within the range of +1.00 and -1.00 and we can therefore conclude that the data exhibits a normal distribution.

5.5 STATISTICAL RESULTS PER HYPOTHESIS

5.5.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one is set out to investigate whether there is an association between a leader's level of self-awareness and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

- Null hypothesis one ($H_0$1): There is no relationship between a leaders' self-awareness and employee engagement.
- Alternate hypothesis one ($H_1$1): There is a relationship between a leaders' self-awareness and employee engagement.

A Pearson's correlation co-efficient was performed using IBM SPSS on these two constructs. The results of this test are shown in Table 29 below:

Table 29: Correlations for hypothesis 1

Correlations

		EE Total	EI SA
EE Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.529**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	184	184
EI SA	Pearson Correlation	.529**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The test result indicates a significance value less than 0.05 ($p<0.001$). This shows that there is a positive association between a leader's self-awareness and the level of employee engagement of their workforce. The strength of this association was deduced through the use of Cohen's D. The Pearson correlation value of 0,529 is greater than 0,51 and therefore represents a strong correlation. Therefore, we can conclude that a there is a strong significant positive correlation between a leader's level of self-awareness and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

Based on the above the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

5.5.2 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis two is set out to investigate whether there is an association between a leader's level of self-regulation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

- Null hypothesis one ($H_0 2$): There is no relationship between a leaders' self-regulation and employee engagement.
- Alternate hypothesis one ($H_1 2$): There is a relationship between a leaders' self-regulation and employee engagement.

A Pearson's correlation co-efficient was performed using IBM SPSS on these two constructs. The results of this test are shown in Table 30.

Table 30: Correlations for hypothesis 2

Correlations

		EE Total	EI SR
EE Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	184	184

EI SR	Pearson Correlation	.445**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The test result indicates a significance value less than 0.05 (p<0.001). This shows that there is a positive association between a leader's self-regulation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce. The strength of this association was deduced through the use of Cohen's D. The Pearson correlation value of 0,445 is between 0,31 and 0,50 and therefore represents a moderate correlation. Therefore, we can conclude that a there is a moderate significant positive correlation between a leader's level of self-regulation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

Based on the above the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

5.5.3 Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 set out to investigate whether there is an association between a leader's level of motivation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

- Null hypothesis one ($H_0$3): There is no relationship between a leaders' motivation and employee engagement.
- Alternate hypothesis one ($H_1$3): There is a relationship between a leaders' motivation and employee engagement.

A Pearson's correlation co-efficient was performed using IBM SPSS on these two constructs. The results of this test are shown in Table 31 below:

Table 31: Correlations for hypothesis 3

Correlations

		EE Total	EI M
EE Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.526**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	184	184
EI M	Pearson Correlation	.526**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The test result indicates a significance value less than 0.05 (p<0.001). This shows that there is a positive association between a leader's motivation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce. The strength of this association was deduced through the use of Cohen's D. The Pearson correlation value of 0,526 is greater than 0,51 and therefore represents a strong correlation. Therefore, we can conclude that a there is a strong significant positive correlation between a leader's level of motivation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

Based on the above the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

5.5.4 Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 is set out to investigate whether there is an association between a leader's level of empathy and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

- Null hypothesis one ($H_0$4): There is no relationship between a leaders' empathy on and employee engagement.
- Alternate hypothesis one ($H_1$4): There is a relationship between a leaders' empathy and employee engagement.

A Pearson's correlation co-efficient was performed using IBM SPSS on these two constructs. The results of this test are shown in Table 32 below:

Table 32: Correlations for hypothesis 4

Correlations

		EE Total	EI EM
EE Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	184	184
EI EM	Pearson Correlation	.480**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The test result indicates a significance value less than 0.05 (p<0.001). This shows that there is a positive association between a leader's empathy and the level of employee engagement of their workforce. The strength of this association was deduced through the use of Cohen's D. The Pearson correlation value of 0,480 is between 0,31 and 0,50 and therefore represents a moderate correlation. Therefore, we can conclude that a

there is a moderate significant positive correlation between a leader's level of empathy and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

Based on the above the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

5.5.5 Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 is set out to investigate whether there is an association between a leader's level of social skills and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

- Null hypothesis one ($H_0$5): There is no relationship between a leaders' social skills on and employee engagement.
- Alternate hypothesis one ($H_1$5): There is a relationship between a leaders' social skills and employee engagement.

