

**Knowing Self, Knowing Others:  
A critical exploration of self-awareness and  
its relevance to leader effectiveness across  
all levels of the Welsh public service**

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## ii. Abstract

The Welsh public service strives to achieve better for its citizens. To do so, it needs to develop leaders that are adept at building workplace relationships that achieve positive outcomes. The researcher's experiences of working within the Welsh public service establish an interest in workplace behaviours and leadership functions vested in individuals at all levels. The literature identifies gaps in exploration of public administration and in defining contemporary leadership in practice. Consequently, the aim of this thesis is to critically explore self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness across all levels of the Welsh public service.

This thesis establishes a three-layer definition of self-awareness made up of internal, internal-social and external-social self-awareness. It defines leader effectiveness as awareness of, awareness of impact of, and ability to regulate first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours. Combined, these definitions generate the first of three contributions to knowledge. Resonant leadership, with its foundations firmly embedded in emotional intelligence emerges as the most relevant leadership model for exploration. The second contribution to knowledge is the five functions job levels framework, establishing operational, business, management, senior management and strategic as the job levels common to all Welsh public service organisations.

Within a pragmatic philosophy and social constructionist approach, a mixed methods strategy is implemented through a questionnaire followed by interviews. A unique self-awareness questionnaire is developed and forms the third contribution to knowledge, forming an element of the larger questionnaire used.

It is found that there is a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness. Effective resonant leaders can be identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service organisations. Effective resonant leaders at the strategic level have less self-awareness than those at any other level. Effective resonant leaders at the operational, business, management and senior management levels have greater self-awareness than those who are ineffective. Line managers identified as effective resonant leaders at the business, management and senior management job levels have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective.

The qualitative data analysis yielded a number of themes that require consideration by the Welsh public service, such as: behaviour, organisational standards, the experiences of individuals, strategic level disconnect, and reflection. Others include people management, the potential of individuals, community connections, and impact of decisions. Such topics for discussion as inclusive decision making, cooperation between peers, and recruitment processes emerge from comparison of findings with extant literature.

This thesis makes five recommendations for improvement: strategic review of organisational culture to raise the profile of second order emotions and behaviours; re-focus of organisational priorities in people management, communication and recruitment-marketing strategies, policies and procedures to align with organisational culture; review of recruitment, retention, capability management, training and organisational development policies and procedures to align with organisational culture and priorities; assessment of individual self-awareness through recruitment and promotion processes; and operationalisation of organisational standards.

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# vi. Research Objectives

## The aim of the study is:

To critically explore self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness across all levels of the Welsh public service

## The study objectives are:

**Objective 1:** To explore the concept of self-awareness within the workplace context of the Welsh public service

**Objective 2:** To examine the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service

**Objective 3:** To determine whether self-aware leaders can be found at all job levels of the Welsh public service

## The research questions are:

**Research Question 1:** Is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?

**Research Question 2:** Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations?

**Research Question 3:** Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations?

**Research Question 4:** Do effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?

# vii. Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
NHS	National Health Service
RSA	Respondent self-awareness
MSA	Manager self-awareness
RLE	Respondent leader effectiveness
MLE	Manager leader effectiveness
SA3Q	Self-awareness three-layered questionnaire



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# ix. Declaration

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

I therefore submit this thesis as my own work.

Name: **Nia Delwen Thomas**

Signature: .....

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

## 1.1 Background

This thesis examines self-awareness within the Welsh public service. It does so with a focus on leader effectiveness and considers leadership at all levels of Welsh public service organisations. The exploration of self-awareness builds on the self/other ratings studies by Atwater and Yammarino (1992), Van Velsor et al. (1993a), Church (1997), Sosik and Megerian (1999), Bratton et al. (2011). These studies explore the view of the self held by the self and the view of the self held by others. They consider the impact of congruity and incongruity between the two viewpoints, and what this means for leadership, performance, working relationship and organisations.

The exploration of leader effectiveness traits, behaviours and characteristics, identifies that to be effective, a leader must have 'first order' technical knowledge and capabilities and also be cognisant of 'second order' emotions and behaviours in order to build positive working relationships (Stogdill, 1948, Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Boyatzis and McKee, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005, Brown and Treviño, 2006, Luthans et al., 2006, Walumbwa et al., 2008b, Bass and Bass, 2009, Van Dierendonck, 2011, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011, Boyatzis et al., 2013, Yukl, 2013, Dinh et al., 2014, Barbuto et al., 2014, Du Plessis et al., 2015, Caldwell and Hayes, 2016, Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017). Resonant leadership is identified as the model of leadership most relevant to this thesis, being that its foundations are based on emotional intelligence (Laschinger et al., 2014, Bawafaa et al., 2015), which is often considered a proxy for self-awareness (Shipper et al., 2003, Bratton et al., 2011). Resonant leaders recognise the impact that relationships have on individual performance and the workplace as a whole (Boyatzis and McKee, 2006).

Within the literature, leadership is most commonly conceptualised as seniority (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003). However, in considering the complexity of leading and managing non-routine events within the public sector, Allen (2012) suggests an alternative model of leadership abounds - that based on complexity leadership theory and leadership at all levels. Relationships are considered of primary importance within complexity leadership theory (Lichtenstein et al., 2006, Uhl-Bien, 2006, Murphy et al., 2017). This connects complexity leadership with self-awareness, being that self-awareness is considered of primary importance for effective workplace relationships (Goleman, 2004, Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005, Gray and Jones, 2018). There is a manifest interconnectivity between the three themes of self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels.

The importance of leader effectiveness within the Welsh public service has never been so stark. In exploring the Welsh public service environment, this thesis will draw from Gray and Jones (2018) who focus on the resilience and wellbeing of leadership within the Welsh public service. Public service organisations are experiencing a period of financial austerity, service cuts and “overwhelm” (Gray and Jones, 2018) at a time when public expectations are ever increasing, driven by better access to information via an increasingly accessible internet and social media. This, overlaid by the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, means that leaders and organisational leadership is illuminated and under significant scrutiny. The findings from this thesis have the potential to support development and improvement of individual leaders, teams, organisations and the Welsh public service as a whole, and ultimately the Welsh citizen.

The audience for this thesis is the Welsh public service, primarily those responsible for organisational development and also those with the responsibility of setting the strategic direction of organisations. It is hoped that it will be of interest to individuals for whom self-awareness, emotional intelligence, positive workplace behaviours, good working relationships and leader effectiveness are important components of working life. It is hoped that it will be equally applicable to individuals for whom management development activities aimed at increasing self-awareness is viewed as a form of “naval-gazing” and a self-indulgence (Bourner, 1996). It will be of interest to public service researchers in Wales and beyond, being that it sheds light on the public service workplace and has the potential for furtherance of research, knowledge and understanding in other sectors and countries.

This chapter now moves on to describe the problem which has generated the need for this thesis and presents the research aim, as the guiding beacon for this study. It will also set out the research objectives, their purpose being to steer the scope of this thesis and guide the journey from theory, to activity, to findings. It will present the experiences which led to the development of interest in this area and the gap in knowledge generating a need for scholarly study. It will then present a brief overview of the following nine chapters.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The need for improvement is ever present. Whether that is in relation to reaching the cancer diagnostic waiting times target, raising the number of young people achieving academic attainment or increasing the use of sustainable energy sources, the Welsh

public service is continually striving to achieve better for its citizens. In doing so it seeks to provide training, coaching and mentoring opportunities for its workforce to improve the abilities of those charged with achieving improvement for its citizens. The very purpose of Academi Wales, the centre for excellence in leadership and management for public services in Wales is,

“to build a future for Wales where leadership of our public services is visionary, collaborative, cutting edge and successful in driving improvement in the lives of people living in Wales. We approach our work from a number of learning philosophies including the ideas that we must ‘lead to learn’ and never stop learning to do our jobs, regardless of age or seniority. We believe that leaders who make the time to adopt a positive approach to their own learning are happier, live their values, understand their personal purpose and achieve greater personal and professional success.

Knowing we need leaders who are optimistic in the face of change and brutally realistic about the scale and bravery needed for success, it is these values in action that make the real difference” (Academi Wales, 2020)

This highlights the criticality of positive and successful leadership in the Welsh public service and also the personal commitment required of leaders to be so. The Leadership Behaviours Framework for Senior Leaders developed by Academi Wales (Academi Wales, 2017, p.4), identifies four core leadership behaviours: learning and self-awareness, and drive and resilience. As core leadership behaviours, learning and self-awareness are described as capacity for learning from experience and feedback and adapting one’s approach, to take account of that learning and feedback. Academi Wales is of the view that learning and self-awareness matter because they support a leader to grow, improve, reduce repeated mistakes and facilitate other behaviours necessary for high level performance.

The researcher’s interest in self-awareness was born out of experiences of working within the Welsh public service and experiencing firstly, the impact of poor leadership behaviour on others and secondly, individuals without formal leadership roles, taking on leadership functions. The first experience generated a number of questions for the researcher. The researcher became interested in understanding whether individuals who appeared to have no care for their impact on others were driven by a conscious choice or an unconscious lack of awareness. The policy paper, The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Service

Workforce: Eight Lessons from the Literature (Needham et al., 2013), states “we need more leaders with much greater self-awareness who are committed to their own development throughout their leadership journeys”. This thesis serves to understand the applicability of this statement to the Welsh public service in detail and explore and examine the state of leaders and self-awareness in the Welsh public service over five years on from the policy paper.

In reflecting on experience, the researcher frequently returns to an old notebook and a page entitled PhD – Workplace Behaviours, from 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2010. The page noted three areas of interest: continuing poor behaviour – professional; consequential socio-professional negatives; and perpetuating and getting away with it. This led to exploration into self-awareness within the workplace context and the assessment of individuals, either by themselves or by others, as being somewhere along the continuum between self-awareness and no-awareness. It also generated an interest in job levels, being that the particular individuals observed spanned four job levels, one being the line manager of the other, from operational to strategic job levels, and all having leadership functions embedded within their formal roles. The debate about individual choice and innate ability was also triggered, being that one individual’s behaviour was reflective of the social, emotional and communication difficulties seen in individuals with autism. The words and phrases recorded in the notebook are surprisingly reflective of literature reviewed and findings made in this thesis some ten years on, namely: definitions of poor/good behaviour, a 360-degree review, emotional intelligence, team dynamics, service outcomes, senior roles, organisational attitudes and organisational policies. A photograph of the notebook page is presented below at figure 1.1.

The second experience emanated from observing individuals without any formal mandate to lead, frequently rising up to lead groups of individuals at a particular moment in time, to drive forward a cause or matter of importance. These individuals would often not show particular leadership traits in their formal roles but would rise up to champion the causes of individuals whose voices were less frequently heard. It was often the case that these individuals were at the most operational level of organisations yet appeared to have innate abilities to lead and speak on behalf of colleagues for the duration that they were needed, akin to the shop stewards of the 1970s – yet without formal union roles, but having acute regard for the welfare of colleagues.

