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The effect of social relationships on employee retention in a remote working context

A qualitative case study on which Talent Management practices an organisation use to retain talented employees in a remote context.

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SUMMARY

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Abstract

Talent Management (TM) is a well-used practice to identify, attract, develop, and retain the most valuable resource in an organisation: talented employees. The concept TM emerged when organisations started to detect increased demands and technological changes in the business market. Additionally, due to the retirement of baby boomers, organisations have started to experience a shortage of talents creating "The War for Talent" (Chambers et al., 1998). However, ethical aspects create a demand for an inclusive approach of TM which includes all employees, as opposed to only focusing on a selected few. Responsible Talent Management (RTM) considers talent to be obtained and developed within the organisation. Employees who experience job satisfaction and commitment are more likely to stay in the organisation (Deery, 2008), whereas work-life balance, employee well-being, leadership, and learning have become important factors for increasing job satisfaction and commitment as well as employee retention (Radda et al., 2015: Deery, 2008). Especially due to new challenges associated with the working environment and social relationships in this new remote working context. Researchers express the need for further research regarding RTM as well as the inclusive approach. This thesis, therefore, aims to understand how an organisation work with TM practices to retain talented employees in a remote working context. Based on the scientific issue and the purpose, a qualitative case study was conducted. Eight employees within the HR department were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the empirical data identified a great need for genuine social relationships. Regardless of which TM retainment practices used, supporting employees with tools and opportunities to build and nurture social relationships may be an instrumental driver to retain talented employees in a remote working context.

Key words: Talent Management, Responsible Talent Management, Inclusive TM, Employee retention, Remote work, Work from home

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SAMMANFATTNING

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Abstrakt

Talent Management är ett välanvänt begrepp för att identifiera, attrahera, utveckla och behålla den mest värdefulla resursen i en organisation: talangfulla medarbetare. Begreppet TM blev uppmärksammat när organisationerna upptäckte ett ökat krav och teknologiska förändringar på marknaden. På grund av att generationen "babyboomers" har börjat gå i pension har organisationer börjat uppleva en brist på talang vilket har skapat "The War for Talent" (Chambers et al., 1998). Dock skapar de etiska aspekterna ett krav på ett inkluderande synsätt på TM som inkluderar alla anställda och inte bara fokuserar på ett fåtal utvalda. Begreppet Responsible Talent Management (RTM) anser att talang kan erhållas och utvecklas inom organisationen. Anställda som upplever jobbnöjdhet och engagemang är mer benägna att stanna kvar i organisationen (Deery, 2008), medan balans mellan arbetsliv och privatliv, anställdas välmående, ledarskap och lärande har blivit viktiga faktorer för att öka jobbnöjdhet och engagemang så väl som att behålla anställda (Radda et al., 2015: Deery, 2008). Framförallt med tanke på de nya utmaningarna gällande arbetsmiljön och de sociala relationerna i den nya kontexten av distansarbete. Forskare uttrycker ett behov av vidare forskning gällande RTM och det inkluderande synsättet. Syftet med uppsatsen är att förstå hur en organisation arbetar med aktiviteter inom TM för att behålla talangfulla medarbetare i en kontext av distansarbete. Baserat på forskningsproblemet och syftet har en kvalitativ fallstudie utförts. Åtta anställda tillhörande HR-avdelningen har intervjuats genom semistrukturerade intervjuer. I analysen av empirin identifierades ett stort behov av genuina sociala relationer. Oavsett vilka aktiviteter inom TM som organisationen använder för att behålla talanger så uppfattas stöttning med verktyg och möjligheter att skapa och vårda sociala relationer vara en stark drivkraft för att behålla talangfull kompetens i en kontext av distansarbete.

Nyckelord: Talent Management, Responsible Talent Management, Inclusive TM, Employee retention, Remote work, Work from home

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Key definitions

Talent management (TM)	Talent management is a strategy including the process how to identify and manage talents in an organisation. Additionally, The TM strategy is created to support the business strategy (Thunnissen et al., 2013; CIPD, 2020).
Talent management practices	A TM strategy includes a set of practices to enable identification and management of talents namely attract, recruit, develop and retain talented employees (Thunnissen et al., 2013).
Exclusive TM approach	An exclusive approach of TM describes “talent as object” and focuses only on a few employees who are talented by nature and considered high skilled (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Organisations categorise employees in “A-players”, “B-players” and “C-players” with the aim of rewarding and praising the most successful and valuable individuals (Stahl et al., 2012).
Inclusive TM approach	An inclusive approach of TM describes “Talent as subject” and focuses on the value of all employees in the organisation and their special skills and abilities (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).
Responsible Talent Management (RTM)	RTM is a strategy that focuses on the inclusive approach and demands more ethical and responsible practices to be included in TM. In addition, RTM is a hybrid between principles from CSR, Stakeholder theory, and organisational justice theory (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020).
Work from home	The concept of working from home includes working digitally with the employees' home as the workplace (Kniffin et al., 2020).
Remote work	Working remote includes working digitally. The work can be done at different locations which makes the workplace dynamic. For example, the employees can work remotely at a coffee place, on the train home, or in the summer house (Kniffin et al., 2020).
Hybrid work	The concept of hybrid work implies having different workplaces during the work week. For example, working two days at home, two days at the office, and one day at a coffee place.

1 Introduction

In this chapter, the scientific issue, as well as its background, will be presented. First, the (i) background of the issue will be described. Second, the (ii) scientific issue will be concretised and formulated. Third, the (iii) purpose and two research questions will be presented. Fourth, the (iv) delimitations will be described, and fifth, the (v) thesis disposition will be explained.

1.1 The concept of Talent Management and Talent

Talent management (TM) is a concept that has been discussed and debated for years. The concept is explained by Chartered Institution of Personnel Development (CIPD) to be the systematic process of attracting, identifying, developing, and retaining talent (CIPD, 2020). However, there is a divided opinion about the definition of talent. In 2013 the word "talent" had six hundred million hits on Google which has now increased to over eight hundred million hits today (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). As a result, the interest in talent and the broad definition of the concept has made organisations use the practices included in TM differently (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).

Talent management started to become popular when The Mckinsey Quarterly wrote an article about "The War for Talent" in 1998. According to Chambers et al. (1998), TM emerged when organisations started to detect increased demands and technological changes in the business market. Consequently, the need for talented employees increased (Chambers et al., 1998). For this reason, organisations need a strategic process of TM to be innovative and create competitive advantages to sustain growth and survive constant change (Galagan, 2010). The expression "The war for talent" implies yet another challenge for organisations. As a result of the retirement of baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964, talented employees have started to leave the organisations. Because of this, the gap of skills will increase and create a shortage of talents available to organisations (Galagan, 2010). Furthermore, this issue has been studied by Souza and Fyfe-Mills (2018), who state that 83% of the companies asked are experiencing a skill gap. Nearly 73% of the companies are concerned about future skill gaps and the way shortage of skills will affect the organisational growth (Souza & Fyfe-Mills, 2018).

Human capital is according to Pandita and Sampurna (2018) the most important resource in an organisation. Consequently, to gain competitive advantage organisations need to retain the most talented employees to grow and cope with the constantly changing labour market. For this reason, employee retention has become a top priority in organisations, fuelled by the large costs associated with employee turnover (Pandita & Sampurna, 2018; Ott et al., 2018). In recent years, the importance put on employee well-being and work-life balance has become equally important as compensation and benefits, when considering organisations to work for (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al.,2020). As a result, concepts such as job satisfaction and commitment have grown in importance in terms of increasing intentions to stay (Deery, 2008). These concepts are often related to good leadership, a healthy work-life balance policy, and general employee well-being, hence being instrumental to retain talented employees (Radda et al., 2015; Deery, 2008). In addition, a new workplace context has emerged due to the outbreak of Covid-19 which has forced organisations to change (Kniffin et al., 2020). Currently, many employees are working from home which puts pressure on organisations to re-consider their retainment practices and adapt to the new remote context (Mulki et al., 2009). In recent years, caring for human beings and the society has increased. A trend fuelled by the outbreak of Covid-19. According to a study by Jung Relations (2019), 83% of young Swedish people expect the organisations to take responsibility and contribute to a more sustainable society. Since 2015 the United Nations (n.d.) have

been putting a demand on the society and organisations to be more responsible in terms of economic, social, and sustainable aspects (United Nations, n.d.).

1.2 Talent Management as an inclusive approach

The increased demands for organisational responsibility have challenged the concept of TM. According to Anlesinya and Amponsah-Tawiah (2020), TM as a strategy need to shift from an exclusive approach to an inclusive approach to meet the new demands as well as increase employee retention. With the exclusive approach, 80% of employees are often excluded from the Talent Management program (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah 2020). The inclusive approach considers all employees as talented with unique abilities, which is included in the concept Responsible Talent Management (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah 2020). If organisations do not focus on the culture and all the people in it, they risk suffering in terms of innovation, especially in the new context of remote work (Microsoft, 2020). Before the pandemic, many organisations had already begun to look for ways to work more remotely. The pandemic forced organisations to accelerate this process, which was challenging for many organisations (Kniffin et al., 2020). Research shows that the new context with flexible workplaces will continue to grow in relevance after the pandemic. 90% of the HR managers indicate that they will allow their employees to work remotely. 65% of the HR managers confirm that the work will be more hybrid and flexible in the future (Baker & Zuech, 2020). Consequently, implementing a more flexible workplace will challenge organisations. Especially, public organisations which is typically characterised as bureaucratic with formalisations of procedures and top-down management. As a result, employees can experience low autonomy inflexibility regarding how the job is performed. Public organisations, as well as private, are experiencing the same "war for talent". However, TM as a concept lack of attention in research in terms of how organisations define talent and TM, especially in the public sector (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017).

The big challenge for all organisations, public and private alike, is to redefine TM practices to optimise their talent retention in the new context of remote work. The new context is influenced by the pandemic which has forced the organisations to work either partly or fully remote. This challenge puts pressure on organisations to identify the most effective practices to retain talented employees in the new context. Current research has not yet been able to identify if retainment practices in a traditional working environment differ in importance and value in a remote working environment. For this reason, the study will focus on finding and understanding which TM retainment practices an organisation uses in the new remote working context to keep their talented employees.

1.3 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to understand which TM practices an organisation uses to retain talented employees in a remote working context.

Based on the purpose of this study, two questions have been created to explain the focus of the study.

1. How does the organisation work with TM practices to retain talented employees?
2. How does the remote working context effect the retainment practices?

1.4 Delimitations

Given the scope of this thesis, some delimitations were made. *First*, the study is limited to one practice within Talent Management, employee retention. As a result, some of the employee retention practices used in the study are closely linked to other practices within TM. *Second*, the selection of the study is limited to employees working at an HR department because TM is often associated with practices included in areas that affect HR employees. *Third*, the scope of this study is limited to one government agency active in Sweden and may not be applicable to the public sector. Furthermore, this indicates that

the study should be associated with the Swedish working context regarding both organisational culture as well as expectations on the working environment since it can differ between countries.

1.4.1 Special restrictions due to Covid-19

The study was performed during spring 2021 in an ongoing pandemic. The outbreak of the virus Covid-19 started at the end of 2019 and was classified as a global pandemic in spring 2020. Covid-19 has affected society and organisations for over a year resulting in recommendations from WHO and the government in Sweden to reduce the spread of infection (World Health Organization, 2021). The recommendations include social distancing, avoid meeting others especially in a larger group and the university has been closed for students with the exceptions for necessary visits. As a result, the study is made digitally, and the authors have not met in person during the thesis because the course has been held digitally.

Covid-19 may have indirectly influenced this study. These indirect consequences are currently difficult to evaluate and discuss in this thesis.

1.5 Thesis Disposition

The thesis consists of six main chapters. Following this introductory chapter, *Chapter 1,* in which the purpose, two research questions, and delimitations have been presented and framed, *Chapter 2* presents the literature review and a visual presentation of the theoretical framework as well as theories and concepts used to analyse the empirical data. *Chapter 3* mainly describes the scientific approach followed by the presentation of the research design, and in *Chapter 4* a description and motivation of the empirical approach undertaken to answer the purpose and the research questions. In *Chapter 5,* the results from the interviews are analysed and presented in accordance with the primary and secondary research questions. Lastly, in *Chapter 6* the answer to the purpose and discussion of the thesis are presented together with a note on practical contributions, important limitations as well as suggestions for future research. The order of this thesis is thus organised as follows: (i) Introduction, (ii) Theory, (iii) Methodology, (iv) Method, (v) Result and analysis, (vi) Conclusions.

2 Theory

In this chapter, relevant theories and concepts within the research area are presented. First, the (i) literature review process is explained and visually presented in a composed figure. Second, the (ii) research gap is presented and third, the (iii) theoretical framework is visually presented in the beginning, followed by a presentation of theories and concepts used in the analysis.

2.1 Literature review

The literature review was limited to peer review articles and the number of "cited by" to at least ten. The articles were gathered through databases such as ABI/INFORM collection and Scopus as well as on Primo through the university library. Journals have been looked up on UlrichsWeb to secure that the journals are publishing peer reviewed articles. Furthermore, key words such as Talent Management, Responsible Talent Management, Inclusive TM, Employee Retention, Remote work and Work from home was used to gather articles. In addition, relevant theories and concept was found in articles from well cited contributors within the field of Talent Management. The literature review which was executed in the creation of the introduction generated in many different perspectives of Talent Management. Several opinions about the definition of TM and the word "talent" were identified. From the investigation of different articles, three themes were created to narrow the focus of the study (i) *Talent Management* as a strategy with focus on the practice of (ii) *Employee Retention*. Since the pandemic has influenced the labour market and forced the employees to work from home, the study will be investigated in a context of (iii) *remote work*. The literature review will be followed by a background to introduce the themes further and be summarised in the research gap to motivate the focus of the study.

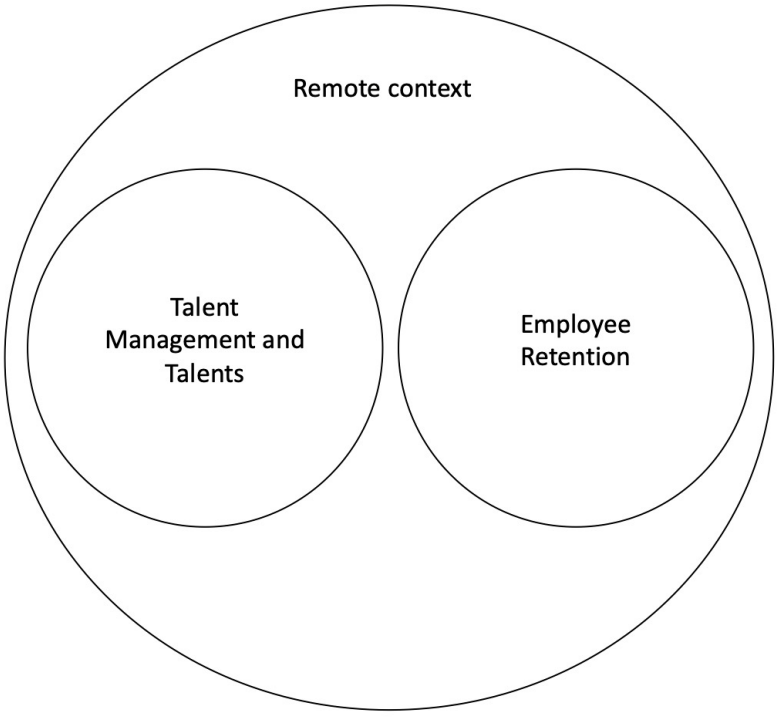

Figure 1: *Visual presentation of the literature review*

2.1.1 Talent Management and talents

The concept of TM become popular after Chambers et al. (1998) wrote the article about "the war for talents". The article includes issues of talent shortage and changed demands on the business market, technical changes and request for global talents (Chambers et al., 1998). Shortage of talent and the progress of knowledge-based economic has contributed to talents becoming a critical aspect to create competitive advantage (Bolander et al., 2017). Talent Management is an overall long-term strategy including an organisation´s identification and management of current and future talents (Garrow & Hirsh, 2008; CIPD, 2020). Additionally, the TM strategy need to be aligned with the business strategy and the organisational culture to bring value to the organisation (Stahl et al., 2012; Garrow & Hirsh, 2008). According to Chartered Institution of Personnel Development (CIPD), TM is valuable because managing talents strategically will contribute to increased performance, improved learning capabilities and making the organisation more attractive. For this reason, TM strategy contains a set of practices which enables the concept to influence the organisation. Asplund (2019) argues for the practices of attract, recruit, develop and retain talents to secure long-term survival on the business market. According to Thunnissen et al. (2013), these practices are often associated with the HR-department. Furthermore, the creation of a talent program is important to make talented employees feel valued, otherwise they will leave the organisation (Bolander et al., 2017). In addition, Talent programs need to adapt to new organisational needs in terms of changed working terms, increased focus on teamwork and more global and virtual focus (Garrow & Hirsh, 2008).

