

# **Effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of Master in  
Business Administration (MBA)**

**National College of Ireland**

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Submitted to the National College of Ireland August 2014

## **Abstract**

There is a growing trend where teams in global companies are dispersed internationally. This has been made possible with significant development in information communication technologies and has led to greater speed and adaptability in Global Business, while reducing costs at the same time. Globally dispersed teams, although offering many benefits, also pose a number of challenges. This study will research the requirements for globally dispersed teams to collaborate effectively. The researcher will attempt to identify the difficulties encountered by dispersed teams and possible solutions to these problems.

Taking from the theoretical concepts found in the literature review, the researcher developed and tested a conceptual framework of effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams. Data was collected by a web-based questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to a globally dispersed team; Supply Chain finance in the financial service industry. A total of nineteen responses were collected and this data was then analysed.

The findings show that communication amongst globally dispersed teams is weakened by the varying time zones. Time differences are leading to duplication of work and that video conferencing would not be a viable substitute for replacing face to face meetings. In addition to communication under cooperation amongst globally dispersed teams there is a great dependence on the trust and sharing of knowledge amongst the team, silos should be avoided at all lengths. Finally in leadership trust again was an important factor when leading a globally dispersed team, it was noted that time management was not an effective way to monitor employees work output and should not be used as a method of appraisal.

**Keywords:** Globally dispersed teams, collaboration, communication, cooperation, leadership.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Leo Casey who took the time to enable me to regain my confidence in writing and move on to be able to complete this thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Jimmy Hill for all his guidance, time, support and patience throughout this research project. Jimmy's positive feedback gave me the strength and courage to move forward with this study.

Secondly, I would like to thank Wells Fargo Bank for their financial support and the Supply Chain Finance team who kindly participated in this study, without them this research would not have been possible.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family and friends for their help and support; I could not have done this without their kind words and support.

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## 1. Introduction

There is a growing trend where teams in global companies are dispersed internationally. This study will research the requirements for globally dispersed teams to collaborate effectively. The researcher will research the difficulties encountered by dispersed teams and possible solutions to these problems.

Traditional collaboration can be described as where more than one person works together towards a similar objective. It constitutes; communication, co-operation, trust, time management, leadership and direction. Various consultants such as AIIM (2014) have generated the collaboration lifecycle which they believe constitutes; “awareness, motivation, self-synchronization, participation, mediation, reciprocity, reflection and engagement”, (AIIM, 2014).

The researcher has chosen to research this topic due to their own current work environment. With a team of two hundred and twenty seven, one based in Europe, one based in Asia, and the remainder of colleagues dispersed around the United States of America. This journey will help the researcher to understand how their colleagues feel about their dispersed setup and to better understand the most effective ways to collaborate.

The researchers proposed research will delve into the details of six areas of collaboration while taking into account cultural factors, technology, and different time zones. The researcher hopes to research these areas in detail and identify the strengths and weaknesses in each.

The current issue with collaboration amongst dispersed teams is that the researcher believes some team members get over looked and are not kept as well informed, this in turn leads to a lack of trust leading to a break-down in communication and a weakened leadership. There is a worry of trust and the responsibility to manage your own time effectively while maintaining work life equilibrium. Technology has transformed over the last number of years enabling better collaboration amongst dispersed teams, however it is hard for some team members to communicate without visual aids such as body language and facial expressions especially where cultural difference are included.

Globally dispersed teams are increasing due to the advances in technology and are now necessary due to globalisation. “As a result of globalisation and advances in information and communication technologies, the increased use of virtual teams in both education and business has become prominent”, (Weiss, Nolan, & Trifonas, in press. Cited in Shachaf and Hara. (2005)).

“A commonly quoted advantage of global virtual teams is the ability of an organisation to leverage competencies and skills from all parts of the world. These teams are seen as having the capability to solve very complex problems and open up possibilities for substantial process creativity and innovative solutions”, (Lockwood, 2010:Q1).

## **1.1 Research Objectives**

The aim of this research is to gain an in-depth knowledge of effective collaboration in globally dispersed teams, specifically in the financial sector. With there being a growth in globally dispersed teams across industries, this research is highly relevant today. There is a lot of research on virtual teams and effective collaboration amongst teams, yet there appears to be a gap in research on effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams and specifically within the financial sector. The inclusion of financial sector research will become apparent after qualitative research methods have been completed.

The objective of this study is to identify the methods of collaboration that dispersed teams use today, and to evaluate these methods and to determine their effectiveness.

## **1.2 Overview of research structure**

The research will begin with a review of relevant academic literature around the area of dispersed teams. There have been numerous articles, journals and books written around the area of dispersed teams covered also under areas such as working from home and remote working locations.

Following on from the literature review there is a conceptual framework model developed for this study. This includes the research problem and identifies the aims of the research.

There is an outline of the Research methodology which was conducted using quantitative methods in the form of charts and tables developed from the questionnaires conducted. Using open coding the researcher will conceptualize the phenomena and provide a typology for effective collaboration in the financial sector for globally dispersed teams.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

There is a growing trend in the global financial industry where teams are situated in various locations, dispersed around the world. This trend can lead to many challenges which will be analysed throughout this research. Dispersed teams are viewed as a dynamic environment they have "members dispersed across distance and time, who are linked together by some form of electronic communication technology and who are only able to physically interact as a team on a limited basis" (Sessa et al 1999:11). Sessa et al suggest that globally dispersed collaboration is not a new concept and communication media such as the telephone and mail remain critical in coordinating groups separated by time and distance (1999: 12). Therefore dynamic globally dispersed team's effective collaboration greatly impacts on efficiency and productivity.

"Collaboration is one essential pillar of the kind of teamwork, which supports and sustains cohesive and productive teams", (Cook & Macaulay, 2013:54). There is significant research around the area of collaboration with varying components, however there is a distinct lean towards the following components; communication, cooperation, and leadership. Thomson and Perry define collaboration as "a process in which actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process of shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions" (2006, p. 23). It can be said that in order for a team to collaborate effectively it is essential that they work together; no amount of planning alone can create effective collaboration.

Effective collaboration is where a team can work together closely to produce a common end result. As previously identified it constitutes communication, co-operation, and leadership. This chapter will firstly examine the constructs of collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams; communication, cooperation, and leadership whilst incorporating the issues within these areas. Finally the review will investigate the linkage between each of these areas.

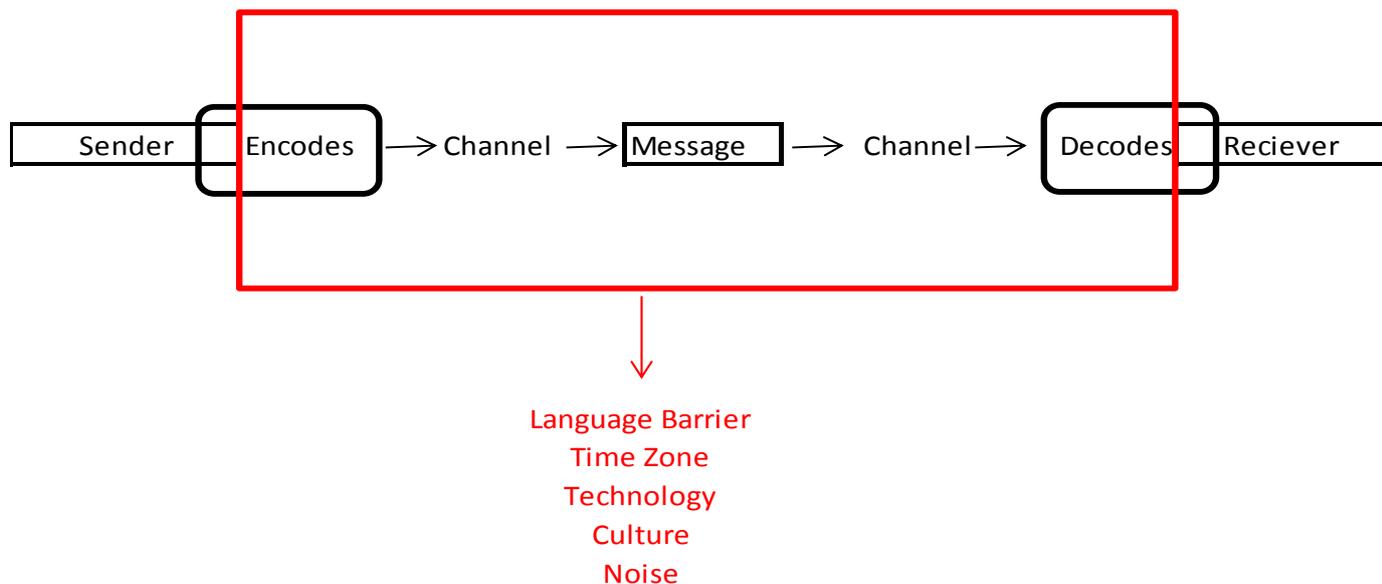
## 2.2. Communication

The emergence of globally dispersed teams has in recent years lead to a rapid development in communication methods. In order to understand the communication process in globally dispersed teams, it is important to take a look at the situational differences to a close-linked team.

There are numerous factors that impact communication amongst globally dispersed teams; technology, culture, time zones, and language barriers to name but a few. Kossler and Prestridge, (2006) suggest it is harder to identify miscommunication, contend with various cultures, and greater effort is required to resolve conflicts which easily go un-noticed. Before addressing these factors, this study will look at the basic difficulties in communication.

Communication amongst a team that does not meet physically on a regular basis can be challenging. Team members are required to make more of a conscientious effort to communicate with colleagues to keep up a level of familiarity and comfortableness amongst each other. This statement fits with Maslow's Theory of hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954), specifically self-esteem where by people have a requirement for attention and recognition.

The below table is the Pfeiffer Communication model, to which I have added onto with the factors that can negatively affect the communication model.



*Table 1.1 Communication model adapted from Pfeiffer's (1998) Basic Communication Model*

- 2.2.i. Language barrier

Language allows people to communicate amongst one another; therefore it is key to one's self-identity. However with globally dispersed teams come many different languages. This can lead to communication barriers. "Language differences may affect the formation of social identities among organisation members", (Lauring, 2008). Various technological aids have been developed in order to assist with this, such as online instant translators. However technology cannot interpret the direct meaning of the conversation, simply translate word for word leading to miscommunication. "Language is not only a medium of communication, but enables an individual's identity to be portrayed", (Lauring, 2008).

- 2.2.ii. Time zone

There are forty time zones in the world, of which globally dispersed teams can be located in. It is important for colleagues to be considerate of the time zone's their team members are in when organising virtual meetings or telephone calls. Time zones may well impede the rapidness of communication as expert staff may not have yet started their day. Bell (2002:30) suggests that team members do not rely on one another to get work done; that each team member is responsible for their individual piece of work and this should not affect other team members. However globally dispersed teams with interdependent tasks across time zones will experience the time gap leading to less time in the day to accomplish their tasks. "Spain is one country that experiences such problems. Currently on the Central European time zone, Spain should geographically be on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) with latitudinally similar countries such as United Kingdom, Morocco, Mali, and Portugal. After a recommendation from Parliamentarians, Spain is working on correcting the time zone issue to help boost worker productivity", (Jacob, 2013).

- 2.2.iii. Technology

Technology has developed rapidly over the last ten years, communicating over email or a more informal instant messaging is favoured over the phone. This can lead to miscommunication, specifically with instant messaging as there is a tendency to omit the friendly introductory greetings. However Oguntebi suggests that recent technology such as video conferencing may have reduced this problem." In the global society that exists today, technological advancements such as video conferencing and video chatting are facilitating the execution of global team tasks", (Oguntebi, 2009:35). Globally dispersed teams rely heavily

on various communication technologies such as email, translator applications and intranet portals.

- 2.2.iv Culture

Cultural differences can greatly inhibit effective communication. “Limited exposure to varying cultures can be a hindrance while executing project tasks”, (Oguntebi, 2009:60).

Culture is a lifestyle within a group of people and can determine the way a group will think, see, hear, and interpret words.

“In pluralistic cultures such as ours, we interact with people who differ from us, and we need to know how to understand and work with them”, (Wood, 2009:7)

Hooker (2008) cites Hall’s (1976) distinction between high and low context cultures. Hooker states that low context cultures include Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United States of America and Europe, and high context cultures are the rest of the world. The significance with low and high context cultures is that high context cultures require a significantly more guidance in communicating. An example of how the two cultures differ is that in a low context culture business procedures would be written whereas in a high context culture someone would bring you through the process in person. Globally dispersed teams would need to be conscious of this when communicating with a mixture of both low and high context cultures. Cultural differences can also impact communication in a positive way by bringing diversity to the table. It can be said that globalisation has greatly reduced the effect culture has on business, more people are travelling internationally today and similar businesses are operating cross-culturally.

- 2.2.v. Noise

There are two types of noise that can impede communication; physical and psychological. Physical noise refers to distractions in the individual teams work environment. For example team members located in an office with other lines of business may be affected by their day to day business such as phone calls and meetings. This noise can impede teams attempting to communicate over the phone.

Psychological noise refers to mechanisms within the individual team members. For example numerous people speaking over one another on a conference call. Team members who have misread the tone of a telephone conversation due to the omittance of visual aids may become abrasive and put their energy into defending themselves instead of understanding the message being sent.

## **Conclusion**

Whilst there has been significant development in communication methods over the recent years, there remains' some significant issues that need to be addressed. It is clear from the literature that it is vital for globally dispersed teams to take the time to build relationships with their fellow team members. Participation and identification are critical factors in the communication of globally dispersed teams.

In addition greater time and efforts must also be made to take technology, time zones, cultural and language differences into account when communicating. There has been significant literature around communication which has been extended to include modern day technology; however literature remains limited around the area of communicating in globally dispersed teams.

### **2.3 Cooperation**

Globally dispersed teams are delegated tasks which result in the same end goal. Therefore cooperation between the team is essential. In order to achieve successful cooperation Mohrman (1999) suggests there is a requirement of negotiation, collaboration and a well aligned management skills. Argote and Ingram (2000) suggest that knowledge transfer is key for a firm's sustainable competitive advantage. It is important for a globally dispersed team to have clearly defined goals. This will prevent the fear of losing one's job should another become more knowledgeable and allow for transfer of knowledge. Levin and Cross 2004 suggest there is a strong correlation between trust and knowledge transfer.

