

Examining Post-Pandemic Behavioural Change in Managing Team Agility: A Study of Team Leaders in Multinational Corporations in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to solicit insights into behavioural change in managing team agility in the wake of the pandemic. The objective is to inform corporations of their transformational strategies according to a redefined meaning of team agility. The mounting competitive pressures from external environments during the pandemic is pressing multinational corporations (MNCs) in Malaysia to swiftly address the daunting challenge in adapting to team agility developments to become resilient to change. Leaders now need to step up and embrace the swift unpredictability at the workplace, hence, requiring team leaders to think and behave differently to effectively manage their teams. The overarching environment is compelling MNCs to obtain a crucial step on ensuring workforces are equipped with the right skills that are paramount to effective leadership in hope of adjusting the team and organisation in becoming more agile. A conceptual framework is put forth to guide the study in identifying the behavioural change that facilitates leaders in orientating team mindset when embracing the evolving meanings of unlearning, teaming, collaboration, agile, and simplicity. These concepts will be re-examined to uncover how leaders now contribute differently now to promote effective leadership for team agility post-pandemic. Qualitative methodology is employed to study behaviour adjustments and new team practices are crystalised. A mixed-mode of data collection is applied where preliminary data will be collected using survey questionnaires to gauge the scope of behavioural changes that have occurred in teamwork from the onset of the pandemic. Team and team leaders in the electrical and electronics industry are identified for sampling as this industry has been the key driver in Malaysia's industrial development for decades. In-depth interviews are then conducted, and findings shall then be triangulation for sense-making and study conclusion.

Keywords: post-pandemic, behavioural change, managing team agility, qualitative

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, there have been many dramatic impacts of the pandemic and the reverberations that it has created across organisations. While the future beyond the pandemic impact is still uncertain, it is seen that thinking in terms of how behaviours are adapting to the required changes to maintain team agility is essential. The pandemic outbreak has impacted businesses of all sizes and industries of various kinds. It is causing increasing disruption and uncertainty across the world (Yee et al., 2020), as well as drastic changes across the global workplaces (Baldwin & Tomiura, 2020). Whether it was at the start of the pandemic when major shifts in working arrangements were required to help curb the initial spread of Covid-19 at the workplace, to the more recent scenarios of finding a suitable style or method in leading and managing adaptable teams, organisations seem to be struggling still in defining the right formula in shaping team leader behaviours that can serve teams towards achieving organisational resilience. In instilling new values in teams to ensure continuous synergy and subsequent change in behaviours, leaders would need to understand how team dynamics have been altered as a result of the changed working arrangement during the pandemic.

The pandemic has caused major shifts in working arrangements as the phenomenon is an unprecedented crisis. It brought about specific challenges requiring organisations to rethink and redesign how people work in teams. Team

leaders are the catalyst for organisational transformation. They need the new right set of skills and traits that are relevant and useful in the ever-increasingly volatile business environment. Organisations require talents that can lead their teams in a redefined manner to carefully brace for stark situations like the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, team leaders must be flexible and nimble in their responses, using methods that suit the current working arrangements in order to help their organisations stay ahead of similar significant disruptions. Team leaders' adaptability to new conducts for leading and managing others can contribute greatly to their organisations' efforts for continual transformation, and sustainability.

The pandemic has rapidly created challenges to many companies operating and business models. MNCs in Malaysia are similarly facing significant challenges with many treading waters from the impact of disruption in productions, as well as supply chain. For organisational transformation to take place, MNCs shall need to first foster behavioural change for workforce adaptability as employees are the engine of any organisation. Chung et al. (2021) state that the pandemic has advocated for behavioural change in leaders and teams, and such change would persist to continue to adapt to the pandemic workplace trends. The post-pandemic concern on employees now is on how organisations have been reactive in addressing the abrupt changes, how employees were compelled to swiftly adapt, and ultimately, on the repercussions of the stopgap measures which have been drastically put in place.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

This study aims to solicit insights into behavioural change in managing team agility in the wake of the pandemic. Ever since the pandemic started, the traditional structures of organisations were broken down, hence, according to Taylor (2021), teams need to speed up their performance state. Managing team agility is crucial not only to organisational resilience when environmental threats arise, but to optimise teamwork and care, and to proactively identify and mitigate risks in organisations' operations (Puriwat & Hoonsopon, 2021). The overarching question in this research seeks to gain an understanding of how the agility methodology, and the application of team agility which was designed and practised to suit business environment requirements such as globalisation, technological advancement, and business sustainability, evolved since the world went into its first lockdown.

In managing behavioural change for team agility, it is essential to identify, develop, and harness the key attributes that are necessary for team dynamics (Aghina et al., 2020). This study proposes to deep dive into factors that facilitate a team leader in changing others' mindsets to enable post-pandemic behavioural changes. The inquiry shall further delve into factors that influence team dynamics based on the elements of a work team. It will look to uncover meanings in behavioural changes that happen during the process for teaming, and collaborating, how agility and the concept of simplicity are applied in the disrupted working arrangements as well as how positive team relationships are fostered for inclusivity against the backdrop of the pandemic workplace trends.