TM as a concept suffers from conceptual ambiguity. Bolander et al. (2017) and Stahl et al. (2012) express the lack of research regarding organisational practices associated with TM and the understanding of the definition of talent and TM. In addition, Thunnissen and Buttiens, (2017) describes a lack of research regarding the definition of talent and TM in the public sector and how they manage talents. In fact, the concept of TM is unexplored in the public sector compared to the private sector. Thunnissen and Buttiens, (2017) describes that both private and public organisations suffer from talent competition and chronical shortage of talents. However, there are differences how public and private sectors are operating. Public organisations are complex due to the influence of the government (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). Organisations in the public sector are often associated with bureaucratic management. This includes formalisation of policies, procedures and high centralisation in terms of top management decisions. The structure, rules and regulations create issues for public organisations regarding inflexible work and low autonomy (Cross Walker, 2020). Furthermore, both Garrow and Hirsh, (2008) and Cross Walker (2020) argues that public organisations strive to have equal opportunities and being transparent regarding promotions and available jobs. As a result, Bolander et al. (2017) considers public organisations to have a more humanistic view of employees compared to the private sector.

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013) found two dimensions of talent which is often used by organisations. (i) *Talent as object* is associated with personal characteristics and is considered inherent. For instance, a person who has a certain skill or competence in a particular subject or field, mostly above average compared to the talent's peers (Bolander et al., 2017). In this case, talents are high performers with special abilities to develop and use their talent. Stahl et al. (2012) is referring to talent as object as "A-players" who is considered top talents, average performers as "B-players" and "C-players" which categorise the employees who didn't meet the standards. Consequently, Thunnissen et al. (2013) argues that categorising and managing employees in an objective way excludes many of the working staff which is considered an *exclusive approach*. Whereas (ii) *Talent as subject* is more about talented people and their unique skills, competences and abilities that contributes to the organisation. All employees in the organisation are considered talented (Gallardo-Gallardo et al.,2013; Bolander et al., 2017).

According to Thunnissen et al., (2013), talent as subject focuses on an *inclusive approach*. This meta-analysis addresses the problematic view of an *exclusive approach* in today's context where the well-being of employees has become a central aspect for organisations. Bolander et al. (2017) express that the exclusive approach is more about attract and recruit talent compared to the inclusive approach which also create talents within the organisation. Bolander et al. (2017) states further the importance of consider the individuals interest and ambition to develop. There is also a lack of respect for the human being regarding the exclusive way of looking at talents. Organisations has often integrated ethical and respectful behaviours in the organisational culture which makes the exclusive approach problematic (Bolander et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important to include ethical, social and responsible theories to make talent management more inclusive (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). In a context with globalisation, new technology, increased demands for high skilled employees and the shortage of skills, organisations need to shift focus from a top-bottom process to a bottom-top focus (Thunnissen et al., 2013). For this reason, organisations have to consider employees demands and give them capabilities to grow and develop to increase employee's intention to stay in organisations (Asplund, 2019). Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah (2020) consider a hybrid strategy where talent management practices are integrated with (I) Corporate social responsibility (CSR), (ii) organisational justice theory and (iii) the stakeholder theory. These theories together with talent management will create the concept Responsible Talent Management (RTM). This is an inclusive approach which focuses on all the employees in the organisation and their unique set of qualities and abilities (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020; Bolander et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Employee Retention

In a previous study conducted by Narayanan et al. (2019), TM is shown to be a strategy for retaining talented employees. TM as a strategy is therefore more important in today's context because of "The War for Talent" which was founded by Chambers et al. (1998) and as Galagan (2010) explains there will be a skill gap due to a shortage of talents when employees born between 1946 and 1964 will retire. Employees are the most important resource in an organisation (Pandita & Sampurna, 2018). In fact, human resources are difficult to manage for many organisations, yet finding successful retainment practices will make the organisation develop in the long-term (Das & Baruah, 2013). Employees that experience job satisfaction and commitment are more likely to stay in the organisation (Deery, 2008). Moreover, previous research has identified four employee retention practices associated with engagement, job satisfaction and commitment including (i) *Work-life balance*, (ii) *Employee well-being*, (iii) *Leadership* and (iv) *Learning* (Radda et al., 2015: Deery, 2008). According to Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2020) the human capital is an essential factor for organisational success and the need of practices for both attracting and retaining talented employees is believed to be more important today than before. As a result, work-life balance has gained an increased importance since talented employees will leave organisations if their needs and motivation are not satisfied (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2020). Losing valuable employees will lead to great costs, both direct and indirect such as recruitment costs and important knowledge and skills. This will affect an organisations competitive advantage on the business market (Ott et al., 2018). Increased workload, more unstable teams and a loss in productivity are other consequences of losing talents (Tlaiss et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2020) explain the focus to have been mostly on economic factors such as profitability or ratios regarding business success. Instead, they explain how the employees' attitudes has increased in importance since it will affect how well the organisation is functioning. Today, individuals have greater opportunities of choosing workplaces even if they are not actively looking for another job (Ott et al., 2018). This indicates how important it is for organisations to retain their talented employees and not lose them to competitors. In a study conducted by Tlaiss et

al. (2017), norms and values were highlighted as important factors for staying in an organisation compared to incentives. Furthermore, the study explains how a positive working environment based on good relationships among the employees as well as challenging work is emphasised for retaining talents. In addition, managers play a great role for creating good relationships between the management and the employees as well as providing both support and feedback (Tlaiss et al., 2017). However, Ott et al. (2018) express that each organisation requires different strategies for retaining talents since they must be in line with the organisaton's strategic objectives (Ott et al., 2018).

2.1.3 Remote Work

Before the pandemic, many organisations had already begun to search for solutions how to work remotely and when the outbreak of Covid-19 became a fact, organisations were forced to accelerate this process (Kniffin et al., 2020). Covid-19 has left its mark on organisations with economic shutdowns and governmental activities to reduce the spread of infection (Kniffin et al., 2020). In fact, the pandemic has challenged organisations to adapt in terms of flexibility, digitalisation, technical advancement as well as greater focus on employee health (Manpowergroup, 2020). Furthermore, questions about work-life balance and ergonomic challenges are in focus for many organisations. Kniffin et al. (2020) also discussing the effects of working from home on productivity, creativity and innovation. Previous research indicates that traditional office practices and activities will be difficult to execute in a virtual working environment (Mulki et al., 2009). Consequently, Covid-19 has caused feelings of uncertainty. As a result, managing risks with developing solutions for organisations and individuals are vital (Kniffin et al., 2020). Researchers stress the importance of building and maintaining the organisational culture in a remote context (Mulki et al., 2009). Similar argument is made by (Baker, 2021) who express the need for reinforcement of organisational values. Moreover, values are created to support and care for the employees which becomes more important when working remotely because of the distress Covid-19 causes.

Working teams has changed environment from working together at the office with face-to-face meetings to working remotely. Consequently, there are challenges for virtual teams regarding communicating and reading emotions of stress and anxiety (Kniffin et al., 2020). Similar argument is made by Mulki et al. (2009) who states that remote meetings take longer time due to the need for more explanations, missed cues and misinterpretations which make the employees feel frustrated. In fact, current research shows that working remotely can cause "Zoom fatigue". Bailenson (2021) describe four reasons for experiencing "Zoom fatigue". First, direct eye contact when speaking considers personal for an individual and contribute to the individual feeling of physiological arousal. In a remote working environment, listeners become speakers because they are constantly looked at in virtual meetings. Second, employees can experience cognitive overload due to increased impressions and to keep track on many activities at the same time. Third, employees are seeing themselves on camera every day, which can result in self-evaluation and stress. Fourth, employees experience increased sedentary and less mobility. For example, movement contributes to creativity and increased performance (Bailenson, 2021).

Kniffin et al. (2020) argues for the consequences of getting constant news about Covid-19 in media and the feelings of uncertainty about the future and possibility of being infected. Mental health problem is one consequence of the uncertainty, yet organisations are facing additional psychological issues related to working remotely. According to Kniffin et al. (2020) and Mulki et al. (2009), social distancing causes work isolation and loneliness. Loneliness arouses painful emotions and will affect commitment, behaviors and performance negatively (Kniffin et al., 2020). In conclusion, organisations need interventions for employee well-being and maintain a healthy balance regarding workload (Kniffin et al., 2020). However, there are positive aspects with working remotely. According to Mulki et al. (2009) employees spending less time on commuting, increased flexibility

and more time for family responsibilities. These aspects generate greater job satisfaction, lower absenteeism and higher employee retention as well as increased productivity.

2.2 Research gap

Researchers have been investigating the TM concept for several years and many of them conclude the need for further research in general, specifically in the public sector where there is a lack of empirical data to understand how a public organisation is working with TM. Researchers conclude that the rise of the remote context will influence how the retention practices will be managed and how they will affect the employee's intention to stay in the organisation. Researchers express that traditional office work practices may be difficult to apply to a remote context, meaning that organisations need to adapt their TM practices when employees are working remotely (Mulki et al., 2009). Since there is a lack of research regarding TM retention practices in a remote context the study aims to understand how TM retention practices are affected by the remote context.

Lastly, as previous research indicates that more ethical, inclusive, and responsible practices are needed in a remote working context (Mulki et al., 2009), there is a need to better understand if and how an organisation can benefit from working with an inclusive and Responsible Talent Management approach, as opposed to the exclusive approach typically associated with talent management in a traditional office context.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Based on the literature review the theoretical framework will present the theories and concept which the study will use when analysing the empirical data. *First*, the literature review generated in two directions of TM, exclusive and inclusive. Consequently, the focus will be narrowed down to the inclusive approach and the theories included in Responsible Talent Management. *Second*, the practices of employee retention will be focusing on employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership. *Third*, the chosen employee retention practices are, according to previous research, important activities to consider in a remote context to retain talented employees (Radda et al., 2015: Deery, 2008). The structure of the theoretical framework is visually presented in figure 2.

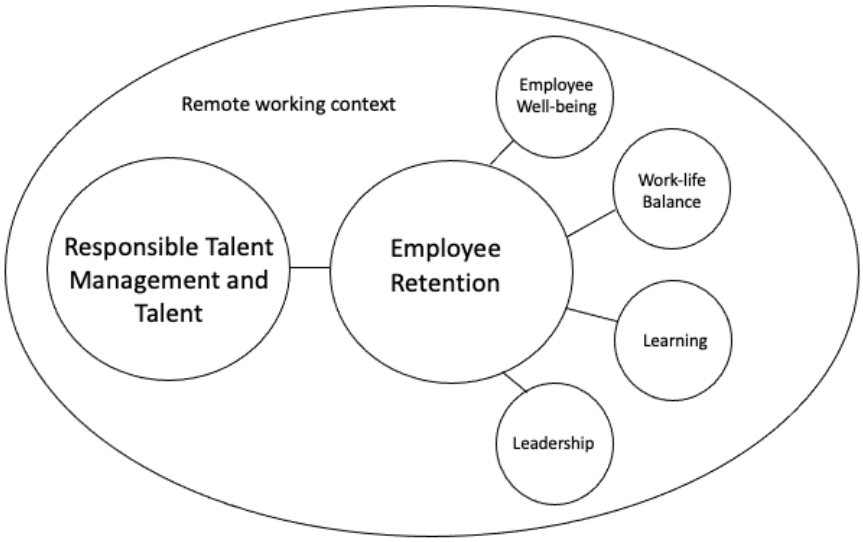

Figure 2: *Visual presentation of the theoretical framework*

2.3.1 Responsible Talent Management and Talent

As explained in 2.1, Talent Management is considered unethical because the TM program excludes many of the employees in an organisation. The new remote context has forced organisations to take action regarding aspects such as employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership. This new context, reinforced by Covid-19, has created many challenges for both organisations and individuals. Consequently, these challenges demand more inclusive aspects in terms of caring for all employees and value their unique abilities. Otherwise, employees can experience social distancing resulting in feelings of isolation and loneliness in a remote working context. These feelings could result in painful emotions and will affect commitment, employee behaviors and performance negatively (Kniffin et al., 2020). In conclusion, adapting RTM with principles from CSR, the stakeholder theory and organizational justice theory will make organisations more inclusive (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020).

First, the concept of CSR concerns economical, ethical and legal aspects as well as a philanthropic responsibility towards stakeholders and the society (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Additionally, employees find their employment more meaningful when the organisation take

responsibility beyond the corporate goals and profit. Therefore, an employee can identify with the organisation on an emotional level, which will result in increased pride, commitment, job satisfaction and well-being. In addition, CSR is an important strategic aspect in order to retain talented employees (Bhattacharya et al., 2008).

Second, the organisational justice theory affects the perceived fairness and justice between the employee and the organisation (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). The theory consists of three components namely procedural, distributive and interpersonal justice. According to Greenberg (1990) procedural justice focuses on organisational practices and procedures and if they are perceived as fair by the employees. Fairness can be reached if the selected procedure is explained and if the outcome for the selected procedure is perceived as fair, for example why one employee is starting a training program while another employee doesn´t. Distributive justice concerns the perception of equally shared organisational resources between employees (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Interpersonal justice is explained by Greenberg (1990) to address the perception of the way employees are treated by others, especially feedback, honesty, respect and courtesy.

Third, Anlesinya and Amponsah-Tawiah, (2020) explains the importance of the stakeholder theory, above all the employees is vital for the organisation. Employees are stakeholders which provide the organisation with skills, experience, creative ideas and solutions to fulfill objectives and strategical goals (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Moreover, the relationship between the organisation and stakeholders are based on trust, since the organisation has a moral responsibility towards the stakeholders (Greenwood & Van Buren III, 2010).

2.3.2 Employee Well-Being in a remote context

Strategies for retaining employees have been discussed for years. Engagement, job satisfaction and commitment are all factors mentioned in the context of employee retention (Deery, 2008). However, even though organisations are aware of the issue employee retention is still an increasing concern. Especially due to the competition on the labor market, where retaining skilled employees as well as innovation are two key factors for getting competitive advantage (Galagan, 2010). According to Barwinski et al. (2016), employee well-being will lead to a greater engagement and job satisfaction, whereas Deery (2008), explains how the role of job satisfaction and commitment can be a reason for staying in the organisation. Therefore, organisations should focus on employee well-being to increase their chances of retaining talented employees. Giving the employees opportunities to affect their working situation by listening to them will contribute to employee well-being (Barwinski et al., 2016). Another aspect that promotes employee well-being is to create a stress-free working environment (Barwinski et al., 2016). Consequently, stress and burn out has a negative effect on engagement, job satisfaction, commitment and employee retention (Deery, 2008).

Working remotely is challenging for the organisations, and according to a research conducted by Microsoft (2020), the company culture, teamwork and the sense of belonging will be affected the most. Additionally, Microsoft (2020) states that the innovation will suffer if the organisation does not focus on the culture and the people in it. Similar is expressed by Baker, (2021) who argues for the importance of maintain and encourage innovation. This is also supported by Barwinski et al. (2016), who emphasises the importance of a good relationship between managers and employees as a reason for employee well-being. Another important activity in the context of remote work is the establishment of policies concerning remote work. Microsoft (2020) means that these policies will be an important activity in order to increase employee retention. TM is developing towards an inclusive approach where responsible and sustainable aspects will contribute to the concept. Similar reasoning has been made by Microsoft (2020) and that the remote work will contribute to more sustainable choices. The remote

work will result in less traveling and commuting among the employees which will decrease the negative effects on the environment.

2.3.3 Work-Life balance in a remote context

About 80% of all Swedish employees highly values a work-life balance, meaning that organisations need to enable a work-life balance to retain valuable competence (Languilaire (2017). Furthermore, Languilaire (2017) describe a life puzzle that includes four different domains in an individual's life which fulfils different needs. The four domains are work domain, family domain, private domain and social domain. These different domains can either be integrated or segmented depending how clear the boundaries are. The domains are controlled by seven different aspects: time, place, emotions, relations, thoughts, behaviour and stress and energy (Languilaire, 2017).

When working from home, balancing life at work and home can be challenging and sometimes create conflicts. Delanoejje et al. (2019) explain that when employees are working from home, they are experiencing less work-life conflicts compared to the working days spent at the office. However, employees are making the working environment at home healthier by avoiding an organisational culture which is often influenced by the encouragement of working during late hours. Furthermore, Languilaire (2017) argues for how employees who experience an unhealthy balance between the domains are more likely to feel stressed and get burnt out. Moss (2019) states that organisations have a great responsibility regarding the work-life balance. Organisations has to make sure that they create the right conditions and work proactive and preventive with work-life balance, since it is considered a hygiene factor for many employees. By listening to the employees' needs the organisation can adjust and create the right conditions for a healthier working environment (Moss, 2019).

