

Research Proposal

An Analysis into the Health and Wellbeing of Workers at Home and Organised Based Working With Particular Reference to Emotional Intelligence

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aims

The aim of the dissertation is to critically compare home and organised based working around the time of the Covid-19 pandemic with particular reference to emotional intelligence. The researcher will discuss and critically evaluate the wellbeing conditions of employees especially how the pandemic changed the dynamics of wellbeing and what initiatives managers and organisations took to address this and combat and elevate work related stress. There will be an investigation of emotional intelligence in leadership and its link to recognising changes in the behaviours of employees.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives to be included in the dissertation are:

- Compare approaches to home and organisation-based working before, during and after the Covid pandemic
- Using secondary and primary research to discuss the support given to the health and wellbeing of employees because of the Covid 19 pandemic
- Using secondary and primary research to critically assess the use and benefits of emotional intelligence for employees to cope with changes
- Provide recommendations on best practices on the use of emotional intelligence and support for home workers post-Covid-19 pandemic.

1.3 Background and Rationale

1.3.1 Background

More and more organisations are taking on a proactive role to support employee wellbeing. Initiatives in assisting employees such as physiotherapy, counselling, and access to a GP around the clock all aid in employee wellbeing and fitness to work. Embracing a preventative approach should be in every organisation in the UK due to the positive outcomes it reaps for example health and wellbeing measures can aid in building resilience and productiveness in the workplace. Advances such as technology can be an advantage allowing jobs to be more accessible and flexible, but the risk is not to let devices steal attention during out of hours which could negatively impact wellness (CIPD, 2020). Companies that truly champion mental health of employees can attract and retain talent which is beneficial for the organisation and individuals especially in such a competitive recruitment market and company culture is vital. It is essential to place mental health of employees at the heart of a strategy for long term growth (McIntyre, 2021). Emotional intelligence (EI) is a valuable skill for both personal and professional growth and can help with wellbeing outcomes such as empathy, helping employees cope with challenges and enhance self-regulation and communication skills with colleagues. Positive

relationship building through EI will increase a culture of collaboration and reduce burnout (LinkedIn, 2023).

1.3.2 Rationale

Despite an increase in workplace health and wellbeing initiatives year on year, sickness absenteeism is at its highest in a decade. Non-working factors such as family commitments and health issues are amongst the most common reasons for stress related absence and according to the respondents of the CIPD report (Altruist, 2023) half of employees experienced or are currently experiencing 'long covid'. The challenges reported by CIPD included:

- Managers lacking skills- top challenge across all sectors is a lack of managerial confidence and skills to support wellbeing. Though 67% felt managers were bought to the idea of wellbeing, only 3 in 10 organisations provide training or guidance for line managers to support workers and 37% reported management style was a key stress indicator
- Lack of employee engagement- a third reported employee engagement as problematic but under half of the respondents did seek feedback from those employees to support their wellbeing initiatives. Most engagement activities were affected by time constraints and 67% of respondents cited heavy workload as a cause of stress absence
- Wellbeing activities not strategic – organisational wellbeing does not have a formal workplace business plan and strategy which can be reviewed annually. 29% stated that wellbeing practices were not embedded across departments and only 39% measure employee wellbeing annually and only 28% critically assess the wellbeing outcomes.

The question to be investigated in the study is, has these challenge been addressed or changed since the pandemic because of home working?

1.3.3 Review of key literature

The literature that are to be included as part of the research are books, websites, journals, and articles which provide information on employee-based wellbeing and the benefits and drawbacks of practices or the lack of.

According to ACAS (2022) though employees have responsibilities, employers are responsible for employee health, wellbeing, and safety whether that be working remotely or in the workplace. Employee responsibilities include taking reasonable care of organisational health and safety at work. Employees working from home should be in regular contact with their line manager about any mental health, physical or safety risks and any working arrangements that needs to be addressed such as caring responsibilities. Regular communications between employee and manager will encourage solutions. Poor mental health should be taken seriously by

their employer and act proactively to support them effectively. Mental health issues can occur quite suddenly due to specific events in one's life or build up over time. This can include depression and anxiety. Though stress is not recognised as a medical condition it can cause or worsen other health conditions. Signs of a breakdown in wellbeing might not be obvious and it is vital not to make assumptions but possible signs in the workplace include changes in the standard of work or focus, appearing withdrawn and changes to usual behaviour and mood or behaving differently with the people they work with. Spotting these signs are a key focus of this study as such behaviours significantly heightened for remote workers. Employers should regularly chime in with employees on how they are doing and help them to be open and honest about feelings. The sooner there is intervention the sooner help can arrive (ACAS, 2023). Mind (2013) state that 60% of employees felt more motivated and more likely to recommend their companies as a great place to work if the employer were proactive in mental wellbeing support. Mental health is as important as physical wellbeing and can fluctuate up and down and as most time is spent at work it is not surprising that workplace culture and environment can affect wellbeing. Another key focus of the study will be of emotional intelligent employers who recognise organisations perform better where staff are healthy and motivated. Research is continuously showing workers that feel their work is supported and valued tend to have higher wellbeing levels and are more committed to organisational goals. Strong relationship levels of employee wellbeing and business performance is referred to as 'employee engagement'. FTSE 100 companies that prioritise employee wellbeing and engagement outperform the other FTSE 100 by 10%.