Successful cooperation guidelines for globally dispersed teams are suggested as follows:

- Initial face to face meeting to develop a relationship
- Importance of establishing a relationship at the beginning of a project as opposed to focusing directly on the task at hand.
- Open and honest communication will enable the development of a trusting relationship
- Maintain communication to provide a sense of presence and support
- Avoid assigning blame and work together to problem solve.
- Learn to understand cultural constraints
- The achievements of a globally dispersed team should be celebrated and highlighted to the entire group.
- The project in its entirety should be transparent to all team members; there should be an avoidance of silos.

As relationship building and formation of trust between globally dispersed teams is weakened due to the lack of face to face time, there is a positive correlation with cooperation amongst globally dispersed teams. Flache (2004) suggests that in globally dispersed teams where the group is compensated as a whole for work achievements that team member "shirking" or "free riding" may become prevalent. Various academics such as Handy 1995 state that electronic communication methods such as email are less effective in comparison to face to face communication due to the lack of ability for team members developing a trust and familiarity with one another.

It is important for globally dispersed team members to understand the constraints of their fellow team members such as varying time zones, time management plays a significant role in effective cooperation.

➤ 2.2.i. Time Management

Globally dispersed teams can potentially operate over the forty different time zones in the world. The significant benefit is that there will be an increase in team-member productivity. Teams collaboratively can work on a job over a twenty four hours period straight. Once coordinated efficiently this can eliminate any work delays. However, factors such as holidays need to be taken into account, for example the southern hemisphere would generally take summer holidays during December to February, and the northern hemisphere would take their summer holidays during June to August.

Varying time zones put a greater dependency on electronic and computer mediated communications. There is the potential that teams can be overwhelmed by the quantity of emails sent over night and important information can be overlooked. In addition a large quantity of globally dispersed team members are provided with mobile phones this can lead to team members being contacted out of working hours and should be monitored diligently by senior management.

Saunders, Slyke & Vogel (2004:20) suggest that there are three issues with varying time zones; deadlines, rhythms and performance.

- Deadlines – dispersed team members do not have as much time with one another to develop relationships. Whilst this leads to the elimination of dysfunctional team dynamics such as conflict and jealousy, it can create a lack of collaboration leading to many possible outcomes such as a breakdown in trust, respect and willingness to help one another.
- Rhythms – as business deadlines draw to a close, team rhythm tends to increase to a faster pace. Due to varying time zones the added pressure of an increased rhythm can cause undue stress.
- Performance – Varying time zones can lead to a dependency by senior management to focus on time performance tasks as a method of appraising team members. This may not be a fair method of performance appraisal.

Teams located around the world will operate on different time zones. There will be times where various team members in different time zones will be required to attend conference

calls at the same time. “The ability of virtual teams to operate effectively in distributed time is expected to increase as tasks become less complex, workflow arrangements become more additive and sequential, and situations are less dynamic with looser external links”, (Bell and Kozlowski, 2002:34). Whilst an infrequent out of hours call would be acceptable it must not become a common occurrence. Managers must diligently monitor the frequency of these calls. I will investigate as to whether this is taken into consideration and controls are in place to insure it is not a frequent occurrence, taking into account Bell and Kozlowski’s proposition it would appear that over time out of hours conferences calls would be infrequent as teams adjust to the time zones.

## **Conclusion**

A regimented structure is clearly the route to success for globally dispersed teams. The development of relationships and occasional face to face meetings allow for relationships to form. Once relationships have been developed transfer of knowledge increases.

In addition it has been recognised that teams compensated as a whole for performance opens doors for certain team members to take a back seat and reduce their efforts. Therefore clearly defined roles and responsibilities and individual performance targets are important for cooperation leading to effective collaboration.

Finally globally dispersed teams are impacted by various time zones. Whilst this improves business productivity there is a greater need for organisation in globally dispersed teams. Organisation and technology skills allowing for effective electronic mediated communication.

## **2.4 Leadership**

Leadership of a globally dispersed team is more challenging than leading a centrally located team due to the dynamic environment. Team members working in different locations will work under different branches of the company. This leads to different regulations, controls, procedures and policies. An effective leader must ensure that team members are kept up to date with the required knowledge in their location. The vice president of Global programs and marketing at Global dynamics, John G.Schieman, cited in Lockwood's SHRM Research quarterly (2010) suggest leadership of virtual groups tends to shift from controller to co-ordinator.

“Effective virtual team leaders are expected to be more likely than leaders of traditional teams to create structures and routines to substitute for the functions and to distribute the leadership functions to the team”, (Kozlowski, 2002:27).

A leader must have a clear understanding of what their goals are both professionally and personally, a passion for success while remaining integral, and be able to think outside the box and take risks. Bennis, (1994:39-40) states that there are five ingredients of leadership; guiding vision, passion, integrity, curiosity and daring. A leader of a globally dispersed team has to take into account situational leadership. Situational leadership requires leaders to adapt to varying environments. According to Fiedler (1964) there are two main characteristics in a leader, the relationship orientated leader and the task orientated leader. The relationship orientated leader is likely to be more effective in more favourable situations.

Shachaf et al (2005:9) suggest that there are four dimensions of effective virtual leadership (1) communication (2) understanding (3) role clarity and (4) leadership attitude.

Looking at Bennis versus Shachaf dimensions of leadership it would confirm that Schiemans suggestion of the change of leadership from controller to coordinator would be correct. Schachaf's dimensions are more focused on coordinating functions of clarity and communication as opposed to Bennis' passion and vision.

Leaders of globally dispersed groups must take into account cultural differences when working with varying team members. Dispersed teams are using technology to communicate as opposed to face to face communication. It is difficult to understand the tone of an email or an instant message as there is no body language or facial expressions to assist. It is possible that some cultures are more aggressive than others and this must be carefully considered

when a leader is communicating to team members. However, it is just as important for a leader to remain authoritative and ensure the globally dispersed team understand the role play. Leaders should engage in conversation as regularly as possible with team members and look for feedback. It is also important for a leader to show a personal interest in the team members specifically as they are having infrequent face to face meetings, this will build a stronger level of trust.

It is necessary for dispersed teams to be provided with clear goals, without goals team members may not feel part of the overall team objective. Dorr and Kelly (2011:9) state that effective leadership avoids the “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” syndrome by reporting to the team members stakeholders on the achievements they have met.

#### ➤ 2.4.i. Trust

In order for someone to trust another they need to be willing to make themselves vulnerable and not in control of the other person’s actions. This is specifically valid where a manager’s team is representing the business in international locations.

There is an increased required level of trust by managers whose team is dispersed internationally. Managers do not have the capability of physically visiting there team members unannounced, therefore the trust that the team member is completing their given tasks is assumed. I will investigate from both the managers and the team members perspective, there is likely to be an increased level of stress on the team members side in order to justify their relevance.

Cummings and Bromley (1996) define a person’s trust in an individual occurs when a person “(a) makes good-faith efforts to behave in accordance with any commitments both explicit or implicit, (b) is honest in whatever negotiations preceded such commitments, and (c) does not take excessive advantage of another even when the opportunity is available”, (Cummings and Bromley, 1996:303).

It is questioned if trust is only relevant where there is a risk. It is important for managers to delegate work, where clear definitions of responsibility have been relayed trust should be

assumed. In addition colleagues with shared interests and values are likely to trust one another quicker than those who don't.

## **Conclusion**

There is quite a lot of research on traditional ideas of trust based on there being a strong interpersonal relationship. However globally dispersed teams do not have as frequent a physical relationship for trust to be built. Leadership of globally dispersed teams strongly leans on the coordination skills as opposed to the controller. It takes a strong leader to guide a globally dispersed team. Clearly defined goals, communication and understanding of the business strategy are prevalent in successful globally dispersed team leadership. A leader's trust in their team members is critical for the business to operate successfully.

## **2.5 Summary: The Overall Framework**

The preceding chapter set the stage for the current study, which holds its central question how globally dispersed teams collaborate effectively, identifying the difficulties encountered by dispersed teams and possible solutions.

Research will focus around the academic research, drawing from the theoretical concepts found and relate to experiences within the financial sector.

### **3. Research Question**

#### **3.1 Research Problem**

The majority of previous literature focuses attention on the need for clearly defined goals, knowledge sharing and face to face interaction for effective collaboration. As discussed in detail in chapter 2, all of these factors are weak or non-existent in globally dispersed teams. This study will identify how to overcome these.

#### **3.2 Research Question**

The primary objective of this research is to establish whether or not effective collaboration is in fact possible in a dynamic environment such as globally dispersed teams. The research also seeks to evaluate the following sub headings:

- Communication amongst globally dispersed teams.
- Cooperation amongst globally dispersed teams
- Leadership amongst globally dispersed teams.

### 3.3 Development of the Conceptual Framework

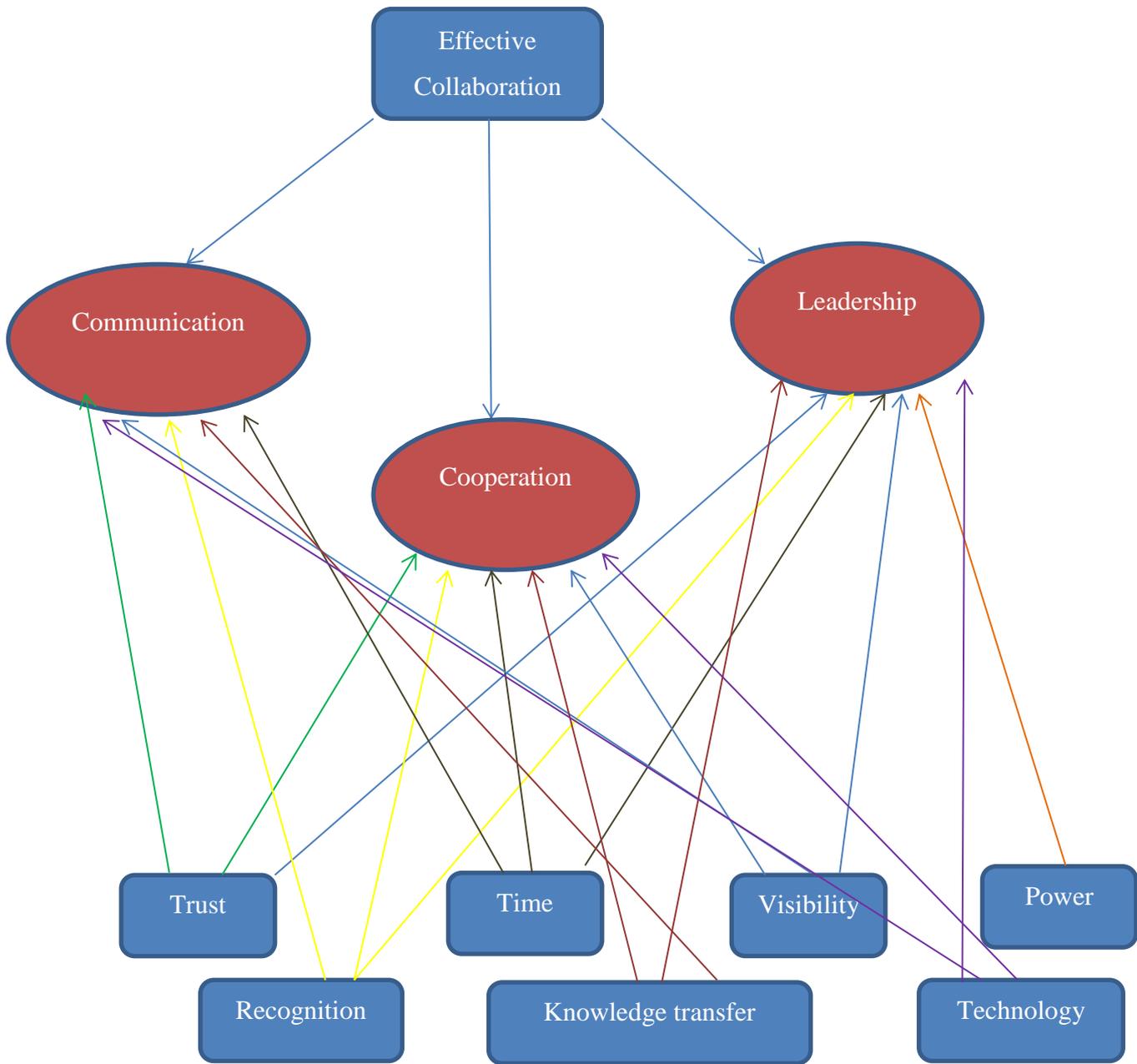
An extensive assessment of the literature around collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams was carried out as part of this study to enable the researcher to create a list of important factors that lead to effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams.

While Stutanto, Kankanhalli & Tan, (2004) have created a conceptual framework for analysing coordination in globally dispersed teams, this model looks extensively at the planning required in globally dispersed teams but fails to take into account the aspect of working together, collaboration as identified in chapter 2.

The key factors identified in the development of the conceptual framework for this study include:

- Trust
- Knowledge Transfer
- Recognition
- Guidance/Visibility/Training
- Clear strategy
- Position Power
- Time
- Technology

These factors relate to three key components; leadership, cooperation and communication which lead to effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams.



### **3.3. I Communication**

Research suggests that in order for globally dispersed teams to communicate effectively leading to effective collaboration, teams who do not meet face to face regularly rely on technology to communicate.

“Human face-to-face interaction is, and will continue to be, the most effective form of communication. Live meetings deliver the rich, potent experiences that virtual meetings cant. They deliver motivation along with messaging and inspiration with information” (Jarrett, 2009).

In order for teams to transfer knowledge between one another they need to form a relationship, the key to this relationship is trust.

“The foundation of trust will permeate every aspect of a company: the people, the products, and the corporate culture” (Williams, 2013).

The more team member trust one another the more willing they are to transfer knowledge. Trust is the vital unmeasurable. Whilst transferring knowledge team members are expected to take barriers such as time differences, technology lingo, culture, noise and language barriers into consideration.

### **3.3. II Cooperation**

Research suggests that in order for globally dispersed teams to cooperate with one another they must form a trusting relationship.

“In the absence of cooperation is competition. Cooperation includes partnering with others in terms of resources, capabilities, and competencies in pursuit of mutual interests for the advancement of goals”, (WordPress, 2011).

In order for team members to trust and transfer knowledge, team members must have visibility of the overall business strategy to understand the role in the strategy and must be shown recognition for their efforts. “By modelling the sharing of resources and information, you encourage others to do the same”, (Kouzes & Posner, 2008, Pg.11).

Time plays an important role in the cooperation of globally dispersed teams due to varying time zones involved. Team members must take the time zone into account when looking to receive or provide information. However, technology has significantly lessened the impact of time differences.