2.3.4 Learning in a remote context

According to a study by ManpowerGroup (2020) in Sweden, it is important for organisations to develop and encourage learning among their employees. Because of "The War for Talent" and the great competition on the labour market, organisations that is not having a culture promoting development or includes all employees will lose competence to other competitors. Kniffin et al. (2020) express that lack of learning opportunities causes less commitment and increased turnover. It is important for organisations to be updated on current and future needs regarding competences when managing learning and development (ManpowerGroup, 2020). Creating the right conditions for learning is important for both the individual and the organisation (ManpowerGroup, 2020). In addition, ManpowerGroup (2020) explain how the organisation must monitor and follow up the employees' learning to achieve development. In a study made by Kramer and Kramer (2020), they discuss how the employees must be trained on how to work effectively when working from home and the organisation will have to check in with these employees to a greater extent regarding how well they perform their work (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). This implicates that remote work requires more effort from the employers. Since remote work enables employees to work anywhere, organisations have to focus on how to manage this new remote context with dynamic workplaces. If organisations manage to make this transition successful, they will increase the possibility of retaining their talented employees.

2.3.5 Leadership in a remote context

The quality of leadership in organisations are important in order to retain talented employees (Peterson, 2005). According to Radda et al. (2015), the leadership is a key source to employee engagement. A successful leader will retain employees in the organisation by caring about the employees and provide them with resources to perform their job and give them opportunities to develop (Peterson, 2005). Moreover, employees value leaders that consider the employees opinions (Radda et al., 2015). Focusing on the employees is even more important in a world where remote work is on the rise due to the

pandemic (Peterson, 2005). As stated in a study by Sull et al. (2020), leaders face a challenging transition from managing employees in a physical workplace to a remote working environment. Subjects concerning the employee well-being, retention, engagement, productivity and connection becomes even more important when working remotely. Sull et al. (2020) has identified five main focuses for leaders in a remote working environment.

First, transparency, consistent and frequent communication enables the employees to feel more connected. Moreover, the management must be consistent with sharing the same information to all employees as well as having regular dialogues with the employees about their working situation (Sull et al., 2020). Similar is argued by Kniffin et al. (2020) who states the importance of having an open and clear communication with employees about the organisations direction, vision and future. In addition, organistions should promote having dialogues since employees need to understand organisational decisions rather than like them then (Baker, 2021).

Second, creating activities to prevent mental health problems and support physical activities. The activities include prevention of social isolation, check-ins, remote social activities and wellness (Sull et al., 2020; Mulki et al., 2009). Additionally, organisations need to inform employees where to turn for support, feedback and inspiration (Mulki et al., 2009; Kniffin et al., 2020). According to Kniffin et al. (2020), employees benefit from clear information how to work from home which can be communicated through a policy. Moreover, the policy can include best practice about training, counseling, mentoring and how to cope with challenges (Mulki et al., 2009; Kniffin et al., 2020).

Third, maintain and increase productivity and engagement by assess performance evaluation in terms of job expectations, future goals and recognize employee and team performance (Sull et al., 2020; Mulki et al., 2009; Baker, 2021). In addition, Mulki et al. (2009) argues for giving employees a sense of opportunity to advancement in the organisation, this can be an issue when working remotely. Kniffin et al. (2020) express the need for appraisal systems to keep employees productive and engaged in a remote context.

Forth, managing and support employees to obtain a healthy work-life balance in a remote working environment. Especially by giving the employees the opportunity to be responsible for their own schedule (Sull et al., 2020). Furthermore, Mulki et al. (2009) express the issues with a remote context. Employees are working longer hours, struggling to take time off and is generally working more hours per day. The boundaries are becoming hard to manage for employees when home becomes work. Consequently, organisations can support employees by creating working norms regarding work-life balance and give them feedback about their workload (Mulki et al., 2009).

Fifth, working remotely challenges the work towards strategic objectives and goals. For example, the culture is included in the strategic objectives and needs to be managed differently and according to the new context of remote work (Sull et al., 2020). Objectives can be used to create clarity about the organisational focus and decrease role ambiguity. To increase employee engagement, leaders should communicate that the effort made by employees contributes to company goals (Baker, 2021). Organistions need to make it effortless to achieve goals by equip employees with technical tools needed to be successful. Baker (2021) also argue for the challenges with working remotely, all employees do not prefer working remotely and other employees do not know how the technical tools works.

The lack of managers visibility in a remote context is a challenge for organisations. Mulki et al. (2009) argues for the importance that managers offers both formal and informal meetings with employees. Kniffin et al. (2020) express that regular contact is preferred by using video calls to create meaningful conversations. Organisations should also have broad opportunities for social and business interactions.

Manager's way of dealing with employees and offer support is important in a working environment with ambiguity and concerns, otherwise job satisfaction, commitment, performance and turnover intentions will suffer (Mulki et al., 2009). Therefore, building trust trough virtual interaction is vital in a remote context, especially concerning new employees (Kniffin et al., 2020; Baker, 2021). In fact, leaders benefit from trusting employees to complete their tasks in ways that works best for them. The outcome is more important compared to the process of how to get there (Baker, 2021).

3 Methodology

In this chapter, a direction and motivation for the scientific approach is described. First, the (i) scientific approach will be presented. Second, the (ii) research design and empirical approach are described including the role of theory.

3.1 Ontological constructionism

Since the study is focusing on different TM practices related to employee retention in the context of an organisation, the study will have an ontological approach (Bryman & Bell, 2017). According to Bryman and Bell (2017), the social world consists of social entities in terms of the organisation and the culture in it. The social entities are objective and are controlling the employees that are working inside the organisations. This means that the employees are acting according to the social entities which are described in the context of the organisation. The strategies and practices of employee retention are a central part of our purpose which focuses on understanding how an organisation operates and is structured. Therefore, an ontological approach allows us to attack the problematisation, since it focuses on social entities as an external reality (Blomkvist et al., 2018)

However, the social world is not only based on structures that individuals adapt to and apply after. Especially in a modern social world where globalisation, the war for talents, shortages of skills, and the pandemic dominates the new context of a remote working environment. The world and society are constantly changing, as a result, the organisation will change with it (Blomkvist et al., 2018). The organisations must adapt their practices to meet the needs of the employees in order to retain them. The generation of knowledge is therefore dependent on the objective aspect of the organisation regarding how they operate as well as the subjective aspect of the employee's experiences. Consequently, the study will take an ontological constructionism approach since the employees are involved in and contributes to the organisation and influence how it will operate (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Therefore, the employee's needs are a crucial part for organisations to take into consideration when creating practices for employee retention.

This is the reason why knowledge is generated to understand which practices the organisation uses to retain employees, as well as the employee's experiences regarding these practices. Looking at previous research within the area of TM, the practices for employee retention have been examined but lacks research in a remote working context. This is the reason for creating a purpose with the intention to understand the phenomena (Blomkvist et al., 2018). In addition, this study will also provide an understanding of the concept of TM and the word talent in general as well as the organisations and employee's experiences about the concepts.

3.1.1 Hermeneutics

Due to the focus of generating knowledge by understanding which TM practices for employee retention the organisation uses, it requires a more interpretive approach of the empirical data. First, the study aims to understand how the organisation operates and which practices the organisation uses in terms of TM and employee retention. Second, listen to employees' experiences and perceptions about employee retention practices. Third, how the retainment practices are affected by the remote working context.

This shift between the perspective of the high level and the different building blocks of TM, employee retention, and remote work explains the process of hermeneutics (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). By listening to employees and interpret their experiences and opinions the study can reach an understanding of which TM practices regarding employee retention organisations must implement in a remote working context and how they are affected. This is explained to be a hermeneutic perspective due to its openness to interpretations and understanding (Bryman & Bell, 2017). The theoretical anchoring in the literature

will generate a preunderstanding about TM, employee retention, and remote work. Consequently, the choice of an abductive role of theory will allow conversion of the preunderstandings which enables the generation of new theories in the analysis of the empirical data (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

3.2 Research design

Given the scientific approach, this section will concretise the empirical approach in terms of describing and discuss the nature of the data collection process in terms of (i) the role of theory, (ii) the empirical data needed to perform the study, and (iii) presentation of the selected survey design.

3.2.1 Abductive approach

The abductive approach is explained by Bryman and Bell (2017) to be a relatively new way of thinking, making it possible to avoid the strict frameworks of being either inductive or deductive. Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2017) argue for the researcher's possibility to search for theories about an issue in advance to understand it and create a clear focus of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2017). This study concerns the concept of TM, which has been questioned in previous research as difficult to define. Therefore, the study began with an extended search for current perspectives on the concept of TM in previous scientific articles. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2017), abduction is useful in theory-based studies but with an innovative angle. The literature review generated in an overview of the concept as well as useful theories. According to Blomkvist et al., (2018), deduction as a role of theory identifies theories at the beginning of the study to use as a framework when collecting empirical data. Due to the confusion about the concept of TM, the generation of theories was necessary in order to build a strong ground for the remaining parts of the study.

Blomkvist et al., (2018) describe the formulation of hypothesis in the deduction which is based on the generated theories. Since TM and employee retention in a remote working context is under-researched, the formulation of the hypothesis would result in a false prediction. The inductive approach is explained by Blomkvist et al., (2018) to embrace the empirical data with openness and understand the empirical data by finding support from theories. Since the aim is to understand practices in the remote context as well as understand the employee's experiences about retention practices, the study will have an abductive role of theory with a mix of inductive and deductive approaches.

In this case, the deductive approach provides a theoretical framework whereas the inductive approach permits interpretations of the empirical data. In line with the hermeneutic principles, the empirical data will be interpreted to raise the possibility of finding theories suitable for the new context. Due to the purpose, the abductive approach is suitable since the authors wanted to clarify the concept of TM before the collection of empirical data but have an openness for identifying new theories. Thereby, the abductive approach will enable flexibility regarding how the empirical data will be managed, which in turn will contribute to more in-depth findings as well as a deeper analysis.

3.2.2 Qualitative research

In order to have a flexible view of the empirical data, the research will apply a qualitative research strategy. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2017), qualitative research allows interpretations that suit well for this study due to the hermeneutic approach. Qualitative research is often focusing on an open and ambiguous empirical data but provides the possibility to make categorisations (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative research is explained to be based on subjectivity where the researcher's presence and interpretations are a central part (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017).

By using qualitative semi-structured interviews, the individual's perceptions and interpretations can be collected. In this case, the interviews are aiming to contribute to deeper knowledge making it possible to interpret the data. Furthermore, the empirical data can generate descriptions for which TM practices

organisations should use in a remote working context. This research aims to interact with the respondents, letting them explain and speak about the subject within the new context of remote work. This descriptive type of knowledge can be connected to a qualitative approach, which is often used when words are the most essential part of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Listening to the respondent's thoughts and ideas is important to make it possible to make an explanatory image of the research issue. Therefore, the study has adapted a qualitative method to collect our data.

Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2017) also argue for the usage of qualitative research in combination with ontological constructionism. Finding theories can help clarify the direction of research. By shifting between deduction and induction the qualitative research allows further exploration of the limited researched issue. Additionally, knowledge is gained through interpretation of the empirical data allowing the respondents to be a part of the construction of the organisation in the new context. The flexibility of the qualitative research is suitable for the abductive approach because of the shift between the role of theory as well as the interpretative perspective which supports the hermeneutic approach of the study.

3.2.3 Case study

The research is based on a case study focusing on one organisation within the public sector. According to Bryman and Bell (2017), a case study is aimed at a specific place, a person, or a specific event in order to go in-depth about the study object. In the problematisation, a lack of research about the issue within the public sector is identified and therefore the choice of conducting a case study was made. The chosen organisation consists of different departments and units as well as different knowledge and skills. Furthermore, Bryman and Bell (2017) explain how case studies are often associated with qualitative methods since it allows the researcher to conduct an intensive and descriptive study. Since the research has a qualitative approach and uses qualitative semi-structured interviews a case study is well suitable for collecting the empirical data. However, Bryman and Bell (2017) argue about the openness for using more than one qualitative method in case studies. For example, combine qualitative interviews with observations, but due to the time limit, it would have been too extensive for the research. Another reason for only using one data collecting method in this research was due to the current pandemic and regulations with social distancing. Thereby it was not possible to conduct participatory observations.

As stated by Blomkvist et al. (2018) a case study is appropriate when using an inductive approach since it generates theories from the studied reality. Due to the abductive approach and having a mix between a deductive and an inductive approach it opens up for generating new knowledge and theories. The problem with the different meanings of the concept TM and how talent is perceived motivates the choice of a case study to examine our issue in detail in order to understand it (Blomkvist et al., 2018). Because of this, the purpose of the research is not to statistically generalise the result but to understand which TM practices organisations use regarding retention within the remote working context. Instead, an analytical generalisability is likely to be achieved if the research is systematically conducted and presented in detail (Blomkvist et al., 2018). This negative aspect with a case study and its generalisability is explained by Blomkvist et al. (2018) to be a problem if the research is objective in a natural science perspective. By taking an ontological constructionism approach and a hermeneutic perspective this is avoided.

4 Method

In this chapter, the course of action is explained and argued for with the aim to achieve the purpose of this research. First, the (i) data collecting method and the selection of respondents are presented. Second, the (ii) collection of the empirical data and the transcripts is explained. Third, the (iii) analytical approach and method are presented. Fourth, the (iv) quality criteria of the research are discussed, and sixth, the (vi) ethical aspects are presented.

4.1 Qualitative interviews

Interviews are believed to be the most common method within qualitative research due to their great flexibility and can be either unstructured or semi-structured (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Since the aim was to reach an understanding of the issue and grasp for details regarding TM practices for retention the choice of using qualitative interviews was made. According to Bryman and Bell (2017), qualitative interviews focus on understanding the respondents' perceptions rather than collecting different answers. Because of this aspect, semi-structured interviews were used since this type of interview enables the researcher to ask complementary questions. This flexibility may create opportunities to direct the questions an attack the subject from more angles (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Allowing the interviews to be flexible led to a bigger perspective for how the respondents view different factors within the research area.

4.1.1 Selection of respondents

The respondents were recruited by a convenience selection since the organisation is known by one of the authors (Bryman and Bell, 2017). The HR manager was contacted and asked to give names of potential respondents within the HR department. After receiving the names, these employees were contacted trough mail and eight out of eight respondents accepted and participated. However, it was revealed during the interviews that some respondents did not have a degree within the HR area. The reason for this was because the department for competence development had been merged with the HR department which was unknown for the authors before the interviews. However, all of the respondents had the experience of working with HR issues. Having respondents with some knowledge about the subject was important for the study since the concept of this research is closely related to HR and the aim was to get a deeper understanding of it.

A convenience selection is described by Bryman and Bell (2017) to be a selection that is both time and cost-effective since the respondents used are close at hand. The negative aspect of this type of selection is that the results cannot be generalised (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Since the aim was to get a deeper understanding rather than being able to generalise it to a bigger population this aspect is avoided. However, Bryman and Bell (2017) argue about how qualitative research is supposed to be generalised to theory and not populations.

By choosing a convenience selection, the respondents were found much easier due to the time limitations and could be selected according to their knowledge within the subject area. Both the organisation and the respondents were chosen to be anonymous since this was not necessary information for the research to mention and to protect the respondents. Before the interviews, each respondent received two documents, one regarding information about the research (Appendix 1), one regarding ethics and consent of participation in the study, and the confidentiality agreement (Appendix 2) and how the secrecy would be handled. In addition, the chosen organisation is a government agency within the public sector which made the handling of the information even more important and both authors received information from the organisation about how they handle personal data.

Table 1: Information about the respondents

Respondent	Age	Title	Time worked in the organisation	Education
R1	29 years	HR-specialist	2 months	Human Resources
R2	51 years	Training administrator	11 years	Communication studies/scientist
R3	42 years	Lawyer	15 years	Legal education
R4	42 years	Labor law lawyer	2 years	Legal education
R5	36 years	Negotiator	4 months	Service Management
R6	49 years	Training administrator	15 years	Qualified legal administrator
R7	32 years	HR-specialist	4 years	Human Resources
R8	28 years	HR-specialist	1 month	Human Resources

4.2 Collection of data

Due to the prevailing pandemic and social distancing, all interviews were conducted digitally using a program called Zoom. Each respondent was invited by a Zoom link allowing them to determine whether they felt comfortable having the camera on or not. Since the authors did not know whether the respondents were familiar with the digital tool Zoom, they received guidelines on how to participate in a Zoom meeting and managing both microphone and camera. Both authors were also checking their mail and telephones continuously in case the respondents had problems with attending. An advantage of doing the interviews digitally is that the respondents could choose a place best suited for them and to feel relaxed in the situation since Bryman and Bell (2017) explain how the respondents should not be concerned about being overheard or disturbed by the environment.

As mentioned in 4.1 semi-structured interviews were used because of the flexibility and an interview guide (Appendix 3) was made before the interviews were conducted. The interview guide is described by Bryman and Bell (2017) to help the researcher remembering which areas to cover and write down the main questions. Based on the extended search for the research subject in previous scientific articles the interview guide was designed and structured according to three main themes: TM, employee retention, and remote work, initially asking a few general questions about each respondent. The interviews were chosen to be conducted in Swedish since the authors are native Swedish and easier can be spontaneous with the language. In addition, the chosen organisation is a Swedish government agency. This was an important aspect due to the choice of semi-structured interviews which contributes to a deeper dialogue.