2.0 Research Methods/Methodology

2.1 Survey Method

The primary method of collection of data will be conducted through a survey which will be shared via an online portal. This can be accessed through a shared link and all answers will be recorded automatically saving time rather than filling out a hard copy. This data will confirm unbiased assumptions. The questions on the survey will be open and closed ended and recorded as statistical data and will also allow for respondents to provide unanticipated answers (Survey Monkey, 2024). The researcher will devise some open-ended questions which will allow for qualitative analysis so there is a deeper understanding of the scope and implications of remote working.

2.1.1 Research Approach

The researcher has chosen to apply inductive technique to the survey as this approach will assert an arising framework through the analysis of data. The reason for this choice is so that the data collected will be free from bias from any existing theories normally found in deductive reasoning which asserts an existing idea or belief. The inductive reasoning will generate meaningful data by observations, producing patterns and drawing conclusions that will be incorporated into theories. The researcher will not be able to alter the direction of the study once the research has commenced (Indeed, 2022).

The quantitative research approach will be applied in conducting the survey as the results produced will be backed by figures which can be turned into numerical data. The technique will allow for the research analysis to be from a statistical perspective and will be representative of the chosen target market. A survey is well suited to quantitative research and can aid averages and patterns (Qualtrics, 2024). The focus will be placed on jobs that could be done at home or in a workplace setting.

2.1.2 Data Collection

As the dissertation is purely based on workplace health and wellbeing, the research will be predominantly structured around people who are in employment. The criteria to be met to be a participant is employment only. The sample will include employees who have worked pre and post covid whether this be part time or full time. The respondents for the sampling will be residing in the United Kingdom. The respondents will be inclusive of all races, religion, and gender as this bears no significance to the study. Closed ended questions are also easier to complete and provide the researcher with a higher completion rate. The questions will consist of multiple choice and tick box questions as the pre-selected questions will be set by the researcher specific to the chosen agenda (Survey Monkey, 2024).

To ensure the questionnaire's reliability and validity the researcher will test the link works before conducting the primary data collection for research by sending the questionnaire to a sample of the target respondents to check for misunderstandings, errors, or ambiguity.

2.1.3 Ethical Considerations

Regarding the survey, all respondents will consent prior to starting the survey and once done the data will be used for research purposes only and will be protected. The survey will be conducted on a voluntary basis. The researcher will choose a reputable secure platform such as Google Forms (2024) who complies with industry standards and has encryption, GDPR and privacy policies.

2.1.4 Sample

The questionnaire sampling size will be conducted by questionnaire of 50 respondents of mixed ages but all to have a working background. The respondents can contribute to the study remotely via an online survey. This will eliminate the need to process the answers manually. By conducting an online survey will allow for a wider reach of respondents. The sample group have approximately 20 questions to answer, and this should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

The study will also aim to engage with managers and leaders for their perspective with an interview follow up.

2.1.5 Limitation

As the respondents of the survey will be in employment, the survey has limitations however, as the research is focused on the health and wellbeing of employees the sample will influence the data required. There is also a limitation of time as the study is to be completed and submitted on the 5th of July 2024.

2.1.6 Timescale

A Gantt chart (see appendix 1) will be appended to plan and execute tasks at an appointed time frame.

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4.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 Gantt Chart

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Activities	Start	Finish		
2		MY TASKS	☐ START DATE	☐ DUE DATE	☐ ☐ NOTES	☐
3		Start and end of dissertation	8/1/2024	5/7/2024		
4		Research a topic for study	8/1/2024	15/1/2024		
5		Proposal for independant study (1500 words)	15/1/1024	17/2/2024		
6		Conduct secondary research	15/01/2024	3/3/2024		
7		Devise a survey for primary research	4/3/2024	18/3/2024		
8		Distribute Survey to respondents	19/3/2024	26/3/2024		
9		Follow up interviews	26/3/2024	2/4/2024		
10		Analyse data from survey and interviews	23/4/2024	14/5/2024		
11		Complile the dissertation (8000 words)	18/2/2024	5/7/2024		
12		Complete Reflection (500 words)	15/6/2024	5/7/2024		

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