



PERCEPTION OF MANAGERS REGARDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING BY USE OF A DELPHI STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Incorporating emotional intelligence training into managerial development efforts resulted in a notable 13% decrease in employee turnover. The Delphi study addressed a critical gap, revealing that many small utility companies lack a structured emotional intelligence training program for their managers. Employing Goleman and Mayer's framework as the theoretical foundation, the study analyzed participant responses across three rounds of questioning. Eligible participants, possessing at least three years of managerial experience coupled with human resource expertise, were recruited. Through iterative rounds of inquiry involving 18 participants, thematic codes were developed, indicating evolving perspectives. The panel achieved a robust consensus against the efficacy of emotional intelligence training for managers, with a weaker consensus regarding potential participation in companywide initiatives. These findings underscore the imperative of implementing emotional intelligence training within small utility companies, thereby facilitating positive social change.

Key words: emotional intelligence, motivation, small business, managers, employee retention.

INTRODUCTION

The impact on organizations from unmotivated and unsatisfied employees is linked to higher turnover ratios (Cuéllar Molina et al., 2020). Sharma and Tiwari (2023) found that the use of emotional intelligence in manager training lowered employee turnover. The use of emotional intelligence policy is discussed as it relates to small businesses and how it can lower their turnover rates. Emotional intelligence has been linked to reducing employee turnover, higher motivation, and increased productivity in businesses. Previous research in emotional intelligence investigating the issues with the implementation of emotional intelligence policies have been extremely limited. The purpose of this Delphi study is to gain consensus on the importance of having policies that accentuate emotional intelligence in managers inside small utility companies in the state of Georgia. Emotional intelligence has shown to provide significant benefits when implemented in small businesses (Yuntao et al., 2014).

Emotional Intelligence Importance

Goleman (1998) explained in his seminal work that individuals encounter five stages of emotions. These stages include knowing one's emotions (self-awareness), managing emotions (self-management), motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others (social awareness), and handling relationships (relationship management). Emotions and intelligence were once separate fields but are now integrated into one theory of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2012). As with any highly variable subject, such as emotions, it is impossible to have one single accepted theory or definition, which led to the two primary theories developed by Goleman (1998) and Mayer et al. (2012). Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence theorized an individual's emotional intelligence as a social role or function. Mayer et al. (2012) developed a second theory on emotional intelligence that is theorized to be cognitive agility associated with general intelligence.

Cabral et al. (2020) stated that the goal of organizations is to steadily improve production and profit for the company. However, low employee turnover and high motivation link with increased production and profitability. Emotional intelligence is one additional tool for managers to fully utilize employee skills. These skills provide motivation, empowerment, and reduction of turnover (Wang et al., 2023). Dierschow (2022) and Wang et al. (2023) found that emotional intelligence can also take time to develop and demonstrated a clear relationship between employee motivation and lowering employee turnover with increasing production and company profit. The benefits of emotional intelligence are documented in the workplace.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Kurniawan and Susanto (2023) and Raji & Ismail (2023) have shown how the impact of unmotivated and unsatisfied employees links to higher turnover ratios. Yuntao et al. (2014) further showed in their study that the use of emotional intelligence in manager training lowered employee turnover by 13%. The general problem is that emotional intelligence is difficult for management in small businesses to implement. The specific problem is that small companies have no strategy or consensus in place regarding the use of emotional intelligence in policies and training for managers. Mahanta (2015) illustrated the need for a clear perspective on what emotional intelligence can bring to the work environment. Mahanta (2015) showed an increase of nearly 20% on managing a work and life balance of emotions. The increase resulted in higher employee satisfaction when managers in small businesses use emotional intelligence.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative Delphi study is to develop a consensus on the benefits of having policies that accentuate emotional intelligence in managers inside small utility companies in the state of Georgia. Emotional intelligence has been shown to provide significant benefits on lowering employee turnover and increasing employee satisfaction for businesses (Sharma & Tiwari, 2023). The purpose of the Delphi study is the development of a consensus on working policy and training that small utility companies can utilize. Kurniawan and Susanto (2023) indicated employees want or expect emotional intelligence from managers, whereas managers viewed employee's emotions as unrelated to a manager's job duty.