A total of eight interviews were conducted with respondents working in the same organisation within the public sector. Each interview took between 40 to 60 minutes and at each interview one of the authors was asking questions and the other one was quite taking notes. All interviews were recorded by a recording function in Zoom which had been tested by the authors before each interview to make sure the technology worked. Before starting to ask questions each respondent verbally gave their permission to be recorded. This was considered to be a flexible solution since it was not possible to meet them in person as well as it was approved by the university. Bryman and Bell (2017) explain how recording the interviews allows the interviewer to focus more on the conversation than trying to take notes and due to this and the choice of using semi-structured interviews the interviews could be performed in a more flexible way leading to a greater understanding by having the option to ask complementary questions.

4.2.1 Transcript of the interviews

After each interview, a transcript was made turning the spoken words into written text. Writing transcripts is explained by Bryman and Bell (2017) to be a time-consuming process but enables the researcher to do a careful scanning of the answers without listening to the recording. Since the authors considered the advantages to outweigh the disadvantages, the decision of making transcripts was made. Considering the choice of semi-structured interviews, semi transcripts were chosen since the focus was on the content rather than how the respondents spoke or acted during the interview. Both authors made separate transcripts after each interview before comparing the transcripts and compiling a final copy. By doing it in this way the authors could be objective as possible making sure not to miss out on any important information or aspect.

The transcripts were made in Swedish due to the time aspect. Translating every transcript would have taken a very long and unnecessary time since a selection of the empirical data had not been done yet. Each transcript was then sent to each respondent making sure that the authors had understood them correctly by allowing them to change, add or delete anything. At each interview, the respondents were asked to approve the mail address to which the transcripts were sent. When all transcripts were conducted and approved by the respondents the data was encoded and translated to English. Both authors were critical when translating making sure to retain the correct meaning of the answers. A document with accepted translations from the organisation itself was used to achieve a good formal and correct translation. This document cannot be presented due to secrecy since the name of the organisation is mentioned. Original quotes in Swedish are to be found (Appendix 4) in order for the reader to see how the researchers chose to translate them.

4.3 Grounded Theory and thematic analysis

When the empirical data had been collected and transcribed the data was encoded and divided into different themes. At first, during the literature review, three main themes were identified: TM, employee retention, and remote work. Based on these three themes the interview guide was conducted and due to the choice of semi-structured interviews the authors could ensure to cover these aspects but be open for identifying new themes or subthemes. Why the respondents were asked questions about remote work was to understand this new context by collect information about before, during, and after the pandemic as well as their personal experiences. This consideration can be connected to the ontological constructionism since organisations is constructed in its reality with respect to the employees' opinions.

Using themes to analyse the empirical data is according to Bryman and Bell (2017) a common way of managing data. Furthermore, they emphasise how a thematic analysis is more of a performed activity than a strategy for approaching empirical data. Due to the abductive approach, a theoretical framework was conducted and when creating the theoretical framework different aspects of employee retention were identified. These aspects became new themes resulting in five main themes (i) *Responsible Talent Management and talent*, (ii) *Employee Well-being,* (iii) *Work-life balance,* (iv) *learning,* and (v) *leadership*. Due to the research gap, all five themes were then placed and analysed in the remote context.

Since the research has a hermeneutic perspective with an openness for interpretations and understanding, grounded theory has been used to manage the empirical data and analyse it. According to Bryman and Bell (2017), grounded theory is a comprehensive strategy consisting of several details. However, grounded theory is based on encoding the data by breaking down the empirical data into categories (Alvesson, 2017; Bryman & Bell, 2017). During the analysis, the empirical data was analysed with the theories within the theoretical framework and with an openness for identifying new theories from the empirical data. This resulted in a total of six main themes with different subthemes.

The analysis of the four themes (ii) *Employee Well-being*, (iii) *Work-life balance*, (iv) *Learning* and (v) *Leadership* aimed to answer both research questions and during the thematic analysis a new pattern was identified. This pattern regarding social relationships was recurrent in all themes and created a new sixth main theme (vi) *Social Relationships*. However, the first theme (i) *Responsible Talent Management and Talent* was considered a strategy and not a practice since the concept TM is more of an approach to manage talented employees. Therefore, the analysis of this theme aimed to understand how the organisation manages their employees and uses RTM. The first main theme will therefore focus on the first research question. The analysis of the empirical data generated in a new social relationship model which is presented and explained in 6.1.

4.4 Research quality

Validity and reliability are two important criteria to achieve when researching with the purpose to measure the quality (Bryman & Bell, 2017). However, these criteria are not always directly transferable to qualitative studies because of the inability to use numbers and therefore, other notions such as trustworthiness and dependability are used instead (Bryman & Bell, 2017). Below we have addressed these criteria and argue for how we have performed our research in order to achieve quality research.

4.4.1 Trustworthiness and dependability

To create trustworthiness in the research the respondents were informed about the purpose before the interviews and both authors acted with respect to rules and regulations applicable to the public sector in general and specific to each organisation. Each respondent had received a document with information about how the data would be managed and how both respondent and organisation would be presented anonymously. Since the choice of using semi-structured interviews, made it possible to ask supplementary questions to ensure that the answer was understood accurately. The respondents had given their consent to participate allowing the authors to record each interview which made it possible to listen to the interviews repeatedly and make transcripts. Afterward, the transcripts were sent to each respondent in order to ensure that the authors had perceived their response correctly. By this means the respondents were allowed to review and change the transcript. During the whole process, the authors were self-critical about all decisions ensuring that the methods helped to aim for the purpose of the paper.

Due to the current situation caused by Covid-19 an adaption to the restrictions regarding social distancing had to be done and thereby each interview was conducted remotely. This means that both the authors and the respondents were able to be at any place only dependent on technology. Another action that had to be done to increase the trustworthiness was to select respondents with some knowledge about the subject of their occupation. In that way, relevant and informative data is assumed to have been collected due to the purpose of the research.

At seminars with other fellow students, they have reviewed this research during the process and have made inputs and comments about the work. This has helped the authors to evaluate the research and to ensure that it has dependability. Through tutoring sessions, the mentor has guided the authors along the way towards scientifically approved research.

4.4.2 Source criticism

Given that the context of remote work is relatively new and lacks research, the literature review and the theoretical framework include articles outside of peer revied databases and journals. However, the sources have been critically reviewed and selected from well-known universities, companies, and research and advisory companies. The sources used in the publications have been looked upon UlrichsWeb.

4.5 Ethical considerations

As researchers, it is important to consider ethical aspects when doing research based on personal information. By conducting qualitative research with qualitative interviews, the persons and their opinions are a central part which means that the respondents must be treated with respect to ethics. At the beginning of this research, the authors did an ethical self-reflection to ensure that the study would be conducted according to ethical standards (Appendix 5). According to Vetenskapsrådet (2021), good research practice is based on the following four principles: reliability, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Furthermore, there are codes of ethics every researcher needs to follow and according to the codex created by Vetenskapsrådet (2021) regarding social science, there are four main requirements research needs to achieve.

The (i) information requirement implicates how the respondents need to be informed about the purpose of the study (Blomqvist et al, 2017). To achieve this each respondent received a document about the study providing them with information about the authors and how the study would be conducted as well as the purpose of the research.

The (ii) consent requirement implicates how each individual needs to consent to participation (Blomqvist et al, 2017). To achieve this each respondent was first informed that the participation was voluntary and that they could cancel the interview at any time without giving any reason. This information was written in the document which the respondents received before the interviews. Additionally, the respondents were also informed how they would be asked verbally to consent to participation at the beginning of the interview. When each interview ten was conducted, the respondents' consent was recorded since the interviews were performed digitally.

The (iii) confidentiality requirement implicates that all collected data must be managed confidentially which means not mentioning names of other information about those who participate in the study (Blomqvist et al, 2017). To achieve this both organisation and respondents were chosen to be anonymised by the authors. Each respondent received information about this in the document as well.

The (iv) utilization requirement implicates that all collected data can only be used for what it is explained to be used for (Blomqvist et al, 2017). To achieve this, it was explained in the document how all collected data would be used for the study, further research within the area, and possible publication of a scientific article. Furthermore, the respondents were assured that both the recordings and the transcripts were only managed by the two authors. If a respondent would have canceled the interview, the recording would be deleted immediately.

5 Result and analysis

In this chapter, a presentation and analysis of the empirical data will be presented. Due to the abductive approach, the analysis is based on the theoretical framework as well as interpretations with the possibility of identifying new theories. The aim is to answer the two research questions (i) How does the organisation work with TM practices to retain talented employees?", *and (ii)* "*How does the context of remote work effect retainment practices?". First, the (i) main theme RTM and talent are presented and analysed. Second, the (ii) employee retention practices, employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership are presented and analysed. Third, the (iii) summary of the analysis of the main themes in 5.1 and 5.2 is presented. Fourth, the new main theme (iv) social relationships are presented and analysed with the theories and concepts of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, social capital and happy at work.*

5.1 The organisations definition of RTM and Talent

In 5.1, theories included in RTM will be analysed, as well as concepts regarding the definition of talent. The aim is to get an overall understanding how the organisation is working with RTM and talent. Since RTM is considered to include an inclusive approach, the aim is also to understand whether the organisation has an inclusive or exclusive approach. Table 2 presents the concepts and theories used in the analysis. 5.1.1 will focus on the research question one "*How does the organisation work with TM practices to retain talented employees?"*.

Table 2: **The main theme RTM and Talent and the sub themes based on the theoretical framework**

Main themes	Sub themes based on the theoretical framework
1) Responsible Talent Management and Talent	a) Exclusive TM b) Inclusive TM c) CSR d) Organisational Justice e) Stakeholder theory f) Talent as object g) Talent as subject

5.1.1 Responsible Talent Management and talent

The interviews confirm the complexity of the definition of talent and the lack of experience working specifically with TM as a concept. Despite the stated lack of experience working with TM, the respondents explain that the organisation is working with practices related to TM (e.g., attract, recruit, develop and retain talent). A similar definition is made by Asplund (2019) who argues for the practices of attracting, identifying, developing and retaining talents in the concept TM. When letting the respondents define TM, R1 and R3 describe TM as taking care of each employee's competence, as well as the importance of adapting the organisation after the employees. R3 explains the definition of TM as: "*Apply the best suitable direction based on the knowledge of the employees. Taking advantage of the employees' knowledge in the best possible way and be smart in the role as an employer.*" (Personal Communication, 29th mars 2021). In fact, caring about each employee's competence is related to "Talents as subject" (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013).

Further, when each respondent was asked to describe their individual definition of talent, they described talent as a natural inclination or as something inherent. R1 described the meaning of talent as working effectively and deliver praising results. Other respondents considered talented people to be talented within a specific field. These individual definitions of talent are associated with "Talent as object" (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). Lastly, when the respondents were asked about how the organisation is defining talent, the view of talent changed to "Talent as subject" (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013). For example, several respondents talked about that all employees are talented with individual competencies and experiences. R4 said that "competence" is used more regularly compared to the word "talent" in the organisation, and competence is considered as a combination of an individual's education, experiences and personal qualifications. R3 explains that the quality of education and learning in the organisation allows the employee to build a solid ground. R8 exemplifies this by describing: "*There is a chance that the individual does not recognise the talent in which the individual possesses but finds this talent in the workplace because of the opportunity the organisation is giving the employees by letting them try different things*" (Personal communication, 7th April 2021). For all these reasons, the organisation is considered to use an inclusive approach of TM because they view all employees as talents and value each employee's competence (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2013; Thunnissen et al., 2013; Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020; Bolander et al., 2017). R3 clarified the organisational definition of talent further: "*It is considered dangerous from an employer's perspective to just focus on a few employees because many of the other employees are being overlooked."* (Personal Communication, 29th mars 2021).

Also in line with an inclusive approach of TM, the organisation does not use any measurements to categorise talent according to the respondents. However, to keep track of talents in the organisation, R1 states that the organisation measures turnover in the organisation. R4 and R1 describe further how the HR department with support from different ratios, measures the degree of employee turnover. The statistics generated from the ratios can be broken down to the organisation's different functions and units. Managers in the organisation are encouraged to reflect on the statistics in terms of which employees have left the organisation and why, and according to R1 the HR department is responsible for driving these discussions with managers. R3 express the importance of focusing not only on attracting and recruiting but also the practices of retaining and terminate employees: "*Having a good conversation with the employees who decide to leave the organisation and follow up to a greater extent will decrease the possibility of making the same mistakes again and create the best conditions from the start when recruiting new employees*" (Personal communication, 29th mars 2021). Related to retention, the respondents also discussed the reasons why an employee decides to leave the organisation. There is a joint belief that salary, lost interest in the working assignment, as well as not getting along with colleagues and managers are all reasons for leaving. R3, R5, and R6 adds that opportunities elsewhere also can be a reason for leaving. R5 and R4 beliefs that unfulfilled expectations can be another cause for leaving the organisation. R3 exemplifies the issue of retaining employees: "*I think we easily can attract individuals but need to work harder to get the employees to stay and prevent the employees from seeing us as a springboard to something else.*" (Personal Communication, 29th Mars 2021).

In this part, the theories CSR, Stakeholder theory and Organisational justice theory are analysed to identify practices related to RTM. The principles of the concept of CSR can be seen in the organisation. For example, R1 describes the impact that the organisation has on society and its development. R1 states further the importance of obtaining democracy, which is a vital part of the strategic objective and operation. Social and environmental sustainability are, according to R4 and R7, on the organisations agenda as well as internal investigations to identify improvements and resources needed to achieve the sustainable goals. For example, the organisation has according to R1 and R4 a travel policy. However, R3 argues about how the organisation probably will review their business trips ahead since much of the

work has been done remotely. R7 adds that the organisation reviews the consumption of material. In conclusion, the organisation has activities included in the CSR theory by being responsible towards society, as well as improving the environment by making environmentally friendly decisions internally (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020).

The stakeholder theory describes the importance of taking care of the organisation's stakeholders (e.g., the employees) by building a relationship based on trust. As stated by R5, the organisation is a government agency where transparency and factual reasoning when making decisions is a vital part. Being transparent is one strategy in building trust and uphold a moral responsibility towards the stakeholders (Greenwood & Van Buren III, 2010). The organisation's ability to apply the organisational justice theory will affect the relationship between the organisation and employees further. R8 explains the opportunity to work with projects and work-related questions related to the employee's interests. The respondents express the organisations ability to create and give resources for the employees to use their knowledge. Overall, the organisation is according to R7, making it possible to gain knowledge and be talented in a specific field. R6 explains the opportunity of becoming talented in the organisation: "*Talent is something an individual can acquire in the workplace culture and become better at it*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021). R1 explains that the leader is rewarding employees with the freedom to manage their working day if they take responsibility. The procedural, distributive and interpersonal justice is achieved by letting each employee decide when, where, and how to gain new knowledge as well as consider the employees' interests in the allocation of projects and work-related questions (Greenberg, 1990). Moreover, interpersonal justice is obtained by having a dialogue with the leader regarding the employees' competencies, interests, and future goals. In particular, the leader's ability to consider the employees' opinions when distributing projects, responsibility, and resources (Greenberg, 1990). The importance of considering the employees' opinions and needs is explained by R7: "*To understand the new business market where the organisation has to play by the employee's rules. The employees can make almost any kind of demands. To be an attractive employer and to always be at the forefront to make it possible to recruit and retain competence.*" (Personal communication, 6th April 2021).

In conclusion, RTM effects the employee's intention to stay in the organisation. Therefore, adapting practices associated with the theories CSR, the stakeholder theory and organisational justice theory will have an impact on the employee turnover (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). The empirical data indicates that the organisation is working with CSR in terms of social and environmental responsibility. The social aspect could contribute to the employee's perception that the organisation is responsible towards the society, because of the impact on its development and the democracy. In addition, the environmental aspect is perceived by the respondents to be an important action internally, as a result of the agenda and the recommendations to take more sustainable decisions. Perceived justice is also an important factor for employee retention. The empirical data indicates that the decisions about allocation of resources, learning and development are made individually. As a result, the respondents experience justice because all the employees are getting the same opportunities to affect their working situation. This is connected to the stakeholder theory, because the empirical data indicates that the organisation is considering each employee to contribute to the organisation. All employees are valuable stakeholders which the organisation uphold with dialogues to maintain a strong relationship with the employees. Finally, the organisations that work with CSR, the stakeholder theory, and organisational justice theory will enable a responsible talent management strategy (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). By indicating the importance of all employees' competencies and define all employees as talented in their unique way, the organisation has an inclusive, equal, fair and responsible way of looking at talents (Anlesinya Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020).