### **3.3. III Leadership**

Research suggests that in order for globally dispersed teams to collaborate effectively leadership in the dynamic environment differs from a centrally located team. A leader must have trust in their team moving from a controller to coordinator. Leaders must communicate the business strategy clearly and regularly providing team members with visibility on where the business is going. Knowledge transfer in a timely manner across the team spectrum is key.

Leaders should show recognition of their team efforts and acknowledge the individuals impact on the overall business goals and achievements. Leaders should also make a greater effort to communicate directly and refrain from relying on technology such as group emails.

## **4. Research Methodology**

### **4. I Introduction**

The primary objective of this research is to investigate and analyse the collaboration between globally dispersed team members dispersed globally as discussed in the literature review; there is a growing trend where teams in global companies are dispersed internationally. With there being a growth in globally dispersed teams across industries, this research is highly relevant today.

The question that this research will pose will be the methods dispersed teams use to collaborate effectively and identifying the weaknesses currently present.

As discussed in the introduction, companies are shifting to teams that are dispersed globally. Companies are doing this for reasons such as cost savings, knowledge sharing, diversity, and attempt to meet the challenges of globalisation.

As this research is specific to the financial sector there will be scope for further research and detailed analysis external to this study to identify Industry norms and collaboration methods that are industry specific.

### **4. II Research Approach**

The researcher has adopted a deductive approach to this study, in that a theory was developed before gathering any data. The theory designed was then tested through the questionnaires. There is an element of inductive research also due to the small number of open ended questions in the questionnaire. A deductive approach enabled the researcher to gather statistical data from the questionnaire and apply this data to the research questions developed in the literature review. This then supported the research and enabled conclusions to be developed on the subject.

#### 4. III Research Design



##### 4. III.A. Research Introduction and Objectives

The objective of this research is to critically assess collaboration in globally dispersed teams. This chapter outlines the research methods used to form the study which include 1) examining how globally dispersed teams collaborate and if it is done effectively 2) identify the weaknesses in collaboration between globally dispersed teams 3) analyse how weaknesses in collaboration can be improved in order to make it effective.

The research methodology will be an empirical study using primary information sourced from academic literature such as journals and other publications. In addition the research will follow an interpretive approach focusing on the qualitative interview and questionnaire process and findings. From an epistemological perspective, the research will be directly based on the results found from the interviews and questionnaires. As interviews tend to lean towards a more value laden approach when analysing the results, the researcher will attempt to remain unbiased.

#### **4. III.B. Data Collection**

There were a number of methods available to the researcher in order to gather data for this study, such as; interview in-person or telephone, web based or paper questionnaires. The researcher took into consideration that the choice of method employed would impact on who could be selected to complete the research questionnaire. The key consideration for this study was to gather data that was truthful and avoided a bias response. In addition the researcher wished to use a method of data collection that would attract the most participants to respond. Pewresearch ([www.people-press.org](http://www.people-press.org)) state that web based surveys are increasingly conducted as a primary method of data collection due to the significant rise in internet penetration and the relatively low cost in conducting web based surveys in comparison to other methods.

The researcher favoured the idea that web based questionnaires enabled the participant to choose a suitable time for them to complete the questionnaire, in addition the absence of an interviewer minimised the risk of bias. The demographic selected for this questionnaire was deemed suitable for a web based method as all participants had access to the internet.

To increase the number of responses the researcher chose to directly email the participants with a cover letter (appendix xx) and a link to the anonymous questionnaire. There was an increased risk of the possibility that participants would not choose to participate due to the anonymity, however the researcher concluded that fewer surveys completed without bias would be more beneficial to this study rather than a large number of responses with an increased chance of bias.

#### **4. III.C. Population**

The population for this study included two hundred and twenty seven members of the Global Supply Chain Finance team in Wells Fargo Bank. These participants were selected by the researcher as this study was intended to target the financial services arena and the Global Supply Chain Finance team is a highly dynamic new product area where the team is globally dispersed. The researcher also made the decision to specifically target their research in one organisation and target their specific opinions with regards to collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams.

Table 1.2

Organization Type	
Type of Organization	%
Financial Services	100

#### 4. III.D. Sample

The target organization for effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams was the financial services sector, specifically Supply chain finance. The potential number of participants from the Supply Chain Finance group was two hundred and twenty seven. The questionnaire was made available to all two hundred and twenty seven team members ranging from senior directors to analyst level. Participation by all levels of the department may allow the researcher to draw possible generalized conclusions. The uniqueness of each job level may indicate that additional studies should be undertaken before generalizations are made that are cross-transferable to the department in general.

Table 1.3

Participants Level in the organization	
Organisational Level	%
ABL National Sales manager	1
ABL Regional Sales Manager	1
ABL Regional Underwriting Manager	1
ABL relationship manager	2
ABL Sales Associate	7
ABL Sales Rep	3
ABL Underwriter	2
Administrative Assistant	1
Business Initiatives manager	2
Collateral analyst	2
Regional Sales Manager	1
Underwriting Analyst	1
WFCF CF Business Develop Consultant	1
WFCF Development Rep	1
WFCF SCF Relationship Manager	1

#### **4. III.E. Instrumentation**

The following describes the process used to develop the questionnaires.

To determine whether the survey items represent the topic being measured, an analysis of the literature reviewed in chapter two provided a list of approximately three key factors that may contribute to effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams. The researcher grouped the factors into the following key factors; communication, cooperation and leadership.

The instrumentation that will be used in the study is qualitative methods. Qualitative methods were chosen as it provides an in-depth examination of the phenomena, examining complex questions that are not limited by rigidly defined variables. There is a weakness being that these methods of research can be value-laden, however the researcher will build controls to avoid any bias that may be present. Triangulation of the research will provide a strong typology for effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams in the financial sector.

#### **4. III.F. Validity & Reliability**

The researcher tested the questionnaire on five test participants to identify that the questionnaire was user friendly and easy to follow. On response from the test participants it was identified that there was too many open ended questions that caused the participant to become tired. Therefore the number of open ended questions was reduced.

#### **4. IV. Qualitative Research**

The purpose of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations to the research questions. This will be conducted through web based questionnaires to determine the method of collaboration used and to generate narratives about the weaknesses experienced amongst globally dispersed teams in the financial sector.

#### 4. V. Questionnaires

The primary data for this research was collected by a web based questionnaire. The questionnaire seeks to research the prevalence of particular characteristics currently experienced in globally dispersed teams and therefore will be cross-sectional. Cross-sectional surveys enable the researcher to assess relations between different subgroups in a population (Visser, Krosnick & Lavrakas, 1993, p.225).

The researcher carried out a pilot test to five participants in the early stages of the questionnaire development in order to identify how the participant was interpreting the questions. An informal interview was then conducted after the participant had completed the questionnaire. The researcher identified that participants were confused by the use of remote users alongside globally dispersed users. The researcher amended the questionnaire to read globally dispersed throughout the questionnaire and in question three states “remote/globally dispersed to avoid confusion”. In addition participants mentioned that they experienced fatigue over the number of open ended questions in the questionnaire. The researcher revised the questionnaire to only contain three open ended questions.

##### Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was generated in a schematic form using esurv.org, a pilot survey. The researcher chose to use both open-ended and closed-ended questions; the decision to do this was that the researcher believed the completion of the questionnaire would be time sensitive and closed-ended questions enabled to participant to answer quicker. In addition however the researcher wished to maximise the data collected and felt that including a small number of open ended questions would be advisable so that they would be able to access data that may not have been covered in the literature reviewed. The open ended questions had a rule that they must be answered by participants, in addition the researcher will use coding to analyse the open-ended responses. Jenkins (1935) states that there is a possible weakness with closed-ended questions where by the participants tend to limit their response to the answers provided even if the researcher wishes for them to expand.

The researcher, when designing the questionnaire wording was cautious to firstly word the questions in a manner that would avoid ambiguity, and secondly use short, simplistic wording that would be familiar to the participant to minimize fatigue. The question order has been designed where the opening questions are easy to understand to entice the participant to

become motivated and interested in the survey. The opening questions also guide the participant to understand globally dispersed teams and what the questions are alluding to. The researcher has avoided questions such as “Do you think”; as researchers such as Nisbett and Wilson (1977) suggest that the cognitive process occurs unconsciously in a person’s mind and therefore is very difficult for a participant to answer such descriptive questions.

On review of the literature in chapter two the questionnaire contained questions such as “What in your opinion is the most important element for effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams?” “What is the most used medium of communication within your globally dispersed team?” “Do you feel informed of what your fellow colleagues are working on?” The objective of the web based questionnaire is to confirm that what the literature identifies as effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams is in fact occurring today in a live globally dispersed team. In addition the researcher will attempt to identify any gaps present in the literature that was brought to light by the questionnaire.

On completion of the questionnaire the researcher read through the questionnaires as a whole and made notes on their first impressions. The researcher then read the questionnaires again very carefully coding relevant sentences and sections. The researcher then highlighted repetitive comments, surprising comments, and comments that relate back to specific literature in chapter two. The methodology will aim to code the conceptualization of underlying patterns in the responses while remaining unbiased.

#### **4. VI. Interviews & Case Study**

After carrying out the questionnaire the researcher chose not to proceed with Interviews or a case study. From the nineteen respondents on the questionnaire there was a cohesive response.

#### **4. VII. Content Analysis**

The researcher analysed the data from the research methods using open coding, (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Open coding involved conceptualizing phenomena throughout the questionnaires e.g. Technology has reduced weaknesses in globally dispersed teams in the financial sector. The researcher then proceeded to compare, contrast, and categorize each phenomena.

#### **4. VIII. Completion Timetable**

Included in the Appendix there is a timetable detailing the schedule up until August 2014, submission date of the final thesis.

#### **4. IX. Research Ethics**

During this study the researcher ensured that ethical standards were adhered to. A cover letter was included with the questionnaire providing a synopsis of the study and the purpose of the questionnaire and the estimated time it would take to complete. The participants were made fully aware as to why the research was being carried out and how much of their time would be required to complete.

The participants were not required to provide their name to complete the questionnaire therefore there was full anonymity. Due to the questionnaire being web based there was no face to face contact in completing the questionnaire; the researcher believed this was the best approach to gain truthful responses.

All of the data was collected solely for the purpose of this study. The researcher ensured that the data collected was stored securely and access was password protected. The data will be destroyed once it is no longer required for this study.

## **5. Limitations of the Research**

All research is subject to limitations, with this study the targeted audience was those working in the financial sector. The researcher chose to use one product team Supply Chain Finance in the financial sector in doing this the researcher was able to identify common weaknesses, however this also meant that there was a possibility of response bias. There was an additional limitation with the possible lack of respondents to the questionnaire however with the nineteen responses there was a cohesive opinion and the researcher deemed this to be to be sufficient for the purpose of the research.

The associated weakness with qualitative research is that it is value laden. To limit this weakness the questionnaires conducted were anonymous therefore the researcher did not know who had completed them. The anonymity will reduce the likelihood of the participants feeling the need to answer in a manner that paints them in a favourable light.

The researcher hoped to achieve as large a number of responses as possible to provide a more robust result, however due to the time limitations of this study it was not possible. However the researcher feels that the data collected is an accurate reflection on globally dispersed teams.

## 6. Findings

This chapter will discuss the findings of the questionnaires distributed to globally dispersed teams. Firstly the researcher will outline the background information from participants. Following from this the key themes of analysis, communication, cooperation and leadership will be discussed. The data collected through questionnaire feedback will be presented along with statistical data.

### 6. I Background Information

The researcher distributed the web based questionnaire to two hundred and twenty seven candidates selected due to their job group in Supply Chain Finance. Of these two hundred and twenty seven, nineteen responded. Of the nineteen responses the researcher deemed one response inadequate as the participant had checked the box stating they did not work in a globally dispersed team. The first three questions on the questionnaire were designed to set the stage for the participants and asked basic background questions such as; do you work for a globally dispersed team, how many employees currently work at the location where you work, and how many members of your team are globally dispersed. From the eighteen responses deemed adequate one hundred percent were working in a globally dispersed team and over forty seven percent had more than five members that were globally dispersed. In addition to this over sixty percent of candidates worked in teams with more than five colleagues.

### 6. II Communication

While studying the literature in chapter two it was apparent that technology has greatly impacted on communication today; the telephone had decreased in popularity amongst team members as a method of communication and that email was the main method of communication. Figure 1.1 below details the most used method of communication amongst the globally dispersed team. Email was the most popular source of communication with nearly seventy nine percent of participants stating this is how they would communicate with globally dispersed colleagues the most. Instant messenger was the second most popular

method of communication with almost sixteen percent. The findings show that the telephone is one of the least favoured methods of communication in globally dispersed teams.

**Figure 1.1, Questionnaire number 8: What is the most used method of communication within your globally dispersed team?**

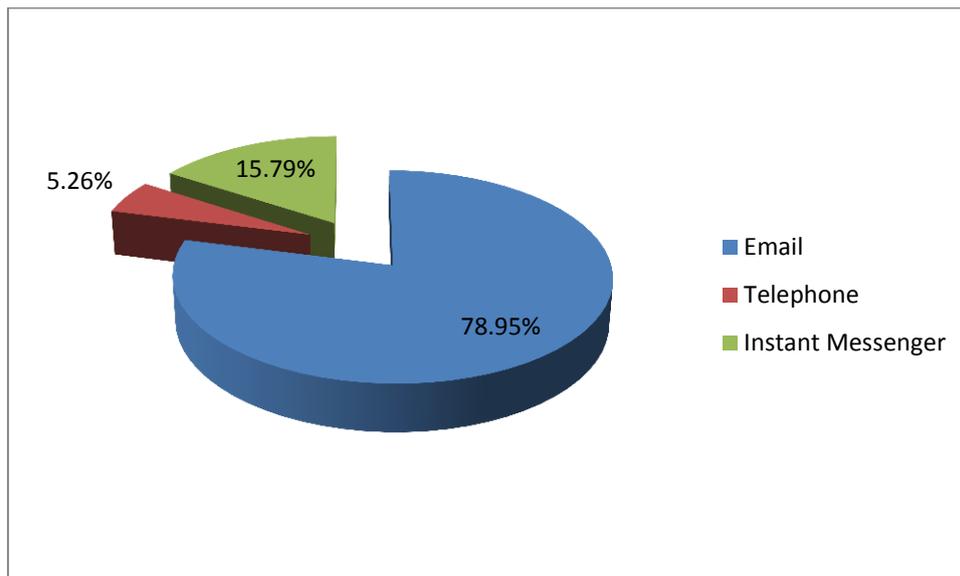


Figure 1.2 details the most important element for effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams. The participants of the questionnaire have claimed that communication is considered the most important element of collaboration with over seventy three percent. After communication is leadership with fifteen percent and then cooperation with only ten percent of the vote. Based on literature in chapter two, it was identified that due to globally dispersed teams not meeting face to face on a regular basis, communication can be challenging and members are required to make more of an effort to communicate with team members on a regular basis to maintain a level of familiarity and comfortableness.