The pandemic has impacted MNCS where 32% of these large corporations faced downtime in their daily operations (EY-Malaysia, 2020). The situation is similarly very dynamic and challenging, if not more, for team leaders of MNCs in Malaysia when managing team agility as the current pandemic environment continues to evolve. As organisations struggle to rapidly adapt, the pandemic revealed that organisations without a formal resilience plan have been deciding "in the dark," and the lack of a centralised strategy have impeded agility when it was needed most (Westby & Lamb, 2020). There is a need to redefine for a set of specific capabilities required in team leaders which are derived from an exercise in clarifying the behaviours that have changed or are likely to change when managing a team during the times of post-pandemic. MNCs in Malaysia as part of the global manufacturing industry are not exempted from the pandemic impact. The findings in this study would be significant for organisations and other industries that would not only want to deal with global uncertainty in contexts of post-pandemic but also have their work teams thrive sustainably. Moreover, post-pandemic studies in behavioural change in managing teams in MNCs in Malaysia are currently scarce.

The whole world witnessed how coronavirus spread furiously like wildfire causing immediate lockdowns across the globe and altering the whole dimension of work life. A post-pandemic normal of working is now taking form as according to Ahlstrom et al. (2020), the changes in technology, social politics, and organisations have initiated the need for longer-term strategies to navigate the competitive landscape. A new normal is further described by Hitt et al. (2020) as unlikely to be a static equilibrium because the pandemic shock has triggered another unexpected dynamic. Such leaves organisations in dire need of new and more flexible strategies to achieve adaptive efficiency. Certain aspects of the business environment will change considering the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Organisations shall need more flexible resources and capabilities to compete in the

differently changing competitive landscape. These substantial uncertainties require dynamic team leaders' capabilities to create successful behavioural change in managing team agility transformations that would lead to operational improvements in the long run. Aghina et al. (2020) elaborate that customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and operational metrics could translate into financial uplift if organisations are no longer emphasising solely on productivity gains and cost savings as how most traditional organisations have been doing all the while. A radical change made on work practices and culture where team leaders and organisations promote support and provide the tools needed for effective team agility would contribute significantly towards sustainably effective business operations.

Many practical organisational problems and management issues are managed through a rapidly changing environment and competition by creating and maintaining flexible and resilient organisations (Rosenhead et al., 2019). In face of these situations, managing team agility has become more important than ever before. A highly effective team demonstrates sustained performance, team resilience, and ongoing vitality. The goal in change management is for teams to adapt and endure where the focus is on improving the whole structure to inspire self-organisation and to regard change as a process of natural adaptation. As given a complex environment, the only way that complex organisations can be successfully controlled is through exploiting the capacity of a system for self-organisation and self-regulation. Research shows that effective teams boost team dynamics successfully based on three effects which are the situation, team dynamics, and teammates (Tannenbaum & Salas, 2020). In addition, Taylor (2021) explains that individuals are strongly influenced by their relationships with other individuals in the organisation. Building on the systems and complexity theories, an agile organisation is one that can move quickly and easily and is able to think quickly and clearly to respond to the changing environment.

Gaps in the Literature

This qualitative research is designed to provide insights to organisations on behavioural changes in managing team agility. Work practices have pivoted in different ways in response to the pandemic crisis. Therefore, it is timely to further the knowledge base on team leader's contribution towards team practices to be able to continually support the dynamics required for an organisation's resilience. This research shall be addressing areas where team leaders react to uncertainty and in identifying positive approaches that can place organisations in a more stable position. Taylor (2021) posits such problems are important to address in the current global situation. Additionally, prior research is limited in defining the importance of agile and transformational benefits for organisations to move to an agile operating model (Brosseau et al., 2019).

Initiatives to address post-pandemic organisational complexities are unique to each organisation. Nevertheless, understanding the behavioural changes in how teams are led and managed can bring insights that can inform organisations on how to establish or re-establish team dynamics in order to remain agile in the new normal. Based on secondary research, there have been many studies conducted on agile workplace and its relevance to organisational resilience and team dynamics. However, there are gaps in journals articles covering areas of post-pandemic behavioural change in managing team agility. A redefinition of the concept of team agility according to how work arrangements have evolved against the backdrop of the pandemic shall be able to address the gaps in the literature on current developments during post-pandemic. It is important to not only see what works but also identify gaps and be actively involved in discussions on how to close those gaps (Handscorn et al., 2020).

Organisations need to think systematically about what they have learned, evaluate practices that have worked and those that have not worked during post-pandemic, and subsequently decide which ones that organisations need to embrace sustainably. They can ask what distinguishes teams that can manage well with challenges from the most struggling teams. Practices by teams that can overcome challenges on an ongoing basis in their daily operations and business models would also be the highlights in this study as there is a need for organisations to look for more agile teams to draw inspiration from. While this research focuses on a specific industry, the research presented has the potential to address a real and solvable problem across all sectors, while enhancing the existing knowledge base for behavioural change in managing team agility initiatives.