5.2 Employee Retention Practices

In 5.2, the empirical data will be presented and analysed based on the theoretical framework related to the main themes' employee wellbeing, work-life balance, learning and leadership. Table 3 presents a summary of the theories and concepts used in each main theme. The first part in each main theme will focus on the research question one *"How does the organisation work with TM practices to retain talented employees?"*. The second part will focus on the second research question "*How does the context of remote work effect retainment practices?"*.

Table 3: Main themes and sub themes based on the theoretical framework

Main themes	Sub themes based on the theoretical framework
1) Employee Well-being	a) Engagement b) Job satisfaction c) Commitment
2) Work-life balance	a) Life domains b) Boundaries
3) Learning	a) Create conditions for learning b) Monitor and follow up learning c) Update competences regularly
4) Leadership	a) Consistent and frequent communication b) Provide support for physical and mental health c) Keep employees productive and engaged d) Manage work-life balance e) Manage strategic priorities

5.2.1 Employee well-being

The organisation is interpreted to actively work with employee well-being by raising questions about both leadership and active employeeship. R2 confirms this by saying: "*I am surprised by the great work and consciousness regarding certain questions in the organisation which I did not experience in the private sector.*" (Personal communication, 26th mars 2021). This is something Barwinski et al. (2016) believe is important since they argue for how employee well-being will lead to greater engagement and job satisfaction among the employees. Furthermore, to achieve employee well-being the organisation must listen to the employees enabling them to have an impact on their working situation (Barwinski et al., 2016). The organisation is perceived to be aware of this since the respondents can raise their voice through an employee survey as well as dialogues with the employer about their situation and working environment, whereas R1 emphasises how the employer still has a responsibility regarding the working environment when working from home. Furthermore, Barwinski et al. (2016) explain how other underlying factors such as the relationship with the manager may be a reason for the employees' sense of well-being. The need for responsive organisations is also confirmed by Microsoft (2020) who emphasises that organisations need to focus on the individuals and the organisational culture. Otherwise, they risk suffering in terms of innovation, especially in the new context of remote work

(Microsoft, 2020). According to the respondents, it seems that the organisation is aware of the organisational culture since they are working with it daily through conversations at a group level. This is clarified by R1 who states how the sense of both the culture and the values vicariously lives through the team's work and unit meetings.

Before the pandemic, the respondents had been working remotely to a small extent. Due to the pandemic, the respondents are urged to work from home but in general, there is an attitude about the office being the main workplace. This implicates that the respondents have not had the flexibility to work from home before, except in certain circumstances but this is believed to change after the pandemic. Today approximately eighty percent is working from home while the rest is at the office. The transition has been successfully done including and engaging everyone which has led to the respondents being able to adapt. The respondents are also being provided with accurate information about the situation through the intranet and are urged to be updated and continuously read the information. Additionally, a policy regarding remote work has been conducted and modified during the pandemic and afterward, it is believed that the new way of working will be inspired by the policy "Temporary mobile work". Furthermore, the policy contains:

1. Working material
2. Work environment and ergonomics
3. Leadership
4. Employeeship and the own responsibility
5. Insurances

Due to the remote working context the respondents explain that there is an increased focus on employee well-being now compared to before the pandemic. The respondents are allowed to take home equipment when working from home and have been given a device to raise their desk to improve the ergonomic aspect. To understand the employees' physical working environment at home the organisation has conducted surveys showing how the employees are experiencing more sedentary work now compared to when they worked at the office. As a measure for this and to encourage movement, the respondents have been given thirty minutes extra time at lunch to go outside and walk which has been very appreciated whereas R4 states:

"*The lunch walk has been very good. It is very obvious how working remotely contributes to sedentary and lack of movement/exercise. You do not take the bike to work, you do not walk to work, you do not even go outside and get in the car. You just walk from the bed to the kitchen table and onto the desk.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021).

The organisation is also urging the respondents to take breaks, be physically active and get some fresh air when working from home. However, this becomes contradictory since the employees explain how meetings are scheduled very tight leaving no time for breaks and according to Deery (2008), stress and burnout can affect an employee's job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment. This in turn can lead to employee turnover since employees are likely to stay in the organisation if they experience job satisfaction as well as job commitment (Deery, 2008). The working environment at home is explained to be calm and quiet because of the ability to work undisturbed. Moreover, this is also brought up as an issue for the organisation to deal with when creating the workplace in the future because employees may no longer be used to the noise at the office. This is an important aspect to take into consideration since having a stress-free working environment can lead to a strong sense of well-being regarding both physical and psychosocial health (Barwinski et al., 2016). The respondents experience the working environment to worsen since they started working from home.

Maintaining a good relationship may today be an even bigger challenge than before due to the remote work. This is something the organisation is explained to be aware of since they are having regular digital meetings which enable the manager and the respondents to check in with each other, both daily and weekly. During digital workplace meetings or unit meetings, all participants are being included letting everyone have their say, even those who usually are quiet. This in turn is perceived to contribute to both joy and a sense of community among the employees. However, Skype is the only digital tool they are using to communicate when working from home and to avoid a system overload they are not having the camera on. This in turn inhibits the relationship among the colleagues and managers as Barwinski et al. (2016) are talking about since they cannot see each other.

The respondents explain how they have gained other values and during remote work. In addition, the respondents claims that they must think about the culture a little extra remembering each other about what is important and less important. As an attempt to maintain a relationship among the colleagues they are having digital coffee breaks enabling them to talk about non-work-related things. Despite this, the employees experience a distance from each other. When only communicating remotely it becomes easy to maintain a facade making it harder to notice if a colleague is not feeling well or try to connect to someone. Furthermore, the respondents mean that it must be a clear focus in the meeting agenda regarding the culture when working from home.

5.2.2 Work-life balance

Languilaire (2017) argues for the importance of enabling a work-life balance to prevent stress and burnout among the employees. The organisation is assumed to have taken this very seriously since the work-life balance is a prioritised issue on the management agenda. According to Moss (2019), the organisation has a responsibility regarding organisational hygiene including work conditions, supervision and working relationships. The respondents explain how the organisational culture is urging for a life outside work and R2 exemplifies this by explaining how the employees should abstain from sending emails late after what is considered to be working time. Furthermore, Languilaire (2017) raises the issue of managing the four different domains in life by letting them integrate or be segmented. The organisation is trying to help the employees with making the boundaries clearer by encouraging them to turn off their work and go home in time as well as use their incorporated time and take time off when possible. Work-life balance is assumed to be a highly individual matter and according to the respondents the organisation offers flexible working hours enabling the employees to manage their own time. In addition, the managers have a responsibility to supervise the flex balance among the employees since they are using flexible working hours. This is another action taken by the organisation to help the employees reduce stress and balancing private life and work life.

However, due to the remote working context, it is difficult for the managers to supervise how the employees' workdays are scheduled when working from home and to make sure they have enough time for lunch or breaks to be able to cope with the workload. Therefore, each individual has a great responsibility to do as they are encouraged to do. As R7 explains:

"*When the daily connection and sense of belonging are not the same there is a risk that the culture will be lost and changed. A few years back, we had more respect for the business working hours and we were encouraged to delay the delivery of e-mails if we worked past working hours/late nights. The purpose was to avoid creating a culture where employees felt obligated to check their e-mails on evenings, to see if there was something that needed their attention. Now, this has become part of the culture as we have been letting go of these guidelines. It has been accepted to log on during nights if other colleagues do. This part of the culture has changed in terms of how employees chose to allocate their work during the day*." (Personal communication, 6th April 2021)

While the remote work situation has made it harder to set clear boundaries between work and private life, the balance between work and private is stated by respondents to be improved. Not having to commute to the office saves time for private and other family activities, which in turn reduce stress. Since the respondents can more easily manage their life puzzle when working from home, the organisation must consider this when managing the work after the pandemic, which is stated by R2:

"*Employee's demand to work from home increases when it enables a better work-life balance and when they discover how much time they save from not having to commute to the office. This demand will continue to be high also in the future, it will be hard for employers to go back to how it was before the pandemic. If not meeting this demand from employees, it will create a competitive advantage for other organisations. Employees will turn to organisations that allow working from home.*" (Personal communication, 26th mars)

5.2.3 Learning

Developing employees and encourage learning in the workplace is more important now than ever considering the competition in the labour market and the increased remote work (ManpowerGroup, 2020). According to the respondents, they are given the opportunity for learning both internally and externally. The organisation is very good at offering learning within the organisation and has created a competence portal including different types of learning as e-learning and webcasted lectures as well as a course catalogue. Creating the right conditions for learning is very important in order for both the individual and the organisation to develop (ManpowerGroup, 2020) meaning both parts have a responsibility. However, the opportunity for learning and need for development is stated by the respondents to be an individual responsibility to be discussed with closest manager. The manager is contributing to the respondents learning by being responsive. The respondents explains that unit meetings and workplace meetings is an opportunity for the colleagues to interact with each other. During these meetings they can discuss work-related issues as well as exchanging knowledge from someone who has participated in a course or a project. In addition, according to the respondents, the organisation organises a competence forum once a month to learn something new.

To achieve development, the organisation must monitor and follow up the learning of the employees (ManpowerGroup, 2020) as well as a check in with the employees to a greater extent on how well they perform their work when working from home (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). The organisation is identifying the individuals' learning by having performance reviews and uses competence plans as well as strategic competence provision. This is stated by R4 who says *"At employee interviews, you are reviewing your competence plan. You talk about the need of competence development the closest year or six months. What do you feel you need to learn more about to improve your job?"* (Personal communication, 31st mars). Being updated on what competence is needed is another important aspect regarding learning and development (ManpowerGroup, 2020). The organisation is perceived to be aware of this since the HR department is focusing on developing the managers. In this way, they can ensure that the organisation has the right competence needed by doing external environment monitoring to be updated. Furthermore, the organisation is perceived to see younger inexperienced individuals as future talents who can be formed within the organisation.

However, due to the remote working context the daily learning among the respondents is negatively affected when working from home since they do not interact with each other physically. The respondents explain that they have a lot of meetings regarding work but emphasizes a lack of opportunities for more spontaneous meetings. This is exemplified by R5 who experience it be cumbersome to contact a colleague and ask for help when working remotely. Regarding training and education R4 explains an increased difficulty when conducting trainings via Skype since the quality of

the training is affected negatively. This indicates a need for an improvement regarding how the employees can interact with each other and take part of the great learning opportunities the organisation otherwise offers. If the employees will have less learning opportunities, they may experience lower commitment reducing the chance of retaining employees (Kniffin et al., 2020).

5.2.4 Leadership

The organisation is working with the leadership in different ways which can increase the employees' intentions to stay. In fact, a leadership of quality who cares about the employees and provide them with resources and support to deal with the new remote context will increase employee retention (Mulki et al., 2009). For example, R3 and R7 described the leadership as flexible, structured, and responsive. Several respondents are describing the leadership as based on trust which is an important ingredient in keeping talented employees (Peterson, 2005). In addition, the same respondents describe that they have considerable freedom and space to take personal responsibility. The organisation is according to R7 working with manager appointments. R7 explained further that the Swedish agency for government employers' advocates for this leadership approach for public organisations. R7 expressed how the HR department cares about the leadership approach and wants to spread it to all managers in the organisation. Moreover, R7 described that the leaders are responsible for the employeeship and this is the reason why the leadership approach is important. The leadership approach is putting a pressure on leaders to perform. R4 described that the employee survey is exposing bad leadership and that the organisation is working with leaders who need support to perform better. This is explained further by R4:

"*I heard before I started my employment that the organisation is really thorough with the managers and that the managers are really good here. We work with temporary manager appointments. If a manager gets very bad results on the employee survey, they cannot continue working as a manager. The employee survey will tell if the manager gets bad results and if this is the case, the manager needs to make improvements, have more workplace meetings, and involve the department manager. In the end, the three-four years-long contract as a manager appointment will not be renewed if the manager underperforms. As a manager, you cannot have a manager appointment for 10 years because bad leadership will be revealed on the employee survey.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Sull et al. (2020) argue for the importance of leaders' concern regarding the employees' physical and mental health. There is a joint belief among the respondents who described the daily "check-ins" with the manager where the employees can ask questions and get support. In addition, R8 described the leader's ability to give all employees attention, whereas R2 expressed that the leader asks the employees how they feel and how their work is going. In particular, the manager is according to R3 and R7 concerned about the employee's workload and if the employees maintain a healthy work-life balance. Giving support regarding employees' work-life balance is according to Sull et al. (2020) an important leadership activity. Sull et al. (2020) describe the leaders' responsibility of keeping the employees productive and engaged. R8 described that the leader is having dialogues with the employees regarding their competencies, experiences, and future goals. As a result, the dialog can identify which competencies the workforce has, which the leader can use as an advantage to position employees and give them projects based on their interests and individual goals. Sull et al. (2020) describe the importance of having consistent and frequent communication when working remotely. For example, the information is explained by R8 to be easily accessible and personally believes that the organisation is giving the employees the information needed to handle work remotely.

The effect of the remote working environment on the leadership can be identified in the empirical data. For example, the organisation is working with manager appointments to secure a high-quality leadership

in the organisation. According to Peterson (2005), the leadership in the organisation is an important factor to retain employees. Current research also states that the leadership is a key factor to maintain a successful working environment in a remote context (Mulki et al., 2009). In the future, R7 believes that there will be both the leaders' and the unit's decisions on how the work should be managed based on the organisational and individual needs. R7 expressed the managers' responsibility of having a dialogue with the employees about their working situation and at the same time consider each employee's needs and interests. Leaders in the organisation is giving the employees support, having regular dialogues and check-ins. This is vital activities in a remote context due to the lack of visibility of the leader, otherwise the employee retention will suffer (Mulki et al., 2009). According to Sull et al. (2020), managing strategic objectives can be challenging in a remote context. The respondents stated that the organisation is providing the employees with the opportunity to be a part of the decision-making regarding the needs of each employee and the organisations. As a result, the employees feel a sense of value and that they contribute to the organisational goals. According to the respondents, leaders in the organisation applies a trust-based leadership. The respondents are also describing the leadership as flexible structured and responsive. These leadership qualities, especially trusting the employees are important in a remote working context (Baker, 2021).

5.3 Summary of the analysis of the main themes

In 5.3, the analysis of the five main themes will be summarised and presented separately. The first theme (i) *Responsible Talent Management and talent* will be summarised based on the first research question. The other four themes (ii) *Employee well-being*, (iii) *Work-life balance*, (iv) *Learning* and (v) *Leadership* will be summarized based on both research questions. In table 4, findings related to the first research question are visually presented.

The analysis of the theme (i) *Responsible Talent Management and talent* shows that TM as a concept is not verbally used in the organisation. However, the respondents explain that they are working with practices included in TM namely attract, recruit, develop and retain employees. From analysing the empirical data with support from the theoretical framework an interpretation was made which indicates a relationship between responsible talent management and the way the organisation operates. For example, the organisations work with sustainability and ethical responsibility, employee justice in terms of equal opportunities, and employees as stakeholders in terms of considering the employees' opinions. The empirical data also indicates that the organisations are viewing talent as subject and that all employees are considered talented with individual competencies and experiences.

The analysis of the theme (ii) *Employee well-being* indicates that the organisation is actively working to maintain a healthy workplace remotely. The practices include both dialogues regarding the working situation and ergonomics for each employee as well as an employee survey. The interpretation of the empirical data also indicates an organisational culture that promotes well-being where the management encourages the employees to take breaks as well as encourage them to be physically active. The respondents also describe a policy created during the pandemic. Furthermore, the organisation is arranging meetings where all employees are included to create a sense of belonging. Due to the remote working context, it is explained to be an increased focus on employee well-being since the working environment has become a more important issue to manage.

The analysis of the theme (iii) *Work-life balance* indicates that the organisation is using flexible working hours to enable work-life balance where the employees can schedule their working hours more independently. In addition, to enable work-life to balance the managers are supervising the employees flex balance to ensure a healthy balance of working hours. Furthermore, the empirical data indicates that the organisation is working with work-life balance in a cultural aspect as well. The management is

encouraging the employees to prioritize life outside work and there is general respect for the working hours among the employees to promote a healthy work-life balance. Due to the remote working context, the work-life balance has improved but made it harder to distinguish between work and leisure. It has also become more difficult for managers to supervise the employees' workload and schedules when working from home.

The analysis of the theme (iv) *Learning* indicates that the organisation offers extended learning possibilities both externally and internally as well as in the daily work. For example, the employees are offered a competence portal with a course catalogue and different types of learning. The managers are also monitoring and follow up on each employee's learning by having performance reviews. In addition, the organisation is working with strategic competence provision and uses individual competence plans. As a result, the managers undergo education by HR to develop and successfully manage the employees as well as making sure the organisation is updated on which competencies are needed by, for example performing external environmental monitoring. Even if the organisation offers good learning opportunities, the daily learning and exchange of competencies among the colleagues has been inhibited due to the remote working context.