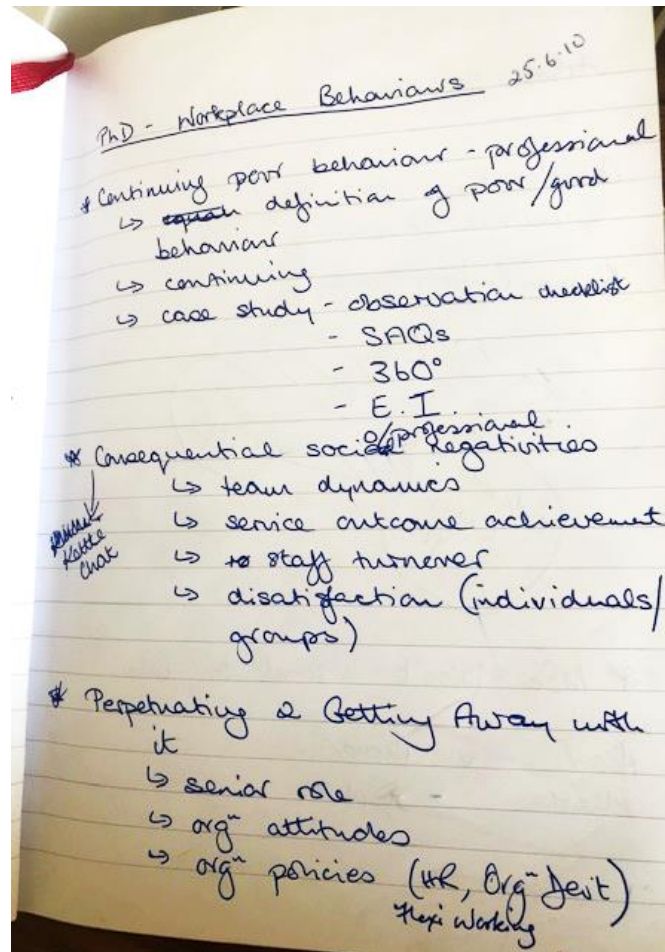


Figure 1.1: Notebook extract from 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2010

The researcher sought comment from a Welsh public service manager about an individual who had demonstrated such leadership capabilities whilst being in a non-leadership role. The comment is presented below. The name of the individual in review has been replaced with 'C'. The key words and phrases which are reflective of the literature and findings made in this thesis are emboldened.

"...I relied heavily on my staff team, especially my supervisors however one person stood out, and although **not in a supervisory role** this individual became an indispensable person. C was naturally inquisitive and supportive and along with a **caring** nature always supported me and the team in every possible way, often going out of her way to find solutions and doing work not in her job description to make life easier for others... C's passion and enthusiasm quickly became apparent within the wider team as she supported them, always looking for the best in people and **noticing when someone needed support**...C became a middle man, someone the team could **confide in** and **reliably** pass messages from



them to me and vice versa. She was **reliable, strong and passionate** and always left a huge hole during leave or sickness. C's ability to **connect with people** made her a **natural leader**. Her caring motherly personality **nurtured younger team members**, while her **confidence** and **ability to communicate** well encouraged staff to confide in her and **seek support**. C would happily **speak to senior managers** communicating issues from other staff, always be on hand to help staff struggling with workload, swap shifts or organise rotas. Although C was a strong team player she could understand management concerns and would often communicate messages supporting both the team and managers helping people understand the situation."

In the study by Atwater and Yammarino (1992), it is stated that "The primary implication of this study is that self-awareness should be considered in attempts to predict leader behavior and performance." This study considers this by answering the question of whether effective resonant leaders at the five different job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective. Van Velsor et al. (1993a, p.261) conclude their journal article by stating that

"Statistical, personality, and performance-related factors probably all play a part in the results reported here. It will be important that future research attempt to identify and separate these effects so that we can continue to enhance the ways we work with managers to help them learn from feedback".

This thesis draws out a number of factors that seek to enhance the self-awareness of Welsh public service leaders and inform improved feedback, discussing such elements as behaviour, individual experience, technical knowledge and capability, reflective practice, people management skills, community connections and innate leadership ability.

The study by Church (1997, p.289) considers manager self-awareness and states that "Future research is needed to test the assumptions that higher levels of MSA eventually lead to increased performance in the workplace". This thesis explores leadership rather than management and in doing so, identifies that effective resonant leaders at the operational, business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective. Also, line managers identified by their direct reports as effective resonant leaders at the

business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective.

Sosik and Megerian (1999, p.388) recommends that “Future research should examine the appropriateness of self-other rating agreement as a surrogate measure of self-awareness, paying particular attention to dispositional attributes which underlie the self-awareness construct”. The bespoke self-awareness questionnaire developed in this thesis, moves away from the use of a surrogate measure of self-awareness and draws from the dispositional attributes identified as underlying self-awareness presented in the three-layer definition made up of internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness.

A limitation highlighted in the study by Gray and Jones (2018) is the number of participants – 68 out of a potential 400, preventing the generation of generalisable findings. The paper recommends that further descriptors of contemporary leadership are surfaced as a means of better understanding leadership that is in action now. This thesis will do so by examining leader effectiveness and developing a clear definitions of leader effectiveness and its relationships with self-awareness. Murphy et al. (2017) state that leadership constructs based on classical management theory may not be fully capturing leadership that is operating within the complex public sector setting. This thesis will examine both classical and contemporary leadership theory and determine whether self-aware leaders can be found at all levels of the Welsh public service.

This interest and experience took a number of years to evolve and mature and an unexpected opportunity lead to enrolment on this taught Doctor of Business Administration degree. The exploration of self-awareness was borne from a maturing of the 2010 idea of workplace behaviours, a need to understand whether people’s behaviour was a conscious choice or an unconscious response, and a need for more self-aware leaders in the public sector. The examination of leader effectiveness is a maturation of the notebook heading, perpetuating and getting away with it, due to the overwhelming influence senior individuals have on colleagues and the power that organisational leaders have on proliferating or stopping poor behaviours, either formally through organisational policies or informally through organisational attitudes and culture. It is also driven by the need for more descriptors of contemporary leadership. The study of leadership at all levels was borne out of the experiences discussed above, where both positive and negative workplace

behaviours were observed at a variety of different job levels, along with a dearth of literature focusing on leadership operating in the complex public sector setting. The interest in the public service in Wales was borne out of researcher experience and a dearth of reference to the Welsh public service within the literature. Fernandez et al. (2010) are of the view that there is generally limited presentation of scholarly studies about public administration in the journals. This thesis will focus specifically on public administration in Wales through the lens of self-awareness and leadership, thereby adding to the literature a body of scholarly studies about Wales. The experiential context and theoretical signposting therefore generate the following aim:

**This study aims to critically explore self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness across all levels of the Welsh public service**

In order to move from a high-level theoretical aim, supporting objectives are set. The purpose of these objectives is to separate the aim into its constituent parts for exploration, generating a framework for thinking, study and research. They also put a clear boundary around the scope of this thesis in order to prevent the exploration from veering off-course into interesting areas of research but not relevant areas of research.

The specific objectives are:

**Objective 1: To explore the concept of self-awareness within the workplace context of the Welsh public service**

This objective steers the focus of the literature review regarding self-awareness to being workplace specific, that workplace being the Welsh public service. This ensures that the scope of study does not deviate into social or familial environments and recognises that research into self-awareness within those contexts are different to the study at hand. It also sets the foundations for comparing research findings made in this thesis with findings from extant literature, to understand whether Welsh public service employees offer supporting or differing definitions.

**Objective 2: To examine the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service**

The purpose of this objective is two-fold. Firstly it will guide the literature review of leader effectiveness towards the characteristics, behaviours and traits relevant to self-awareness, rather than any other kinds of emotions and behaviours, such as resilience or wellbeing, which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Secondly this objective sets the foundation for research activity, generation of findings and comparing those findings with extant literature, concerning the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness.

**Objective 3: To determine whether self-aware leaders can be found at all job levels of the Welsh public service**

The purpose of this objective is to explore and define what 'at all job levels' means within this thesis, drawing from the literature. It sets the scope of this study to be organisational structures and hierarchies within organisations and ensures that there is no drift into exploration of leadership within partnership working models or co-production with citizens. It sets this thesis's limitations to be coterminous with organisational boundaries and does not delve into leadership between organisations. It also sets the frame of reference for the research activities.

The aim and objectives are highlighted throughout this thesis as a means of forming a visual connection. The colours have been specifically chosen to ensure that they are identified separately to the models developed within the thesis and the findings in chapter eight, which have used different colours to establish connections.

### **1.3 Chapter Organisation**

Chapters two to four set out the literature reviewed. Chapter two sets out the history and explores the definition of self-awareness. The connection between self-awareness and emotional intelligence is also explored. The chapter present the self/other ratings studies which make up the largest section of the literature concerning self-awareness. The chapter moves on to discusses self-awareness in the context of the workplace and concludes by discussing barriers to self-awareness.

Chapter three presents positive traits, behaviours and characteristics of leadership. It explores authentic leadership, servant leadership and resonant leadership, identifying the latter as the leadership modality most relevant to self-awareness, with its tenets firmly embedded in emotional intelligence. The chapter present leadership in the public sector

and barriers to leadership, concluding by presenting the definition of leader effectiveness developed for this thesis, linked to self-awareness.

Chapter four considers where self-aware leaders can be found within the organisations of the Welsh public service. It begins by presenting leadership as synonymous with seniority moving on to explore complexity leadership theory, which operates within a complex adaptive system, supporting the concept of leadership at all levels. It concludes by discussing bureaucracy as a barrier to adaptive leadership.

Chapter five discusses the research framework. It explores the methodologies of the self/other ratings studies, and self-awareness and leader effectiveness instruments. It presents the unique job level framework which is a theoretical contribution of this thesis. It then moves on to discuss the Welsh public service context. It concludes by presenting the research questions, which have developed from the exploration of the literature review, as a means of moving the research framework from theory to action.

Research methodology theory and philosophy are presented in chapter six. The chapter begins by setting out the ontology of this thesis as social constructionism and the epistemology of this thesis as pragmatism. It moves on to discuss the quantitative/qualitative debate concerning research methods in the social sciences. The chapter discusses the merits and implications of a mixed methods approach and closes by considering the role the researcher plays in the research.

Chapter seven presents the research strategy, time horizon, techniques and procedures moving the thesis from theory to action. It begins by presenting potential research strategies, those used in the self/other ratings studies and the determined strategy of a questionnaire. The cross-sectional time horizon is then set out. The questionnaire is described and the pilot process is explained and subsequent learning. The questionnaire data analysis process is presented leading to the interview procedure. Interview analysis techniques are explored and the determined procedure is presented. The chapter concludes by setting out ethical considerations.

The findings in chapter eight are presented in two sections, the first is concerned with the questionnaire and the second, the interviews. In section one, the demographics and data findings are presented followed by the themes drawn from the final question of the questionnaire, seeking thoughts, views and comments. Section two presents the demographics of the eight interviewees and the themes derived from the interviews,

pertinent to each of the interview questions. The chapter concludes by bringing together the themes from both methods.

The discussion, chapter nine, considers each of the four research questions and reflects on the literature presented in the thesis, highlighting parallels and variances. The chapter discusses the self/other ratings studies and presents a table comparing findings. In conclusion, chapter nine presents the corollary model which brings together the questionnaire data; the themes derived from the questionnaire; the interview themes; and the topics for discussion from the comparison exercise between this thesis' findings and extant literature.

The final chapter begins by discussing the impact and relevance of this thesis and raises a challenge to the Welsh public service regarding the self-awareness and leader effectiveness of individuals at the strategic job level, proposing recommendations for improvement. It then reviews the research journey travelled through this thesis, considering the aim, objectives and research questions. It then presents the three important contributions made to theory and practices by this thesis: **the model of self-awareness and leader effectiveness; the new five functions job levels framework; and the SAQ3 self-awareness questionnaire**. The Welsh context is then explored, discussing both legal and language differences. The chapter moves on to present limitations and opportunities for future research. It concludes by presenting a personal reflection.