Concept of Emotional Intelligence Training

This Delphi study was utilized to establish a consensus on emotional intelligence training by a

panel of 18 managers in small utility companies in the state of Georgia with no more than one manager per company. The Delphi study was used to develop an effective policy on emotional intelligence training for managers by managers in small utility companies (Diamond et al., 2014).

This Delphi study objective was to establish an expert panel of 18 managers in small utility companies with preferable human resource experience that will try to develop guidelines for EI policy development and implementation. The group answered open-ended questions during the first round. Second round questions were closed-ended as the study tried to form a consensus on the feasibility and reasonability of implementing emotional intelligence training. The Delphi study included three rounds with themes developed from open-ended questions in round one. The themes were used to create the closed-ended questions for rounds two and three.

Consensus is defined as the ability of a group of small business managers to reach an agreement on a working policy. Participants were given questions using an email questionnaire in a three-round study. The Delphi study was a three-round study that stopped when a consensus was formed or at the end of three rounds (Diamond et al., 2014). El-Gazzar et al. (2016) explained that three phases would be conducted, allowing a better understanding of current ideas on emotional intelligence policy in small businesses.

The panel was contacted using an email with all corresponding blind carbon copied (BCC) to keep all respondents' names confidential. The use of identifying respondents by numbers or letters prevented any panelist from knowing any other panelist. El-Gazzar et al. (2016) stressed the importance of confidentiality in Delphi studies to avoid one or more members from dominating the responses. The panel received opportunities to revise earlier answers upon review of replies from other members of the group for round one only. Each round, every panelist was given one week to answer and submit the email questions back to the researcher.

METHODOLOGY

Research Question

This study focuses on managers in small utility companies in the state of Georgia to form a consensus with the use of a Delphi study. The overarching research question is: What level of consensus will the Delphi study achieve among managers in small utility companies regarding an acceptable level of emotional intelligence training for managers in small utility companies?

Research Design

In the Delphi process, participants received questions in a series of rounds. Each round of the study

was delivered by email to participating managers. The managers answered questions and responded to the researcher. After each round, responses were analyzed to identify themes in the data. The questions involved a Likert scale format with respondents having five questions to choose from.

Data analysis consisted of hand-coding answers to each round of questionnaires to develop primary themes. Round one took one week to analyze and hand code data. Then one additional week was used in the development of questions for round two. Themes were coded by hand after round one of the questionnaires. After the coding of data items and themes, questions were in a closed-ended format for round two that panelists were asked to rank in order of importance or significance. Answers to these questions were then utilized to format data for round three in which consensus was achieved (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). Data from round two took one week after all responses were submitted. Data was analyzed for the median and mode of the reactions. Consensus was determined when 90% of respondents reached similar conclusions.

The Delphi Explained

The Delphi study was first created in the early 1950s by two mathematicians named Dalkey and Helmer (Skulmoski et al., 2007). Donohoe and Needham (2009) described the Delphi technique as a tool used in any research form to create an interactive process with the purpose to develop goals, establish policy, predict future events, and for the study of policy in place. The Delphi study is useful in creating policy or agreement on topics when knowledge is lacking regarding the problem. Dalkey and Helmer (1951) argued that using a Delphi study is helpful when knowledge is lacking. Experts help understand lack of knowledge and make aware of the existence of the experience to the experts. In the use of a Delphi study, the essential characteristics of the method are anonymity of participants, controlled feedback, multiple rounds or iterations of the study, and measured group responses (Diamond et al., 2014; El-Gazzar et al., 2016).

In the research, there were two main approaches using the Delphi technique. The first is the classical technique. This technique, as described by Diamond et al. (2014), is the typical three to four round questionnaire that uses an open-ended first round to tailor questions for the remaining rounds. After round one, the researcher developed questions delivered to the panel of experts in an iterative process where experts respond to the questionnaire. After round two, the researcher will compile and analyze information and send it to the panel of experts. Upon review, the group of experts were allowed to modify their initial responses of round two of the questionnaire.