A Pearson's correlation co-efficient was performed using IBM SPSS on these two constructs. The results of this test are shown in Table 33 below:

Table 33: Correlations for hypothesis 5

Correlations

		EE Total	EI SS
EE Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.490**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	184	184
EI SS	Pearson Correlation	.490**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	184	184

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The test result indicates a significance value less than 0.05 ($p<0.001$). This shows that there is a positive association between a leader's social skills and the level of employee engagement of their workforce. The strength of this association `was deduced through the use of Cohen's D. The Pearson correlation value of 0,490 is between 0,31 and 0,50 and therefore represents a moderate correlation. Therefore, we can conclude that a there is a moderate significant positive correlation between a leader's level of social skills and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

Based on the above the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 exhibited the results of the data collection and analysis elements. It then presented the population descriptives followed by reliability and validity resting of the constructs. In addition, the descriptive statistics per construct was shown along with the statistical results per hypothesis.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 is set out to discuss the results based on the data collected. It goes on to discuss the results of the descriptive statistics and statistical analysis done on the constructs. Additionally, it discusses the results of the hypothesis testing performed. These results are compared and contrasted to the outcomes of current literature which was covered in-depth in Chapter 2. The objective of this research was to determine if there is a relationship between situational leadership and the collective commitment aspect of strategic agility, and, if so, whether EI moderates this relationship.

6.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Table 34 summarises the results which were exhibited in Chapter 5.

Table 34: Summary of the results

Section	Sub-Section	Summary of Results
Data analysis	Data collection and preparation	From the survey sent out, a total of 233 respondents accessed the survey. 203 respondents filled out data entries within the survey. Of the 203 respondents who filled in data, 19 had a significant amount of missing data which was relevant to the study and thus removed. This led to a final sample size of 184 items
Population descriptives	Demographic analysis	The survey requested demographic data from the respondents to help gain insights on the population of the sample. These included information on age, length of reporting to line manager, work department, management level of people leader and whether or not they have worked in a virtual environment over the past year.
Statistical analysis	Reliability	Reliability was confirmed using the Cronbach's alpha statistical tool to determine the level of internal consistency
	Validity	Validity was confirmed using exploratory factor analysis using a bivariate correlation test
	Dimension	The KMO and Bartlett's tests revealed that the

Section	Sub-Section	Summary of Results
	reduction	factorised variables were viable and satisfactory
	Descriptive statistics	The mean, median and mode of constructs were evaluated
	Normality	The results of the Skewness and Kurtosis test revealed that the data exhibits a normal distribution
Testing of Hypothesis	H1	The Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a significant positive correlation between a leader's level of self-awareness and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.
	H2	The Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a significant positive correlation between a leader's level of self-regulation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.
	H3	The Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a significant positive correlation between a leader's level of motivation and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.
	H4	The Pearson's correlation test showed that there is a significant positive correlation between a leader's level of empathy and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.
	H5	The Pearson correlation test showed that there is a significant positive correlation between a leader's level of social skills and the level of employee engagement of their workforce.

6.3 DATA COLLECTION

The sample size used for the study consisted of 184 respondents. There were 203 respondents that filled out demographical information. After this point 19 of the 203 opted out of the survey resulting in 184 respondents completing the survey in its entirety.

6.4 OVERVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey was designed to collect data on five demographic data elements. These comprised of whether the respondent had worked in a virtual environment over the past year, the age of the respondent, the length of time the respondent had reported to their line manager, the division in which the respondent was employed and the management level of their people leader.