The analysis of the theme (v) *Leadership* indicates that the organisation is working with manager appointments. As a result, the employees can speak up on the employee survey and get leaders replaced if the leader underperforms. The empirical data indicated a leadership based on trust which enables the employees to take personal responsibility regarding their working hours and need for learning. Leaders are updated with each employees' working situation by having daily check-ins. Moreover, Leaders have dialogues with employees regarding competencies, experience, and future goals as well as about the future and take their interest into consideration regarding work schedule.

Table 4: Employee retention practices identified in the empirical data

Main themes	Employee retention practices
1) Responsible Talent Management and Talent	a) The organisation has adapted an inclusive approach because they view all as talents b) Working with justice in terms of resource allocation, transparency and equal opportunities c) Considering the employees opinions d) Working sustainably with developing the society, environmental activities internally
2) Employee Well-being	a) Regular dialogues regarding working situation b) Employee survey c) Management encourage well-being d) Workplace meetings e) Remote work policy
3) Work-life balance	a) Flexible working hours b) Create own schedule c) Dialogues with managers about the balance d) Management encourage work-life balance
4) Learning	a) Strategic competence provision b) External environmental monitoring c) External and internal courses d) Competence portal e) Performance review f) Competence plan g) Daily learning h) Leadership development
5) Leadership	a) Manager appointments b) Trust-based leadership c) Daily check-ins d) Dialogues about the employees current and future situation

5.4 Social relationships

During the coding and categorising of the empirical data, a pattern was identified in the main themes' employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership which the theoretical framework could not cover. The respondents explained the transition to remote work as successful, yet the respondents indicate the need for social connection with the colleagues. The lack of social connection which has been identified is concerning the non-work relationships between colleagues which are obtained by social activities. The analysis of social relationships in the organisation are support by the theories about Maslow's hierarchy of needs, social capital as well as the concept happy at work. Moreover, the presentation and analysis of social relationships are visually presented in figure 3. In figure 3, the main themes are connected to different social relationships. *First*, Employee-Employee (E-E) which focuses on the work-related relationship between employees. *Second*, Employee-Employee- Non work (E-E-NW) are focusing on the non-work relationship between employees. *Third*, Employee-Leader (E-L) is focusing on the relationship between employees and leaders. This identified theme aimed to answer the second research question *How does the remote working context effect the retainment practices?*

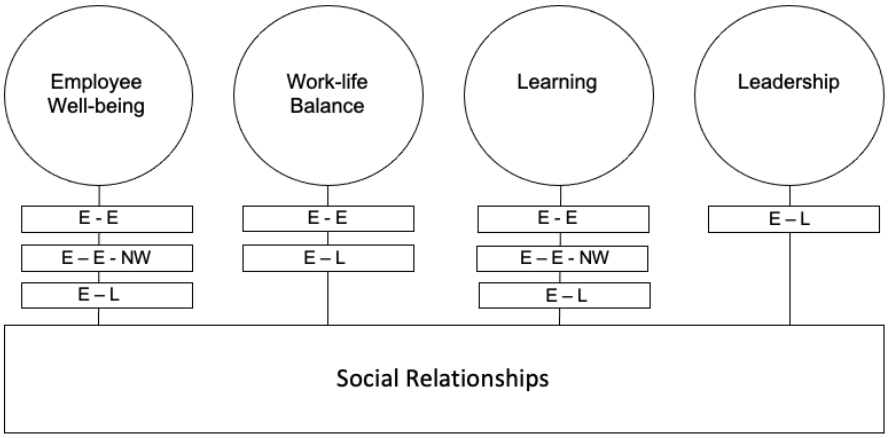

Figure 3: *Visual presentation of the social relationships*

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the importance of social relationships and sense of belonging are viewed as a basic need for the human being (Karlsson, 2012). The social need is categorised as a basic need and if the basic needs are not satisfied, it will inhibit the individual's development and well-being (Karlsson, 2012). When working remotely, the social aspect of the working environment becomes vital due to the distance to the colleagues. Based on the presentation and the analysis in 5.2, the organisation has created conditions to maintain a good working relationship between leaders and colleagues. This interpretation is based on the respondents' answers and their experiences regarding the working environment in a remote context. For example, R8 expressed the possibility of contacting the manager with questions and at the same time have meaningful dialogues if needed. R3 has similar experience about the relationship with the manager and perceives the manager as caring because of the regular check-ins. As a result, R3 feels that the leader is trustworthy. In addition, R2 experience that the dialogue with the manager has become more personal when talking remotely. R8 confirms the value of having a good relationship with the manager when working remotely because of the lack of physical meetings. In summary, the lack of social connection does not depend on the relationship between employee and leader.

The empirical data was examined further, and the focus changed to interpret the relationship between colleagues in the organisation. According to R4, there is a positive atmosphere between the colleagues in the organisation. A similar statement is made by R3 who explained the positive atmosphere because of the perceived encouragement and understanding between the colleagues regarding working remotely. The working relationship between the employees is interpreted to also be upheld by daily and weekly meetings and digital workplace meetings which is explained by R7. This is confirmed by R1 who described that "*We have done exercises on APT-meetings with the purpose of praising each other, to promote well-being, health, sense of belonging, communication, and feedback. We have been eager to include this in meetings even though we do not see each other in person.*" (Personal Communication, 25th mars 2021). Furthermore, the respondents explained workplace meetings and unit meetings as an opportunity to interact with other colleagues discussing work-related issues or exchanging knowledge from each other. This describes the importance of *Employee-Employee* relationships when it comes to creating learning opportunities. Despite the attempt of maintaining the working relationship between colleagues with digital meetings, R4 and R2 explained the issue of losing connection to colleagues. Especially colleagues that the respondents do not work with in the same projects or have the same work-

related questions as. R7 expressed the importance of having a working relationship and daily contact with colleagues by stating "*It is important to have a daily dialogue and contact to prevent questions from getting lost or being left alone in a working situation. We have to remember to still act as colleagues, working together as a part of a unit even though we cannot meet in person."* (Personal Communication, 6th April 2021).

One aspect that can affect the relationship between the colleagues is the function of the digital tools used in the organisation. R1 stated the need for better digital tools. R5 explained the limits regarding Skype and the program functions. For example, the participants cannot be viewed at the same time or divided into different virtual rooms. R4 confirmed the issue with the digital tools in the organisation and the effect on the relationship between colleagues:

"*Working from home has a negative effect on the social working environment since we do not meet in person and can identify if colleagues look sad or identify if colleagues look tired. It is much easier to maintain a façade when meetings are being held on Skype. Besides, we usually have Skype meetings without camera. There are not many colleagues who ask each other how they feel, we just jump straight to the work-related matters. I think the working environment has gotten worse in many ways compared to the balance between work and free time which has improved.*" (Personal Communication, 31st mars 2021)

A similar experience is stated by R4 who expressed the importance of making time for conversations about private life in connection to the meetings on Skype. R4 values the relationship with the colleagues and cares about their well-being. R3 brought up the aspect regarding how employees can feel alone when working remotely, if they do not have a large social network outside work. According to R3, this is the reason why the relationship with the manager becomes even more important when working remotely. An interpretation of the empirical data is that the organisation has back-to-back meetings which can affect the non-work relationships between the employees. R2 confirmed this issue by stating: "*Today (26th mars) I got a call that we are booking too many meetings. The meetings go in one and we have to raise this issue and suggest that a 1-hour meeting should be 55 minutes or less to enable breaks in between meetings*." (Personal Communication, 26th mars 2021). R3 stated that the effect of having back-to-back meetings is the lack of space for breaks where the employees can have non-work conversations. This type of spontaneous conversation occurs naturally at the office between meetings according to R3. A similar statement was made by R2 who experiences a lack of relationship with other colleagues who is not a part of the respondent's team and projects. R2 also stated that these relationships are obtained spontaneously through coffee breaks at the office which currently suffers due to the remote work. The correlation between a tight schedule and the lack of non-work relationships is also expressed by R4 who states that:

"*It has gotten worse because you do not see each other, you cannot identify how colleagues are feeling, we do not have lunch together, we do not have coffee breaks together. There is no time to talk about private life.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

In fact, R2 confirmed that the work has become more intense which results in a decrease in coffee breaks. Furthermore, R2 expressed the need for social interactions by stating: "We *are socially starved*" (Personal Communication, 26th mars). This issue with poorer social relationships and the difficulty with maintaining them is supported by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) who emphasises how relations require interactions to be maintained and strengthened. Furthermore, it is important for organisations to create opportunities as well as encourage social relationships to be successful (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). This is supported by Cross Walker (2020) who explains social capital to include structural, cognitive, and relational dimensions which together creates both opportunity and motivation for the

social exchange which is resulting in social benefits. The structural dimension refers to network ties, the cognitive dimension refers to the conversation between employees and the relational dimension refers to trust, norms, values, and membership. Network ties together with communication will provide the opportunity for the relationship whereas trust, norms and values, and membership provides the motivation for the relationship. Both the opportunity and the motivation for the relationship will then determine the benefits of the social capital (Cross Walker, 2020).

The respondents express the need for in the organisation. This could increase by applying the social capital and the relational dimension to create a stronger feeling of membership, trust and shared values between the employees. As a result, the employee well-being and learning could be positively affected and motivate the employees to create better social exchange and stronger network ties. The social capital could also explain why the respondents experience some of the practices to be successfully transferred to a remote working context. The *Employee-Employee* relationship related to well-being, work-life balance and learning is positive because the employees are connected through the cognitive and structural dimension. A reason for this, are the number of meetings where the respondents can discuss work-related issues. Consequently, the respondents experience that the organisation is giving the employees opportunities for maintaining *Employee-Employee* relationships which focusing on work.

Despite the positive effect of the structural and cognitive dimension, the respondents express the need for more *Employee-Employee-Non work relationships* which concern the relational dimension. Virtual conversations lack of richness hence high-quality informal social interactions is essential to maintain mental and physical health (Kniffin et al., 2020). Informal conversations usually take place spontaneously at the office between meetings or at coffee breaks. Working remotely reduces spontaneous social and emotional interactions, as a result, the employees are feeling lower job satisfaction, commitment, and increased intention to leave the organisation (Mulki et al., 2009). For this reason, employees are at greater risk of burn-out, chronic stress, feelings of exhaustion and distant attitudes towards work. Research indicates the importance for social activities and having fun at work (Mulki et al., 2009). Employees that are happy at work will have more functional brains according to McKee (2017). Being happy at work and find a sense of purpose at the workplace will increase productivity and creativity. In fact, when employees have good social interaction with colleagues, the usage of competences, experience and emotional intelligence will be supported (McKee, 2017).

The empirical data indicates the need for a hybrid working environment including a combination of working remotely, working from home, and working at the office. This is confirmed by R8 who prefers working 50% at home and 50% at the office to obtain variety and get environmental change. This is also stated by R7 who believes in a combination of working remotely, working from home, and working from the office. Three respondents believe the pandemic has demonstrated the possibility of working from home. From these interpretations, working remotely will continue to be an option for the employees. Especially, if the employee's opinions are being heard. In fact, R8 argued that the organisation should consider letting the employees schedule their work individually to some extent. R6 and R4 believe many employees want to be at the workplace and at the same time having the opportunity to work from home. Despite the positive aspects of creating a hybrid working environment in the future, there are still issues regarding managing the employee-employee and the employees-leader relationships in a hybrid working environment. This is confirmed by R4 who explained that:

"*We introduced meetings on Skype every morning which has created a closer connection to the unit. All my colleagues have their office in another city and has always been meeting each other in the mornings to say hello, which I have never been a part of. All colleagues are working from home at the moment, and it has become more "fair" from my perspective. I have gotten a closer connection to my*

manager and colleagues because of the start-up meetings every morning." (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Additionally, new employees can be much more sensitive regarding the lack of social relationship between colleagues. R8 express the difficulties of being a new employee and only meet colleagues remotely. As a result, the respondent believe it is hard to get to know the colleagues which make R8 unsure of who the respondent can turn to for questions and when. R5 was hired during the pandemic and therefore the onboarding process was conducted remotely. The respondent was not indoctrinated into the culture in the same way compared to former workplaces that operated in the private sector with a strong value-driven culture. According to Cross Walker (2020), social relations rely on the strength of the network ties, how well a person communicates, and the membership with shared norms and values as well as the perceived trust. This indicates the importance of creating an organisational culture that focuses on relationships and encourages communication.

In summary, work-related relationships are maintained remotely by adapting regular meetings and check-ins. The organisation lacks non-work relationships due to tight schedules and back-to-back meetings. R2 confirms that the organisation usually has different activities and after works managed by their staff association, currently these events are cancelled due to the current pandemic. However, three respondents state that the organisation is trying to maintain the relationship by creating digital coffee breaks where the employees get the opportunity to have non-work conversations. This is also stated by R2 that: "*Many colleagues are working more. For example, I do not take coffee breaks alone, instead, I keep working. The organisation encourages the employees to participate in the digital coffee break which is optional for all employees.*" (Personal communication, 26th mars 2021). Due to the back-to-back meetings, the digital coffee breaks can be overlooked due to the lack of time in between meetings. Despite the efforts made by the organisations, the respondents still experience a lack of social relationships, especially non-work relationships.

6 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the study will be summarized and clarified. Initially, the (i) authors explain the extent to which the purpose has been achieved. Second, the (ii) is presented. Third, the (iii) practical contributions are presented. Fourth, the (iv) limitations of this research are described. and fifth, the (v) future research is proposed.

6.1 Responding to purpose

The purpose of this study was to understand which Talent Management retention practices an organisation uses in a remote working context. To clarify the focus of the study, two research questions was created (i) *How does the organisation work with TM practices to retain talented employees?* and (ii) *How does the remote working context effect the retainment practices?* The study has applied a case study with the aim of understanding and investigating in detail how an organisation uses TM to retain talents in a remote working environment. The empirical data was collected by semi-structured interviews with employees from the HR department. The reason for this was to enable a deeper understanding of the operation, because the HR department are, according to previous research, responsible for many of the practices included in TM (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Due to the abductive approach, the analysis of the empirical data allowed interpretations and findings outside of the theoretical framework.

The analysis was divided into six themes where the first five main themes were based on the theoretical framework and the sixth main theme was created by additional findings. Table 4, under 5.3 summaries the first five main themes (e.g., RTM and talent, employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership) which considers the first research question. In 5.3 are also a summary of the second research question regarding the main themes' employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership. Based on the summary and the additional findings, some important conclusions were made which will support the responding to the purpose. In order to respond to the purpose, a model was made to clarify the findings. Figure 4 are presenting the main themes and how they are connected, as well as which type of social relationship that effect each employee retention practices in a remote work.