Modification happens during and after each round which provides time to review and revise reactions from the previous round. Changes occurred until consensus is reached. The agreement is a 90% alignment of answers from the panel of experts within a standard deviation of the median. Typically, Mullen (2003) found the need for only three rounds as the most significant amount of consensus. Once the process is complete, the researcher can draw inferences or generalizations from the data analyzed.

The second technique is a modified Delphi technique that relies upon review of the literature and guidance from experts in the field to formulate the first round of questions. This approach does reduce the time involved in the first round of questions due to the lack of open-ended questions for the panel of experts. The downside is that with limited information on emotional intelligence in small utility companies, the use of this approach was not applicable in this study.

RESULTS

Data Results

This study was conducted online exclusively with contact by phone was conducted on a limited number of participants for the study. Due to the nature of this study limited information was gathered on participants outside of them confirming they met the requirements outlined in the participant recruitment letter. If any conditions existed that influenced the participants in any way, they remained unknown to the researcher.

Demographics

In this study, a panel of 18 experts was the aim for gathering to keep with the use of a Delphi study. The participants did not submit any data to age, sex, or identifying markers. The only requirement was that each participant have three years' experience as a small utility company manager. Sandrey (2008) stated in reviewing current literature it notes that often time's participants cannot meet all three rounds of requirements, therefore, having a more considerable number of participants on hand ensures that the end goal gives the minimum number of participants needed for validity and reliability.

In this regard, the start of the study may require 18 participants. The use of randomly selected participants is not allowed in a Delphi study (Diamond et al., 2014). The need for experienced and suitable participants recognizes as the standard for a Delphi study. The criteria for each participant to be included in the study ensures quality participants for the Delphi study (Diamond et al., 2014; Skulmoski et al., 2007).

This study required that all participants have experience as a manager to qualify as a study participant. Experience in the field of study leads to the selection of individuals who have met the selection

criteria process outlined in the participant selection process. The use of a pilot study is invalid in this research. Sandrey (2008) found that when a Delphi study is conducted in an area with limited experts, the use of a pilot study cannot be conducted.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis of the data is further analyzed. The first round of the Delphi study focused on three open ended questions. The responses were hand coded, and three themes were derived from the results. The data from the first round led to the creation of two questions for round two, which follow the Likert format. Participants were asked to answer based on agreeing or disagreeing. The final round was developed using the responses from round two to narrow down the questions based on participant responses.

Hand Coding of Round One Responses

The following responses from respondents were used in the hand coding of the interview responses. The participants did not submit any data to age, sex, or identifying markers. The only requirement was that each participant have three years’ experience as a small utility company manager. The study identified 25 participants at first with only 20 agreeing to the first round of the study. Of the 20 only 18 responded within the period given for answering questions from round one of the study. From these 18 responses three major categories were developed. In each of the categories, the repeated usage of the terms such as time constraints, manager’s duty, and benefits were used. Below is each category and examples of the sentences used by participants. The following questions were asked of participants during the first round of the study:

1. What is your definition of EI?
2. What is the perception of managers about EI?
3. How does the EI of managers in small utility companies influence duties?
4. How is EI used by managers in small utility companies during daily operations?

These four questions led to three distinct themes that were present in the responses. The following themes became apparent during the coding of the data: time, manager’s duty, and benefits versus disadvantages. Each theme was explored further with responses given from participants. A word cloud was used to help show main themes that surfaced when coding the data. See figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Word Cloud



Time. From the responses given by participants the primary theme pulled was time. This came in the form of participants worried about not being able to fulfill current duties, too many duties to have extra time for EI, and extended workloads in small utility companies, leaving no time for EI management.