**Figure 1.2, Questionnaire number 7: What in your opinion is the most important element for effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams?**

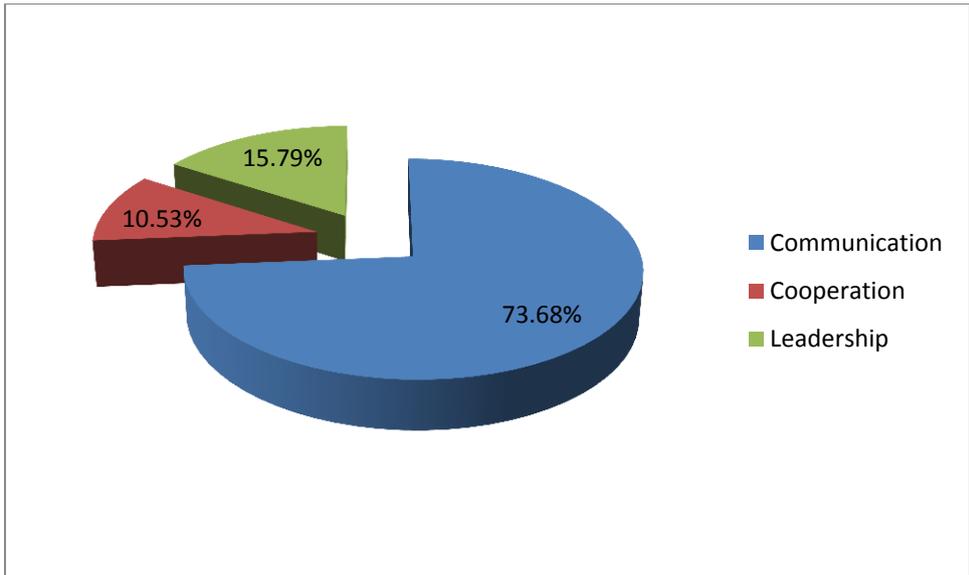


Figure 1.3 details the factors considered by participants to impact on communication the most. There was a strong agreement with this question with eighty nine percent of participants stating that time zone was the greatest factor effecting communication amongst globally dispersed teams. In chapter two the literature suggested that there was not a strong reliance in globally dispersed teams on one another to complete work Bell (2002), however this survey would suggest that this is not the case and in fact the time zone factor can impede on the time work is completed. Teams with interdependent tasks will need to acknowledge delays in completion of tasks due to the time zone differences.

**Figure 1.3, Questionnaire number 9: Which of the following in your opinion impact on globally dispersed teams most?**

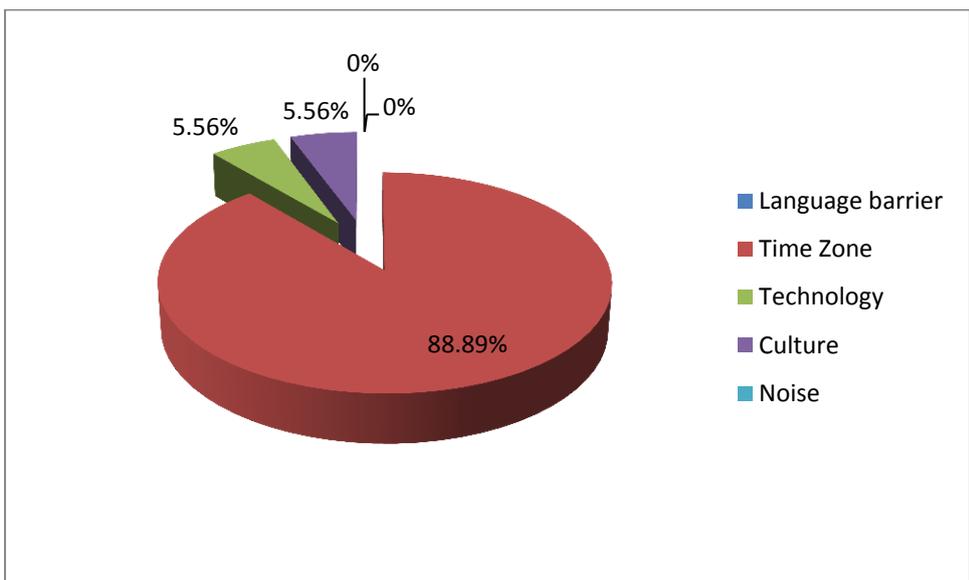


Figure 1.4 details whether or not participants felt that video conferencing could replace face to face meetings. In chapter two, research suggested that globally dispersed team members are required to make more of a conscientious effort to communicate and it is harder to identify miscommunication. Technology has greatly improved over the past ten years; therefore the question was put to participants to identify if technology could in fact replace face to face meetings. The participants strongly dis-agreed that technology such as video conferencing could replace face to face meetings with seventy nine percent stating no.

**Figure 1.4, Questionnaire number 12: Would video conferencing replace face to face meetings?**

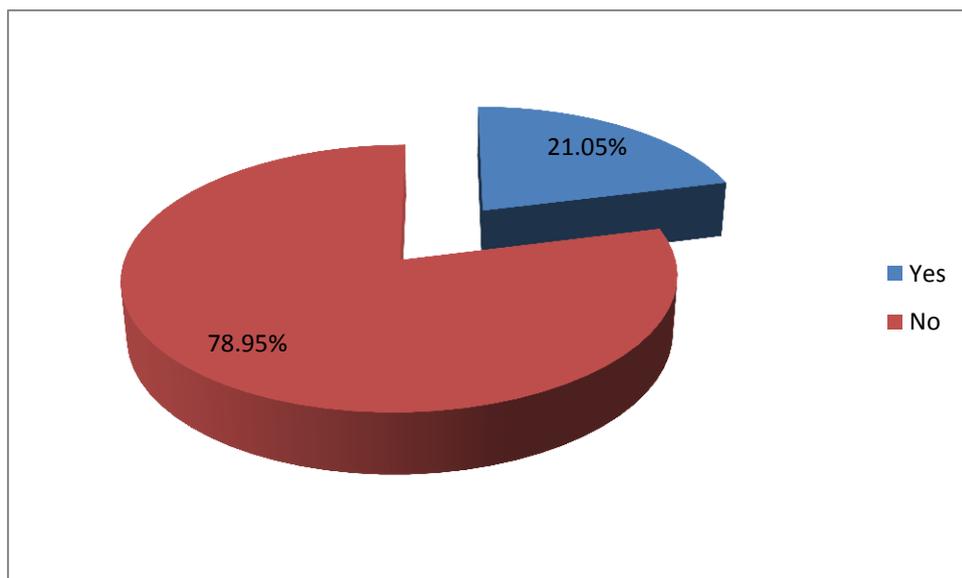


Figure 1.5 details the number of members on the globally dispersed team that have met their global counterparts face to face. Forty percent of this team have met all of their global team members. Taking into account new team members joining, thirty one percent have met with almost seventy five percent of their global team members. It is apparent that in this survey the Supply Chain Finance team acknowledge the importance of face to face meetings and have carried out group functions. This correlates with the research in chapter two in that a level of familiarity and comfortableness amongst team members is critical to effective communication.

**Figure 1.5, Questionnaire number 13: What percentage of your globally dispersed team members have you met with face to face?**

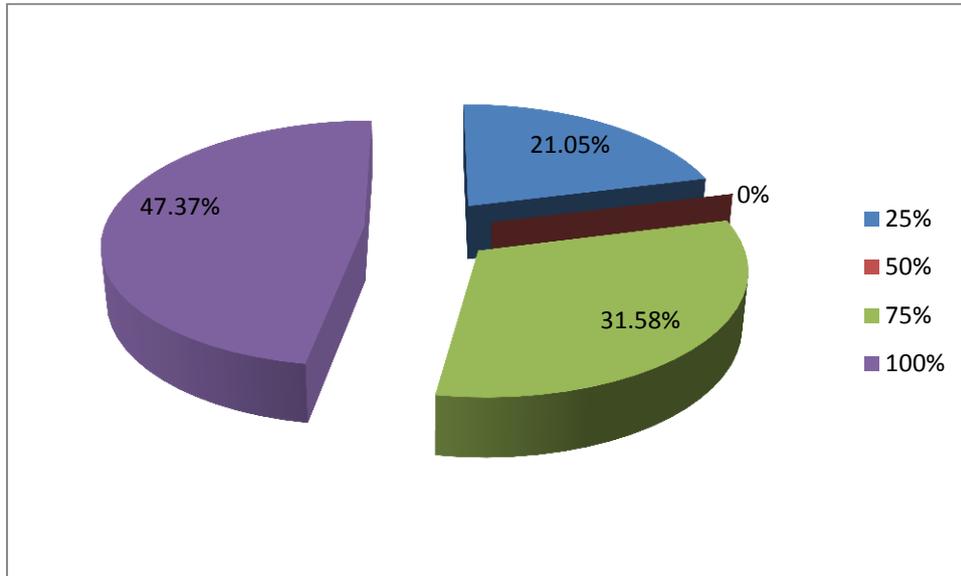


Figure 1.6 details if future project plans and strategies are communicated to the team as a whole. The results of this question is almost split down the line with fifty three participants feeling that no plans and strategies are not communicated to them and forty seven percent feeling they were communicated to them. As this questionnaire was distributed to the Supply Chain Finance group as a whole it is apparent that the lower levels in the group are not being communicated the future strategies and projects. Research in chapter two states that Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of needs shows that people require attention and recognition to meet there needs of self-esteem.

**Figure 1.6, Questionnaire number 18: In your opinion are projects and future strategies communicated to you?**

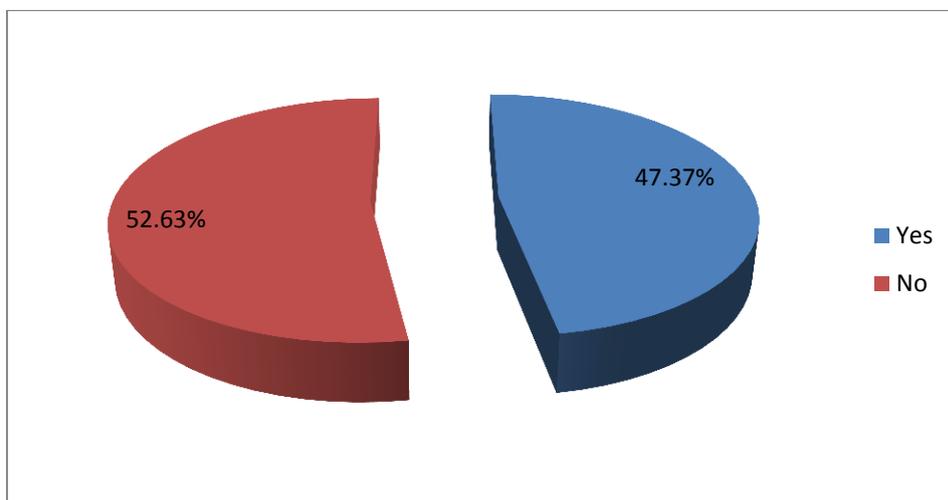
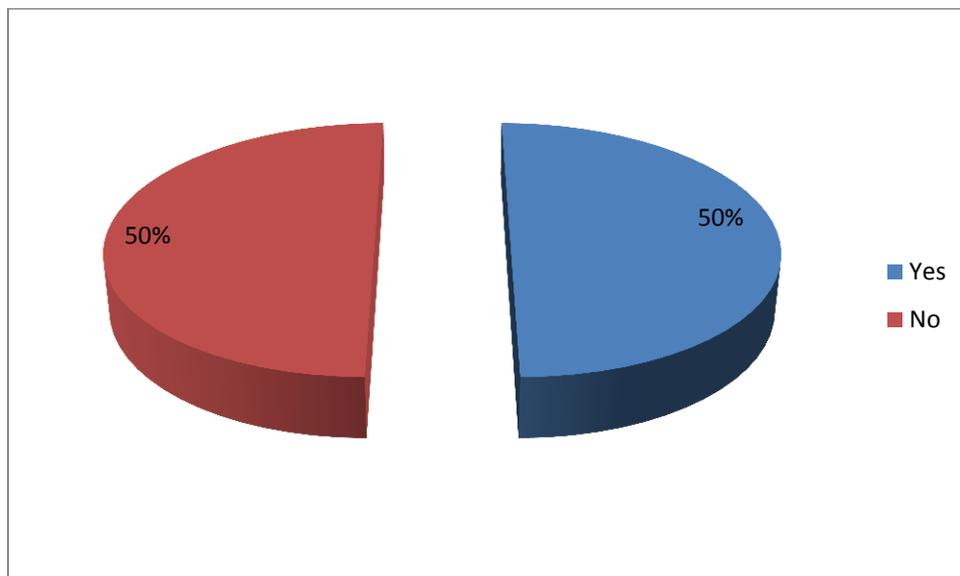


Figure 1.7 details if achievement's in the globally dispersed teams are communicated to the team. The results of this question again is split down the line with fifty percent feeling they are involved in the celebration of achievements and fifty percent feeling they are not. It again is a possibility that the lower levels are not being included in this. All members of a globally dispersed team have a need for self-esteem and need to be provided with recognition.

**Figure 1.7, Questionnaire number 19: Are achievements in your globally dispersed team celebrated and highlighted with you?**



### 6. III. Summary of Key Findings:

- Time difference is causing delays in the completion of work.
- Time difference is leading to duplication of work. Greater time and efforts must be taken into account when communicating.
- Video conferencing is not perceived as a viable substitute for face to face meetings. Globally dispersed teams must take the time to build relationships.

## 6. IV. Cooperation

Figure 2.1 details whether globally dispersed team members felt it was critical to work together. There was a unanimous response from participants with one hundred percent stating yes, working together is critical for globally dispersed teams. This correlates with Argote and Ingram (2000) suggestion in chapter two that knowledge transfer is key for a firm's sustainable competitive advantage. Projects should be made entirely transparent to all team members.