The research journey is presented below in the research journey map (figure 1.2)

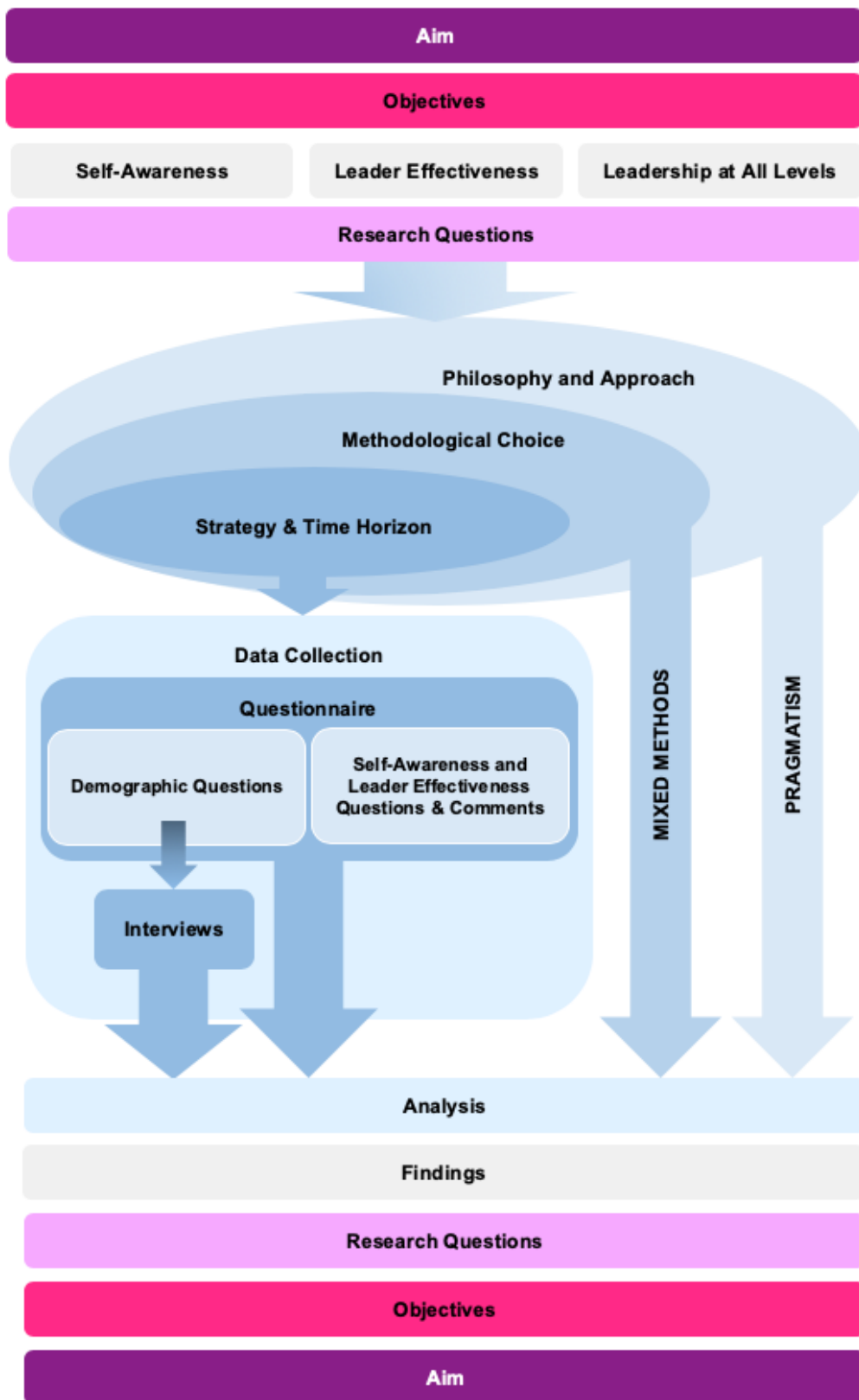


Figure 1.2 – The Research Journey Map

## 1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has set out the background to this study and presented the research problem drawing from researcher experience, Welsh public service guidance and policy documentation and literature. Researcher experience spans two experiences of observing individuals at different job levels operating in ways so as to both positively and negatively impact their colleagues. Evidence is drawn from Academi Wales (2017) that the Welsh public service needs effective leadership underpinned by self-awareness. Recommendations and limitations set out in the literature which direct future researchers to: consider self-awareness in predicting leader behaviour and performance (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992); identify and separate factors to help managers learn from feedback (Van Velsor et al., 1993a); test the assumptions that increased managerial self-awareness leads to increased workplace performance (Church, 1997); examination of the appropriateness of the use of a surrogate measure of self-awareness; surface further descriptors of leadership (Gray and Jones, 2018); and capture leadership operating in the public sector (Murphy et al., 2017).

The aim and research objectives have been developed as a means of generating a clear route map and scope of study. Finally, a summary of each chapter has been presented, concluding with the presentation of the research journey map.

The next chapter presents the literature related to self-awareness, beginning by setting out the history of self-awareness. The chapter will present the concept of self, as an element of internal self-awareness, the first of the three layers of self-awareness. It will move on to consider social self-awareness and the layers of internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness. The connection between self-awareness and emotional intelligence will be explored, as evidenced throughout the literature. It will present the self/other ratings studies, as the key literature underpinning the theme of self-awareness. It will discuss what self-awareness within the workplace means and will establish a clear environmental context. Barriers to self-awareness will be discussed, providing a rounded definition of what self-awareness is and what it is not.



# **Chapter 2**

## **Literature Review of Self-Awareness**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will begin by establishing a clear definition of self-awareness. It will then explore the relationship and link between emotional intelligence and self-awareness. It will move on to review a number of research studies focussed on the assessment of the 'self by the self' and the assessment of the 'self by others', referred to as the 'self/other ratings studies' (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011). They form the foundation on which this thesis is built.

The final part of the chapter will link both internal self-awareness and social self-awareness to the workplace. The study by Gray and Jones (2018) will be explored in detail because of its specific focus on the Welsh public service. The difference between technical knowledge and capabilities and emotions and behaviours, termed first order and second order knowledge will be presented, because of their importance throughout this thesis in differentiating the weight of importance placed on the former in the Welsh public service, over the latter, with the latter encompassing self-awareness.

The chapter will discuss barriers to achieving or maintaining ongoing self-awareness as a means of demonstrating what it is to be self-aware and the antithesis. The chapter will culminate in the presentation of the three-layer model of self-awareness developed in this thesis encompassing internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness.

## **2.2 History of Self-Awareness**

This section will begin by presenting the history of self-awareness and how the concept has developed over the centuries. The purpose of this is to understand how the definitions and views about self-awareness have changed and evolved, whilst demonstrating that self-awareness continues to be an area of special interest. The three-layer model of self-awareness, which will be used in this thesis, will also be presented. Internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness will each be presented, as they pertain to the workplace and specifically, leadership.

The concept of self-awareness can be traced back to ancient history. The Greek aphorism, 'Know thyself' is identified as one of the Delphic maxims (Mackenzie, 1988)

found in Apollo's temple (Shusterman, 2007). In deciphering the meaning, it is suggested that the aphorism is advice for personal development, personal expansion and acquisition of wisdom, as well as advice to demonstrate restraint in one's conduct and behaviour (Andren, 2012). 'Know thyself' is the foundation of Socratic philosophy. Socrates suggests that in order to know thyself, individuals must see themselves as if they were looking through the eyes of someone else and seeing themselves, as if in a mirror (Betz, 1981). Socrates stated that with wisdom comes an understanding of what the self does not know, "I seem to be wiser than this man in so far as I do not think I know what I do not know. I recognise myself...as knowing nothing" (Mackenzie, 1988). In exploring Socratic ignorance, Mackenzie (1988), defines self-knowledge as "the knowledge of one's own ignorance or knowledge". This is borne out in studies explored later in this chapter; as professionals become more self-aware, there is a realisation of how little they know about themselves and the world. The converse being the case as explained by the Kruger-Dunning effect (Kruger and Dunning, 1999), presented later, where people without knowledge of themselves have over-confidence in their beliefs and judgements (McCarthy and Garavan, 1999).

In the literature, the pursuit of 'know thyself' appears to have two elements. Firstly, there is the pursuit of defining what 'know thyself' means and the method by which this can be discovered – 'what' is self-awareness? Secondly, there is the implementation of that method and the quest to develop knowledge of the self – 'how' to become self-aware. What and how are the key questions of self-awareness. This is reflective of the notion of first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours, that are described in detail later.

Know thyself is referred to in the first line of the poem, 'Essay on Man' by Alexander Pope in 1734, "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan...The proper study of Mankind is Man" (Beyrer, 2015, p.1724). The philosopher, Immanuel Kant states that "self-knowledge is the beginning of all wisdom" (Bourner, 1996) and Betz (1981) states that "knowledge of the self is knowledge of the soul". The literature demonstrates that the search for self-awareness and indeed, defining a clear and concise definition of self-awareness has continued to be a challenge over the centuries.

### **2.3 The Three Layers of Self-Awareness**

Throughout the literature, self-awareness is presented as having particularly defined

layers, those pertaining to knowing the self, those pertaining to knowing others and those pertaining to knowing how the self interacts with others. Together, these three layers make up the definition of self-awareness used within this thesis. This section now goes on to present each of those layers in detail.

### **2.3.1 Internal Self-Awareness**

Over time, the various elements making up the concept of self-awareness have been given a number of different names, with slight variations in description. The element of self-awareness that is initially discernible within the literature is entitled 'private self consciousness' (Fenigstein et al., 1975), which is described as "attending to one's inner thoughts and feelings". It directs attention towards an individual's ideas, concepts, motives, emotions and memories (Church, 1997). This concept is later given an alternative name with a slightly different definition by Silvia and Duval (2001) who draw from the study by Wicklund and Duval (1972). They present an 'objective self-awareness' theory that is concerned with the "self-reflexive quality of the consciousness". Wong and Law (2002) move on and draw from Gardner (1993) and label the element 'intrapersonal intelligence', describing it as "one's intelligence in dealing with oneself and is the ability to symbolise complex and highly differentiated sets of feelings". Showry and Manasa (2014) make reference to 'internal self-awareness' in their paper, stating that "introspection is the road to self-awareness". Their description bears a similarity to 'intrapersonal emotional intelligence' (Bar-On, 1997), noted above. Showry and Manasa (2014) describe it as an ability to get in touch with and learn about one's "characters, traits, beliefs, values, strengths, abilities, motivations and desires" and "an understanding of how one thinks and feel in different situations". Gray and Jones (2018), focussing on Welsh public service leaders refer to internal self-awareness as "being aware of stressors and the impact stressors were having mentally, physically and emotionally". Being that the most recent term used for the inward looking element of self-awareness has been 'internal self-awareness', first offered by Showry and Manasa (2014), this thesis will continue to use that most contemporary term throughout.

Within the literature concerning internal self-awareness the concept of 'self' as a separate but linked area of research is evident (Bourner, 1996, Kondrat, 1999). It is important to present the literature here as the interconnection of self and self-awareness needs to be made explicit, as the interplay between the self's awareness of 'self' and the achievement of 'self-awareness' are connected. Indeed, it could be construed, that for there to be self-awareness first there must be an understanding of self. Before the

transition can be made to internal self-awareness and onward to social self-awareness, there must be recognition of the self as a sentient being.