The model of social relationships is beginning with RTM and the way the organisation is defining talent. To have a strong inclusive foundation where all employees are valued and heard, but also provide an environment based on justice, ethical and responsible principles are important in a remote working context. The pandemic has created a feeling of uncertainty and many employees are dependent on support and regular dialogues with managers regarding individual needs and working situations (Baker, 2021). The empirical data indicates that the organisation is working with RTM as well as having an inclusive view on talent. As a result, the interpretation of the empirical data indicates that RTM and the inclusive approach could affect the employee retention practices. For example, the way the organisation is working with employee well-being, work-life balance and learning are enabling the employees' opinions and interest to be heard and considered. This is achieved by activities such as check-ins, regular dialogues about the employees working situation, employee survey, workplace meetings, performance review, daily learning, competence portal, manager appointments and trust-based leadership and a remote policy. According to the respondents and interpretations of the empirical data, many of these practices is successfully transferred and adapted from an office environment to a remote working environment. Work-life balance is one practice which has increased and become better in a remote context. However, the degree of social relationships will affect the experience of the main themes' employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership in different ways. The social relationship model presents which type of social relationship that effects each main theme. These types of social relationships have been identified in the empirical data and presented in 5.4 and in figure 3. In

addition, social relationships have not been identified in the empirical data as a practice to retain employees in the organisation, despite the clear need of social relationships in a remote working environment. This indicates that social relationships are an important practice to consider in a remote working context. Especially, practices that enables the employees to maintain social relationships in a remote working context. The study indicates that the organisation may have overlooked aspects which negatively affect the social relationships in a remote context. For example, poor technical tools, back-to-back meetings which result in less time for breaks, lack of spontaneous social interactions and cancelled social activities. There are a few of the respondents who described that the organisation has organised coffee breaks. However, due to the increased number of scheduled meetings, the respondents did not take time to join the collective coffee breaks. The social relationships and interactions occur unconscious and automatic in an office environment. Organisations does not need to secure and plan for the social relationships and interactions to happen in a physical working environment in the same way. Therefore, the organisation could overlook social relationships as an important practice to transition and adapt to a remote working environment. As a result, the leadership becomes even more important in a context of remote work which is shown in the social relationship model. Employee-Leader relationship has an effect on all the employee practices in the model. The study has explained the importance of social relationships with support from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, social capital and happy at work. Previous research also shows that social relationships are a vital practice to consider in order to retain employees (Mulki et al., 2009). Despite the previous theories on social relationships, current research has not included social relationships in RTM as an important practice to retain talented employees in a remote context. In conclusion, social relationships should be considered an equally important factor as traditional practices to work with in a remote context to retain talented employees. Social relationships are not only an additional practice, but also a moderator which effect the traditional practices such as employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership and how well they work. In summary, many of the practices are successfully transferred and adapted to the remote office. The challenge in a remote work is to manage the social relationships and understand the effect it has on traditional practices as well as the importance of including social relationships as a practice to retain talented employees. This is achieved by a strong inclusive strategy with RTM principles

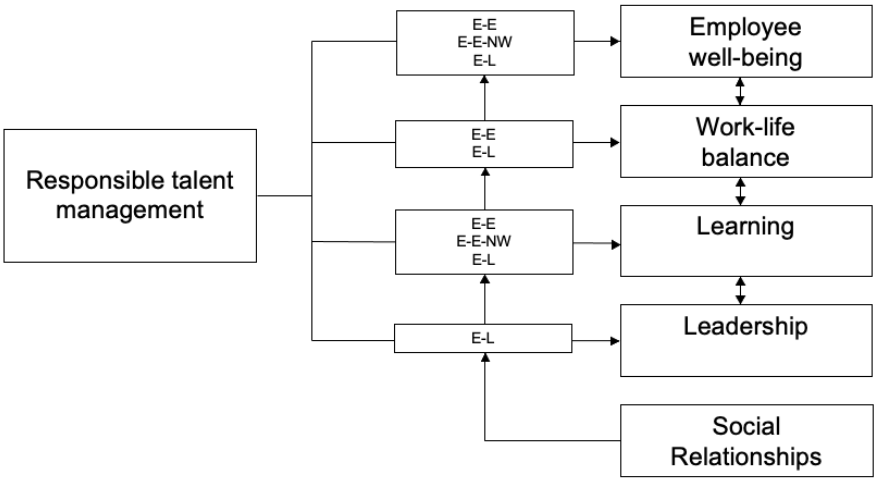

Figure 4: *The Social relationship model in a remote working context*

6.2 Discussion

At the beginning of this study, a scientific issue was presented and concretised. A shortage of skills has created "The War for Talent" at the business market for many years (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Consequently, organisations have prioritised employee retention to keep the most talented employees. As a result, organisations can use talented employees to gain competitive advantage on the business market (Galagan, 2010). TM as a strategy has been excluding many employees due to the definition of talent as object (Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013). In fact, the society has become more aware of environmental and responsible aspects. The UN sustainable development goals have contributed to the awareness, as well as putting a pressure on the organisations to change and adapt to the new demands (United Nations, n.d.). The new demands have forced TM as a strategy to become more ethical, responsible and inclusive. As a result, Responsible Talent Management was created to increase focus on the inclusive approach which consider all employees as talented (Anlesinya & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2020). Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, working remotely has increased and challenged the TM strategy further. The study shows that many TM retention practices that organisations used in the traditional office environment can be transferred to the remote working context. However, there are other challenges with the new remote working context which requires a shift of focus. Social relationships have been identified in chapter 5 and presented in a new social relationship model in 6.1, as an important retainment practice and moderator for traditional retainment practices (figure 4). The study shows that regardless of which retainment practices used, the quality of social relationships in the organisation will influence the employees to a great extent. In fact, Mulki et al. (2009) explain that decreased social interactions will make the employees feel lower job satisfaction and commitment as well as increased turnover. For this reason, social relationships should be considered an important practice to retain talented employees.

Social relationships and a sense of belonging are seen as basic human needs in Maslow´s hierarchy of needs (Karlsson, 2012). In the study, the respondents expressed a lack of spontaneous social interactions which has affected the employee well-being and the *E-E* and *E-E-NW* relationship. In fact, the experience of social distancing and loneliness can affect commitment, employee behaviours, and performance (Kniffin et al., 2020). Implementing social relationships as a retainment practice and increase high-quality social interactions will prevent mental and physical health problems (Kniffin et al., 2020). In addition, the employees express an increased number of meetings since the implementation of remote work. As a result, the respondents experience back-to-back meetings with no time for breaks or opportunities for non-work conversations with colleagues. Previous research indicates that to be happy at work the employees need social activities and friends at work to feel a sense of belonging and that the work matters (McKee, 2017). Similar statement is made by Microsoft (2020) who argues for the importance of focusing on organisational culture, teamwork, and the sense of belonging when working remotely. If the organisation does not focus on the culture and the people in it the innovation will suffer (Microsoft, 2020). The social relationship model indicates the connection between *E-E-NW* relationship and learning. This correlation is also stated by McKee (2017) who explains that when employees are happy at work, the brain works better (McKee, 2017). As a result, the employees get more productive and creative. By having social activities and interactions the employees get better access to their competencies and experiences (McKee, 2017). According to new research on remote work, maintaining productivity are a concern in a remote working context (Kniffin et al., 2020) Having a clear plan for maintaining social relationships in a remote working environment could decrease this concern and increase productivity. The culture and teamwork can be maintained in a remote working context with support from the social capital and the social relationship model. By understanding which type of social relationship that effects each retainment practice, organisations can create a network. The network will support and maintain meaningful social interactions both formal

and informal to strengthen the employee retention practices employee well-being, work-life balance, learning and leadership (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The study indicates that the organisation provides the employees extended learning opportunities, both internal learning opportunities as well as daily learning between colleagues. This *E-E* relationship is important since it enables the employees to connect and exchange resources in terms of competences, knowledge and experiences (Cross Walker, 2020). By prioritising social relationships, both *E-E* and *E-E-NW*, will build equal norms and values which strengthen the social tie. As a result, talented employees could potentially contribute with greater value and trust between employees when the organisation is focusing more on social relationships (Cross Walker, 2020).

The social relationship model indicates that the leaders are becoming even more important in a remote working context. In fact, the study shows that the organisation is using trust-based leadership which allows the employees to impact their learning and working situation. Trust is based on dialogues where the manager listens to both the employees and the organisational needs when making decisions. This is supported by previous research which emphasise the importance of having dialogues with the manager in a remote working context (Baker, 2021; Kniffin et al., 2020; Mulki et al., 2009). A good *E-L* relationship which includes listening to the employees and enable them to control their working situation will increase their well-being, job engagement and job satisfaction (Barwinski et al.,2016). Experienced job engagement and job satisfaction will also lead to greater employee retainment (Deery, 2008). Researchers express the importance of leader's support in a remote working context (Sull et al., 2020; Kniffin et al., 2020; Mulki et al., 2009). The study indicates that the organisation is working with managers' appointments which will secure good leadership in the organisation. Having good, supportive leaders in remote work will increase job satisfaction, commitment, performance, and employee's intention to stay (Mulki et al., 2009).

The study indicates that the respondents want to have the opportunity to work remote after the pandemic. Several respondents believe a hybrid working environment will be the most suitable to fulfil the employee's needs. The respondents experience that the work-life balance has improved in a remote working context and want to continue having this flexibility. *E-L* relationship concerning the work-life balance are therefore important in a remote working context. In fact, previous research shows that a flexible schedule, less commuting, and more family time will give the employees greater job satisfaction and higher employee retention, and lower absenteeism (Mulki et al., 2009). Consequently, employees' opinions about the future workplace, as well as building strong social relationships will be important factors to retain talented employees. According to the ontological constructionism, organisations must adapt to the employees and the society in which the organisation is operating. With the digitalization and rise of social networks like LinkedIn.com, employers can now more easily than ever connect with talent world-wide, which in turn make new job opportunities more accessible for talents. This is why employee retention has become a top priority in order to keep the most talented employees.

Another aspect to take into consideration regarding employee retention practices is which perquisites the organisation has. Since government agencies are controlled by the government, they may not be able to compete with organisations within the private sector in the same way. The empirical data indicates that the salary can be a reason for employees leaving the organisation. Government agencies may need to find other competitive practices for retaining their talents. In addition, the empirical data has demonstrated how employment within a government agency can be seen as a great springboard for the individual into the working life. This indicates how important it is to work with employee retention practices, especially for government agencies. However, this study has identified a clear need for genuine social relationships at work which does not necessarily involve a great financial cost but possibly as a great factor for retaining talents.

6.3 Practical contribution

Given the pandemic, the changed working environment indicates that a hybrid working context will emerge in the future. This new way of working was also identified in the empirical data where the respondents believed in a combination between working at home and working at the office. This research has identified an important area that requires a great focus both in current working situation and in a hybrid working context. Although the empirical data shows that the employees working experience in general benefits from working at home, as well as improve the work-life balance, the social aspect urges for an improvement.

Having identified the challenge with social relationships, it is believed to help organisations understand the importance of social interactions for retaining talents. This implicates how organisations must make time and create occasions for employees to interact beyond work-related issues. The HR department is interpreted to play a great role for managing the issue with social relationships. Preferably, social relationships can be included in a policy regarding remote work. The social aspect is not only an important consideration to existing employees but also when introducing new employees into the organisation in a remote context. The study indicates that new employees have difficulties to connect with colleagues in a remote working environment as well as getting indoctrinated in the culture. To manage social relationships remotely, there is a need for good digital tools enabling the participants to interact in a more friendly way. This includes the possibility of having the camera on even at bigger meetings with many participants as well as functions for dividing employees into different virtual breakout-rooms to create opportunities for deeper and more meaningful interactions.

Another important practical contribution is regarding leadership. Although these issues may address the HR department it is important to have supporting and responsive leaders which enables a friendly working environment with meaningful social relationship. The leadership becomes an important factor for both individual and organisational development in a remote context. Therefore, both managers and the HR department should view social relationships as an important retainment practice and actively work with the issue. In a remote working context social interaction does not occur spontaneously and therefore requires an active work. The managers and HR department needs to have a clear focus creating and enabling opportunities for social interactions since network ties can benefit social relationships.

6.4 Limitations

In this research, some limitations should be mentioned. *The first* and most significant limitation is that this research has been conducted during a pandemic due to Covid-19 with restrictions and recommendations about social distancing. This means that the employees are not voluntarily working from home and since the interviews could not be performed in the employee's physical working environment they were performed digitally. This may also contribute to a greater sense of loneliness since the restrictions reach beyond the work environment but life in general. *Second*, as mentioned in 4.1.1 some of the respondents did not have an education within HR but experience of working with questions regarding HR. Both authors were unknown about how the department of competence development had been merged with the HR department. *Third*, some respondents were not familiar with the concept of TM and had no experience of working verbally with it. *Fourth*, the majority of the representative sample consisted of women. This means that there is an uneven distribution between the genders. Even if the number of respondents is considered acceptable, this skew should be adjusted in future research. *Fifth*, as mentioned in 3.2.3 even if this study consists of a case study there is only one used method for collecting data.

6.5 Future research

Researchers have discussed the concept of TM as well as strategies for retaining talents but not in a remote working context. In general, this study showed that practices within TM is used but TM as a concept is not verbally expressed. Due to the positive aspects with TM regarding RTM and the inclusive approach, this indicates the need for further research to create a legitimacy for the concept.

Furthermore, previous studies have shown a shift in focus from monetary incitements to relationships, values, and culture whereas this research emphasises the need for valuable social relations among colleagues. One suggestion is to compare monetary incitements with social relations as a factor for staying in an organisation. This type of research may reveal if individuals' opinions and values may have changed after the pandemic. Another suggestion for future research is to conduct a comparative case study to investigate TM and retention practices between both the private and public sectors. It would also be of interest to conduct a cross-sectional study with several different organisations to identify which practices is used to retain talents in a hybrid working context.

The empirical data in this study is based on individuals within the HR department and therefore it would be interesting to investigate how other employees experience the organisation’s retention practices. Getting the employees view of what they consider as important factors for staying in the organisation may identify successful employee retention practices. Furthermore, this study emphasises the importance of leadership when working remotely. Therefore, this could be further investigated in a qualitative study identifying how the managers and leaders are perceiving the issue with retaining talents as well as understanding how the HR function can support the management. Different situations and issues require different leadership and since the hybrid working context is a new phenomenon, this needs further exploration. Based on the respondents, this study shows how working remotely requires both hard and soft skills indicating a change in how the organisations operate as well as the leadership. The lack of social relationships, mainly E-E NW emphasises the importance of further research for how these relationships can be maintained and how the opportunities can be created in a hybrid working context.

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APPENDIX 1

Informationsbrev till deltagare i studien

Hej

Vi är två studenter från Högskolan för lärande och kommunikation i Jönköping som läser HR-programmet med inriktning mot företagsekonomi. Vi skriver just nu vår C-uppsats som syftar till att förstå vilka Talent management aktiviteter i syfte att behålla de anställda som organisationer använder i en kontext med distansarbete. Därför behöver vi ert deltagande i studien för att kunna besvara vårt syfte.

Nedan finns samtycke till deltagande i studien samt ett sekretessavtal som säkerställer organisationens och varje enskild deltagares anonymitet och integritet. Det berör även behandlingen av information som delges under intervjun.

Vi är glada och tacksamma att ni vill delta i vår studie.

Hälsningar

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Appendix 2

Samtycke till att delta i studien

Studiens syfte är att förstå vilka talent management strategier organisationer arbetar med för att behålla sina talanger. Syftet ligger till grund för studiens intervjuer som kommer att genomföras enskilt med varje deltagare. Intervjun varar i 45 minuter och kommer att spelas in. Inspelningen transkriberas för att sedan analyseras i syfte att skapa ett resultat och en slutsats. Transkriberingen skickas till varje enskild deltagare som ges möjligheten att säkerställa att insamlad data uppfattats korrekt. Varje deltagare kommer få transkriberingen skickad till den mailadress som angavs vid första kontakt med organisationen. Mailadressen kontrolleras i samband med intervjun för att säkerställa att transkriberingen skickas på ett säkert och korrekt sätt. Insamlade data används till uppsatsen, vidare forskning inom ämnet samt eventuell publicering av vetenskaplig artikel. All information som ges under intervjun kommer behandlas konfidentiellt. Information och data från intervjun kommer behandlas och redovisas på ett sätt så att den inte kan kopplas till en specifik deltagare eller deltagande organisation. Insamlat och inspelat material hanteras med försiktighet samt förvaras så att obehöriga ej med uppsåt eller av olyckshändelse tar del av uppgifterna. Deltagandet i studien är frivillig och kan avbrytas när som helst utan att ange något skäl.

Sekretessavtal

Uppsatsens författare Linn Danielsson Wiksell och Julia Svensson försäkrar att all insamlade data, information och inspelningar hanteras konfidentiellt. Deltagarens och organisationens identitet kommer att vara anonym genom hela arbetet. Syftet med intervjuerna och insamlade data, är som nämnt tidigare, till för att användas till uppsatsen, vidare forskning inom ämnet och vid eventuell publicering av vetenskaplig artikel. Inspelningen och efterföljande transkribering hanteras endast av uppsatsens författare med hänsyn till deltagarens integritet och säkerhet. Deltagandet i studien är frivillig och kan avbrytas utan att ange något skäl. Det gäller även deltagarens rätt till att inte besvara frågor och avbryta intervjun utan påföljder. Vid en avbruten intervju kommer inspelningen att raderas.

Samtycke till att delta i studien och sekretessavtalet godkänns muntligt i samband med intervjun. Godkännandet kommer att spelas in.

Appendix 3

Interview guide

In order to answers our purpose, we are going to collect qualitative data through semi-structured interviews. The aim is to do a comparative study and identify differences between private and public organisations regarding talent management strategies to retain talented employees in the context of hybrid work. The interviews are going to be executed through video calls and recorded to facilitate the transcription and coding of the interviews. In line with the purpose, three themes were identified:

The first theme is "*Talent Management*" which focuses on the respondent's knowledge and experience about the concepts of "Talents" and TM, both personally as well as the organisations view on the concepts. The questions will also consider the current state of talents in the organisation along with the need for certain talents in the future.

The second theme is "*Employee Retention*" which will focus on identifying processes and strategies for retaining the employees. Since employee retention, according to prior research, is often associated with engagement, commitment, employee well-being, and work-life balance, for this reason, the questions will also be about these concepts.

The third theme is "*Hybrid work*" which will identify to which extent the organisation is working remotely as a result of the pandemic. Furthermore, the questions will concern the present and future state as well as policies and cultural aspects of working from home.

Questions

The questions will be written and asked in Swedish.

General questions

1. Ålder
2. Titel
3. Hur länge har du arbetat i organisationen?
4. Har du någon utbildning? Vilken?

a. OM NEJ: Hur länge har du arbetat inom HR-yrket?

Questions regarding Talent management

- **Hur skulle du beskriva begreppet 'Talent Management'?**
- Vad har du för erfarenhet kring begreppet?
- **Vad betyder talang för dig?**
- **Hur ser din organisation på talang?**
- Hur identifierar ni "talanger"
- Finns det "talanger" och "icke-talanger" på arbetsplatsen?
- Är alla talanger? Finns det någon form av skala/mätbart system för att mäta färdigheter/prestation hos de anställda?