The results indicated that 99,51% of respondents had worked in a virtual environment over the past year. This translates to 183 of the 184 respondents working in a virtual environment. The reason for this may be due to the flexible working arrangements afforded to staff by the target firm. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the target firm instituted policies which allowed only 5% of staff to work from the office to reduce the spread of Covid promote staff well-being.

The data revealed that 40% of the population fell within the 33- to 42-year age group and 36% between the 43- to 52-year age group. Therefore 76% of the population fell between the ages of 33 to 52 years. This shows that most of the population is mature with a high level of work experience. It demonstrates that the sample population would have had extensive experience in engaging with many leaders of varying EI levels and can provide valuable insights to the study.

The survey findings indicated that 22% of respondents had reported to their people leader for between 1 and 2 years, 31% had reported to their people leader for between 2 and 5 years and 14% had reported to their line manager for more than 5 years. Therefore 67% (two-thirds) of the sample population had reported to their people leader for more than a year. This shows that the respondents had had a considerable period of time to gauge the EI competencies of their line managers through work experiences. The respondents would have sufficient time working with their line managers to observe and interact with the variables in this study.

The survey also requested that the respondent fill in the department that they worked in. The results showed that a majority of the sample population worked in business operations (32%) and finance (26%). These departments are considered fast-paced and have a high degree of stress attached to them which may have had an influence on the level of employee engagement and the level of perceived EI of leadership.

Lastly, the management level of the people leader was requested from respondents. The results showed that 33,82% of respondents reported to executive heads of departments

and 14,22% reported to management executives. Therefore, almost half of the population were reporting to a people leader who was at the executive level of management. People who are in an executive position would have developed mature leadership styles through their years of experience. Many of them would have been through firm-mandated training to develop their EI through leadership skills and have experience on how to foster engagement. This may have had an effect on the results of the study.

6.5 OVERVIEW OF CONSTRUCTS

6.5.1 Employee Engagement (EE)

From the literature review in Chapter 2, an in-depth knowledge of the concepts of EE and EI have been dealt with. A brief overview of this understanding is provided below.

Various scholars have defined EE from different perspectives. The four main categories for these definitions are: EE is a multi-faceted construct; EE is a form of dedicated willingness; EE is a positive state of mind; and EE is the opposite of burnout.

Under the multi-faceted perspective, EE is seen as “self-expression of individuals physically, intellectually, and emotionally in the context of the workplace” by Khan (1990). It is also seen as involving both feelings and actions (May et al., 2004), being a blend of “commitment, loyalty, productivity, and ownership” (Wellins & Concelman, 2005), consisting of “knowledge, emotion, and conduct” (Saks, 2006). Cha (2007) noted it as work involvement which includes physiological, cognitive and emotional condition components while Bakker (2011) noted EE as a pleasant, energetic emotional disposition with elements of vigour and high levels of contribution. Further to this Liu (2016) mentioned five key dimensions to describe EE, namely, “initiative, loyalty, effectiveness, identification, and commitment.”

Under the dedicated willingness perspective, Fang et al. (2010) described EE as a sensuous engagement which focuses around employee contentment, including a feeling of self-accomplishment at their job. Xie (2006) described EE as a worker’s devotion to a profession, encompassing diligence, commitment to the business, loyalty to their employer and self-assurance.

Literature further describes EE as a positive state of mind. Central to this study, Schaufeli et al. (2002) describe EE as a pleasant, satisfied mental position related to one’s job consisting of “vigour, dedication and absorption.” Harter et al. (2002) defined EE as a “person’s interest in, contentment with, and excitement for work”, and Zeng and Han (2005) explained EE as a

persistently optimistic emotional condition which creates an inspiring feeling about one's profession which is characterised by pleasing, satisfying and encouraging work encounters.