Within the literature, there is a clear question raised about the objectivity of an individual reviewing themselves when 'self' can never be so far disassociated from self to be completely objective: essentially, some subjectivity must always be present. Bourner (1996, p.16) articulates this conundrum succinctly, by stating, "self-awareness involves gaining knowledge of the "self" that is both being managed and is managing". Kondrat (1999, p.455), focusing on self-awareness in relation to social workers, discusses the dichotomy between being oneself and being aware of oneself, when it is the same self that holds both conscious thought, stating, "this presumption of a differentiation between a subject-self who reflects and an object-self who is the focus of reflection is the formula for self most often assumed in discussions of professional self-awareness in social work practice texts". Sparrowe (2005) states that the narration of the self involves viewing the "self as an object of reflection by the self". These descriptors are helpful in demonstrating the apparent subjectivity connected to self-awareness and serves as a helpful warning regarding the inseparability of self as subject of reflection and self as the reflector.

There are further studies that make reference to the conundrum of the self reflecting on the self, particularly in relation to healthcare practice and professions. Focusing on self-awareness in the nursing profession, Freshwater (2002, p.2), discusses numerous definitions of self, from the theory of the self as a constant entity to the theory of self as ever changing. This is supported by Rasheed et al. (2019) who state that self-awareness begins in childhood and continues until adulthood. AbuJbara and Worley (2018) also recognise the development of self-awareness in children from birth to around five years old, which is then reflected in the self-awareness of the self as an adult.

The studies by Kondrat (1999) and Freshwater (2002) serve to connect the concepts of self and self-awareness with the predominantly public sector professions of social work and nursing. The studies highlight that healthcare and social care are areas where knowledge of the self and self-awareness have been studied and acknowledged as being important. However, the policy paper by Needham et al. (2013) entitled, *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Service Workforce: Eight Lessons from the Literature* states, "A recent report by Leading Social [a consultancy body] concludes that there are big skills gaps in the leadership of the UK's social sector and that 'we need more leaders with much greater self-awareness who are committed to their own development throughout their leadership journeys'".

In reviewing the literature, a number of studies identify that self-awareness is fundamental to leadership models such as authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Baron and Parent, 2015) and transformational leadership (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Barbuto and Burbach, 2006, Bratton et al., 2011). In order to be authentic, a leader requires an understanding of themselves. Sparrowe (2005) is of the view that this can only be discovered when the self is constituted in relation to others, thereby suggesting that self-awareness is socially constructed. This is supported by Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014), who state that no matter how individualised are separate from other human beings we might feel ourselves to be, we are always fundamentally connected, existing relationally with others.

Self appears as an ongoing narrative rather than a static constant, that experiences change, reversal and surprise which in turn creates a changing and evolving self. This suggests that the definition of self held by the self changes depending on the situation and any extrinsic influence at any given point in time. This is supported by Brewer and Gardner (1996, p.83) who state that “connectedness and belonging are not merely affiliations or alliances between the self and others but entail fundamental difference in the way the self is construed”. This suggests that depending on how the self views the self, that construct will impact on how the self views and interacts with others. This is supported by Uhl-Bien (2006) who states that a major component of the leader-follower relationship is the leader’s perception of themselves, relative to followers and a move away from the perception of the self as an unique person. Therefore, if the self views the self as others do not, incongruity occurs and relationships between the self and others may be ineffective. This is the main argument running through the self/other ratings studies. The studies evidence that the view of self about the self is often incongruous with the view of self held by others. The studies demonstrate that self-ratings of leadership and performance are often inflated when self-awareness is low. Subjects who rate themselves as high, termed ‘over-raters’, in the areas of leadership and performance, are often poor performers (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011). The self/other ratings studies all support the view that leader effectiveness is heavily dependent on self-awareness. These studies will be explored in depth later in the chapter.

Drawing from the literature reviewed, this thesis will define internal self-awareness as ‘an ability to recognise the self’s changing thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, strengths

and abilities through reflection and introspection'. This is the definition which will be used throughout this thesis.

### **2.3.2 Social Self-Awareness**

The second element of self-awareness evident within the literature also has a number of names and descriptions and builds on internal self-awareness. It is referred to by Fenigstein et al. (1975) as 'public self consciousness', which is described as a general awareness of the self as a social object that has an effect on others and occurs when "one feels under the scrutiny of a social other in regard to personal appearance, manners, presentation style, or physical quirks" (Church, 1997). This description takes self-awareness beyond the emotional to considerations about the outward self and such things as appearance and self-presentation. This description is supported by McCarthy and Garavan (1999) who state that gaining an insight into one's self is usually accompanied by greater insight into other people. This concept has already been introduced above, in the literature concerning the changing definition of self, which is constituted in relation to others (Sparrowe, 2005), i.e. is socially constructed. It is also supported by Caldwell (2009) who states, that 'identity' refers to who we believe we are and self-awareness includes the degree to which we are sensitive to how we are perceived by others, which again raises the conundrum that the self/other ratings studies aim to explicate.

In developing the definition of an outward or externally orientated type of self-awareness, the paper by Silvia and Duval (2001), which draws from the study by Wicklund and Duval (1972), refers to 'subjective self-awareness'. This results when attention is directed away from the self and the person experiences themselves "as the source of perception and action". Wong and Law (2002) draw from Gardner (1993), and define this element as 'interpersonal intelligence', describing it as one's intelligence in dealing with other people and the ability to notice and differentiate between other people's moods and intentions. The term used by Showry and Manasa (2014) is 'social side of self-awareness' which is described as the ability to see how others view the self and understand how one's behaviour impacts on other people. The term social side of self-awareness, proposed by Showry and Manasa (2014) is adapted in this thesis and the concept is referred to as 'social self-awareness' throughout. The description is akin to that used by Fenigstein et al. (1975) which takes into account the effect and impact of the self on others. Webb (2012, p.ii) describes this succinctly as 'harmony', stating, "discovering the authentic self includes the journey of the outer self reflecting the inner self, which creates personal

harmony”. This brings together the two elements of internal self-awareness and social self-awareness and suggests that for there to be the latter, there must first be the former. This helps to inform the model of self-awareness used in this thesis. The development of the definition of self-awareness is exemplified in figure 2.1, where internal self-awareness and social self-awareness are layered, one on top of the other. This is supported by McCarthy and Garavan (1999) who state that gaining an insight into one’s self is usually accompanied by greater insight into other people



**Figure 2.1: Building the Definition of Self-Awareness**

### **2.3.2.1 Internal and External Social Self-Awareness**

Within the descriptions of social self-awareness there appear to be elements related to an inward-looking self-awareness and an outward-looking self-awareness, effectively separating social self-awareness into two layers. The internal element establishes a transition-like approach to the achievement of self-awareness. Showry and Manasa (2014) refer to an ability to see how others view the self which is a step away from awareness of the self but not yet a move so far as to be awareness of how the self impacts others. For ease of reference, throughout this thesis the inward element of social self-awareness will be referred to as ‘internal-social self-awareness’ as a means of connecting internal self-awareness and social self-awareness and forming a connecting layer. The definition of internal-social self-awareness drawn from the literature which will be used throughout this thesis is ‘an ability to recognise how the self is viewed and perceived by others’.

Social intelligence is evident within the literature and could be viewed as the conception of the outward looking element of social self-awareness. It is described by Riggio and Reichard (2008) as “the ability to think and act wisely in social situations”. Elements such as: “the ability to express oneself in social interactions, the ability to “read” and understand different social situations, knowledge of social roles, norms, and scripts,



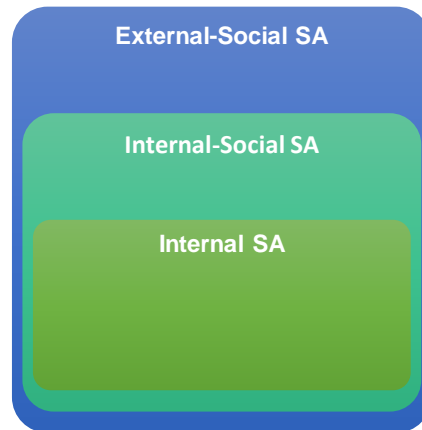
interpersonal problem-solving skills, and social role-playing skills.” (Riggio and Reichard, 2008) are described as social skills. They allow a leader to manage social exchanges and display appropriate adult emotional responses in social interactions (Boal, 2000). Sosik and Megerian (1999) describe public self-consciousness in such a way as to parallel the outer-directedness component of self-awareness.

The descriptions and definitions presented above either focus on the self-reflective and inward-looking element or the external or outward looking element of the concept. Table 2.1 groups the descriptions of social self-awareness presented in the literature and definitions accordingly as internally or externally focussed. The external side will be referred to as ‘external-social self-awareness’ and defined as an ability to read and understand the emotions and intentions of others, recognising the self’s impact on others and responding and acting wisely in social exchanges.

**Table 2.1: Internal-Social and External-Social Self Awareness**

Reference	Term	Internal-social self-awareness	External-social self-awareness
Fenigstein et al. (1975)	Public Self-consciousness	General awareness of self as social object	General awareness of self as having effect on others
Silvia and Duval (2001) from Wicklund and Duval (1972)	Subjective self-awareness	Attention directed away from self and a person experiences self as source of perception and action	
Wong and Law (2002) from Gardner (1993)	Interpersonal intelligence’		Intelligence in dealing with others, ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals in particular, their moods, temperaments, motivations and intentions.
Showry and Manasa (2014)	Social Side of self-awareness	Ability to see how others view the self	Understand the impacts of their behaviour on others

The idea of self-awareness being made up of three layers is supported and reflected in the research by Brewer and Gardner (1996) focussing on the social aspects of the self, that the self is made up of an identity constructed at three levels, personal (internal), relational (dyadic) and collective (group or organisation) (Uhl-Bien, 2006, Caldwell, 2009). Rasheed et al. (2019) consider self-awareness to be intrapersonal, relational and extra-personal. Figure 2.2 aims to describe how the literature presents self-awareness as a transitional process of cumulative enlightenment about the self.



**Figure 2.2: Three Layers of Self-Awareness**

In establishing a clarity of definition, the table below (table 2.2) brings together the definitions of the three layers of self-awareness. The definitions combine the descriptions drawn from the literature and connect internal self-awareness with an inward definition of the self that changes over time. Internal-social self-awareness is connected to awareness of how the self is perceived by others and external-social self-awareness is connected with recognition of impact on others.

**Table 2.2: Summary definition of the Three Layers of Self-Awareness**

Term	Definition
Internal self-awareness	An ability to recognise the self's changing thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, strengths and abilities through reflection and introspection
Internal-social self-awareness	An ability to recognise how the self is viewed and perceived by others
External-social self-awareness	An ability to read and understand the emotions and intentions of others, recognising the self's impact on others and responding and acting wisely in social exchanges

## 2.4 Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence

From the very outset of the review of the literature, the interconnectivity, overlap and interchange between the concepts of emotional intelligence and self-awareness have been discernible. In order to move forward in this thesis it is necessary to discuss this relationship, to understand the rationale for the inclusion of the studies in this thesis that focus on emotional intelligence as well as self-awareness. Côté (2017, p. 1) defines emotional intelligence as “a set of abilities to reason about emotions and use emotions to enhance thought” and self-awareness as “how well people know themselves”. These definitions alone are sufficient to raise the debate about whether emotional intelligence is an element of self-awareness or whether self-awareness is an element of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence was first presented by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and developed and popularised by Goleman (1995). The abilities model developed by Salovey, Mayer and colleagues is based on the development of intelligence about emotions, through both experience and age (Gardner and Stough, 2002). The approach identifies four general emotional abilities: identifying emotions in self and others and expressing emotions; using emotions to facilitate thinking and harnessing the power of positive moods; understanding emotions and their interrelationships; and managing emotions positively through regulation and control (Gardner and Stough, 2002). This overlays onto the three-layer model of self-awareness developed in this thesis, in that it focusses on understanding how emotions impact on the self, how emotions impact others and how emotions can be controlled.