- **Hur säkerställer ni att organisationen har de talanger som behövs nu och i framtiden?**
- Upplever ni att de talanger som behövs i organisationen finns på arbetsmarknaden? (Nej: varför?)

Questions regarding employee retention

- **Under din tid i organisationen, hur upplever du personalomsättning?** *(Vad är det viktigaste för att behålla folk)*
- Hur upplever du att personalomsättningen har ändrats under den rådande pandemin?
- Vad tror du är den största anledningen till att en anställd lämnar organisationen?
- Har det blivit mer utmanande som organisation att ”leverera” på anledning X i och med pandemin?
- **Beskriv hur organisationen möjliggör för de anställda att kunna balansera mellan arbete och privatliv?**
- Vad har du upplevt för skillnader i balansen under pandemin?
- **Beskriv hur ledarskapet har fungerat under rådande pandemi i organisationen?**
- Upplever du några skillnader jämfört med innan pandemin? (beskriv dessa)
- **Hur arbetar organisationen för att skapa en trivsam arbetsmiljö? (fysiskt och psykiskt)**
- Vad upplever du har ändrats gällande arbetsmiljön under rådande pandemi?
- **Vilka förmåner erbjuder organisationen sina anställda?**
- Hur upplever du möjligheterna till lärande i organisationen?
- Har förmåner blivit mer / mindre viktiga eller relevanta med pandemin?
- **Hur ser ni på hållbarhet som en orsak till att de anställda stannar kvar i organisationen?**
- Uppmanas de anställda att tänka hållbart i det dagliga arbetet?

Questions regarding hybrid work

- **I vilken utsräckning har ni arbetat digitalt innan Corona-pandemin?**
- Hur arbetar ni idag?
- Hur har omställningen till distansarbetet fungerat på XX?
- **Hur upplever du att distansarbetet har fungerat under den rådande pandemin?**
- **Hur upplever du arbetsrelationen till andra kollegor vid digitalt arbete?**

- Upplever du att arbetsrelationerna förändras vid digitalt arbete? (Hur)
- **Hur har företagskulturen och värderingarna i organisationen upprätthålls under distansarbetet?**
- **Har organisationen några riktlinjer/policys hur arbetet ska genomföras på distans?**
- Om ja, vilken typ av riktlinjer/policys?
- **Hur kommer "arbetsplatsen" att se ut I framtiden för organisationen?**

Är det något du vill tillägga eller har du några frågor till oss?

Appendix 4

Translated citations

Citation by respondent 3

”Styrning som utgår från medarbetarens kunskaper. Att man utnyttjar sina medarbetare på bästa sätt och är smart i sin arbetsgivarroll.” (Personal Communication, 29th mars 2021)

Translation:

“*Apply the best suitable direction based on the knowledge of the employees. Taking advantage of the employees' knowledge in the best possible way and be smart in the role as an employer.*”
(Personal Communication, 29th mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 3

”Ur ett arbetsgivarperspektiv är det egentligen farligt att inrikta sig på ett fåtal för då är det så många andra som blir förbisedda.” (Personal Communication, 29th mars 2021)

Translation:

“*It is considered dangerous from an employer’s perspective to just focus on a few employees because many of the other employees is being overlooked.”* (Personal Communication, 29th mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 3

”*Att ha bra samtal med dem som faktiskt väljer att sluta och att man följer upp mer så att man inte gör samma misstag igen och kan få de bästa förutsättningarna redan från början när man rekryterar.”* (Personal communication, 29th mars 2021).

Translation:

“*Having a good conversation with the employees who decide to leave the organisation and follow up to a greater extent will decrease the possibility of making the same mistakes again and create the best conditions from the start when recruiting new employees*” (Personal communication, 29th mars 2021).

Citation by respondent 3

”*Jag tror att vi har ganska lätt att attrahera personer men sedan behöver vi nog arbeta hårdare för att verkligen få dem att stanna och att de inte bara ser oss som en språngbräda ut till något annat.*”
(Personal Communication, 29th Mars 2021).

Translation:

”*I think we easily can attract individuals but need to work harder to get the employees to stay and prevent the employees from seeing us as a springboard to something else.*” (Personal Communication, 29th Mars 2021).

Citation by respondent 8

”*Det kanske är så att individen själv inte riktigt har koll på att man besitter just den talangen men genom att man är på en arbetsplats där man får möjlighet att testa olika saker och då märker att man har talang för något.”* (Personal communication, 7th april 2021)

Translated:

"*There is a chance that the individual does not recognize the talent in which the individual possesses but finds this talent in the workplace because of the opportunity the organisation is giving the employees by letting them try different things*" (Personal communication, 7th April 2021)

Citation by respondent 6

"*Talang är något man kan få i den arbetskultur man kommer till och bli bättre på den.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021).

Translated:

"*Talent is something an individual can acquire in the workplace culture and become better at it*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021).

Citation by respondent 7

"*Att förstå den nya arbetsmarknaden, när arbetstagarna styr och ställer. Arbetstagarna kan nästan ställa vilka krav som helst, att man ska vara attraktiv och i framkant för att kunna rekrytera och behålla kompetens.*" (Personal communication, 6th april 2021).

Translated:

"*To understand the new business market where the organisation has to play by the employee's rules. The employees can make almost any kind of demands. To be an attractive employer and to always be at the forefront to make it possible to recruit and retain competence.*" (Personal communication, 6th April 2021).

Citation by respondent 4

"*Man är väldigt noga med cheferna, det fick jag höra redan innan jag började här, att det är väldigt bra chefer. En sak är att vi har tidsbegränsade chefsförordnanden, är det någon chef som får katastrofsiffror i medarbetarundersökningen då får de inte fortsätta att vara chef. Dels fångas det upp att en chef har fått dåliga siffror i medarbetarundersökningen och då måste man jobba med det och ha extra arbetsplatsträffar och avdelningschefen är med och styr upp det. I slutändan kan det bli så att det här chefsförordnandet som är på 3 eller 4 år, att det faktiskt inte förlängs. Man kan inte sitta och vara en jättedålig chef i 10 år hos oss*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Translated:

"*I heard before I started my employment that the organisation is really thorough with the managers and that the managers are really good here. We work with temporary manager appointments. If a manager gets very bad results on the employee survey, they cannot continue working as a manager. The employee survey will tell if the manager gets bad results and if this is the case, the manager needs to make improvements, have more workplace meetings, and involve the department manager. In the end, the three-four years-long contract as a manager appointment will not be renewed if the manager underperforms. As a manager, you cannot have a manager appointment for 10 years because bad leadership will be revealed on the employee survey.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 2

"*Jag är förvånad jämfört med det privata arbetslivet, att man är så medveten och jobbar med frågor som jag inte upplevde att man jobbade med i den privata sektorn*." (Personal communication, 26 mars 2021)

Translation:

"*I am surprised by the great work and consciousness regarding certain questions in the organisation which I did not experience in the private sector.*" (Personal communication, 26th mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 4

"*Lunchpromenaden tycker jag har varit väldigt bra. Det är väldigt påtagligt hur mycket man sitter och hur lite man rör sig. Man cyklar inte till jobbet, man promenerar inte till jobbet, man går inte ens ut och sätter sig i bilen. Utan man går bara från sängen till köksbordet till skrivbordet.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Translation:

"*The lunch walk has been very good. It is very obvious how working remotely contributes to sedentary and lack of movement/exercise. You do not take the bike to work, you do not walk to work, you do not even go outside and get in the car. You just walk from the bed to the kitchen table and onto the desk.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021).

Citation by respondent 1

"*Vi har haft övningar på APT-möten där vi gett varandra beröm. Klassiska övningar för att främja trivsel, välmående, delaktighet, kommunikation och feedback. Vi har varit måna om att försöka väva in det trots att vi inte träffas på riktigt.*" (Personal Communication, 25th mars 2021).

Translation:

"*We have done exercises on APT-meetings with the purpose of praising each other, to promote well-being, health, sense of belonging, communication, and feedback. We have been eager to include this in meetings even though we do not see each other in person*." (Personal Communication, 25th mars 2021).

Citation by respondent 7

"*Det är viktigt att ha en daglig dialog och kontakt så att inte frågor blir liggandes eller att man känner att man står ensam med något, utan att vi fortsatt är kollegor och en enhet på en arbetsplats även om vi inte träffas.*" (Personal Communication, 6th april 2021).

Translation:

"*It is important to have a daily dialogue and contact to prevent questions from getting lost or being left alone in a working situation. We have to remember to still act as colleagues, working together as a part of a unit even though we cannot meet in person."* (Personal Communication, 6th April 2021)

Citation by respondent 4

"*Den sociala arbetsmiljön blir lite sämre när man jobbar hemma i och med att man inte ser varandra och kan fånga upp de som ser lite ledsna ut eller fånga upp dom som ser lite trötta ut. Det är mycket lättare att upprätthålla sin fasad när man bara har Skype-möten. Vi brukar mest ha Skype-möten utan bild dessutom. Det är inte så många som frågar hur man mår egentligen, utan man bara kör på med det man ska prata om. Jag tror att arbetsmiljön på många sätt är sämre nu, samtidigt som balansen mellan arbete och fritid har blivit bättre.*" (Personal Communication, 31st mars 2021)

Translation:

"*Working from home has a negative effect on the social working environment since we do not meet in person and can identify if colleagues look sad or identify if colleagues look tired. It is much easier to maintain a façade when meetings are being held on Skype. Besides, we usually have Skype meetings without camera. There are not many colleagues who ask each other how they feel, we just jump straight to the work-related matters. I think the working environment has gotten worse in many ways compared to the balance between work and free time which has improved.*" (Personal Communication, 31st mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 2

"*Senast idag (26 mars) fick jag ett samtal om att vi bokar för mycket möten. Mötena går i ett, vi måste lyfta att 1h möte ska vara 55 minuter eller mindre, så man kan ta en paus mellan mötena.*" (Personal Communication, 26th mars 2021)

Translation:

"*Today (26th mars) I got a call that we are booking too many meetings. The meetings go in one and we have to raise this issue and suggest that a 1-hour meeting should be 55 minutes or less to enable breaks in between meetings*." (Personal Communication, 26th mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 4

"*Det har blivit sämre i och med att man aldrig ser varandra, man kan inte uppfatta riktigt hur folk mår och vi äter inte lunch tillsammans, vi fikar inte tillsammans. Det finns aldrig tid att prata om det privata egentligen.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Translation:

"*It has gotten worse because you do not see each other, you cannot identify how colleagues are feeling, we do not have lunch together, we do not have coffee breaks together. There is no time to talk about private life.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 2

"*Vi är socialt utsvultna*" (Personal Communication, 26th mars)

Translation:

"*We are socially starved*" (Personal Communication, 26th mars)

Citation by respondent 4

"*Vi införde morgonmöten på Skype varje dag och för min del gjorde det att jag kom närmare min enhet. Alla andra på min enhet satt på kontoret på en annan ort, så dom träffades varje morgon och sa hej till varandra och då har jag aldrig varit med. Nu sitter alla hemma och det blir mer "rättvist" från mitt perspektiv. Så för min del så har jag fått närmare kontakt med min chef och mina kollegor genom att vi träffas på ett uppstartsmöte varje morgon.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Translation:

"*We introduced meetings on Skype every morning which has created a closer connection to the unit. All my collogues has their office in another city and has always been meeting each other in the mornings to say hello, which I have never been a part of. All colleagues are working from home at the moment, and it has become more "fair" from my perspective. I have gotten a closer connection to my manager and colleagues because of the start-up meetings every morning.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 2

"*Det är många individer som jobbar mer. Jag tar exempelvis inte fikapauser själv, utan man jobbar på istället. Vi har digitala fikapauser som är frivilliga, men organisationen uppmanar starkt att delta.*" (Personal communication, 26th mars 2021)

Translation:

"*Many colleagues are working more. For example, I do not take coffee breaks alone, instead I keep working. The organisation encourages the employees to participate in the digital coffee break which is optional for all employees.*" (Personal communication, 26th mars 2021)

Citation by respondent 7

"*När man inte har samma dagliga anknytning och känsla av samhörighet finns det en liten risk att man tappar den (culture) och att den förändras. För ett par år sedan var vi väldigt måna om att vi skulle hålla oss inom arbetstid och vi skulle lägga på fördröjd leverans av mail om vi satt på kvällar utanför arbetstid och skickade, så att vi inte bygger upp en kultur och att man känner att man behöver gå in och kontrollera sin mail på kvällarna om man fått någonting som behövs ta om hand. Det är en del av kulturen känner jag och vi har nog släppt lite på det. Det är okej om man haft en tuff dag och loggar in vid 19 och ser att andra också är inloggade vid 19. Den kulturen förändras lite, hur man väljer att lägga upp arbetet under dagen.*" (Personal communication, 6th April 2021)

Translation:

"*When the daily connection and sense of belonging are not the same there is a risk that the culture will be lost and changed. A few years back, we had more respect for the business working hours and we were encouraged to delay the delivery of e-mails if we worked past working hours/late nights. The purpose was to avoid creating a culture where employees felt obligated to check their e-mails on evenings, to see if there was something that needed their attention. Now, this has become part of the culture as we have been letting go of these guidelines. It has been accepted to log on during nights if other colleagues do. This part of the culture has changed in terms of how employees chose to allocate their work during the day*." (Personal communication, 6th April 2021)

Citation by respondent 2

"*Efterfrågan hos de anställda ändras när de lättare får ihop livspusslet, upptäckt hur mycket tid man sparar för att slippa resa. Den efterfrågan kommer att vara stor, det kommer bli svårt för arbetsgivare och gå tillbaka till det som var förr, man måste möta kravet från anställda annars kommer det att vara en konkurrensfaktor. De anställda kommer gå till ett företag som tillåter mer hemarbete*" (personal communication, 26th mars)

Translation:

"*Employee's demand to work from home increases when it enables a better work-life balance and when they discover how much time they save from not having to commute to the office. This demand will continue to be high also in the future, it will be hard for employers to go back to how it was before the pandemic. If not meeting this demand from employees, it will create a competitive advantage for other organisations. Employees will turn to organisations that allow working from home.*" (personal communication, 26th mars)

Citation by respondent 4

"*På medarbetarsamtalen har man sin kompetensutvecklingsplan. Man pratar om vad man har för behov av kompetensutveckling det närmsta året eller halvåret. Vad är det du känner att du skulle behöva lära dig mer av för att göra ditt jobb bättre.*" (Personal communication, 31st mars).

Translation:

R4 says *"At employee interviews, you are reviewing your competence plan. You talk about the need of competence development the closest year or six months. What do you feel you need to learn more about to improve your job?"* (Personal communication, 31st mars).

Appendix 5

Etisk egengranskning av studentprojekt som involverar människor

Samtliga uppsatsarbeten som involverar människor ska genomföras under etiskt godtagbara former. Det är din skyldighet som student att känna till de etiska riktlinjer som finns, samt att tillämpa dem. I alla projekt, inte minst i uppsatsarbeten, är det viktigt att redovisa hur ni/du som uppsatsförfattare har tillämpat detta och inte bara beskriva vilka de etiska riktlinjerna är. I samband med att du/ni startar ett projekt, eller påbörjar ett uppsatsarbete, är första steget i den etiska granskningen att gör en egengranskning. Om någon av frågorna 1-7 besvarats ”Ja” eller ”Tveksamt” måste du diskutera med din handledare hur du ska gå vidare och om undersökningen är lämplig att genomföra överhuvudtaget. Vid tveksamhet även hos handledaren ska samtal föras med examinator.

		Ja	Tveksamt	Nej
1	Kan frivilligheten att delta i studien ifrågasättas, d.v.s. innehåller studien t.ex. barn, personer med nedsatt kognitiv förmåga, personer med psykiska funktionshinder samt personer i beroendeställning i förhållande till den som utför studien (ex. på personer i beroendeställning är patienter och elever)?			**X**
2	Innebär undersökningen att informerat samtycke inte kommer att inhämtas (d.v.s. forskningspersonerna kommer inte att få full information om undersökningen och/eller möjlighet att avsäga sig ett deltagande)?			**X**
3	Innebär undersökningen någon form av fysiskt ingrepp på forskningspersonerna?			**X**
4	Kan undersökningen påverka forskningspersonerna fysiskt eller psykiskt (t.ex. väcka traumatiska minnen till liv)?			**X**
5	Avser du att behandla känsliga personuppgifter som ingår i eller är avsedda att ingå i en struktur (till exempel ett register)? Med känsliga personuppgifter avses, enligt Personuppgiftslagen och sedan 2019 också den paneuropeiska GDPR, uppgifter som berör hälsa eller sexualliv, etniskt ursprung, politiska åsikter, religiös eller filosofisk övertygelse samt medlemskap i fackförening.			**X**

6	Avser du att behandla personuppgifter som avser lagöverträdelser som innefattar brott, domar i brottmål, straffprocessuella tvångsmedel eller administrativa frihetsberövanden, och som ingår i eller är avsedda att ingå i en struktur (till exempel ett register)?			**X**