Lastly, EE was perceived as the "opposite of burnout". In this category, Maslach et al. (2001) defined EE by a worker's enthusiasm, involvement and effectiveness, while Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) described "vigour and dedication as polar opposites to the dimensions of fatigue and pessimism which are normally used to characterise burnout".

There were three frameworks explored as part of the study. The first was the needs satisfaction framework. This framework theorised that EE exists in work environments where employees are provided with a sense of meaningfulness in their jobs, a sense of psychological safety as well as having availability of resources in job fulfillment. The second framework reviewed was the JDRM framework. This posited that work ecosystems are classified into two main categories of job demands and job resources (Bakker et al., 2005). Job demands are requirements of a function such as pressure, heavy workloads and organisational factors. Job resources are the components which help workers attain their work goals and help grow and develop the employee (Bakker et al., 2005). The last model researched was SET, which modelled EE as a reciprocal concept of mutual exchange between the employee and employer (Masterson et al., 2000). Employees may sometimes feel obliged to go above and beyond expectations based on wanting to reciprocate actions by their employer.

The UWES scale used for this study was seen as the superior scale for the measurement of EE based on its extensive use in scholarly studies. It is widely used in practice and measures items of "vigour, dedication and absorption".

6.5.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI)

The popularisation of EI in workplaces has been attributed to the work of Daniel Goleman in his book titled *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (Goleman, 1996).

The definitions of EI span a few decades as scholars are still debating certain attributes pertaining to the complex concept. Many terms have been used to describe attributes of EI including "emotional literacy" (Steiner, 1997); "emotional quotient" (Cooper, 1997); "personal intelligences" (Gardner, 1993); "social intelligence" (Thorndike, 1920); and "interpersonal intelligence" (Thorndike, 1920). Goldman (1997) described EI as "knowing what you are feeling and being able to control them without letting them overwhelm you". Matinez (1997) described EI as "an array of non-cognitive talents, capacities, and

competences that impact a person's capacity to deal with external factors and stresses". There were, however, two definitions which were central to this study which encapsulate the salient features of EI. The first is Salovey and Mayer (1990) who described EI as "the ability to recognise, regulate, and utilise emotions that drive moods, feelings, and behaviours". The other significant definition was coined by Goleman (1998) explaining EI as "the capacity for organising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships".

Although scholars have not reached consensus on the best way to measure EI, and some support the idea of EI being incapable of measurement, three well-known frameworks were reviewed. The first was the Mayer and Salovey ability model which is best described as having four dimensions, namely, "perception, assimilation, understanding and regulation of emotions" (Mayer et al., 2004). The second framework was Bar-On's (1997) model of EI which characterises the concept as having five dimensions, namely, "intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and general mood". The last model reviewed which underpins this study is the Goleman's (1996) five-factor model which defines EI as having five key core components, namely "Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills".

EI has been known to have great benefits to individuals for their personal and professional growth and the nascent question is around whether we can develop higher levels of EI. There is however alignment between experts in the field that EI can be developed by individuals (e.g., Cooper, 1997; Goleman, 1996; Hopfl & Linstead, 1997; Martinez, 1997 Steiner, 1997). Some studies have raised questions on whether EI can only be developed as part of childhood (Goleman, 1996). However, management studies support the notion that even though EI capabilities are acquired during childhood, they can be developed over a lifespan (Fineman, 1997; Hopfl and Linstead, 1997).

6.6 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

6.6.1 H1 There is a Relationship Between a Leaders SA and EE

The hypothesis intended to determine the existence of a relationship between the self-awareness of leaders and the employee engagement of their employees. The results of the Pearson correlation revealed that there is a positive correlation between SA and EE. Therefore, the relationship between SA and EE is deemed to be significant.

6.6.2 H2 There is a Relationship Between a Leader's SR and EE

The hypothesis intended to determine the existence of a relationship between the self-regulation of leaders and the employee engagement of their employees. The results of the Pearson correlation revealed that there is a positive correlation between SR and EE. Therefore, the relationship between SR and EE is deemed to be significant.