The non-cognitive model of emotional intelligence, developed by Bar-On (1997) is a somewhat broader construct than that described above and refers to emotional and social intelligence (Gardner and Stough, 2002). It has five specific dimensions: intrapersonal emotional intelligence; interpersonal emotional intelligence; adaptability emotional intelligence; stress management emotional intelligence; and general mood emotional intelligence (ibid). All of these dimensions parallel the three-layer model of self-awareness in that they consider internal emotional awareness, external emotional awareness and the ability to deal with and respond to the impact of extrinsic situations.

Self-awareness and self-regulation are identified as two of the five key elements in Goleman’s emotional intelligence model (Goleman, 1995). Self-awareness is described by Goleman as, “the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and

drives, as well as their effect on others” (Goleman, 2004, p.88) and self-regulation as “the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods” (Goleman, 2004, p.88). These descriptions appear to be a simplification of those presented by Salovey and Mayer (1990) in that they can also be grouped into three components: one’s own emotions, others’ emotions and regulation of emotions.

In a revised model of emotional intelligence, focussing on workplace performance, Goleman offers a four dimensional framework (Goleman, 2001), which is adapted below with additional information included, to exemplify the parallel with the three-layer definition of self-awareness used in this thesis. Goleman’s competency-based model (Gardner and Stough, 2002) identifies that the characteristics and skills for emotional intelligence require an inward focus, to understand and regulate one’s own emotions and an outward focus, to recognise and consider the feelings of others (Klare et al., 2014). This is presented in table 2.3 below: self-awareness and self-management are considered to be concepts linked to internal self-awareness, and social awareness and relationship management are considered to be concepts linked to social self-awareness.

**Table 2.3 – A Framework of Emotional Competencies adapted from Goleman (2001)**

<b>Self-Awareness Parallel</b>	<b>Internal Self-Awareness</b>	<b>Social Self-Awareness</b>
<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Self-Awareness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional self-awareness</li> <li>• Accurate self-awareness</li> <li>• Self Confidence</li> </ul>	<b>Social Awareness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Service orientation</li> <li>• Organizational Awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Self-Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self control</li> <li>• Trustworthiness</li> <li>• Conscientiousness</li> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Achievement drive</li> <li>• Initiative</li> </ul>	<b>Relationship Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing others</li> <li>• Influence</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Conflict Management</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Change catalyst</li> <li>• Building bonds</li> <li>• Teamwork &amp; collaboration</li> </ul>

For the purposes of this thesis, this definition developed by Goleman (2001) will be considered most helpful, being that much of the literature concerning emotional intelligence is developed from Goleman’s work. This thesis will consider emotional intelligence made up of four domains in two groups: the personal competence group made up of self-awareness and the self-management domain; and the social competence group made up of social awareness and the relationship management

domains.

The literature presented above suggests that emotional intelligence and self-awareness are inextricable, if not interchangeable. The study by Shipper et al. (2003), states that due to the difficulties of establishing the presence of emotional intelligence, a viable alternative to doing so is to use findings from studies that explore the view of self held by the self and the view of self held by others, (i.e. the self/other ratings studies) to identify the existence of self-awareness. This is supported in the study by Bratton et al. (2011) where emotional intelligence is described as equating to self-awareness. The study focusses on the impact of emotional intelligence on the accuracy of self-awareness and transformational leadership performance and is described in detail below.

Through the literature there appears to be a tension between the idea of self-awareness being an element of emotional intelligence and conversely, emotional intelligence being an element of self-awareness. The study by Avolio and Gardner (2005) offers a broad definition of self-awareness that can be argued to be beyond emotional elements. In the study, self-awareness is said to be made up of the self becoming aware of its' "unique talents; strengths; sense of purpose; core values; beliefs and desires; knowledge... experience...capabilities; cognitions regarding identity; emotions; and motives/goals" (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). In considering this list, it could also be viewed as a list of traits, behaviours and characteristics necessary for leaders to achieve effectiveness. This will be helpful in considering the definition of leader effectiveness in chapter three.

Table 2.4 aims to summarise and compare the descriptors of self-awareness and emotional intelligence reviewed above, as a means of evidencing similarities and differences. It is discernible that self-awareness could be argued to be broader than emotional intelligence and therefore guides this thesis to the standpoint of self-awareness being a broader concept than emotional intelligence.

**Table 2.4: Comparing the definitions of emotional intelligence and self-awareness.**

Descriptors of Emotional Intelligence	Descriptors of Self-Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying emotions in self and others and expressing emotions</li> <li>• Using emotions to facilitate thinking and harness the power of positive moods</li> <li>• Understanding emotions and their interrelationships</li> <li>• Managing emotions positively through regulating and control <b>(Salovey and Mayer, 1990)</b></li> <li>• Intrapersonal emotional intelligence abilities</li> <li>• Interpersonal emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Adaptability emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Stress management emotional intelligence</li> <li>• General mood emotional intelligence <b>(Bar-On, 1997)</b></li> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Self-regulation</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Social Skills <b>(Goleman, 2004)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private self consciousness</li> <li>• Public self consciousness <b>(Fenigstein et al., 1975)</b></li> <li>• Objective self-awareness</li> <li>• Subjective self-awareness (Silvia and Duval, 2001, Wicklund and Duval, 1972)</li> <li>• Intrapersonal intelligence</li> <li>• Interpersonal intelligence <b>(Wong and Law, 2002, Gardner, 1993)</b></li> </ul> <p>The self becoming aware of its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unique talents</li> <li>• strengths</li> <li>• sense of purpose</li> <li>• core values</li> <li>• beliefs and desires</li> <li>• knowledge</li> <li>• experience</li> <li>• capabilities;</li> <li>• cognitions regarding identity;</li> <li>• emotions</li> <li>• motives/goals. <b>(Avolio and Gardner, 2005, p.324)</b></li> <li>• Internal self-awareness</li> <li>• Social side of self-awareness (Showry and Manasa, 2014)</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Self/Other Ratings Studies

In connecting the three layers of self-awareness, the literature presenting the self/other ratings studies are helpful and explanatory. They also make up a large section of the literature concerning self-awareness. The studies present the incongruity or unrealism (McCarthy and Garavan, 1999) between the viewpoints of the self and others and the implication this has for leader effectiveness. In terms of research methods on which current knowledge about self-awareness is based, the self/other ratings studies appear key. The topic is presented in studies by Atwater and Yammarino (1992), Van Velsor et al. (1993a), Church (1997), Sosik and Megerian (1999) and Bratton et al. (2011), which are examined below. The study that is cited within all of the self/other ratings studies presented here, is that conducted by Atwater and Yammarino (1992). This study appears to be the first discernible self/other ratings study in the literature and it also

explores self-awareness in the workplace, which is of benefit to this thesis as it offers a structure, knowledge set and research methodology from which to build.

The self/other ratings studies generally focus on individuals at senior job levels within organisations. The study by (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992) explores the self-awareness of student leaders in training at the United States Naval Academy and a group of graduates from the Academy. In the study by Church (1997) and Sosik and Megerian (1999) the focus is managers at the senior job level of the organisational hierarchy. In the study by Bratton et al. (2011), data is collected from a large international technology company's management development programme. Similarly, the study by Sosik and Megerian (1999) examine whether the self-awareness of managers moderate relationships between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviour, and transformational leadership behaviour and managerial performance. This evidences a discernible interest across the literature in individuals at senior positions within organisations. However, in the study by Van Velsor et al. (1993a) specific focus is given to exploring self-awareness and leadership across a number of different levels or organisational hierarchy, which is of interest to this thesis in its aim to critically explore the relevance of self-awareness to leader effectiveness at all levels of the Welsh public service. More will be discussed in chapter five concerning where leaders can be found within organisations. Literature will be presented supporting the idea of leadership tied to senior positional posts (Murphy et al., 2017) and leaders at all organisational levels as explored through systems thinking (Palaima and Skarzauskiene, 2010), complexity leadership theory (Lichtenstein et al., 2006, Uhl-Bien, 2006, Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009) and complex adaptive systems literature (Schneider and Somers, 2006).

The other self/other ratings studies generally corroborate the findings presented by Atwater and Yammarino (1992) that: self-ratings tend to be inflated; self-ratings are less highly related to ratings by others than others' ratings are with each other; and inaccurate self-raters are poorer performers than accurate self-raters. The study states, "those who are more aware of how they are perceived by others...are rated as more transformational by their subordinates; and these leaders are the best performers" (ibid, p.159). In exploring the finding that under performers are over-raters, the literature identifies this as the Kruger-Dunning Effect, following from the study by Kruger and Dunning (1999) which identified that lack of ability not only causes poor performance but also the inability to recognise that one's performance is poor. As stated by Fleenor et al. (2010), presenting the Kruger-Dunning study, the "bottom quartile of individuals on a test of logical reasoning scored on average at the 12th percentile while they estimated their

score at the 62nd percentile.” The Atwater and Yammarino (1992) study findings similarly identified that participants in the bottom quartile thought that they were above average, supporting Kruger and Dunning (1999).

The research findings of the study by Van Velsor et al. (1993a) in the main, agree with those presented by Atwater and Yammarino (1992). The study found that under-raters of self-awareness were rated as having the highest self-awareness by direct reports and over-raters were rated as having the lowest self-awareness by direct reports, the latter demonstrating the Kruger-Dunning effect in practice. Similarly, the results of the study conducted by Church (1997) replicates trends evident in the studies by Atwater and Yammarino (1992) and Van Velsor et al. (1993a) and indicate that high-performing managers have greater managerial self-awareness and are better able to assess their own behaviours in the workplace, compared to average performers. Bratton et al. (2011) suggests that under-estimation of self ratings by under-estimators is based on greater self-awareness, modesty and humility.

The self/other ratings study conducted by Sosik and Megerian (1999), Shipper et al. (2003) and Bratton et al. (2011) focus on emotional intelligence rather than self-awareness as the primary theme of exploration and demonstrate the inextricable nature of self-awareness and emotional intelligence, as previously discussed. The findings of the study by Sosik and Megerian (1999) generally support those of previous studies and identify that self-awareness is a key component of emotional intelligence and effective performance. The study makes reference to the potential impact of cultural differences on emotional intelligence however, no self/other studies have been discovered that consider Wales specifically, albeit the studies by Morgan (2009) appears to be directed at the public health workforce in Wales and the study by Gray and Jones (2018) is centred on resilience and wellbeing of Welsh public service leaders.

The study by Shipper et al. (2003) conceptualises emotional intelligence as self-awareness and the foundations of the study by Bratton et al. (2011) are based on the premise that emotional intelligence equates to self-awareness. The study conducted by Bratton et al. (2011) focusses on the impact of emotional intelligence on accuracy of self-awareness and transformational leadership performance. It follows the theory of Atwater and Yammarino (1992) and the research methodology of Sosik and Megerian (1999). However, the study raises criticisms of the latter study due to its use of an unvalidated emotional intelligence measurement tool. This is considered in this thesis when developing the research methodology.