Dimensions of Managing Team Agility

In this study proposal, a research conceptual framework is designed to determine the behavioural change that facilitates leaders in orientating team mindset when embracing the evolving meanings of unlearning, teaming, collaboration, agile, and simplicity. These established concepts pertaining to change and team dynamics will be relooked to uncover how leaders contribute differently now in promoting effective leadership for team agility post-pandemic. The following Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual framework where its operationalisation would explain how behavioural change in team leaders could reorientate their teams towards becoming more agile. The conceptual framework based on Taylor (2021) five key dimensions to make organisations agile will be

applied in this study from the angle of how sudden change affect team dynamics in order to uncover how leaders contribute differently now to promote effective managing for team agility. Ultimately, this study seeks to understand within the post-pandemic context how teams adapt to the new normal. The study process is a comparative analysis of team dynamics in pre-pandemic and post-pandemic work arrangements.

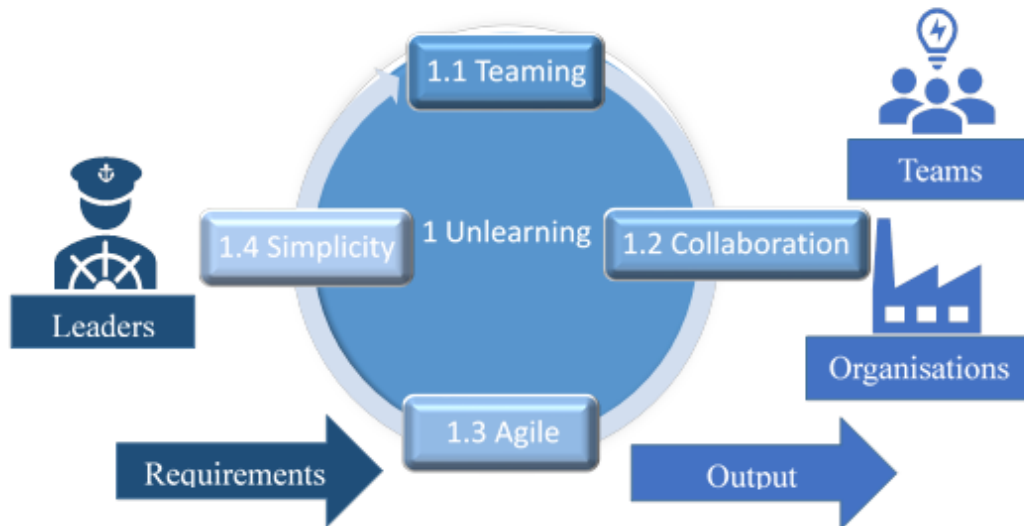


Figure 1: Behavioural change in managing team agility post-pandemic:

Dimensions in managing team agility in the post-pandemic environment begin with the fundamental concept of (1) unlearning which makes the basis for the following (1.1 – 1.4) concepts to function.

(1) Unlearning

Unlearning should not be viewed as an end, but as a medium to be applied to achieve learning excellence, innovation, and ultimately change. The dimensions of unlearning and relearning result in growth mindset experiences that strengthen the possibilities of real organisational renewal and change. The concept of unlearning according to Grisold et al. (2020) is the ability to analyse what we know and how we have been doing things, our current assumptions, and mindsets, and to experience these as inexplicable. Organisations and team leaders must acquire skills for a mindset of openness in identifying the not yet and what is possible attitude such as learning to deeply understand the core of one’s business and to identify its untapped potentials (Peschl, 2019).

In its original sense, unlearning means deleting, as proposed by Hedberg (1981) where obsolete knowledge is deleted while new knowledge is created. Subsequently, Klein (1989) describes unlearning as storing for later, where obsolete knowledge is not erased but is stored beside the new knowledge. It is further explained that knowledge will degrade if not used for some time, or it can be retrieved if the individual returns to the old context. In a later study, Wheatley (2006) finds on organic emergence with regard to the concept of unlearning where obsolete knowledge is continually redefined, added to, and recomposed in a continuous process. The most important implications of the approach to achieve this type of unlearning require a radical shift in mindsets and skills in leaders and organisational strategy (Padan & Nguyen, 2020). Hence, team leaders and organisations must embrace openness and be willing to unlearn old set mindsets and behaviours, then replace them with an adaptive set of beliefs, values, as well as cognitive, affective, and conative evaluation (Katz, 1960), to be able to form an attitude that can reshape one’s mindset and behaviours.

(1.1) Teaming

Teaming explores the dynamic structure of teams to understand the nature of non-traditional team structures and how the latter engages in complex environments (Russomano, 2018). Organisations engage teaming structures to gain access to specialised skills, short-term increases in workforce resources, and optimise efficiencies by reducing costs as a means of growth (Harvey, 2017). Teaming benefits from the traditional hierarchy and have more freedom to ensure responsiveness and timeliness when reacting to change and new demands. Teaming goes beyond the structural characteristics of a team and suggests the importance of new teaming behaviours, values,

and norms when working together and seeking effectiveness (Hong, 2020). Teaming is not specifically about team leaders and individuals, but it is about the holistic process of working collectively to produce outcomes. Team leaders influence their teams from their formation to their full development (Afsar & Umrani, 2019). Leaders are involved in the changes that affect them and have the most impact on how these changes take place. Leaders play a pivotal role in the stage development of their teams (Taborga, 2018). Hence, with change being ever constant, under the strategic mind of a leader, teaming needed to be less fixed, less static, and more dynamic to reach a performing state throughout the development life cycle of teams.