**Figure 2.1, Questionnaire number 14 would you agree that working together is critical to a globally dispersed team?**

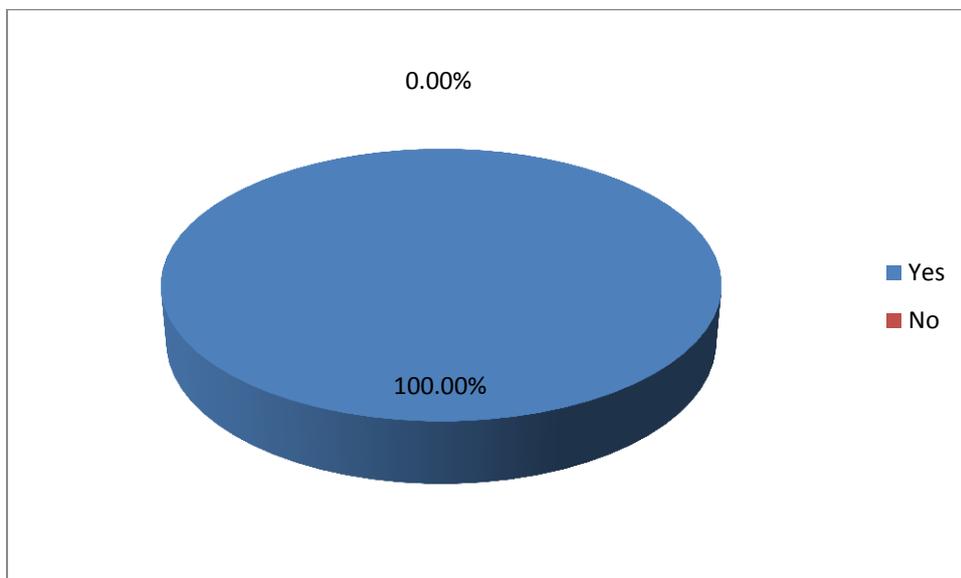


Figure 2.2 details participants who openly provide knowledge transfer to their globally dispersed team members. One hundred percent of participants have stated they would openly share knowledge to the globally dispersed team members. It would appear that there is open and honest communication amongst this globally dispersed team. Literature in chapter two suggests that in order for the transfer of knowledge to occur, team members must develop a trusting relationship by conducting open and honest communication.

**Figure 2.2, Questionnaire number 15 would you provide knowledge transfer openly to your team members?**

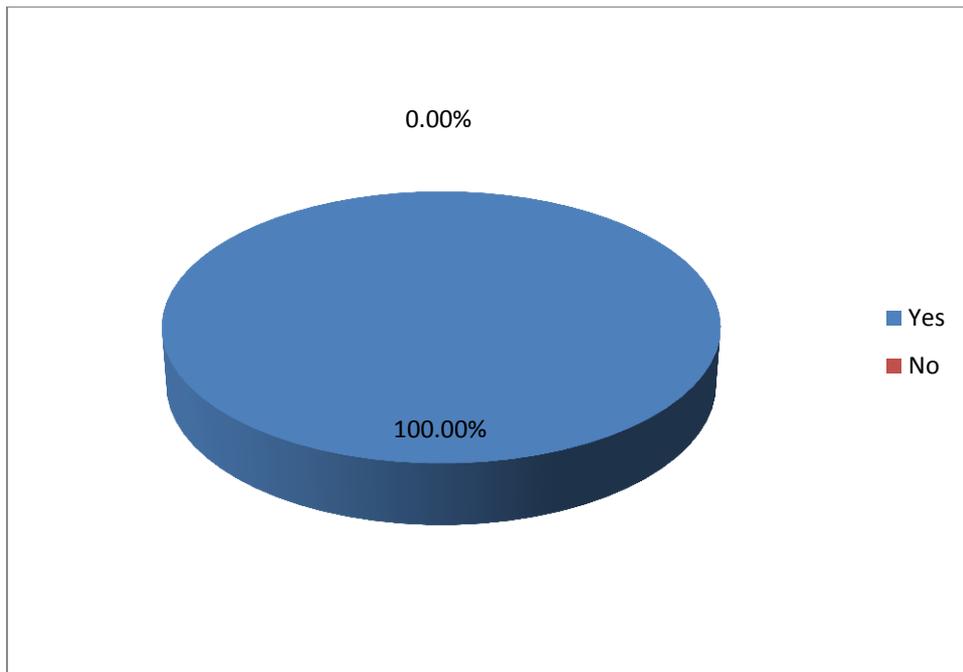


Figure 2.3 details if there are any circumstances that team members would consider not divulging information to their globally dispersed team members. Sixty seven percent of participants felt that the only scenario where information would not be openly divulged to team members was if the data was confidential. Twenty two percent stated that need to know basis would be the main factor, and sixteen percent felt that there was no reason they would not divulge information. Five percent were undecided. The literature in chapter two stated the importance that silos where not created and that information that was relevant to the group should be divulged. Over half of the population of participants appear to be correlating to the literature.

**Figure 2.3, Questionnaire number 16: Is there any circumstance where you would not divulge information to your globally dispersed team members?**

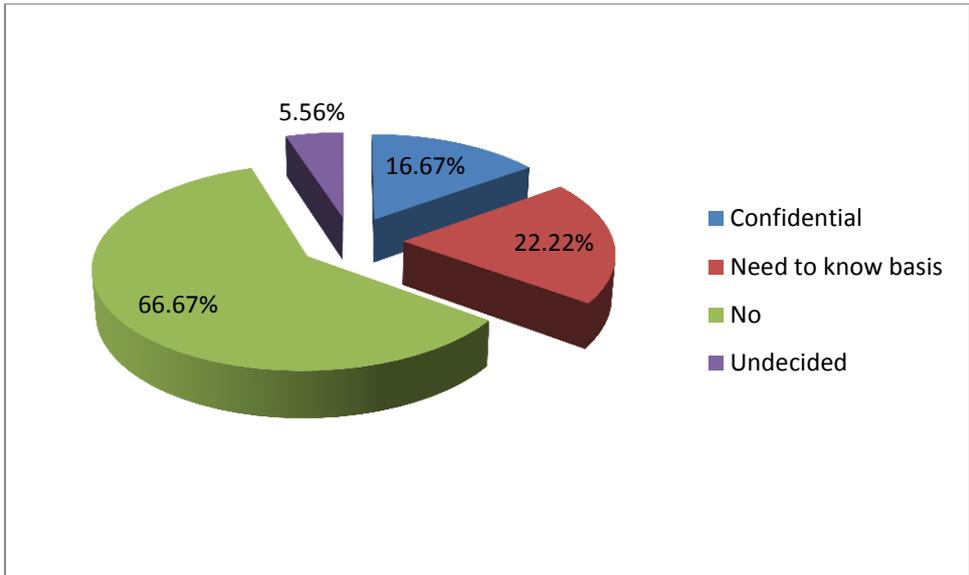
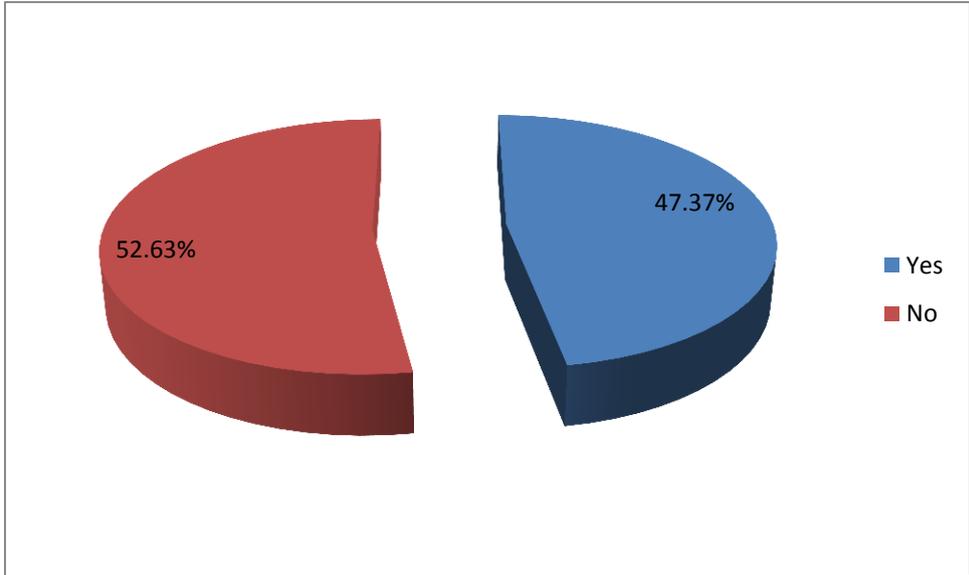


Figure 2.4 details whether job security is a factor considered when sharing knowledge transfer. Fifty two percent of participants stated that job security was not a factor in sharing knowledge, however interestingly after question 5.2 where sixty seven percent of participants stated that confidentiality was the main factor considered when sharing knowledge a considerable forty seven percent have said yes that job security is a factor considered when sharing knowledge. As the literature in chapter two states knowledge transfer is key to a firm's competitive advantage and clearly defined goals prevent the fear of one losing their job.

**Figure 2.4, Questionnaire number 17: Is job security a worry when transferring knowledge amongst globally dispersed team members?**



## 6. V. Summary of Key Findings:

It was identified in the literature in chapter two that a regimented structure is clearly the route to success for globally dispersed teams. The development of relationships and occasional face to face meetings allow for relationships to form. Once relationships have been developed transfer of knowledge increases. This links directly with the key findings from this section of the questionnaire:

- It is important that Silos are not created with sensitive/confidential data.
- Job security is considered when sharing knowledge and therefore defined goals are required.

## 6. VI. Leadership

Figure 3.1 details if relationship building is more important for globally dispersed teams. Eighty nine percent of participants felt that relationship building was more important for globally dispersed teams. As literature in chapter two identified, trust is critical in globally dispersed teams. A leaders function moves from a controller to a coordinator. In order for a leader to let go of control they must build strong relationships with their teams. The participants agree with this with almost ninety percent agreeing yes relationship building is important for globally dispersed teams.

**Figure 3.1, Questionnaire number 10: Is relationship building more important for globally dispersed teams?**

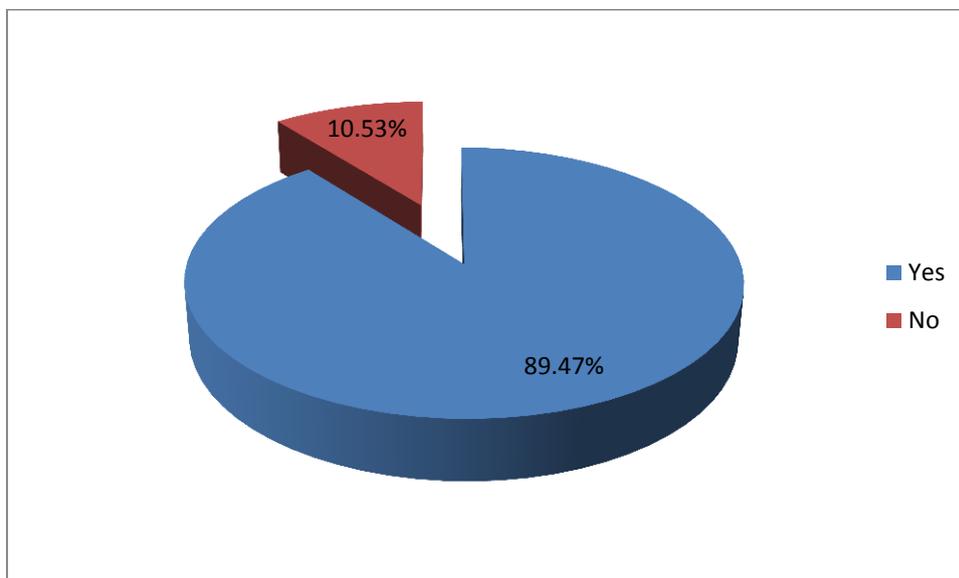


Figure 3.2 details if participants feel that face to face meetings improve relationship building. One hundred percent of participants felt that face to face meetings were important for relationship building. With seventy eight percent of the population used in the survey stating that they had met face to face with at least seventy five percent of their global team members, it is clear that they feel that this is of benefit to them. Literature in chapter two identified that it is difficult to understand the tone of an email or instant messenger due to the lack of body language and facial expressions. Leaders should engage in conversation on a regular basis with team members to build a stronger level of trust.

**Figure 3.2, Questionnaire number 11: In your opinion do face to face meetings improve relationship building?**

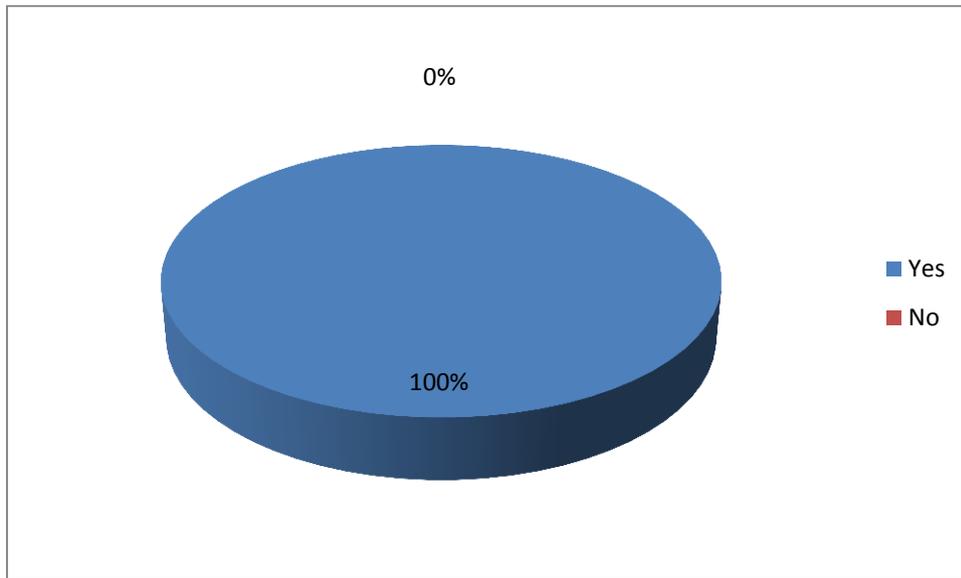


Figure 3.3 details whether participants believe that leadership in a globally dispersed team is complex. Seventy three percent of participants felt that globally dispersed team leadership was complex and a large number of sixty three percent did not believe this was the case. Literature in chapter two suggested leadership in globally dispersed teams was a complex and dynamic environment. The results from the questionnaire would show there was not as strong a belief by participants that this was the case. However as seventy five percent of participants have met face to face with their globally team members, it would suggest that the management of this globally dispersed team was well structured.