Table 1 Delphi Theme Time

Theme	Participants	Responses
Time	P1	a. If I spent all my time worrying about my employees’ problems, I wouldn’t get anything done
	P2	b. Managers in small companies are faced with workloads that extend beyond what a larger company manager may have to deal with
	P4	c. This leaves less time to perform such task as being HR on top of all our duties.
	P6	d. Most small companies I have worked with HR does an excellent job of performing EI duties for employees as most of my work history has been in companies under 100 employees freeing up time to perform jobs assign to me.
	P8	e. Having to do time management, ordering supplies, scheduling, dealing with customers, and more leaves no time for dealing with emotions of employees outside what is required to perform their duties.
	P9	F As managers we have many jobs to do and do not have time to do extra that is not really proven to work
	P10	g. I just don’t feel we as managers have the time to get extra training for problems outside our job duties and scope of our company production
	P11	h Time constraints limit how much managers can utilize such training like EI
	P12	i. In small companies we must wear many hats as managers, workers, motivators, scheduling, and ordering inventory leaving little time for managing emotions.
	P14	j. This leaves many of us managers without time to incorporate emotional support for employees that may not be our job in the first place

Manager’s Duty. The following table 2 illustrates that the second common theme was Emotional Intelligence and is outside of manager’s duty. The participants responses demonstrated the importance of overloaded with responsibilities currently and felt that adding to that was too much for them. In addition to not having the time to perform these duties they felt that it was not the duty of the managers to begin with.

Table 2. Delphi Theme Managerial Duty

Theme	Participants	Responses
Managerial Duty	P1	a. My management skills have been about numbers, job skills, getting things done as quickly as possible. My goal was to get the job done, no matter what. This left out the emotional part of my life, and the employee's lives
	P2	b. With an additional thing to worry about, it seems production would slow not increase
	P3	c. It could potentially create chaos when trying to assign duties.
	P4	d. To me I believe I utilize EI already as it is a natural ability that makes managers effective
	P5	e. When either learning to be a manager through work experience or schooling EI is just part of being able to recognize potential problems employees may experience
	P6	f. I believe that EI is not really the duty of the managers as problems that cause productivity drops of employees are normally resolved by HR
	P7	g. I do see EI as something that is outside the scope of management unless in HR and receiving special training that we typically don't have time to add to our schedules or workloads.
	P8	h. Outside of our natural ability I do not see extra training as part of managers job duties or scope of our managerial duties
	P9	i. Having to perform duties outside of normal management duties without time to deal with issues that small companies already have a solution for employees through HR
	P10	j. If EI were implemented as a training tool, I believe more managers would get on board with this form of management
	P11	k. Several of the management positions I have been in requires some form of improvement training every couple of years for managers.

Benefits/Disadvantage. The last theme derived from the hand coding was the benefit versus disadvantages of using Emotional Intelligence. Overall, participants felt that having managers add Emotional Intelligence training to their jobs added no benefit but brought about too many disadvantages. In Table 3, these responses are shown for the coding from the open-ended questions from round one of the Delphi study.

Table 3. Delphi Theme Benefits/Disadvantages

Theme	Participants	Responses
Advantage Disadvantage	P1	a. It opens managers up to being taken advantage of by employees
	P2	b. I did not see any increase in operations, but I could be wrong
	P3	c. I think EI is beneficial in life because of the thought process within our lives
	P4	d. To me I believe I utilize EI already as it is a natural ability that makes managers effective
	P7	e. I understand how current technology has led to problems arising in employees on a more daily basis due to receiving bad news, good news, or other issues instantly instead of after the workday.
	P8	f. This increase has resulted in more than usual mood changes in employees, but typically employees are mature enough to still be productive and get through the workday.
	P10	g. I feel it is misunderstood by some but, if proper training were implemented, managers could have a better output from their employees.
	P13	Looking back on some of the tasks I assigned to employees, I can see that my use of EI (in the form of understanding, listening, and empathy) has been helpful

These three categories led me to formulate the next round of questions. Participants answered questions on a Likert scale to determine if a group view of emotional intelligence already exists that may hinder the training of managers in the use of EI. Keywords were identified through repetition of responses. Time and duty became clear from the first level of coding. Participants described benefits or disadvantages that may not have used the exact key work but fell into a similar category.

In addition, the usage of the work skill was often used in describing part of the manager's duty that participants felt negatively about. After reviewing the 15 responses, the three categories used above resulted in the best categories that responses fell into. With this information and using prior research, the questions for round two were formulated to determine if managers have the time, any perceived benefits, and if such training falls within their job duties.