(1.2) Collaboration

Collaboration is in effect when two or more individuals work cooperatively intending to resolve a problem (Conner, 2016). The key driving forces of collaboration encompass a shared vision, embedded systems, and knowledge sharing (Dirani et al., 2021). Some key structures necessary for effective collaboration include trust, clear communication with a defined goal, and a spirit of exploration (Garwood, 2020). Collaboration of teaming across organisations towards harnessing the collective power, thoughts, experience, knowledge, and wisdom of the many, rather than the few could better improve the decision-making process (Hong, 2020). By utilising the teaming structures, collaborations can become more fluid. Organisations are enabled to become more agile when there have teams successfully built through forming of meaningful collaborations. The concept of collaboration within organisations demonstrates the unique aspects of the collective partnering and teaming consensus in meeting challenges effectively, and efficiently. Hence, team leaders in today's post-pandemic nature of adhocracy require nothing short of changing their behaviours to better embrace the more social, decentralised, and collaborative business world.

(1.3) Agile

Agile is an approach through a series of steps that involves delivering value iteratively and incrementally throughout a project life cycle (Taylor, 2021). It encourages the team to be self-organised for the allocation of responsibilities among the team by providing the environment and support needed and trusting the team to get the task accomplished (Masood et al., 2020). Agile processes promote organisations sustainability where team leaders and the team should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely. A constant pace allows a team to reflect on how it could become more effective and improve how it collectively behaves and subsequently achieve the optimum dynamics of how to work with everyone. The concept of agile suggests that for the team to reach agility in teamwork, members need to have a proactive and open mind, and a specific functional attitude towards their team as well as others. These requirements contribute towards shared responsibility and equality and are related to the experiences in response to organisational issues.

(1.4) Simplicity

The concept of simplicity in an organisation is explained as having a structure that is decentralised, with minimal levels of hierarchical decision-making. Simplicity is applied to reduce the complexity in processes, adjust for hierarchical control, and to attest to the belief in the power of a team in delivering success in a time of complex demand. Organisational effectiveness is achieved by having a simple organisation structure where individuals have a good, functional understanding of how the team works together to accomplish tasks assigned and react to challenges and changes variability in moving things forward. Pérez-Valls et al. (2019) put forward simplicity when organisations empower self-directed teams to increase decentralised decision-making. According to Birkinshaw (2020), in the age of adhocracy where it is about action, about getting things done, and done fast through experimentation and outcome achievement, organisations would need to operate in a process world of simplicity by harnessing the collective power of the many through collaboration and high performing teams, driven by an agile mindset which is free from traditional constraints. Simplicity is a quality that not only evokes employees' passionate loyalty towards the organisation but has also become a key strategy for team leaders to deal with intrinsic complexity.

METHOD

The qualitative methodology is employed where the study is conducted inductively. A mixed-method mode of data collection is applied; however, a survey questionnaire is used only to collect preliminary data to gauge the scope of behavioural changes that have occurred from the onset of the pandemic. A survey instrument designed based on items to identify post-pandemic behaviour based on the five concepts of team agility will be disseminated to team-based employees of electrical and electronics MNCs. The descriptive findings will then be used to guide the design for a semi-structured in-depth interview instrument. The methods to be used in analysing interview data will be processed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative content analysis to identify, analyse, and report themes within data. Thematic analysis is appropriate for this research as according to Bernard et al. (2016) it is a method used to study participants' experiences pertaining to the research questions.

The electrical and electronics industry is identified for sampling as it is the key driver in Malaysia's industrial development and ranks as the seventh-largest exporter in the world. The sampling method used is convenience sampling followed by snowball sampling in order to locate individuals who practice team agility. The description of the research process begins with an explanation of the data collection method, followed by a step-by-step clarification of the research protocol, and assurance of scientific rigour. The process concludes with a summary of the research design.

SAMPLING

The unit of study for online surveys will be 38 team members of the electrical and electronics MNCs in Penang while for in-depth interviews the unit of study will be their team leaders. The fifty team members would help to give an overall understanding of how the practices are different from those of pre-pandemic. This is to look into how employees orientate themselves in teams while having to adapt to abrupt changes that take place during the pandemic. The data from the surveys involving team members is a step taken to funnel areas in the scope of team dynamics to produce a descriptive outcome for the subsequent inductive study. Descriptive analysis is the type of analysis of data that helps describe, show, or summarise data points in a constructive way such that patterns might emerge that fulfill every condition of the data. Team leaders in the electrical and electronics industry are identified for sampling as it is this industry that has been the key driver in Malaysia's industrial development for decades. The sampling method for both data collection methods is convenience sampling. A snowballing technique is then applied in order to locate individuals who practice team agility at their workplaces.

Penang's vibrant industrial ecosystem is a strong determining factor for many investments into the country and is upheld by a network of diversified and competent manufacturers. The electrical and electronics manufacturing is known to also play a critical role in the country's recovery and re-growth following the pandemic outbreak. It has shown early signs of resilience to the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic while remaining competitive due to the pandemic.