Within the self/other ratings studies by Van Velsor et al. (1993a) and Bratton et al. (2011) the impact of gender is explored. In the study by Van Velsor et al. (1993a) specific focus is given to examining gender differences and states “direct reports rated women significantly higher on self-awareness than they rated men. So, while women managers do not perceive themselves as more self-aware than men, they are perceived as such by people who report to them” (ibid, p.256-257). Bratton et al. (2011) also include the factor of gender as a consideration, due to their research identifying women as moving slowly into and through the management levels. The study by Fleenor et al. (2010) references a number of studies that identify men as higher self-raters than women in such areas as transformational leadership, leader effectiveness, sales and marketing. Data regarding gender will be considered in the methodology of this thesis but will not be a major area of focus due to the importance of the topic requiring its own platform.

Through researching the literature concerning self-awareness and the self/other rating studies, the journey of the individual becoming enlightened as to what they do not know about themselves and the world around them, becomes apparent. Within the research by Russo and Schoemaker (1992) the concept of ‘metaknowledge’ is presented within their study concerning overconfidence, also called ‘meta-cognitive ability’ by Fleenor et al. (2010). Russo and Schoemaker (1992) describe metaknowledge as being “an appreciation of what we do know and what we do not know”. It could be considered a direct connection to the Kruger Dunning Effect, in that individuals without metaknowledge are victims of the Effect. They propose that owing to a lack of metaknowledge, people have overconfidence in their beliefs and judgements (McCarthy and Garavan, 1999).

The study by Russo and Schoemaker (1992) define metaknowledge as “knowing when to see a doctor or a lawyer” rather than “how much we know about medicine and law”, terming the latter ‘primary knowledge’ and the former ‘secondary knowledge’. This is reflective of later descriptions concerning first order knowledge and capabilities linked to technical skills and second order emotions and behaviours, linked to self-awareness. It is highlighted that an individual is responsible for knowing how much they do not know and this can be achieved by accurate and timely feedback and making changes following that feedback (Russo and Schoemaker, 1992). It appears that metaknowledge could be conceptualised as internal self-awareness and can be traced back to the Socratic idea of the more one knows about the self and the world, the more one realises that one does not know very much at all.

For the purposes of this study, understanding the concept of metaknowledge is of

relevance, being that it expands our understanding of the research findings of the self/other ratings. The self/other ratings studies have identified that self-aware leaders and managers score themselves lower when self-assessing self-awareness and leadership (Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Sosik and Megerian, 1999), suggesting that they possess metaknowledge.

The literature presented thus far identifies that the self has an internal and social side. However, it is thought that, when considering social interactions, the self can be conceptualised across three levels and has private, public and collective facets referred to as the personal self, relational self and the collective self (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). The collective self is said to reflect the “internalization of the norms and characteristics of important reference groups” and move an individual from conceptualising self as ‘I’ to ‘we’ (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). This supports the need to consider the self that operates in the workplace as distinct to the self in any other context. Therefore, the next part of this chapter will consider self-awareness within the workplace context.

## **2.6 Self-Awareness in the Workplace**

This study examines self-awareness in the workplace context of the Welsh public service. The most notable and relevant study identified in the literature that focuses on the Welsh public service, is that by Gray and Jones (2018) who focus specifically on resilience and wellbeing of public sector leaders in Wales. The study is developed through a salutogenic lens which is described as a strengths based approach of “thinking and acting in ways that orientate leaders towards what is working well” (Gray and Jones, 2018, p.139) and allows people to develop a sense of coherence. The study sought to out what resilience and wellbeing means to leaders and identify opportunities for salutogenic development experience that would improve their resilience and wellbeing.

The study draws findings from interviews conducted with 68 individuals from a number of Welsh public service organisations, namely the NHS, councils, a government sponsored body, police, Ministry of Defence, Welsh government, the Royal College of General Practitioners, and the Wales Deanery from north and south Wales. The conversations were framed in terms of the proposed SoC model that used comprehension, management and meaning as reference to guide discussions. Within management, the theme of internal self-awareness was identified - in managing feelings of overwhelm, participants felt that they could draw on their internal self-awareness to help them gain perspective, increase awareness and draw themselves back. This clearly

demonstrates that self-awareness is viewed as a benefit to leaders in helping them manage their own mental state, wellbeing and behaviour

The study also identified a number of 'generalised resistance resources', which were defined as being internal or external resources that operated as buffers to stress and overwhelm. Practices such as mindful meditation, exercising, and taking breaks were shared, and a suggestion to "develop a team leading programme that includes self-awareness/wellbeing" was proposed. This suggest that team leading programmes already attended by participants did not highlight or sufficiently highlight the benefit and utility of developing self-awareness

The study also developed resilience and wellbeing leadership descriptors for best self and periphery (i.e., worst self). For best self, participants proposed such descriptors as: "they can reflect without ruminating", "they are open to challenge / feedback / communication" and "leaders show that they care". For periphery, they proposed such descriptors as "leaders are disengaged", "shut themselves away", "are unable to communicate", "leaders' micro manager", "they are defensive". These descriptors reflect the descriptors identified in the literature describing self-awareness and barriers to self-awareness, discussed below.

The self/other studies referred to above have explored self-awareness in the context of the workplace, from the United States Navy (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992) to a pharmaceutical company (Church, 1997) to information and technology firms (Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011) and an airline (Church, 1997). Morgan (2009) makes reference to increased self-awareness having an impact on understanding difficulties in personal and professional interpersonal relationships, recognising that there are differences in both settings within the descriptions of self-awareness. There is limited evidence of an explicit connection between self-awareness and the workplace in the literature. The ability to evidence this connection explicitly is essential for this thesis and will ensure that the links between self-awareness and the Welsh public service are robust.

A further dimension to self-awareness is offered by Goleman (2004), albeit in presenting the concept of emotional intelligence rather than self-awareness. Nevertheless it is helpful in the pursuit of exploring self-awareness in a professional, work-based context. Goleman (2004) identifies that individuals with a high degree of self-awareness recognise how their feelings affect them, other people and their 'job performance'. This

description reflects the elements of internal self-awareness, social self-awareness and offers the third dimension of job performance, relevant to this thesis. Within the literature this is supported by a number of the studies already mentioned, where self-awareness has been highlighted as necessary for effective professional practice, namely: healthcare (Novack et al., 1999, Freshwater, 2002, Morgan, 2009, Bawafaa et al., 2015, Beyrer, 2015), social care (Kondrat, 1999) and education (Anzalone, 2001).

There is much evidence of studies linking self-awareness with healthcare practice and professions and therefore, further evidence of self-awareness linked to the workplace context. For example, Novack et al. (1999) discusses how the emotions of medical students have the potential to impact on their relationship with patients and subsequently patient-wellbeing. The study highlights the need for the inclusion of self-awareness in medical training programmes to ensure that doctors manage their own stresses so as to mitigate against any negative impact their behaviour may have on their patients. Freshwater (2002) looks at self-awareness and reflective practice in relation to nursing care and how the 'authentic self' can support therapeutic healing in patients. The study discusses the implication for nurses as self-aware practitioners who need to build rapport and have sympathy for and empathy with patients in order to support them to achieve good health. Morgan (2009), discussing reflective practice and self-awareness in the public health workforce in Wales, states that having an open mind and being self-aware are prerequisites for reflection. This is supported by Beyrer (2015, p.1725), stating, "To reduce unnecessary suffering, it has always been an imperative to know oneself". Rasheed et al. (2019) go further and state that self-awareness helps nurses develop their critical thinking and clinical decision making skills, listing a number of nursing associations which consider self-awareness an important nursing competency.

There is also evidence within the literature that self-awareness is a necessary attribute of social work practice. Kondrat (1999, p.451) focusses on self-awareness and social work. The study states, "professional self-awareness is widely considered a necessary condition for competent social work practice". Quoting Hepworth et al. (1997, p.470), the research states, "...individuals are engaged in constant transactions with other human beings and with other systems in the environment and that these various persons and systems reciprocally influence each other". This idea of 'reciprocal influence' is key to self-awareness in this research, linking well with the element of social self-awareness and the need to draw attention to the influence that one's behaviour has on others, whilst also supporting the notion of a self-awareness as a socially constructed concept.

The professional area of teaching is highlighted by Anzalone (2001) whose study focusses on teaching at Boston College Law School. It identifies that students' appreciation is very much dependant on teaching delivery and personal style. The paper highlights that student evaluations, following the delivery of training, are full of comments about the teacher's demeanour, tone and style and less about teaching methods and content. The paper proclaims, "my thesis is simple: by knowing more about ourselves and our own learning processes, preferences, and inclinations, we will become better teachers...We must start with ourselves" (Anzalone, 2001, p.326). This links very clearly to the Delphic Maxim, 'know thyself', putting it into a contemporary, work-based context.

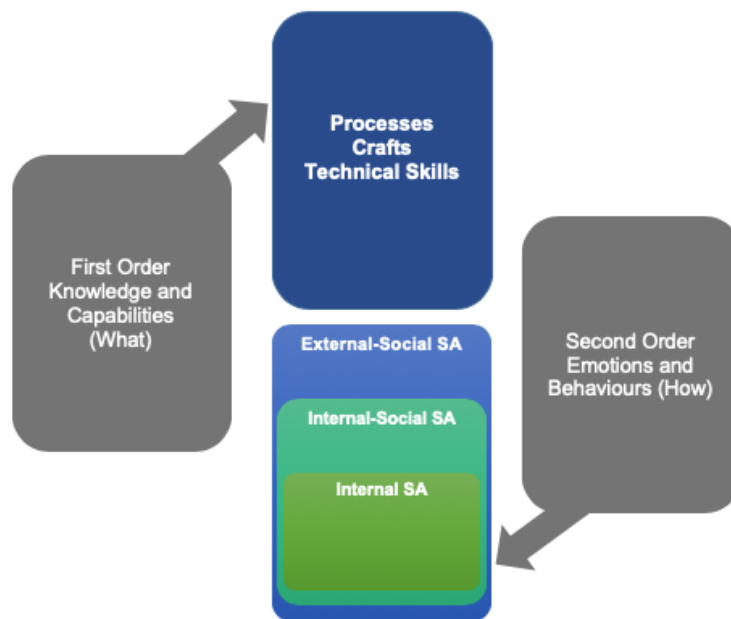
These studies are relevant to this thesis being that healthcare, social care and education for children of statutory school age (5 to 16 years), are predominantly public sector responsibilities within Wales. However, even though particular professional areas are highlighted within the literature, there appears to be limited research on corporate functions which are necessary to all public service organisations in Wales, such as human resources, finance, estates management, procurement, communications and promotion etc. This is helpful in steering this thesis and consideration will be given in the research methodology to broadening inclusivity, allowing employees from all sectors and levels to be included in the study, thereby moving away from the type of exclusivity which has been seen in previous research.

The debate concerning the impact of self-awareness and emotional intelligence on job performance versus the impact of technical skills on performance is seen within the literature. In support of the importance of self-awareness in the workplace, Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) state that executives not only need to have 'what' skills but also 'how' skills. The study states that the delivery of technical outputs (the 'what') are equally relevant to effective performance as are people skills in managing a team of technicians (the 'how'). Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) go on to discuss the model of leader effectiveness measurement used in the Australian Public Service. One model being a performance management system, as a means of measuring the 'what', and another being the 360 measures of leadership behaviours, as a means of measuring the 'how'. This is of interest to this thesis as technical skills and capabilities could be conceptualised as the 'what' and self-awareness could be conceptualised as the 'how'.