**Figure 3.3, Questionnaire number 20: Would you agree with the statement leadership in a globally dispersed team is complex?**

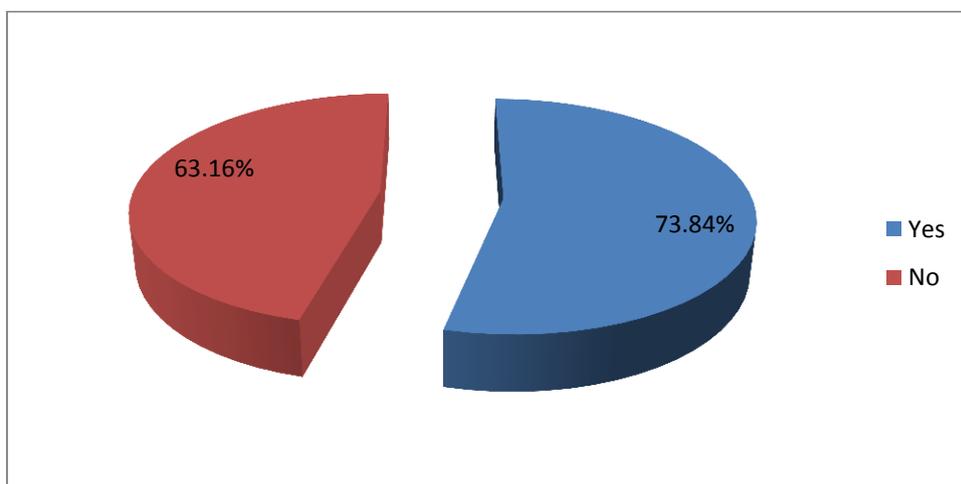


Figure 3.4 details the participants who are in a managerial role. Sixty three percent of participants are in a managerial role.

**Figure 3.4, Questionnaire number 21: Are you in a managerial role?**

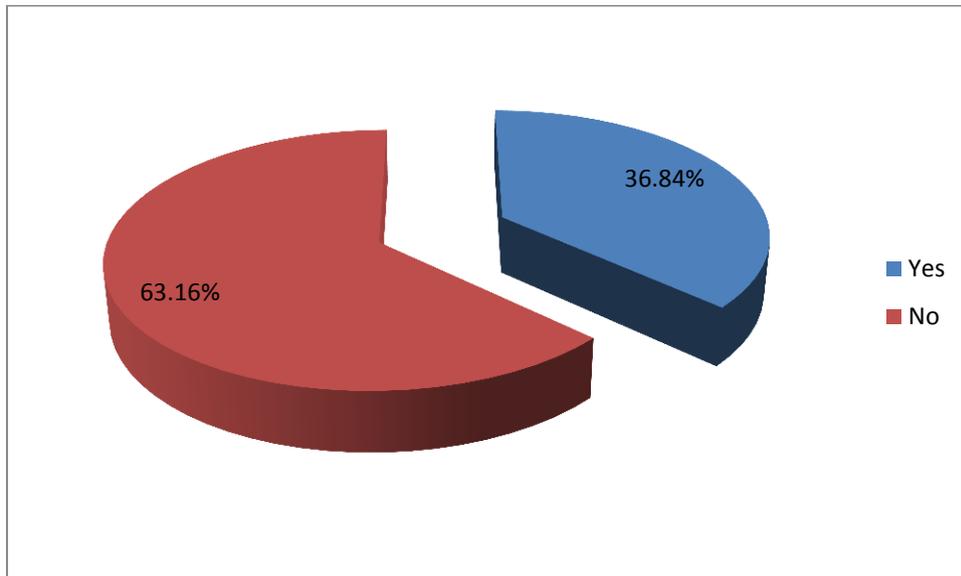


Figure 3.5 details how often participants work outside business hours. Fifty percent of participants are working outside the standard business hours and this would indicate that the time zone differences may be leading to this significant amount of overtime.

**Figure 3.5, Questionnaire number 22: How often would you work outside your standard business hours?**

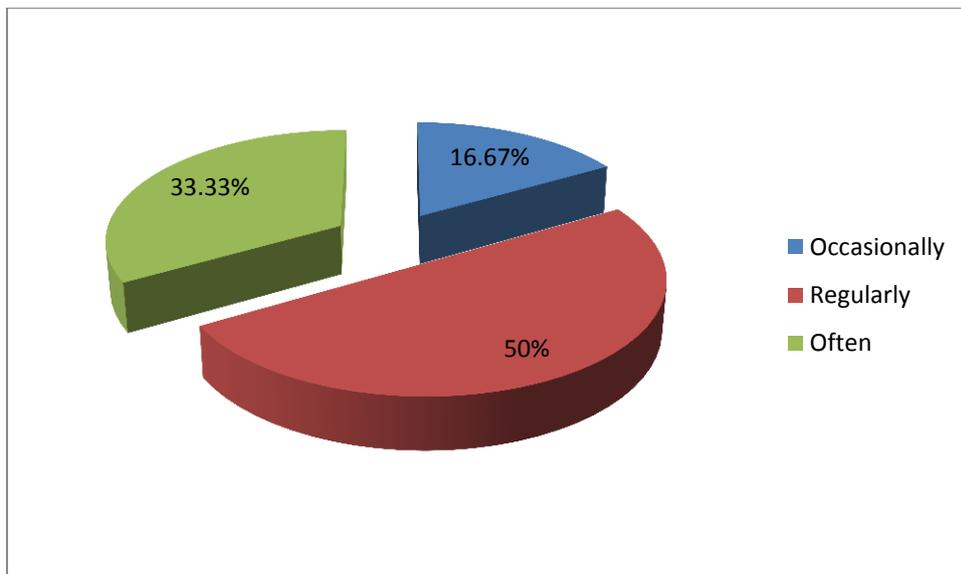


Figure 3.6 details how often participants use a work device outside of business hours. Fifty percent of participants are using devices outside of the office.

**Figure 3.6, Questionnaire number 23: How often would you use your work device?**

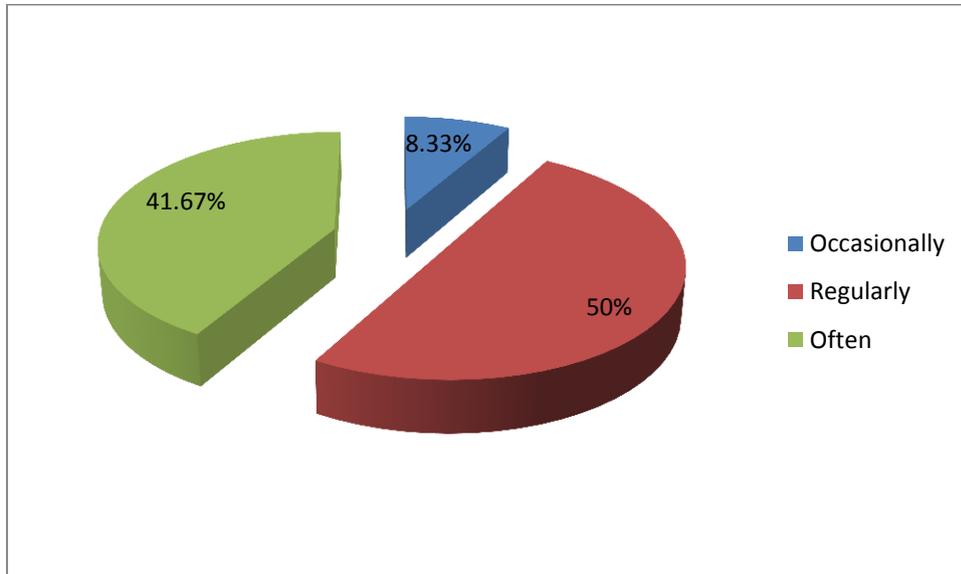


Figure 3.7 details what percentage of participants meetings fall outside the hours of nine to six. Fifty percent of participants have meetings outside of the standard nine to six business hours. There is a consistent response in figure 3.5-3.7.

**Figure 3.7, Questionnaire number 24: What percentage of your meetings fall outside the hours of 9-6?**

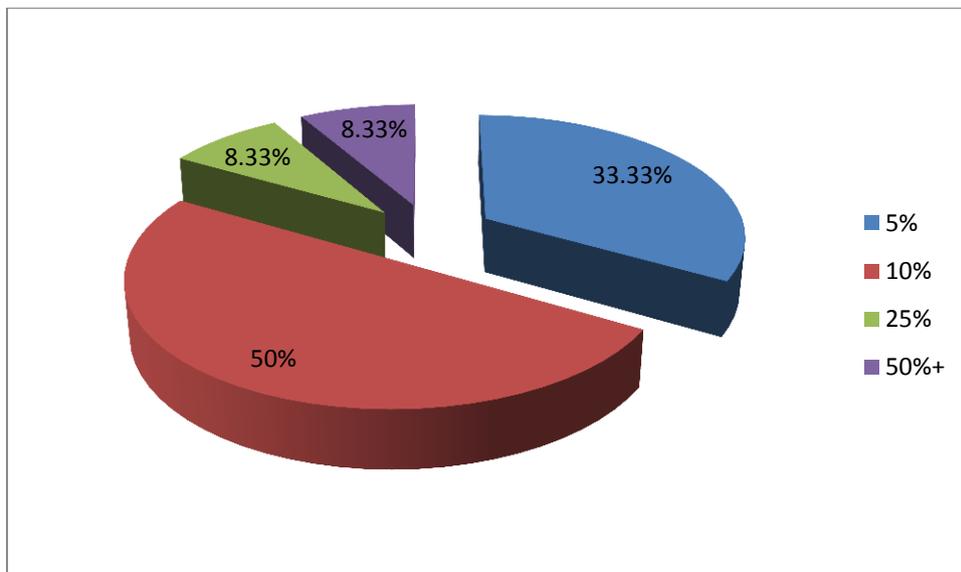


Figure 3.8 details the participants that are senior management. The researcher requested that only participants in managerial roles complete the six subsequent questions.

**Figure 3.8, Questionnaire number 25: Are senior management documenting this?**

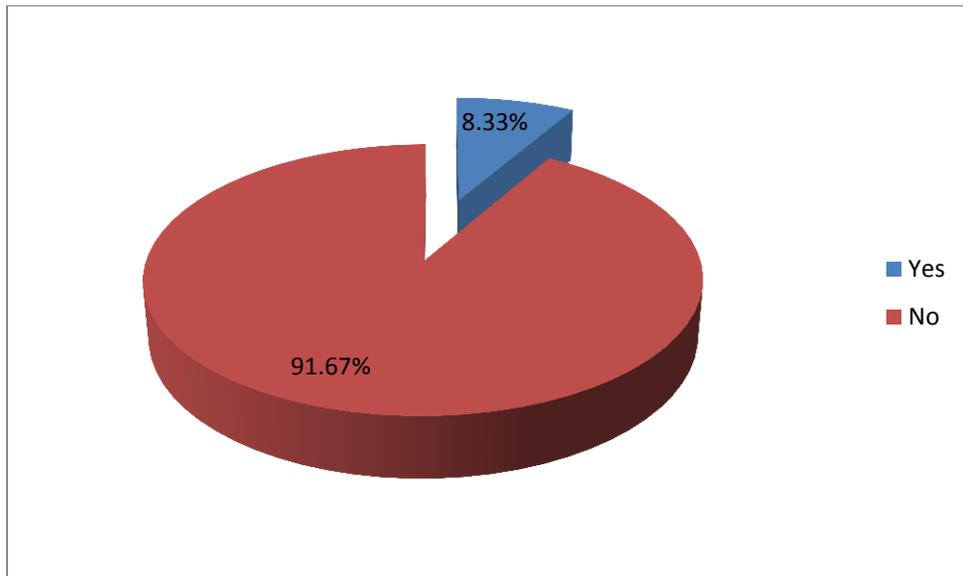


Figure 3.9 details whether time performance is used as a measure of job performance. Seventy five percent of senior management have stated that they do not use time performance as a measure of performance and a method of appraisal.

**Figure 3.9, Questionnaire number 26: Is time performance used as a method of appraisal?**

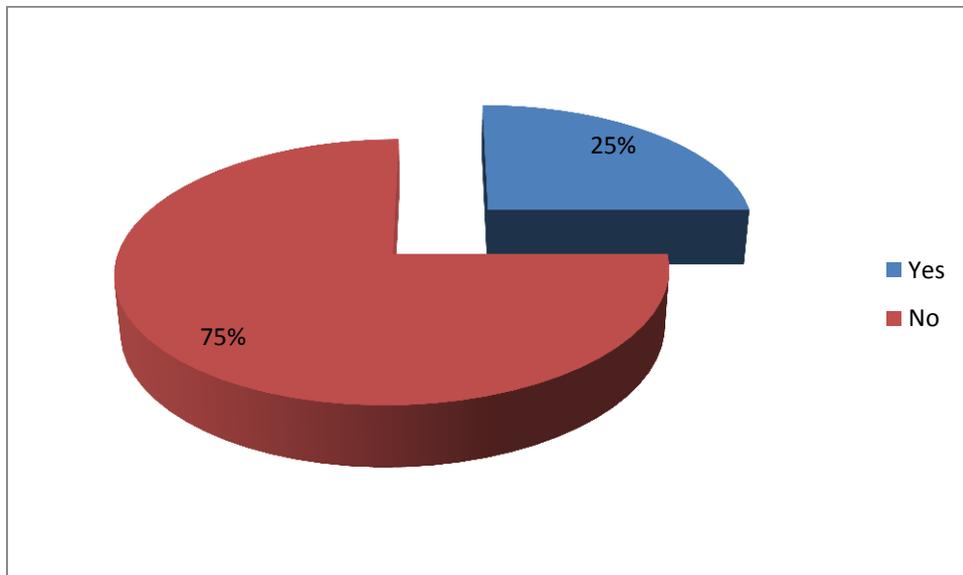
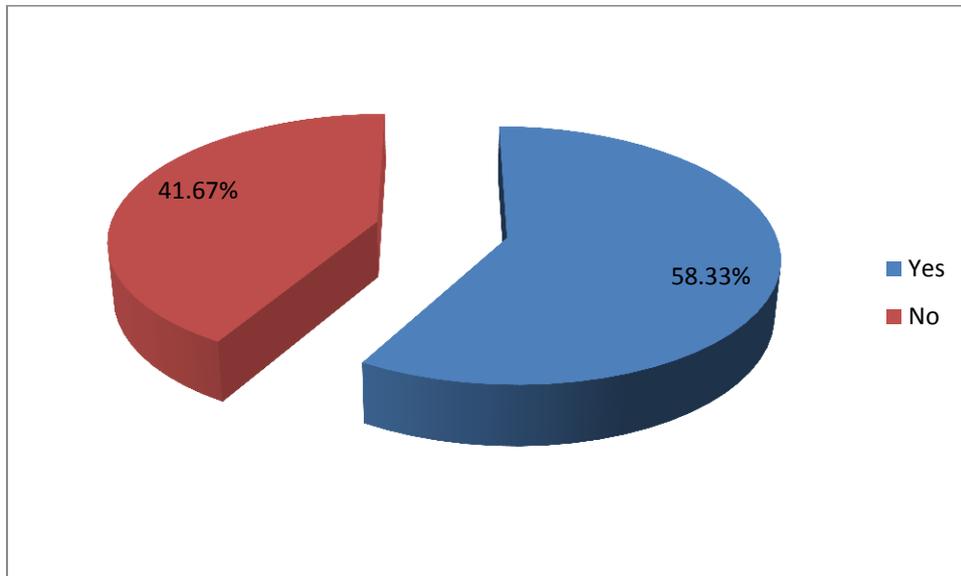


Figure 3.10 details whether trust is perceived as an issue when managing team members situated globally. Fifty eight percent of senior management have stated that trust is an issue with globally dispersed teams. As literature in chapter two suggests, trust is only relevant where there is a risk. It is important for managers to delegate work where clear definitions of

responsibility have been relayed. A leader's trust in their team members is critical for business to operate successfully.