Hand Coding Round Two Delphi Answers

During round two of the Delphi study, there was a total of 18 participants responses. The following is the percentages for each question that respondents answered.

Table 4. Delphi Round Two Questions and Responses

Question	Percent	Percent	Percent
	Agreed	Disagreed	Neither agreed nor disagreed
1. Managers have time to incorporate emotional intelligence training into their schedule	22	73	5
2. Emotional intelligence management is within the scope of manager's duties.	17	78	5
3. Incorporating emotional intelligence training in small business would be beneficial for the organization.	83	12	5
4. Managing employee's emotions should be considered for decreasing key employee turnover rates.	78	10	12
5. You would be willing to pursue emotional intelligence training for your organization.	6	89	5
6. You would be willing to propose the idea of adding emotional intelligence training to your organization.	11	89	

Round Two Results. The table above includes the overall responses from participants that shows there is no need for Emotional intelligence, EI is not beneficial, or the duty of the managers. The results led to a final round of questions derived from previous round responses. These questions led to a consensus from the participants, resulting in over 90 percent agreement from the answers. The next section looks at the last round of the Delphi study and how participants responded to each question.

Hand Coding Round Three Delphi Answers

The following is the final round of Delphi questions and responses. The final round only consisted of five questions, which focused on the first two rounds of responses. As shown in Table 5, a consensus was reached regarding the lack of need for Emotional intelligence as a training tool in small utility companies. The following shows each question and response.

Table 5. Delphi Round Three Questions and Responses

Questions	Percent Agreed	Percent Disagreed	Percent Neither agreed nor disagreed
1. Emotional intelligence is one of many tools that can be used in small businesses to reduce employee turnover and increase employee productivity.	90	5	5
2. Managers should not be responsible for additional emotional support on top of current managerial duties.	95	0	5
3. Emotional intelligence as a companywide training would be a greater benefit than only as tool for managers.	84	5	11
4. Managers should not be required to undertake emotional intelligence training.	90	5	5
5. You would be willing to partake in a companywide emotional intelligence training versus managers only training.	95	0	5

Evidence of Trustworthiness

In every research study, four factors help to ensure that the article is trustworthy. The four factors include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These are qualitative concepts used in describing the level of quality in research findings. In the following section, each topic was addressed according to outline the plan incorporating a solution

to meet the requirements of each subject and the role as a researcher in the Delphi design.

Credibility

The credibility of a research topic is associated with the truthfulness of the article. When conducting a Delphi study, researchers have found that the first round of questions is vital to credible research (Ab Wahid & Grigg, 2022; Diamond et al., 2014;). The first round of questions should be open and broad without leading the panelists down a predetermined path. In addition to the first round of questions, Skulmoski et al. (2007) found that it is essential to have the right panel of experts, correctly communicate requirements of the study to participants, and have the initial set of questions proper for the study.

To address each of the issues, requirements were implemented to meet the expertise of the panelists. Detailed communication procedures for the panelists to ensure communications were fluid and collaborated with experts in addressing the initial questions to help refine the first round of questions. A total of 18 panelists in the study allowed for any participants withdrawing during the study. Skulmoski et al. (2007) found that an appropriate number of participants strengthen the credibility of a Delphi study.

Transferability

Instrument testing in a Delphi study is a vital way of increasing the validity of the study overall. Laupichler et al. (2023) claimed one way of performing this task is through the testing of the instrument in multiple ways. One method of evaluating the device in a Delphi study is through a pilot test for the first round of questions. In this study, the use of emotional intelligence is not researched in small businesses, often eliminating the validity of a pilot study. Clibbens et al. (2012) found that the use of having the panel of experts to validate the researcher's interpretation of crucial factor variables ensures the validity of the study. In this study, the first round of open-ended questions was developed through an analysis of existing research on emotional intelligence and verified through factor variable verification from the panel to ensure the interpretation of the data.