6.6.3 H3 There is a Relationship Between a Leader's Motivation and EE

The hypothesis intended to determine the existence of a relationship between a leader's motivation and the employee engagement of their employees. The results of the Pearson correlation revealed that there is a positive correlation between Motivation and EE. Therefore, the relationship between Motivation and EE is deemed to be significant.

6.6.4 H4 There is a Relationship Between a Leader's Empathy and EE

The hypothesis intended to determine the existence of a relationship between the empathy of leaders and the employee engagement of their employees. The results of the Pearson correlation revealed that there is a positive correlation between Empathy and EE. Therefore, the relationship between Empathy and EE is deemed to be significant.

6.6.5 H5 There is a Relation Between a Leader's SS and EE

The hypothesis intended to determine the existence of a relationship between the social skills of leaders and the employee engagement of their employees. The results of the Pearson correlation revealed that there is a positive correlation between Social Skills and EE. Therefore, the relationship between SS and EE is deemed to be significant.

Past research has linked EI with a multitude of positive outcomes. Cherniss et al., (2006) indicate that EI is a predictor for "performance, job effectiveness, objective performance outcomes, and workplace success". Brown (2014) explained that management with high EI promote productive job environments. Leaders with high EI "emphasise solving problems, rather than focusing on who is at fault". In addition, they are "more committed to careers and satisfied with jobs, enjoyed a better balance between work and family, and [are] less likely to leave organisations" (Carmeli, 2003). Freedman and Stillman (2016) noted that it "may be essential to differentiating world-class organisations in an increasingly complex and competitive marketplace".

"Properly managed emotions influence productivity by encouraging trust and loyalty" (Cooper, 1997). "Individuals with higher EI are more successful, develop better interpersonal

relationships, lead more effectively, and enjoy better health" (Schutte et al., 2001). In addition Individuals with greater EI have "higher scores for empathy, self-monitoring, social skills, greater cooperative responses toward partners, more desire for inclusion and affection" (Schutte et al., 2001). Lastly, Goleman (2001) posited that management with high EI develop a "nurturing and encouraging working environment for employees".

6.7 CONCLUSION

Chapter 6 outlined the summary of the results from the statistical tests performed in Chapter 5. It went on to discuss the key demographics, the descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing. In addition, a summary of the constructs was provided as an overview of key elements in relationships established.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 outlines the key findings which have come from the study. It goes on to discuss the consequences for businesses and management. Theoretical implications for scholarship are then discussed. Further to this, the limitations of this study is discussed and the chapter then closes by expanding on future areas for research.

7.2 KEY FINDINGS FROM STUDY

The study followed its objective of determining if there is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence of leaders and the employee engagement of their followers. The dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, empathy and social skills) of leaders were tested against the level of employee engagement of their subordinates. Refer to chapter 3 for the hypotheses. The research instrument was evaluated to ensure its fit for purpose within the South African context and was found to be adequate (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Rahim et al., 2002).

There were 5 major findings from the study. The first was that there is a significant relationship between leadership self-awareness and emotional intelligence. This shows that when leaders have knowledge of and can recognise their emotions or emotional state, it can result in their employees having higher levels of EE through their interactions. This may be because the leader is able to decipher their strengths and weaknesses due to their heightened awareness (Goleman, 1998).

The second major finding is that there is a significant relationship between leadership self-regulation and emotional intelligence. This shows that when a leader develops their ability to control their emotions, it can result in higher levels of employee engagement. This may be so as the leader can think clearly before taking actions which may lead to more trust from employees while enhancing leadership integrity (Goleman, 1998).

The third major finding is that there is a significant relationship between leadership motivation and emotional intelligence. This shows that when leaders are relentless in the quest for attaining organisational goals with vigour and commitment, their employees are more engaged. This may be due to a higher level of self-efficacy that is attained through increased motivation, morale and belief in achievement of ambitions (Goleman, 1998).