DATA COLLECTION

In this scientific research related to examining the post-pandemic behavioural change in managing team agility, the data collection method will be applying the following sequence:

Stage 1: Preliminary Data Collection using Quantitative Method

Quantitative data will be gathered based on an online survey that was developed to gauge the experience of working in teams during the pandemic. Survey questionnaires will be disseminated to fifty respondents who would then complete the surveys online. The instrument uses closed-ended questions and items measured on a 4-point Likert scale to facilitate respondents to fill in the survey in a standardised manner. The 4-point Likert scale is used to avoid respondents using a midpoint as a dumping ground when they are responding to survey items that are unfamiliar to them or to items that are ambiguous or socially undesirable (Chyung et al., 2018). The survey will target employees who work under a team in MNCs to provide their perspectives on post-pandemic behavioural change in working in agile teams. The purpose of gathering preliminary quantitative data is to have its descriptive findings assist in the design of the qualitative in-depth interviews' questions.

Stage 2: Data Collection using Qualitative Method

The qualitative data will be guided by the quantitative findings to help in determining the scope of a semi-structured interview instrument. Interview questions will be based on the five dimensions of team agility, and there will be sets of probing questions to help gain further insights on changed behaviours during post-pandemic, revolving around those dimensions. A semi-structured interview would allow for flexibility ensuring that there will be rich enough data to be analysed in order to answer the research questions in this study. Ten agile practicing team leaders will be identified as either key informants or informants to be interviewed. In-depth interviews will be conducted either physically or online, depending on circumstances during the data collection exercise. The questions in the interview are shaped based on the phenomenology method to facilitate the researcher to analyse respondents' post-pandemic experience while leading and facilitating teams, and the meanings behind their behaviours and intentions. Agile practicing team leaders are regarded as key informants in this study, while those who do not practice agile when managing a team are considered as study informants. While key informants can provide responses specifically related to the five dimensions in managing team agility which is being examined in this study, informants will help in making sense, comparatively, of the challenges experienced in leading a team in a conventional method during a time of crisis.

RESEARCH PROTOCOL

To ensure scientific rigour, a research protocol is planned out and efforts to meet research validity and reliability are embedded in its process. Details of the process are described in the following Figure 2 depicting a comprehensive protocol that will be undertaken in this study, which is subsequently presented.