Dependability

Typically, in qualitative research, reliability and validity are subjective (Ab Wahid & Grigg, 2022). In qualitative research, logical measures can be taken to increase the value of research. In a Delphi study, the expert panelist helps conceive the credibility of the study through the integrity of the participants. With the selected participants as experts in small utility companies, reliability and validity could be established of the research.

After each round, a summary of the group's views was provided for the panelists to comment on and change their views. This use of review by panelists ensures the validity of the data by having the experts validate data instead of myself. Detailed descriptions were used throughout the process. Triangulation was performed by each panelist, serving as a data source. Member checking was another validation technique that was performed by each expert reviewing the summary from the other panelists after each round.

Confirmability

Miles et al. (2014) researched that the methods executed in data gathering, analysis, participant selection, and conclusion need to be outlined explicitly by the researcher. In the Delphi design, this allows the researcher to meet the requirements of confirmability. Also, the researcher needs to be aware that they are a facilitator and not a participant. Miles et al. (2014) stated this guideline aids in removing bias from the research as data is collected directly from participants. Donohoe and Needham (2009) found that the Delphi method allows honest and rational expression of opinions by panelist without influence by a dominating panelist. Donohoe and Needham (2009) stated that even a Delphi study is not free from bias as the researcher needs to be critical of analysis misinterpretation. Bias has led to the rationale of the first round of questions established by careful examination of the literature.

Round One Delphi Results

In Table 5, the results of the participant's answers to round one show how each theme was reached. The participants had remarkably similar thoughts and views on how time constraints, managerial duties, and the benefit versus disadvantage of emotional intelligence could be used in their organization. As shown in Table 5, 75% of participants felt that emotional intelligence training was not their duty, the participants did not have the time or the need to implement it, and participants felt that no major advantage would arise from such training.

Round Two Delphi Results

In round two, ten questions were developed based on the results from round one. Table 5 lists the questions with response percentages for each question. As the Table demonstrated, 73% of participant felt that managers did not have time to incorporate emotional intelligence training into their managerial roles. Other key take aways included 78% agreeing that emotional intelligence training falls outside of their managerial duties, 83% agreeing that no benefit would arise from emotional intelligence training, and 89% agreeing they

would not pursue any emotional intelligence training in their organization.

Round Three Delphi Results

In this round of the study, questions were more narrowly defined to gather participants thoughts and beliefs on emotional intelligence training for each theme that was developed in round one. The level of consensus reached in round three was enough to make any further rounds unnecessary (Diamond et al., 2014; El-Gazzar et al., 2016). Overall, participants agreed that emotional intelligence could be a useful tool companywide. However, participants felt that due to their time constraints and current job duties emotional intelligence training for managers was not a benefit or needed. In each round of the Delphi study, the common factors remain consistent throughout the survey. Managers believed that emotional intelligence training for managers was not needed and fell outside their current job duties but remained opened to the idea of a companywide training or policy for everyone to use.

Research Question Results

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that managers are in consensus on a companywide policy for emotional intelligence training. For the primary research question, the goal was to determine if managers could agree on a policy for small utility companies regarding emotional intelligence training for managers. The results demonstrated to the researcher that participants do not want a policy for managers only. However, managers are open to a companywide policy for emotional intelligence training. Table 5 displays the results of the research questions and how participants responded during the survey.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this Delphi study was to gain consensus on the importance of having policies that accentuate emotional intelligence in managers inside small utility companies in the state of Georgia. Emotional intelligence has shown to provide significant benefits when implemented in small businesses (Mahanta, 2015; Yuntao et al., 2014). In this study, emotional intelligence was summarized in the workplace, the research problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, and the research methodology. After conducting the research, my questions were not answered in the way expected, but showed that managers believe that emotional intelligence training is outside of their job duties. The following sections will detail the limitations faced, future recommendations for research, and significance of this study.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this research, impact on organizations was identified from unmotivated and unsatisfied employees link to higher turnover ratios (Cuéllar Molina et al., 2020; Kurniawan & Susanto, 2023; Raji & Ismail, 2023. Yuntao et al. (2014) further indicated in their study that the use of emotional intelligence in manager training lowered employee turnover by 13%. Due to the limited research on emotional intelligence training in small utility companies, this Delphi research's aim was to develop a consensus on small utility companies on the use of emotional intelligence training for managers. The results were that managers believe emotional intelligence training is beyond the scope of their managerial duties, believe they do not have the time to perform such duties, and the benefits of such training do not outweigh the disadvantages such training would impose on their day-to-day job duties.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations are influences that occur which are out of the researchers' control. A limitation of this study involves the participants and if they provide honest answers provided through online survey questions. Diligence and thoroughness on my part as a researcher helped protect against bias. Concentration on the data analysis and comparable results (Skulmoski et al., 2007). Processes to guard against researcher bias can include triangulation using expert panelists, expert response to summaries, and detailed descriptions throughout the entire process. Also, define prior experiences and prejudices before the research. Specific measures were taken when gathering information from participants to help increase the number of honest answers needed to conduct the study with validity.