**Figure 3.10, Questionnaire number 27: Is trust an issue when managing team members situated globally?**



## **6.VII Summary of key findings**

- > Trust is not an issue for managers in globally dispersed teams.
- > Time management is not used as a method of appraisal.
- > Over half the work force work outside standard business hours.

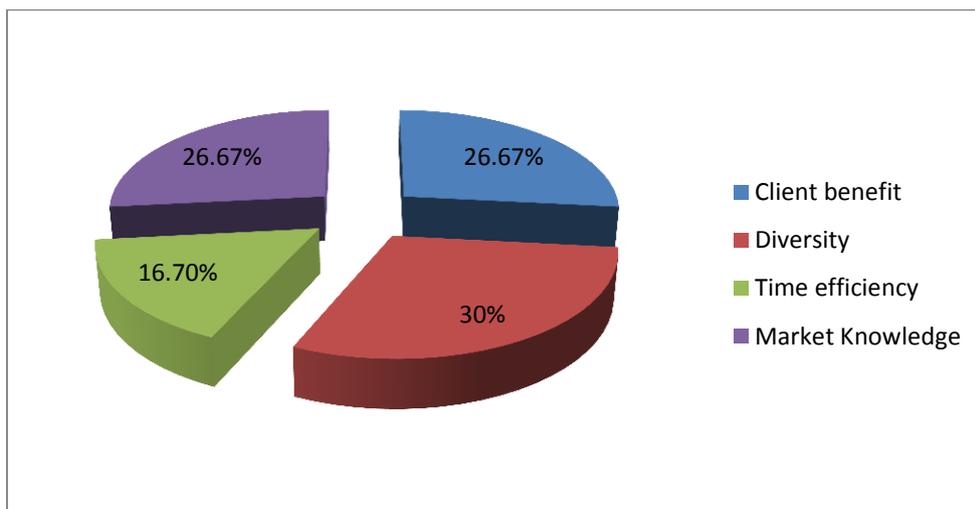
## 6. VIII Conclusion

In the development of the conceptual framework the following were identified as key factors:

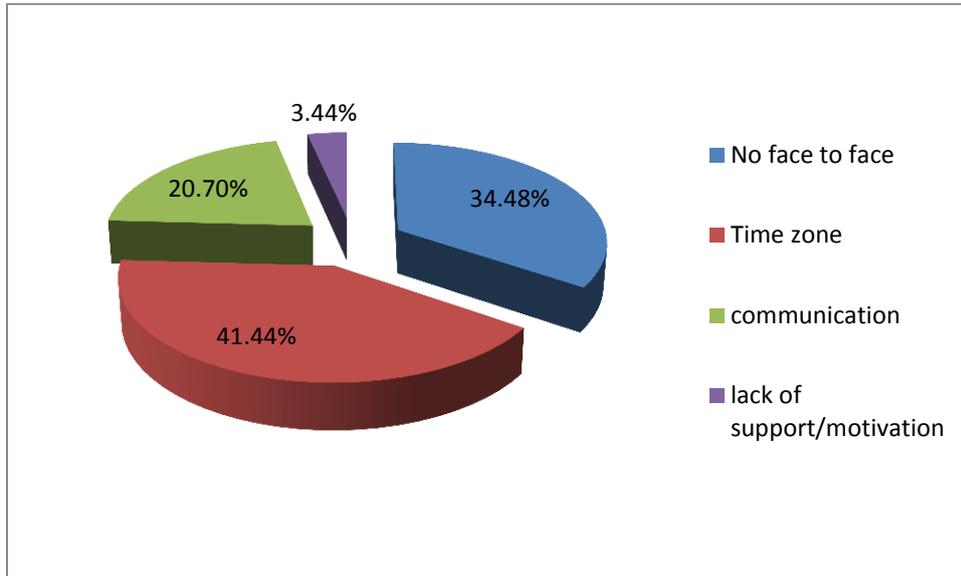
- Trust
- Knowledge Transfer
- Recognition
- Guidance/Visibility/Training
- Clear strategy
- Position Power
- Time
- Technology

From the three areas of the questionnaire; communication, cooperation and leadership and the following three concluding questions, a revised conceptual model was devised which is detailed in the following chapter seven.

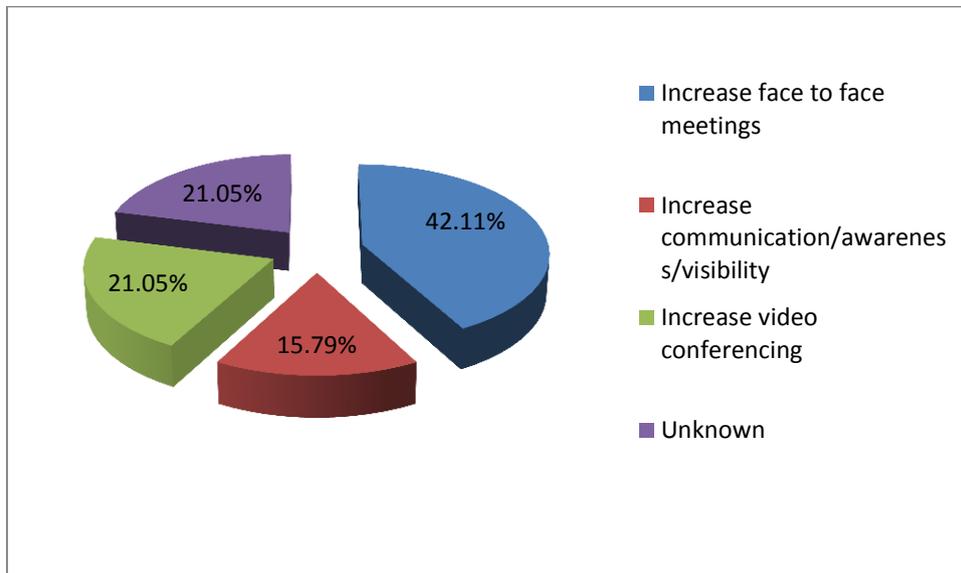
**Figure 4.1, Questionnaire number 4: What do you find positive about working on a globally dispersed team?**



**Figure 4.2, Questionnaire number 5: What do you find negative about working on a globally dispersed team?**



**Figure 4.3, Questionnaire number 6: If you could change one thing with globally dispersed teams what would it be?**



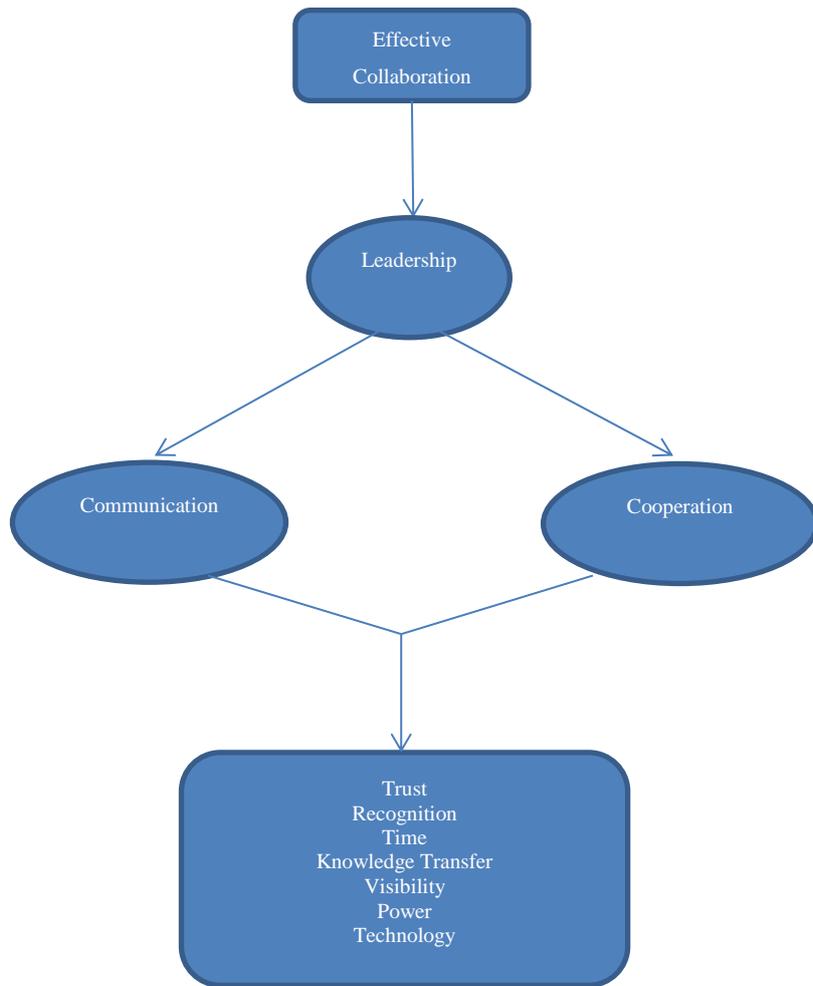
The findings show that communication amongst globally dispersed teams is weakened by the varying time zones. Time differences are leading to duplication of work and that video conferencing would not be a viable substitute for replacing face to face meetings. In addition to communication under cooperation amongst globally dispersed teams there is a great dependence on the trust and sharing of knowledge amongst the team, silos should be avoided

at all lengths. Finally in leadership trust again was an important factor when leading a globally dispersed team, it was noted that time management was not an effective way to monitor employees work output and should not be used as a method of appraisal. In closing participants were given the chance to state what they felt was positive about globally dispersed teams, this was an open ended question and thirty percent stated that globally dispersed teams brought diversity to the team.

## **7. Proposed Conceptual Model**

With an extensive assessment of the literature around collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams complete, the researcher was able to highlight the three key areas of effective collaboration. These were leadership, communication and cooperation, and the seven key factors; trust, knowledge transfer, recognition, visibility, time, power and technology where necessary to achieve effective collaboration. The researcher then carried out research after developing the conceptual framework. As a result of the findings outlined in the previous chapter, the researcher revised this conceptual model.

It became apparent to the researcher throughout the research that leadership was the key stone to the effective communication and cooperation amongst globally dispersed teams. A leader of a dynamic global dispersed team takes a different approach to a leader in a centrally located team. Globally dispersed team leaders rely heavily on their team to provide leadership and act primarily as a coordinator as opposed to a controller. Taking this into account the researcher has moved leadership up in the conceptual model with Communication and Cooperation following. Without leaders coordinating a dynamic globally dispersed team communication and cooperation would not occur.



## 8. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore the areas of collaboration in globally dispersed teams. The study also sought to examine the weaknesses present in collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams today. The research has achieved answers to these questions. In this chapter findings will be discussed and suggestions made for further study on this topic.

The study identified that there are numerous factors that impact on communication in globally dispersed teams. Acknowledging these factors and understanding them the study then focused on the importance of relationship building and how familiarity and trust assisted relationships and ability for team members to communicate.

In order for globally dispersed teams to build these relationships it was noted that face to face meetings remained a vital part in the relationship building process.

Research also identified that in the absence of trust and relationships that knowledge-transfer would not be exchanged inhibiting an organisations ability to compete in a competitive global market.

The study identified successful cooperation guidelines for a globally dispersed team:

- Initial face to face meeting to develop a relationship
- Importance of establishing a relationship at the beginning of a project as opposed to focusing directly on the task at hand.
- Open and honest communication will enable the development of a trusting relationship
- Maintain communication to provide a sense of presence and support
- Avoid assigning blame and work together to problem solve.
- Learn to understand cultural constraints
- The achievements of a globally dispersed team should be celebrated and highlighted to the entire group.

The study reverted back to relationship building and the formation of trust between globally dispersed teams. It was identified that this was required for cooperation amongst globally

dispersed teams in addition to understanding the constraints of their fellow team members such as varying time zones and time management.

The study finally identified that leadership of a globally dispersed team was more challenging than leading a centrally located team due to its dynamic environment. A leader was required to have a clear understanding of their goals and communicate this to the team. In addition trust impacted on globally dispersed team's leaders largely due to the coordinator type leadership requirements as opposed to the controller requirements.

A summary of the key findings were as follows:

- Email is the most common method of communication
- Communication is most important for globally dispersed teams.
- Time zone impacts on collaboration
- Face to face meetings cannot be replaced with technology
- It is critical to work together
- Job security is a factor to consider in knowledge transfer.
- Relationship building is more important for globally dispersed teams.
- Face to face meetings improve relationship building
- Trust is an issue when managing a globally dispersed team.

Further study on this topic should concentrate on expanding further into the leadership of globally dispersed teams. There is some relatively new literature around the area of self-managed work teams and virtual work teams.

## **9. Further Research**

An interesting new approach to the issues associated with employee dissatisfaction is self-managed work teams. The literature around this area would fit very well with globally dispersed teams and the difficulties associated with the dynamic environment and the transition in leadership from controller to coordinator.

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## 11. Appendices

### Appendix A: Cover Letter

Hi All,

I am currently working on a thesis for my MBA on "Effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams".

The below link to my questionnaire will assist with my research and i would be hugely appreciative if you could take 2 minutes to complete this.

[http://eSurv.org?s=LKOLKK\\_ae0f30f5](http://eSurv.org?s=LKOLKK_ae0f30f5)

Many Thanks in advance,

Regards

Gemma

## Appendix B: Questionnaire

I am currently working on a thesis for my MBA on "Effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams". This questionnaire will assist with my research and i would be hugely appreciative if you could take 2 minutes to complete this.