In considering the ideas of 'what' and 'how' skills the paper by Mackenzie (1988) identifies them as two types of knowledge and describes 'what' as first-order knowledge or 'knowing' and 'how' as second order knowledge or 'knowing what I know'. First order

knowledge is described as knowledge of an object, process or craft, which can be transmissible and teachable, such as technical skills. First order knowledge such as educational attainment and technical skills are also referred to as hard skills (AbuJbara and Worley, 2018).

Second order emotions and behaviours are described as non-technical skills, often encapsulated within the term 'soft skills', which also encompasses beliefs, professionalism, attitudes, personality traits, socio-emotional factors, wisdom, motivation and team work (AbuJbara and Worley, 2018). Second order emotions and behaviours are not transmissible in the same way as first order technical knowledge and capabilities. This is described by Mackenzie (1988, p.341) stating, "by instructing you in the details of my self-consciousness I may be no nearer to making you self-conscious". This further supports the idea developed from the Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) study that self-awareness could be viewed as the 'how', as discussed above. The connection between second order knowledge and self-awareness is explained in figure 2.3, which also clarifies the differences with first order knowledge.



**Figure 2.3 – First and second order knowledge linked to self-awareness, developed from Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) and Mackenzie (1988)**

Other studies go further than Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005) and suggest that people skills are far more relevant than technical skills. Atwater et al. (1998, p.595) state, "self-other agreement is most relevant to outcomes that involve human perceptions and less relevant to more objective measures such as sales volume or meeting productivity goals". This directly supports the view presented by Goleman (2004, p.84) who states,

“The higher the rank of a person considered to be a star performer, the more emotional intelligence capabilities showed up as a reason for his or her effectiveness. When I compared star performers with average ones, in senior leadership positions, nearly 90% of the difference in their profiles was attributable to emotional intelligence rather than cognitive abilities”

It must be noted at this point that again, studies predominantly focus on high ranking individuals in senior leadership positions. It is worthwhile to note this as in chapter four, consideration will be given and literature presented about the view that leaders exist at all levels, not merely senior levels.

Goleman (2004) states that emotional intelligence proved to be twice as important as technical skills and intellectual quotient (IQ) for jobs at all levels. Showry and Manasa (2014) go further and propose that IQ and technical skills are far less important to leaderships success than self-awareness. This links to the discussion presented earlier concerning first order and second order knowledge (Mackenzie, 1988) and provides further support that self-awareness is necessary for leader effectiveness, however it develops the discussion by presenting the notion that second order knowledge should be given more weight than first order knowledge.

Klare et al. (2014) offer a clear and succinct view on the ability of individuals with strong intellectual credentials and highly developed analytical thinking skills, in support of the views held by Atwater et al. (1998), Goleman (2004) and Showry and Manasa (2014) stating,

“When individuals in leadership positions are not able to read their co-workers and appropriately respond to the emotional temperature of the room, the resulting confusion, miscommunication and disengagement leave people wondering, “What just happened here?”. If smart people miss emotional cues, they can come across as clueless and uncaring, which undermines their ability to build the connections necessary for successful leadership. In really smart places, workplace interactions can be very stupid.” Klare et al. (2014, p.21)

In the study exploring future employment skills in 2030, Bakhshi et al. (2017) identifies that in the United States, skills with a strong emphasis on interpersonal skills and social skills such as social perceptiveness will be important. This is supported by the ‘2019

Global Talent Trends' (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2019) study conducted by LinkedIn, which surveyed over 5,000 talent professionals and considered behavioural data and activity on the LinkedIn website. It identified that soft skills, conceptualised as broader than self-awareness and emotional intelligence, is the top trend directing the future of the workplace. The top five soft skills are identified as creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability and time management. Persuasion and collaboration are relational behaviours which are relative to the discussion about self-awareness. The study states,

“Soft skills have always been important, and they’re increasingly vital today. The rise of automation and artificial intelligence means that hard skills alone are no longer enough to be successful. And while the half-life of hard skills is shrinking, soft skills stay relevant... creativity, adaptability, and collaboration skills will always be valuable”

More will be discussed in chapter four regarding first and second order knowledge and skills, highlighting the need for both, but recognising the important of second order skills as having primary importance.

## **2.7 Barriers to self-awareness**

Through reviewing the literature, a number of barriers to self-awareness are discernible, which offer some possible answers as to why self/other ratings are often incongruous. In the paper by Showry and Manasa (2014), a number of barriers to achieving self-awareness are identified. They offer such barriers as incompetence, preventing accurate feedback, narcissism and self-deception. The notion of incompetence has already been presented above as a barrier to self-awareness and is supported by the Kruger-Dunning Effect (Kruger and Dunning, 1999). The study by Showry and Manasa (2014) is of benefit to this thesis, in that it offers a different viewpoint from previously presented literature in that it highlights what self-awareness is not and what barriers leader should guard against to avoid derailment.

A particular obstacle of note, that warrants specific reference is stress, characterised as ‘overwhelm’ by Gray and Jones (2018). There is less need to manage change and be self-aware in situations where management is routine and repetitive. There are less opportunities for surprises and shocks. However, as managers spend relatively more time doing things that are new to them, the opportunity for surprises and shocks increase



(Bourner, 1996), leading to greater stress. Commenting on the Welsh public service Gray and Jones (2018) state,

“The demands put upon today’s workforce are, within the context of reducing resources, creating a psychosocial environment that contributes to workplace stress, to mental and physical ill health, and compounds other causes of workplace illness/injury”

Explored in chapter three, never before have organisations faced so much turmoil (Baron and Parent, 2015) and been presented with such complexity. The Spring Statement 2018 from ‘Wales Public Service 2025’, a collaborative programme between Cardiff University and a number of national bodies in Wales focussing on Wales’ public finances states, “Eight years of austerity is taking its toll on key public services such as NHS, schools and local government...You can’t have European standards of welfare with American-style tax levels. You have to make a choice” (Luchinskaya, 2018). In making those choices, difficult and complex decisions need to be made by the Welsh Public Service organisations.

When an individual is in a crisis or feeling threatened, emotions will drive behaviour (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005). Leader self-awareness is dynamic and not a constant phenomenon; it fluctuates in response to particular stimuli such as stress (Rochat, 2003). Feelings are linked to the way people think, behave and make decisions (George, 2000) and in times of stress, individuals miss signs from others that give them cues in how to manage themselves and their relationships (Boyatzis and McKee, 2006). This then impacts on individuals’ ability to be self-aware in the workplace. In knowing that “emotions are contagious” (Boyatzis and McKee, 2006), a stressed leader that once may have operated in resonance with colleagues and partners, begins to operate in dissonance to others, which quickly proliferates through the organisation, impacting on the effectiveness of individuals and the organisation as a whole (Boyatzis et al., 2013). In situations of increased work pressure, leaders may display behaviour which is uncharacteristic of normal behaviour, exhibiting physical and mental disruption, becoming emotionally detached from the organisation (Lenka and Tiwari, 2016). The research methodology will need to consider the stress that is present in complex public sector environments (Murphy et al., 2017).

Of interest to this thesis is the study by Gray and Jones (2018), focussing specifically on Welsh public service leaders, which identifies that internal self-awareness can act as a

mitigator for stress and overwhelm. Study participants identified self-awareness ‘in the moment’ as being helpful in allowing them to assess themselves and draw back from a position of overwhelm. This stepping-back allowed leaders to recalibrate, draw from their experiences of overcoming other challenges and move positively and optimistically forward.

## 2.8 Summary of Self-Awareness

In summary, the review of literature within this section identifies that there are three cumulative layers which together make up self-awareness. They are internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness. They are identified as interconnected concepts and good leaders must understand their own emotions, emotions of others and the impact of their emotions in interactions with others (Wong and Law, 2002) to be wholly self-aware. The chapter also firmly embeds the three-layers of self-awareness in the workplace context, identifying the importance placed on self-awareness and emotional intelligence over technical skills (Goleman, 2004, Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005). This three-layer model of self-awareness combines ideas and models from previous literature, thereby contributing new and original thinking to the subject. This is exemplified in figure 2.4 which shows the three elements of self-awareness together creating the one model of self-awareness embedded in the wider workplace context, which is the definition of self-awareness used in this thesis.



Figure 2.4 – Self-Awareness in the Workplace

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This chapter began by presenting the history of self-awareness and the different descriptors of self-awareness evident within the literature. It identified three distinct but cumulative layers of self-awareness, termed internal, internal-social and external-social self-awareness. The relationship between self-awareness and emotional intelligence was presented, discussing the interchangeability of the terms. The chapter presented the self/other ratings studies, which are fundamental to understanding self-awareness in the workplace and indeed guide the framework of the research of this thesis. Literature was presented that connected self-awareness to healthcare and social care and the Welsh public service, through the study by Gray and Jones (2018). Barriers to self-awareness were presented and stress was highlighted as a distinct barrier to achieving self-awareness. It has explored the concept of self-awareness within the workplace context of the Welsh public service, which is the first objective of this thesis.

The key element to note within this chapter is the new, three-layer definition of self-awareness, extending the previous two-layer definition of internal self-awareness and social self-awareness into internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness.

The next chapter will seek to define and explore leader effectiveness.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Literature Review of Leader Effectiveness**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service, which is the second objective of this thesis. It presents the literature concerning leader effectiveness, exploring its history as well as seeking to define it, in the context of self-awareness. Authentic leadership, servant leadership and resonant leadership are explored, the latter being identified as most relevant to this thesis, with its tenets firmly based in emotional intelligence. The chapter discusses leader effectiveness within the public sector and refers to leadership at all levels, which connects the literature with complexity leadership and complex adaptive systems, explored in detail in chapter 5.

It concludes by presenting the model of leader effectiveness connected to the three-layer model of self-awareness.

### **3.2 The History and Development of Leadership**

Leadership is one of the most comprehensively researched and debated topics in the organisational sciences (George, 2000). This is because the success of all economic, political and organisational systems depends on the effectiveness of their leaders (Parris and Peachey, 2013). The systematic study of leadership began in the early 1930s (House and Aditya, 1997) and continues to be an active field of research (Sturm et al., 2017), although the subject of inquiry has been changing over the years.

The appropriate definition of leadership proposed in any study depends on the purpose of that study (Bass and Bass, 2009), however scholars have agreed that leadership has some commonalities and can be summarised as, “the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of an organisation” (Bass and Bass, 2009, p.23-25). This is supported by Klare et al. (2014, p.23), who states, “leadership involves influencing people and moving them toward a common goal”. In combining these summaries, a hybrid definition can be developed which presents the definition of leadership for the purposes of this thesis as ‘the ability to influence and motivate people and move them towards a common goal by enabling others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of an organisation’.

Prior to the Ohio State studies of 1955, leadership research was predominantly focussed on leadership traits, however the trend has since moved towards a discussion about

leadership styles, which is more focussed on a descriptive or prescriptive method of considering leadership (Rodriguez et al., 2017). However, leadership traits will not be disregarded in this thesis, as much can be learned about self-awareness and leader effectiveness when focussing on leaders' traits.