Another limiting factor was the size of the study. The study was limited to less than 20 participants. A larger population would be necessary to overcome the limitations of the study to further expand on the results. Targeting a small geographic location of only the state of Georgia also limits the study due to differences in managerial styles across different areas of the world. With this in mind, expanding to different geographical locations, larger sample sizes, and different sectors of the work force can overcome the limitations of this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrated that managers perceive they are overworked to the point of not wanting to add any more training, and that managers are not fully aware of the benefit emotional intelligence has been shown to have in the workplace (Mahanta, 2015). For a future study, it would be

recommended to evaluate employee motivation and satisfaction, then compare it after an emotional intelligence training for managers and even employees after a given period of six to 12 months. This can assess the statistical difference that emotional intelligence may or may not bring to small companies. In addition, by comparing motivation of employees and turnover ratios after emotional intelligence has been implemented can lead to advancements in the research.

By conducting hands on training and research, greater impact may be reached compared to online survey conducted in this study. Research and training on the limitations of smaller companies in being fully aware of what emotional intelligence training is or how it works is needed. In this research, participants reached out with no idea on what emotional intelligence is or how it works. A firsthand approach with training can lead to greater awareness and even acceptance from small organizations.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The use of emotional intelligence by managers gives them the ability to motivate and capitalize on an employee's skills. Managers are no longer just giving orders but are expected to teach, guide, and motivate employees (Goleman, 1998; Raelin & Raelin, 2011). Currently, there is limited research regarding the development of emotional intelligence in managers in small utility companies. Wang et al. (2014) stressed that breakthroughs in emotional intelligence are not adequately utilized in managerial training of managers in small businesses.

Wang et al. (2014) also recommended an innovative approach that can give greater insight into how to utilize and realize the benefits of emotional intelligence. This innovative approach may bridge the gap in understanding the level of importance that a manager's emotional intelligence training plays in employee satisfaction. The critical aspect of this study was dependent on a sample group of managers in small utility companies with the aim to form a consensus on emotional intelligence training policy.

The social change aspect of this study is that employees might be able to become more involved in organizations. Cabral et al. (2020) researched that emotional intelligence enables managers to adapt to new cultural and economic changes positively. Employees could provide a more significant impact in their place of work and help bring about innovation and positive social change through their work. Carn (2019) and Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2012) indicated that emotional intelligence accounts for up to 50% of the control variable for employee behavior and showed that employees become better in the workplace, more motivated, and better in the community. The resulting positive social impact is to

improve emotional intelligence training in managers. Increased employee motivation and community involvement can lead to social change in the workplace and the community.

CONCLUSION

It is vital to document the impact of unmotivated employees throughout small businesses. As discussed, the use of emotional intelligence policy in small businesses can lower turnover rates in small businesses. Emotional intelligence has been linked to reducing employee turnover, higher motivation, and increase productivity in businesses (Yuntao et al., 2014). However, in emotional intelligence research thus far investigating the issues with the implementation of emotional intelligence policies have not been done. The purpose of this Delphi study was to gain consensus on the importance of having policies that accentuate emotional intelligence in managers inside small utility companies in the state of Georgia.

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