The fourth major finding from the study is that there is a significant relationship between the empathy of leaders and the employee engagement of their workers. This shows that when a leader is able to understand the emotions of the employees and modify their interactions

with them, this can result in high engagement from their employees. This level of empathy can also result in higher staff retention and thereby reduce the levels of great resignation and quiet quitting (Lumpkin & Achen, 2018).

The fifth major finding is that there is a significant relationship between the social skills of leaders and the employee engagement of their workers. This shows that when a leader improves their relationship management and network building skills, it can result in higher engagement from their staff. This may be because the leader is able to develop a sense of common ground with their employees (Goleman, 1998). Social skills are an amalgamation of the other factors of EI and is enhanced through the development of those factors (Lumpkin & Achen, 2018).

7.3 BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the global economic landscape which created instability in business environments while creating new levels of competitiveness within sectors (Ahammad et al., 2020; Karr et al., 2020). In these tough environments, businesses need to have levels of flexibility and seek out new ways to endure and survive (Doz, 2020). These conditions have led to mega trends like the great resignation and quiet quitting which have resulted in both low performance and high employee turnover at companies (Stein et al., 2021; MacDonald, 2022). These issues can be circumnavigated through higher employee engagement in the workforce (Harter et al., 2002). Bennet (2001) concluded that having higher EI in the leadership team is an important factor that impacts EE.

In light of this, companies should create management development plans which include elements which target and advance the EI capabilities of the leadership teams (Boyatzis, 2008). This plan should specifically target the 5 dimensions of EI as presented in this study as self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman, 1996).

The next step that corporates should take is within the area of recruitment when hiring potential managers. The organisation’s hiring process should, in addition to assessing a candidates role fit, evaluate their EI capabilities. HR departments should thus include interview questions to assess the EI of potential hires. When management with higher EI are pursued, it can lead to both greater firm performance and better employee retention (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2022).

Lastly, organisations could include both EI and EE elements in their annual employee surveys to gauge the levels of EI of managers and EE of staff members. In addition, their

performance KPIs of management could include EI competencies which can be measured and monitored over time.

The results of this research are significant for businesses and management to gain better insights into enhancing employee engagement within teams at organisations.

7.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Past research has shown that EI is an important skill for management in improving their leadership skills (Barry & Plessis, 2007). The leadership capabilities, in turn, play an important role in cultivating EE (Wallace & Trinka, 2009; Shuck & Herd, 2012). Different leadership styles have also been shown to have varied effects on EE (Milhem et al., 2019).

Although scholars have not gained consensus on the best mode of EI, they do however agree that “awareness of one’s emotions and the emotions of others” is significant factor for EI (Cherniss et al., 2006).

This study has shown that all five dimensions of Goleman’s (1996) model of EI are significant in influencing EE in subordinates. This has implications not just for the professional environments but strong implications for academia. The benefits of higher levels of EI have been extensively covered under Chapter 2. Being cognisant of these benefits, EI training and development could be implemented as part of school and university curriculums to enhance the EI of individuals long before they enter the organisational environment.

7.5 LIMITATIONS

Some of the possible elements which could have potentially impacted the results of this study are outlined below.

The research adopted a non-probability, convenience sampling method which could result in the problem of not being able to generalise the findings because of the technique’s susceptibility to sample bias. This means that the data and findings of this study cannot be extrapolated to a larger population (Vehovar et al., 2016).

The study also adopted a cross sectional time horizon as opposed to a longitudinal study due the time constraints. Data was thus gathered at a single point and not over a period. A longitudinal study would have shown the effect of growth in EI of management and the resultant impact on their subordinates’ EE.

The research study was conducted during the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic which could have had an effect on leadership EI as well as followers’ EE levels. This could have had an impact on the way respondents approached the survey.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between a leader's EE and the effect this may have on the EE of their workforce. The study was successful in observing the dimensions through statistical tests involving the 5 dimensions of EI (self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, empathy and social skills) and the construct of EE. The study concluded that each of the dimensions of EI has a significant relationship with EE.