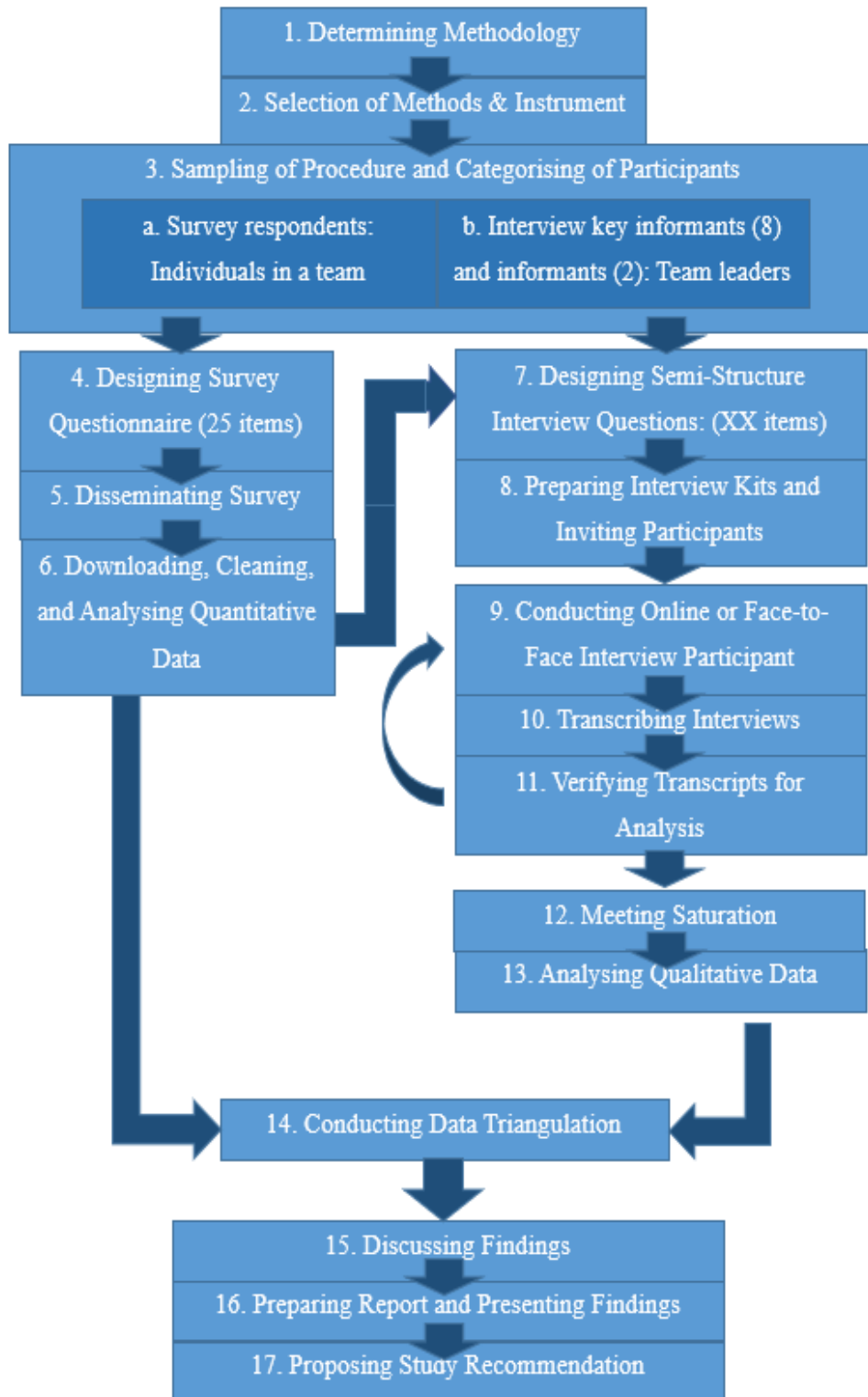


Figure 2: Research Protocol Framework

Step 1: Determining Methodology

In this qualitative research design, a preliminary quantitative data collection method is applied to gather descriptive findings which will then inform the instrument for a qualitative data collection method using phenomenological-based inquiry. Rather than providing predictions or causal explanations, the qualitative method offers contextualisation and interpretation of the data gathered from purposively selected respondents.

Step 2: Selecting Methods and Instrument

For quantitative method, the survey questionnaire designed shall consist of a list of questions with multiple-choice answers, and statements requiring respondents to answer based on a 4-point Likert scale. The multiple-choice answers are given in terms of demographic profile which consists of a range of respondents' age, agile professional certification, occupation level if they are working in a team, and an average number of members in a working team. The survey questionnaire designed is shown in appendix A and the construction of the interview questions will be guided by the five dimensions presented in the study framework. The findings garnered are to provide guidance on the focus points of the study problem as well as to be used to converge with the qualitative findings in the process of data triangulation. For the qualitative method, the semi-structured interviews will allow for deep probing on dimensions that frame this inquiry. This method involves asking open-ended questions verbally to informants, as well as prompts to encourage them to share rich narratives from their experiences.

Step 3: Sampling of Procedure and Categorising of Participants**(a) Survey respondents: Individuals in a team**

The target participants are individuals in a team. The surveys which will be sent out include an invitation for employees to participate. Fifty employees that fulfill the definition of individuals working in teams, in the electrical and electronics MNCs make the target sample for this study. They would be those who are willing to participate when they are approached for their involvement or requested to participate. Such would be aligned with the process of applying the approach of convenience sampling. The survey would provide data as to how employees view the five key dimensions that support managing team agility.

b) Interview key informants and informants: Team leaders

There will be additional study participants of eight key informants and two informants. The number of key informants will be increased if saturation is not met, and the snowballing technique will be employed for this purpose. Key informants or informed participants for this study will be team leaders that manage a team in MNCs and practise agile in managing a team while informants are those who do not practise agile in managing a team. They will be interviewed based on semi-structured in-depth interviews which consist of a conversation between researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes, explanations, and confirmations. The method allows the researcher to collect open-ended data, explore participant thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic and delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The interview is expected to provide rich data revolving around the five key dimensions in fostering positive team relationships within a diverse workplace, and pivotal changes in behaviour that have taken place. The general qualifying criteria for both key informant and informant is that the individual must have held the role of a team leader for at least a minimum of two years. The key informant must have a job scope that addresses the managing for team agility, and for the informant, a job scope that describes the conventional role of managing a team.

Step 4: Designing Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was designed based on the five key dimensions that underlie a transformation required when managing team agility post-pandemic. Each of the five key dimensions is supported in prior quantitative studies; unlearning (Matsuo, 2020; Wang et al., 2019; Matsuo, 2018); teaming (Lisbona et al., 2020; Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Kloak, 2017); collaboration (Garwood, 2020; Conner, 2016), Agile (Miler & Gaida, 2019); simplicity (Pérez-Valls et al., 2019; Hopej-Kamińska et al., 2015). The questionnaire will have a total of twenty-five items altogether.

Step 5: Disseminating Survey

The process begins with disseminating surveys online through email and WhatsApp mobile application to employees working under a team in an MNCs with the assistants of team leaders of various MNCs in Penang. It is expected that at least a 100 percent response rate can be achieved in three weeks, otherwise the survey will be disseminated again to achieve an optimum number of at least 50 participants to complete the survey questionnaire. The survey will be set using Google Forms as it is easy to create and disseminate to participants to fill in the survey at zero cost. The data will then be gathered in a spreadsheet to be analysed descriptively.

Step 6: Downloading, Cleaning, and Analysing Quantitative Data

Within a duration of three weeks of receiving responses, all completed survey data will be analysed. Frequency analysis will be conducted, and cross-tabulation run where possible. The findings are expected to provide an idea of how much teams are practising agile from the start of the crisis.

Step 7: Designing Semi-Structure Interview Questions

A semi-structured interview instrument will be built using open-ended questions allowing for a fluid flow of discussion and a dynamic probing for insights. A set of guided questions will be constructed for its first part where the emphasis is to determine the practice of agility. The second part of the interview will be on behavioural change that facilitates in managing team mindset on the key agile dimensions while working during pre-pandemic and post-pandemic. The goal of the interview will be on what it takes for a team leader in this post-pandemic environment to ensure that their teams are able to continuously thrive in the organisation.