**Do you work on a globally dispersed team?**

Yes

No

**How many employees currently work at the location where you work?**

1

2-5

5+

**How many members of your team are remote/globally dispersed?**

1

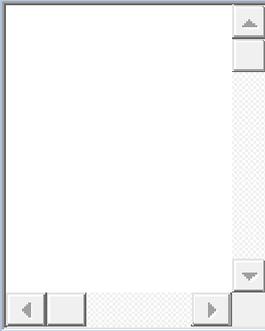
2-5

5+

**\* What do you find positive about working on a globally dispersed team?**

**What do you find negative about working on a globally dispersed team ?**

**\* If you could change one thing with globally dispersed teams what would it be ?**



**What in your opinion is the most important element for effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams ?**

- Communication
- Cooperation
- Leadership

**What is the most used medium of communication within your globally dispersed team ?**

- Email
- Telephone
- Instant Messenger

**Which of the following in your opinion impact on globally dispersed teams the most ?**

- language barrier
- time zone
- technology
- culture
- noise

**Is relationship building more important for globally dispersed teams?**

- Yes
- No

**In your opinion do face to face meetings improve relationship building?**

- Yes
- No

**Would video conferencing replace face to face meetings ?**

- Yes

No

**What percentage of your globally dispersed team members have you met with face to face?**

25%

50%

75%

100%

**Would you agree that working together is critical to a globally dispersed team ?**

Yes

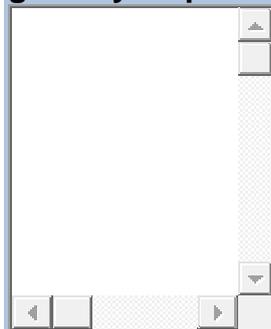
No

**Would you provide knowledge transfer openly to your team members**

Yes

No

**\* Is there any circumstance where you would not divulge information to your globally dispersed team members?**



**Is job security a worry when transferring knowledge amongst globally dispersed team members?**

Yes

No

**In your opinion are projects and future strategies communicated to you?**

Yes

No

**Are achievements in your globally dispersed team celebrated and highlighted with you ?**

Yes

No

**Would you agree with the statement leadership in a globally dispersed team is complex?**

Yes

No

**Are you in a managerial role? (If yes, please answer the following 6 questions)**

Yes

No

**How often would you work outside your standard business hours?**

Occasionally

regularly

often

**How often would you use your work device (phone/laptop etc.) outside of office hours?**

Occasionally

Regularly

Often

**What percentage of you meetings fall outside the hours of 9-6?**

5%

10%

25%

50%+

**Are senior management documenting this?**

Yes

No

**Is time performance used as a method of appraisal?**

Yes

No

**Is trust an issue when managing team members situated globally?**

Yes

No

[< Finish Survey >](#)

My Sincere thanks for taking time to complete this survey.

## Appendix C: Data analysis of questionnaire responses

### Results for: Globally dispersed team survey

I am currently working on a thesis for my MBA on "Effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams". This questionnaire will assist with my research and i would be hugely appreciative if you could take 2 minutes to complete this.

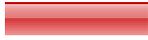
1) Do you work on a globally dispersed team?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		95.00	19
No		5.00	1
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

2) How many employees currently work at the location where you work?

		Response (%)	Responses
1		31.58	6
2-5		5.26	1
5+		63.16	12
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

3) How many members of your team are remote/globally dispersed?

		Response (%)	Responses
1		15.79	3
2-5		36.84	7
5+		47.37	9

Answered Question 19

Skipped Question 0

\*4) What do you find positive about working on a globally dispersed team?

ID	Responses (19)	View
10329749	xxx	<a href="#">View</a>
10330030	Interacting with other people not based in our office on a daily basis.	<a href="#">View</a>
10336945	The flexibility & convenience	<a href="#">View</a>
10342517	Different of opinions from across the globe	<a href="#">View</a>
10342608	Diversity, different view points and experience.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342626	We make a good effort of engaging with each other and building "community spirit" etc	<a href="#">View</a>
10342658	local culture knowledge, person has proximity to client	<a href="#">View</a>
10342701	Develop good communication skills.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342783	Flexible working locations to suit individual's needs.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342853	The opportunity to work across jurisdictional, cultural and language differences. We benefit from having a global perspective.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342895	Time zone differences - for coverage purposes.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342904	enriched points of view and ways of looking at issues/topics. local color which helps contribute to understanding clients and business more broadly and deeply. fun from the spirit of vive le difference!	<a href="#">View</a>
10343349	Team members who are in different global locations are better able to communicate locally to clients/prospects and understand the culture.	<a href="#">View</a>
10343642	Being able to tap into industry/market knowledge from different individuals depending where they sit.	<a href="#">View</a>

<b>ID</b>	<b>Responses (19)</b>	<b>View</b>
10346350	The reach of our team spanning over time zones is nice. Plus having people who are culturally familiar with a particular area is a definite advantage for the group.	<a href="#">View</a>
10360941	We can cover alot more hours in the day.	<a href="#">View</a>
10375743	Learning about other cultures some work can "follow the sun" allowing for continued progress throughout the work week	<a href="#">View</a>
10379371	We can cover clients more effectively from a time zone, language, and cultural perspective.	<a href="#">View</a>
10402542	1)Differing perspectives on issues 2) Having the ability for local contacts with clients and other remote team members	<a href="#">View</a>

<< Hide

5) What do you find negative about working on a globally dispersed team ?

<b>ID</b>	<b>Responses (19)</b>	<b>View</b>
10329749	xxx	<a href="#">View</a>
10330030	Time differences sometimes come into play / Different bank holidays. Can't go over to them if I have a problem, always have to just ring them.	<a href="#">View</a>
10336945	Being unable to contact my colleagues at times	<a href="#">View</a>
10342517	Unable to contact colleagues due to time differences. Not being able to have face to face meetings.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342608	harder to accomplish tasks when time zones are vastly different	<a href="#">View</a>
10342626	Sometimes one has to be conscious of the medium they communicate and how they do so	<a href="#">View</a>
10342658	time zones mostly, language (accent) issues, lack of contact with person	<a href="#">View</a>
10342701	Personal level interaction.	<a href="#">View</a>

<b>ID</b>	<b>Responses (19)</b>	<b>View</b>
10342783	Lack of team spirit and team support. Requires self motivating individual. Remote team member often missed off group team meetings/calls accidentally as out of sight. Different time zones can slow down processes. Lack of feedback on performance due to remoteness can have a negative impact on remote member.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342853	The inability to speak face to face, i.e. too much reliance on email for communication. The nuance of relationship and business understanding is lost.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342895	Don't get to spend as much time in person with the global team members.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342904	sometimes...working the time zone differences. occasional cross-path communication due to different terminology or lack of details about local practices and thus assumptions	<a href="#">View</a>
10343349	In most cases, the time difference is most difficult. Being able to help and respond timely is harder.	<a href="#">View</a>
10343642	Responsiveness is sometimes slow. Time zone differentials can sometimes cause headaches.	<a href="#">View</a>
10346350	Strained communications.	<a href="#">View</a>
10360941	It is tough because you don't get to see your full team everyday.	<a href="#">View</a>
10375743	Delays in responses. Difficulty scheduling meetings / tacking public holidays	<a href="#">View</a>
10379371	Some team members do not have enough daily face to face interaction with other team members.	<a href="#">View</a>
10402542	1)Time zone differences 2)Less ability for face to face meetings	<a href="#">View</a>

<< Hide

\*6) If you could change one thing with globally dispersed teams what would it be ?

<b>ID</b>	<b>Responses (19)</b>	<b>View</b>
10329749	xxx	<a href="#">View</a>
10330030	It might be worth meeting up with them on a more regular basis.	<a href="#">View</a>

<b>ID</b>	<b>Responses (19)</b>	<b>View</b>
10336945	N/A	<a href="#">View</a>
10342517	Quarterly face to face meetings	<a href="#">View</a>
10342608	more face to face meetings to build the team rapport.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342626	Ensure awareness and visibility is at the forefront at all times for the full team	<a href="#">View</a>
10342658	do regular teleconference or phone conference	<a href="#">View</a>
10342701	Web conference and occasional travel to meet our colleagues.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342783	Communication policies in place to ensure sharing of all information. Constant contact with team members and line of business to create sense of teamwork.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342853	the opportunity to travel more for more face to face interaction.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342895	More "face time" with the global team members. Strong relationships.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342904	more cohesive reporting/organizational structure with few management layers	<a href="#">View</a>
10343349	Not sure.	<a href="#">View</a>
10343642	Unknown	<a href="#">View</a>
10346350	Increase the number of face to face team meetings over the year.	<a href="#">View</a>
10360941	I would make it so that there were Video conference setups at each desk to help with communication.	<a href="#">View</a>
10375743	Put everyone in the same place :)	<a href="#">View</a>
10379371	If we had video conferencing available on our pcs it would really help.	<a href="#">View</a>
10402542	No changes	<a href="#">View</a>

<< Hide

7) What in your opinion is the most important element for effective collaboration amongst globally dispersed teams ?

		<b>Response (%)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Communication		73.68	14
Cooperation		10.53	2
Leadership		15.79	3
Answered Question			19
Skipped Question			0

8) What is the most used medium of communication within your globally dispersed team ?

		<b>Response (%)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Email		78.95	15
Telephone		5.26	1
Instant Messenger		15.79	3
Answered Question			19
Skipped Question			0

9) Which of the following in your opinion impact on globally dispersed teams the most ?

		<b>Response (%)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
language barrier		0.00	0
time zone		88.89	16
technology		5.56	1
culture		5.56	1
noise		0.00	0
Answered Question			18

Skipped Question 1

10) Is relationship building more important for globally dispersed teams?

		<b>Response (%)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Yes		89.47	17
No		10.53	2

Answered Question 19

Skipped Question 0

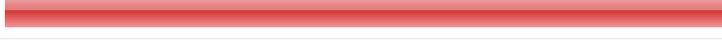
11) In your opinion do face to face meetings improve relationship building?

		<b>Response (%)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Yes		100.00	19
No		0.00	0

Answered Question 19

Skipped Question 0

12) Would video conferencing replace face to face meetings ?

		<b>Response (%)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
Yes		21.05	4
No		78.95	15

Answered Question 19

Skipped Question 0

13) What percentage of your globally dispersed team members have you met with face to face?

		<b>Response (%)</b>	<b>Responses</b>
25%		21.05	4
50%		0.00	0

75%		31.58	6
100%		47.37	9
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

14) Would you agree that working together is critical to a globally dispersed team ?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		94.74	18
No		5.26	1
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

15) Would you provide knowledge transfer openly to your team members

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		100.00	19
No		0.00	0
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

\*16) Is there any circumstance where you would not divulge information to your globally dispersed team members?

ID	Responses (19)	View
10329749	xxx	<a href="#">View</a>
10330030	Yes if the information was confidential and on a need to know only basis.	<a href="#">View</a>
10336945	Confidentiality purposes.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342517	No	<a href="#">View</a>

ID	Responses (19)	View
10342608	depends if it's on the their side of the business transaction.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342626	Dependent on the nature of it, and if it didn't affect the team then not relevant to them	<a href="#">View</a>
10342658	no	<a href="#">View</a>
10342701	No	<a href="#">View</a>
10342783	No	<a href="#">View</a>
10342853	no.	<a href="#">View</a>
10342895	No	<a href="#">View</a>
10342904	only per institutional policy ("need to know")	<a href="#">View</a>
10343349	Not anything because of them being elsewhere in the globe.	<a href="#">View</a>
10343642	Depends	<a href="#">View</a>
10346350	No	<a href="#">View</a>
10360941	No	<a href="#">View</a>
10375743	No	<a href="#">View</a>
10379371	No	<a href="#">View</a>
10402542	No, unless a client specifically instructed that information be kept to just a few team members	<a href="#">View</a>

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17) Is job security a worry when transferring knowledge amongst globally dispersed team members?

	Response (%)	Responses
Yes	21.05	4

No		78.95	15
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

18) In your opinion are projects and future strategies communicated to you?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		47.37	9
No		52.63	10
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

19) Are achievements in your globally dispersed team celebrated and highlighted with you ?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		50.00	9
No		50.00	9
		Answered Question	18
		Skipped Question	1

20) Would you agree with the statement leadership in a globally dispersed team is complex?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		73.68	14
No		26.32	5
		Answered Question	19
		Skipped Question	0

21) Are you in a managerial role? (If yes, please answer the following 6 questions)

**Response (%) Responses**

Yes		36.84	7
No		63.16	12
Answered Question			19
Skipped Question			0

22) How often would you work outside your standard business hours?

		Response (%)	Responses
Occasionally		16.67	2
regularly		50.00	6
often		33.33	4
Answered Question			12
Skipped Question			7

23) How often would you use your work device (phone/laptop etc.) outside of office hours?

		Response (%)	Responses
Occasionally		8.33	1
Regularly		50.00	6
Often		41.67	5
Answered Question			12
Skipped Question			7

24) What percentage of you meetings fall outside the hours of 9-6?

		Response (%)	Responses
5%		33.33	4
10%		50.00	6
25%		8.33	1

50%+		8.33	1
		Answered Question	12
		Skipped Question	7

25) Are senior management documenting this?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		8.33	1
No		91.67	11
		Answered Question	12
		Skipped Question	7

26) Is time performance used as a method of appraisal?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		25.00	3
No		75.00	9
		Answered Question	12
		Skipped Question	7

27) Is trust an issue when managing team members situated globally?

		Response (%)	Responses
Yes		58.33	7
No		41.67	5
		Answered Question	12
		Skipped Question	7



Q.16. is there any circumstance where you would not divulge information to your globally dispersed team members?

- |                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. Confidential           | 3/18  |
| 2. Need to know/Relevance | 4/18  |
| 3. No                     | 12/18 |
| 4. Depends                | 1/18  |

## **Appendix E: Dissertation Timetable**

<b>MBA Dissertation Timetable</b>			
	Number of days/Weeks needed	Start Date	End Date
Research for Proposal	8 weeks	November 30th	January 10th
Proposal Completion			January 31st
Quantitative Data Collection	4 weeks	February 1st	February 28th
Design Questionnaire	12 weeks	February 1st	April 30th
Distribute Questionnaire	1 week	May 1st	May 8th
Analysis of Questionnaire Findings	6 weeks	May 9th	June 20th
Data Analysis	6 weeks	May 9th	June 20th
Formulation of Findings and Conclusion	6 weeks	June 20th	August 4th
Review of Dissertation	4 weeks	August 4th	August 22nd
Final Submission			August 22nd