Further research could be conducted to investigate the reasons for the EE levels in this study being significantly higher than the EE that has been reported at the country level.

Future studies could involve assessing management's EI and workers' EE at a point in time and then introducing an element of training and development on EI components of management. After providing sufficient time for the training and development to take effect, the EI and EE scores could be re-assessed to evaluate the effect of the training and development on EE scores of workers.

The study was exclusively performed within a single large telecommunications firm and it may be relevant to broaden the scope of the study to other industries and markets to assess whether the results are replicable or sector-specific.

The study could also be conducted once the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant effects have passed to determine if the findings would be true in a post-crisis period.

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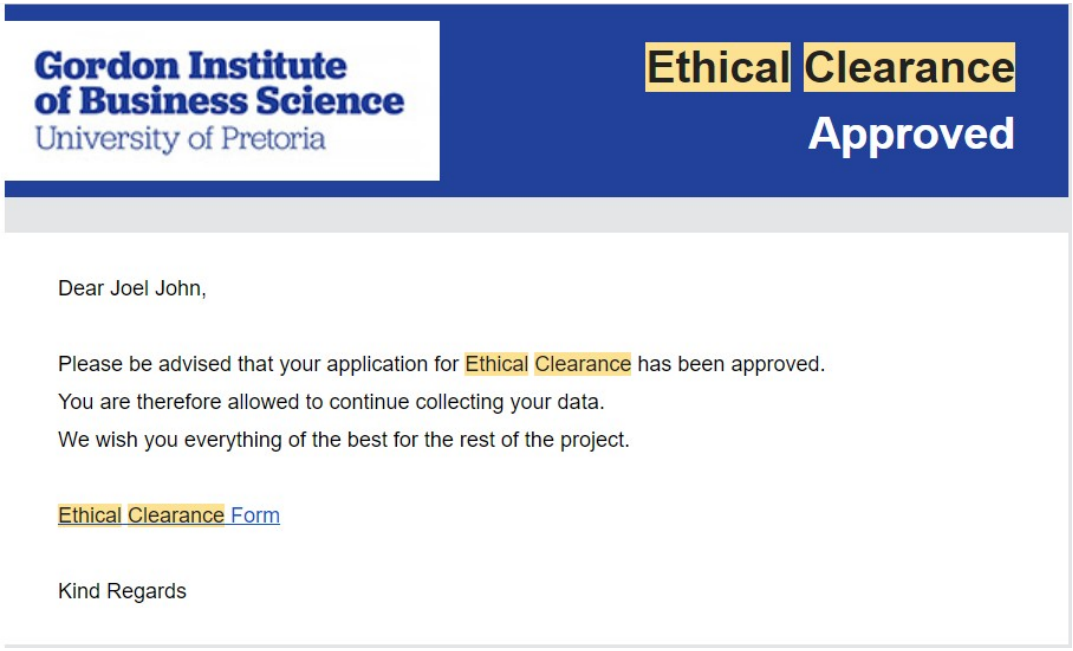
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



GIBS ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM 2021/22

G. APPROVALS FOR/OF THIS APPLICATION

When the applicant is a student of GIBS, the applicant must please ensure that the supervisor and co-supervisor (where relevant) has signed the form before submission

STUDENT RESEARCHER/APPLICANT:

29. I affirm that all relevant information has been provided in this form and its attachments and that all statements made are correct.

Student Researcher's Name in capital letters:	JOEL MALCOLM JOHN
Date:	08 Aug 2022
Supervisor Name in capital letters:	ANTHONY WILSON-PRANGLEY
Date:	08 Aug 2022
Co-supervisor Name in capital letters:	
Date:	08 Aug 2022

Note: GIBS shall do everything in its power to protect the personal information supplied herein, in accordance to its company privacy policies as well the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013. Access to all of the above provided personal information is restricted, only employees who need the information to perform a specific job are granted access to this information.