Step 8: Preparing Interview Kits and Inviting Participants

The process begins with identifying participants for qualitative interviews, through work and social connections to conduct an individual interview session. Online or face-to-face interviews will be scheduled with a period of reflection between each interview conducted. This process will allow the development of the skills required to administer the interview and help to develop further probing questions. E-mail invitations will be sent out and followed by phone calls to further provide interviewees with the information they may require. The MNCs selected shall fulfill the definition of the target population. Informants shall be those willing to participate when selected and requested as this is a condition that is aligned with the method of convenience sampling. Immediate follow-ups to arrange for the interviews will be made. The aim of this is to have each of the team leaders, one from a few different MNCs, establish a baseline of self-discovery. The team leaders will be divided into key informants and informants. By the time the interview is scheduled, the informed consent for the interview session will all have been confirmed and accepted.

Step 9: Conducting Online or Face-to-Face Interview

For online interviews, a google meet session will be set up, while for a face-to-face interview, logistics arrangements will be made. The face-to-face interview will have a better effect to gauge the expression, ensuring the quality of the obtained data, and increasing the response rate (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017), whereby through online mode, it may be more challenging to establish a connection. Interviews will be recorded, and notes will be taken during interviews. Interviews will begin with conversation starters to draw information from the interviewee about this research topic. Depending on how the interviewee answers, follow-up questions shall be asked to gain a more in-depth understanding. Follow-up questions will help to draw out more specific evidence about the interviewees' sharing of experience pertaining to any change initiatives at their workplaces. Documents such as charts or an agile framework of the team or organisation practices will be requested from the informants and can be used during the interview to elicit clarifications or descriptions on agile practices. The duration of each interview is estimated to run for a minimum of forty minutes.

Step 10: Transcribing Interviews

Once each of the interviews is completed, the recordings are transcribed and analysed to see if themes emerged. The value of interviewing individuals one at a time as a data source is the ability to use data in a respectful inquiry approach to understand and relate interviewees' experiences and help them to convey and signify what can be learned from the specific situation faced (Powell & Bodur, 2019). This would allow improvement of the upcoming interview with another interviewee. The data collected will require diligence in sorting the responses in a structure that is clear and pertained to the research. There could be follow-up carried out with the informants for any clarification, confirmation, and acceptance of data. After that, all the data including email invitations, consent forms, recordings, and transcribed data will be kept in folders in Google Cloud categorised by individual informants. This will also allow sharing view access to any specific informants that are interested in reviewing their respective transcripts.

Step 11: Verifying Transcripts for Analysis

After each set of transcribing work is completed, data are analysed to examine whether informants are responding to the research question related to the area of interest, or whether follow-up and refining are needed before each key informant and informant accepts and confirms that the respective interview transcript is complete. According to Stuckey (2014), this method is recognised as member checking. Member checking is significant as it allows the interviewee to evaluate their response to the research, confirm the interpretation, ensure reliability and validity of the interview transcribed. This step will be repeated from Step 9 for each interviewee.

Step 12: Meeting Saturation

As described in previous steps, the sample size determined for this research is estimated to enable data saturation to be achieved. Saturation in a research study aims to define the point at which no new information or concepts emerge from the data and when the themes or theories that have emerged from the data have been well-supported (Saunders et al., 2018). As data saturation is an important research criterion to meet, careful steps shall be taken during the data analyse the process to ensure that data solicited from the ten informants are sufficient, and rich, otherwise, new participants will be identified and added to continue yielding new or novel insights. Efforts spent in organising, observing, and taking observational field notes during interviews can complement the data sets when ensuring that no new themes appear, data becomes repetitive, and saturation is achieved.

Step 13: Analysing Qualitative Data

As each interview is completed, the researcher examines its content to determine what has been learned and what still needs to be discovered or needs elaboration (Stuckey, 2014). Analysing qualitative data by going through each interview question and answer, allows the explore ideas and further explains quantitative results. By going through each of the interviews will assist in identifying answers to the research question, repeated words and phrases, and experiences that have not been researched prior (Elliott, 2018). Converging all data from each of the interviews and correlating the themes will uncover answers to the research questions posed in this study.

Step 14: Conducting Data Triangulation

A data triangulation puts together the separate analyses of qualitative, secondary, and the preliminary quantitative data. Data triangulation is defined as a methodological process whereby two or more procedures such as interviews and surveys are used to collect and cross-verify data (Abdalla et al., 2018). Both quantitative and qualitative data sources of surveys and interviews are used in this data triangulation which incorporated cross-verification of the data gathered to construct rigour and lead to a convergence of evidence in completing this research. Through this process of triangulation analysis, an in-depth interpretation of meanings beyond preliminary findings shall provide clearer insights into how a team leader could redefine key agile dimensions towards building and sustaining team dynamics for organisational resilience.

Step 15: Discussing Findings

This phase of the research process will be on answering the main research question and its sub-questions following the data triangulation analysis. The purpose of the discussion is to interpret and describe the significance of data collected and analysed, and to explain the understanding or insights explored about the research considering all the findings. The findings will include all data obtained from the semi-structured interviews, surveys, and secondary sources to provide a conclusion about this qualitative inquiry and compare the findings to those of prior studies.