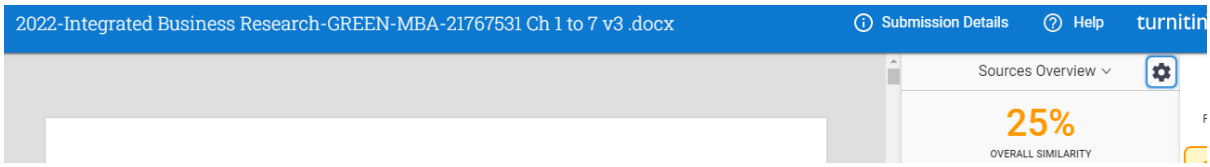
Decision:

Approved

APPENDIX B: DATA CLEANSING CODEBOOK

Code Book		
EE Questions	**Code**	**Subconstruct**
6. At my work, I feel bursting with energy	EE1	Vigor
7. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	EE2	Vigor
8. I am enthusiastic about my job	EE3	Dedication
9. My job inspires me	EE4	Dedication
10. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	EE5	Vigor
11. I feel happy when I am working intensely	EE6	Absorption
12. I am proud of the work that I do	EE7	Dedication
13. I am immersed in my work	EE8	Absorption
14. I get carried away when Iâ€™m working	EE9	Absorption
EI Questions	**Code**	**Subconstruct**
15. My manager keeps his or her distressing emotions in check.	EI1	Self-Regulation
16. My manager accepts rapid change to attain the goals of his or her group/organization.	EI2	Motivation
17. My manager is well aware of which emotions he or she is experiencing and why.	EI3	Self-Awareness
18. My manager is well aware of the effects of his or her feelings on others.	EI4	Self-Awareness
19. My manager is well aware of his or her moods.	EI5	Self-Awareness
20. My manager confronts problems without demeaning those who work with him or her.	EI6	Social skills
21. My manager sets aside emotions in order to complete the task at hand.	EI7	Social skills
22. My manager understands the feelings transmitted through nonverbal messages.	EI8	Empathy
23. My manager remains calm in potentially volatile situations.	EI9	Self-Regulation
24. My manager has high motivation to set and attain challenging goals.	EI10	Motivation
25. My manager maintains composure irrespective of his or her emotions.	EI11	Self-Regulation
26. My manager handles emotional conflicts with tact and diplomacy.	EI12	Social skills
27. My manager stays focused on goals despite setbacks.	EI13	Motivation
28. My manager provides useful and timely feedback.	EI14	Empathy
29. My manager understands the feelings transmitted through verbal messages.	EI15	Empathy
7-point likert	**Code**	
Strongly disagree	1	
Disagree	2	
Somewhat disagree	3	
Neither agree nor disagree	4	
Somewhat agree	5	
Agree	6	
Strongly agree	7	

APPENDIX C: TURNITIN REPORT



APPENDIX D: CONFIRMATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING

Blue Diamonds Professional Editing Services (Pty) Ltd
Polishing **your** brilliance
Email: jacquibaumgardt@gmail.com
Website: www.jaybe9.wixsite.com/bluediamondsediting

30 November 2022

Declaration of professional editing

The impact of leaders' emotional intelligence on employee engagement: A South African Telecommunications study

Joel John

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency and referencing style. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 400 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

As the copy editor, I am not responsible for detecting, or removing, passages in the document that closely resemble other texts and could thus be viewed as plagiarism. I am not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party subsequent to the date of this declaration.

Sincerely,

Baumgardt

Dr J Baumgardt
UNISA: D. Ed. Education Management
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Copy Editing
University of Cape Town: Certificate in Corporate Coaching
Full member: Professional Editors Guild (BAU001)
Intermediate member: Chartered Institute of Editors and Proofreaders (CIEP 21858)