Step 16: Preparing Report and Presenting Findings

Once the findings conclusion is derived, a final report will be produced. The final report includes a deep discussion on the convergence of multiple sources of data findings as well as any contradictions to the primary findings. Discussions on the five key dimensions and any contradictions supported with evidence, and clearly described in a narrative would uphold the reliability of the research. This final report will make clear the contribution to knowledge and practice from this research.

Step 17: Proposing Study Recommendation

Lastly, study recommendations for implementation and further research will be put forward. The recommendations that result from the study will be directly linked to a continuous enhancement of the knowledge base for practice and future research about pivotal behavioural change in managing team agility post-pandemic.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The privacy and protection of all the participants in the survey and informants of the interview session, pertaining to their willingness and consent given in providing information and data required for this study, will be assured. Respondents' partaking in survey study and interview sessions are on a volunteer basis, and this research shall similarly apply the same conditions in a study by Yeong et al. (2018) that participants could discontinue the interview at any point with no consequences. Although there will be not any direct benefits for the participants by participating in this research, there could be an overriding benefit that this study can be beneficial in contributing to organisations and industries. The identities of the participants in the survey and informants of the interview session including their organisations will be protected. All the data, information, and recording will be treated with strict confidentiality. Findings from this research may be used for future research, reports, and publications, however, the participants and informants that have contributed to this research will not be identified nor disclosed.

The information will be kept by the researcher in a secured cloud storage service through a strict access control to ensure confidentiality of the participants, their organisations, and other data sources provided (Arifin, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The procedure on obtaining participant consent by Creswell & Creswell (2017) is applied in this study where all informants of the interview session will receive a copy of a consent form which will be reviewed together, with an agreement signed at the end of the research process. To ensure that informants are comfortable in providing data and information needed for this research of study, all participants will be properly assured that all information, data, and their identities and respective organisation are kept discreet.

DISCUSSION

MNCs in Malaysia as the global manufacturing industry is not exempted from the pandemic impact. The findings in this study would be significant for organisations and other industries that would want to deal with global uncertainty in contexts of post-pandemic behavioural change in managing team agility that bring value and contribute to the success in team dynamics and organisational resilience.

The impact on electrical and electronics manufacturing is an evolving situation where organisations already reconfiguring their leaders and team to improve resiliency, and the changes may continue into the next normal. The organisations are also becoming smart workspaces, with technologies that facilitate remote work for most employees. The efficiencies gained through such changes, as well as their start-up costs, could influence future electrical and electronics manufacturing revenues.

This research has created a high interest in the behavioural change in managing team agility literature that will be conducted using qualitative methods. Qualitative research has played a crucial role are typically used in determining the requirements for team leaders of organisations to embrace and keep their teams agile by growing the skills set needed in achieving team dynamics to build organisational resilience. Hence, there is a need for an accelerated transition towards enhanced efficiency and improved team dynamics management during the pandemic and its aftermath.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The dimension that underlies behavioural change in managing team agility for organisational resilience is examined to uncover the significance of each of them when determining how the concept of agile has evolved. Team leaders in MNCs must transform by applying a cohesive framework that can be easily communicated to others, allowing for the team to be able to work effectively and to improve organisational processes. Planning for specific behavioural change in managing team agility is crucial in paving the way for organisational resilience. Recalibrating for team dynamics requires mindset transformation that leads to constructive behavioural change in order to achieve a defined target. In conclusion, team leaders play a key role in ensuring that organisations remain resilient throughout a pattern of unpredictable changes in the business environment.

It is hoped that this research can generate a large discussion and a high interest in behavioural changes in managing teams. Qualitative research can play a crucial role in clarifying the requirements for team leaders to sharpen the skills set needed in keeping their teams agile and remain at the top of the game when crisis strikes or unforeseen significant shifts happen in the business environment. Hence, there is a need for an accelerated transition towards enhanced performance through improved team dynamics management during the pandemic and its aftermath.

It is expected that the whole team dynamics have pivoted towards becoming more dependable on new requirements such as technological skills, systematic sharing of information, and structured meetings. The emergent framework from this study would be one that can facilitate team leaders in MNCs in their transformation processes. Team leaders in MNCs must transform by applying a cohesive framework that can be easily communicated to others, allowing for the team to be able to work effectively and to improve organisational processes. In conclusion, team leaders play a key role in ensuring that organisations remain resilient throughout a pattern of unpredictable changes in the business environment.

Future research should look at how team leaders in MNCs in Malaysia adapt their management practices for team agility in the post-pandemic period. Conducting similar studies in different industries, states, or countries would provide a broader perspective and strengthen the findings' credibility. Second, investigating different levels of abstraction, such as team groups and organisations, would provide a more in-depth understanding of team agility. Finally, future studies could include a larger and more diverse sample of participants from multiple organisations

to increase generalisability and comprehensively further understand post-pandemic behavioural changes and their impact on team agility.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The lead author Deng Alan affirms that this manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study being reported; that no important aspects of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned (and, if relevant, registered) have been explained.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author hereby declares that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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