In the last decade, the number of new leadership theories has been growing, although there is continued scholarly interest in transformational and charismatic leadership (Dinh et al., 2014). Strategic leadership is identified as the most prolific of the emerging leadership theories. In contrast, interest in other leadership constructs such as contingency theory and behavioural approaches has waned in recent years (Dinh et al., 2014). The relevance of this will become clear in chapter four when literature concerning complexity leadership theory and complex adaptive systems is presented. However, the literature identifies that as organisations are changing to cope with complex operating environments, ideas about leadership and models are changing and developing. (Lichtenstein et al., 2006, Schneider and Somers, 2006, Fernandez et al., 2010, Murphy et al., 2017).

The need for rigorous research into leadership is particularly acute in public administration, and the journals contain relatively little reference to the topic (Fernandez et al., 2010). Scholars with an interest in public administration and leadership are expressing increasing concern that a focus on public sector leadership based on classical management and role theory, "may not fully capture the leadership dynamics operating in today's complex environments" (Murphy et al., 2017). Murphy et al. (2017) add that public administration literature is lagging behind "mainstream organisational literature in challenging some of the basic assumptions of traditional leadership theory" This suggests that there is a gap in knowledge in that the complexity in which public sector organisations are operating has not been broadly researched and leader effectiveness within this contemporary operating modality is underexplored.

In today's environment, effective leadership is increasingly about building leader capabilities to manage change and difficult and complex situations (Leslie and Canwell, 2010). Change processes are long-term, novel and include much uncertainty so "understanding the role of leadership in such complex change is critical" (Alavi and Gill, 2017). Leslie and Canwell (2010, p. 303) state, "Self-belief and self-awareness are perhaps the most important emotionally-intelligent attributes that public sector leaders need to demonstrate". This links self-awareness to leader effectiveness; self-awareness to organisations dealing with complexity and change; and complexity to public service

organisations. This study is helpful in connecting the three areas of interest in the thesis – self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels.

The Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 moves the discussion beyond complexity to crisis. The article by Shingler-Nace (2020) lists five principles for leadership during a crisis: stay calm, communicate, collaborate, coordinate and support. To act with deliberate calm (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020) a leader needs to know themselves and understand their response to a crisis. They must be able to “communicate clearly and frequently” (Fernandez and Shaw, 2020) so as to facilitate collaboration and coordination and have sufficient empathy to support others. It is argued that all five principles require an underpinning of self-awareness. Shingler-Nace (2020) state “we can use this moment to mold our leadership styles and learn from experience to improve the future”, suggesting that self-awareness will be increasingly important to leadership during an uncertain future.

### **3.3 Traits, Behaviours and Characteristics of an Effective Leader**

In researching leader effectiveness, it is evident that the descriptions presented across the literature fall into one of two groups; positive characteristics, termed the ‘bright side’ and negative characteristics, termed the ‘dark side’ (Hogan et al., 1994, Burke, 2006). The bright side refers to that which an effective leader is or should aspire to be. The dark side refers to negative characteristics and behaviour that can derail leaders and act as obstacles to effectiveness. Within the study by Gray and Jones (2018), focusing on Welsh public service leaders, they refer to a ‘best-self’ and ‘periphery’ as descriptors of resilience and wellbeing leadership, with best-self denoting the bright side and periphery denoting everything outside of the scope of best self. As has been referred to above when exploring self-awareness, having both positive and negative descriptors of what a concept is and is not, is helpful to generate a rounded, holistic definition. For the purposes of this doctoral study, these rounded descriptions of leader effectiveness are helpful as they make the practical application of knowledge gained from the thesis more achievable in practice, and less abstract.

Within the literature, there are number of lists of the characteristics, behaviours and traits that describe an effective leader. Boyatzis and McKee (2005) state that emotional intelligence is the determining factor in excellent leadership. This is supported by Groves (2005) who states that self-awareness is both a predictor of charismatic leadership and managerial performance. Yukl (2013) lists: high energy levels, stress tolerance, internal

locus of control, emotional maturity, personal integrity, socialised power motivation, moderately high achievement orientation, moderately high self-confidence and moderately low need for affiliation. Caldwell and Hayes (2016) add profound personal insight to the list. Gray and Jones (2018) list a number of best-self themes grouped by thoughts, emotions, behaviours and physicality, detailing such elements as: positive thoughts, having positive emotions, happy, open to challenge and feedback, care, listen, are engaged and are energised. These descriptions are clear evidence that an emotional element to leader effectiveness exists and demonstrates a connection with both internal self-awareness and social self-awareness.

Conversely, Antonakis et al. (2009), rejects the assertion that there is a scientifically proven link between emotional intelligence and leadership. In response to Antonakis et al. (2009), Ashkanasy and Dasborough repudiate this view stating that research is emerging that the link is clear, albeit asserting that measuring emotional intelligence is problematic (Antonakis et al., 2009). This study acts as a helpful reminder that literature with opposing views on the impact of emotional intelligence on leader effectiveness should be considered relevant, as understanding opposing views and the arguments behind those views supports a robust furtherance of the topic of self-awareness connected to leader effectiveness.

Charismatic Leaders tend to have greater social and emotional ability and they in turn have greater impact on organisations, groups and individuals (Groves, 2005). Emotional and social intelligence competencies have been shown to predict effectiveness in leadership and management in many countries of the world (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Riggio and Reichard (2008) state that emotional skills are necessary for effective leadership and present a framework for conceptualising the role of emotional and social skills in effective leadership and management. The research highlights the need for effective leaders to have 'people skills' which are described as the "ability to communicate effectively, to manage social interactions and relationships" through non-verbal communication, and listening actively, and being tactful. This supports the study findings of Groves (2005) who states that nonverbal communication is an integral component of interpersonal emotional ability. The description by Riggio and Reichard (2008) appears to encapsulate both internal and the social self-awareness pointing to the need for an effective leader to not only be emotionally aware, but also socially sensitive, with a heightened ability to read and respond to socio-professional events. This is supported by Boyatzis and McKee (2005) and Boyatzis et al. (2013); both studies being presented in greater detail later.



In describing their framework, Riggio and Reichard (2008) identify three particular skills: expressiveness, sensitivity and control, which operate in both the emotional and social domains. The three elements can be linked across to the three-layer model of self-awareness used in this thesis. This is described in table 3.1 below. An additional column has been included in the table to link the six skill areas with the elements of self-awareness relevant to this thesis.

**Table 3.1: The emotional and social skills framework: definitions and leader behaviours, adapted from Riggio and Reichard (2008)**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples of leader behaviours</b>	<b>Link to the Three-layer Model of SA</b>
<b>Emotional expressiveness</b>	Skill in communicating nonverbally, especially in sending emotional messages, nonverbal expression of attitudes, dominance, and interpersonal orientation	Motivating/inspiring followers; conveying positive affect and regard	External-Social SA
<b>Emotional sensitivity</b>	Skill in receiving and interpreting the emotional and nonverbal communications of others	Understanding followers' needs and feelings; establishing rapport	External-Social SA
<b>Emotional control</b>	Skill in controlling and regulating one's own emotional and nonverbal displays, especially conveying or masking emotions on cue	Regulating inappropriate emotions; masking or stifling the expression of strong emotions	Internal SA
<b>Social expressiveness</b>	Skill in verbal expression and the ability to engage others in social discourse	Public speaking; persuasion; coaching	External-Social SA
<b>Social sensitivity</b>	Skill in interpreting the verbal communication of others; ability to understand social situations, social norms, and roles	Effective, active listening; regulating and monitoring of social behaviour	Internal-Social SA
<b>Social control</b>	Skill in role-playing and social self-presentation	Being tactful; leader impression management; social and leader self-efficacy	Internal SA

The table is of practical value as it gives examples of leader behaviour in

demonstrating emotional and social skills and therefore can generate a list of behaviours to support leaders to enhance their self-awareness.

### **3.4 Authentic Leadership**

In reviewing the literature to identify characteristics, behaviours and traits of leader effectiveness and the link with self-awareness, authenticity as well as the model of authentic leadership is discernible as relevant. Morgan (2009), in discussing the public health workforce in Wales states, “it has been suggested that self-awareness is a prerequisite to being an authentic leader”. The literature concerning authenticity as a subject for discourse in modern psychology, separate to the model of authentic leadership, is well documented and has been defined as the extent to which an individual is true to their core values and acts in accordance with those values (Alavi and Gill, 2017). Diddams and Chang (2012) state that the key attributes of both authenticity and authentic leadership are a high level of self-concept clarity and extensive self-knowledge, stating,

“Authentic leadership is a relevant concept that satisfies a current public need for accountability, integrity, courage and transparency because of its focus on leaders' own transparency, internal principles and a moral compass in the face of nefarious, shifting and possibly ethically ambiguous business practices.”  
(Diddams and Chang, 2012, p.593-4)

This is of relevance to this thesis in that authenticity, as a trait or characteristic of effective leadership behaviour must be considered as both intrinsic to the authentic leadership model and also relevant to other leadership models, such as servant leadership (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011) and transformational leadership (Rodriguez et al., 2017).

Throughout the literature, the importance of self-awareness to the authentic leadership modality is clear. Reflective of the view held by Diddams and Chang (2012), Avolio and Gardner (2005) stated that due to challenges such as “ethical meltdowns” and terrorism impacting on “public, private and even volunteer organisations”, there has been a renewed interest in restoring “confidence, optimism and hope” and developing greater resilience, meaning and connection through a new self-awareness. Within their paper, it is stated that “authentic leadership requires heightened levels of self-awareness ...a leader's self-awareness is an appropriate starting point for interpreting what constitutes authentic leadership development.” (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, p.324). Luthans et al. (2006) go further and state that ‘psychological capital’ is an important antecedent to an

authentic leader's self-awareness.

Psychological capital is described as an underlying capacity that is critical to human motivation, consisting of four positive psychological resources: self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience (Luthans et al., 2006, Peterson et al., 2011). Hope is defined as being optimistic about attaining future desired objectives (Lenka and Tiwari, 2016). The inclusion of hope in this list supports that proposed by Avolio and Gardner (2005) and could be considered a function of both internal and social self-awareness in both feeling hopeful and behaving in a positive, future focussed, hopeful way. This connection between authentic leadership and psychological capital is also supported by Gardner et al. (2011).

In the study by Luthans et al. (2006) authentic leaders are described as having awareness of their 'multifaceted self-nature', stating that authentic leaders own their personal experiences, such as "thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences and beliefs" (Luthans et al., 2006, p.85). This description is reflective of the self having internal self-awareness. The study by Brown and Treviño (2006), albeit focussing primarily on ethical leadership states, "self-awareness, openness, transparency, and consistency are at the core of authentic leadership" (Brown and Treviño, 2006, p.599). This is supported in the study by Walumbwa et al. (2008b) which highlight that "authentic leaders are anchored by their own deep sense of self (self-awareness)". The first of the four underpinning dimensions of authentic leadership presented in the study (ibid) is self-awareness. This dimension is described as understanding one's self in terms of how one makes meaning of the world, one's strengths and weaknesses and one's impact on others, which is reflective of internal self-awareness and social self-awareness. This presents further evidence of a connection between authentic leadership and self-awareness.

The literature identifies that for authentic leaders to be effective they must be true to themselves. Sparrowe (2005), states that authentic leadership is underpinned by the central assertion, "to thine own self be true" (Shakespeare, 1901: Hamlet, Act I Scene iii). This links authentic leadership with the very earliest connotation of self-awareness enshrined in the aphorism, 'know thyself', already discussed in chapter two. The study by Avolio and Gardner (2005) identifies that authenticity, by definition, involves being true to oneself, which supports the position put forward by Sparrowe (2005).

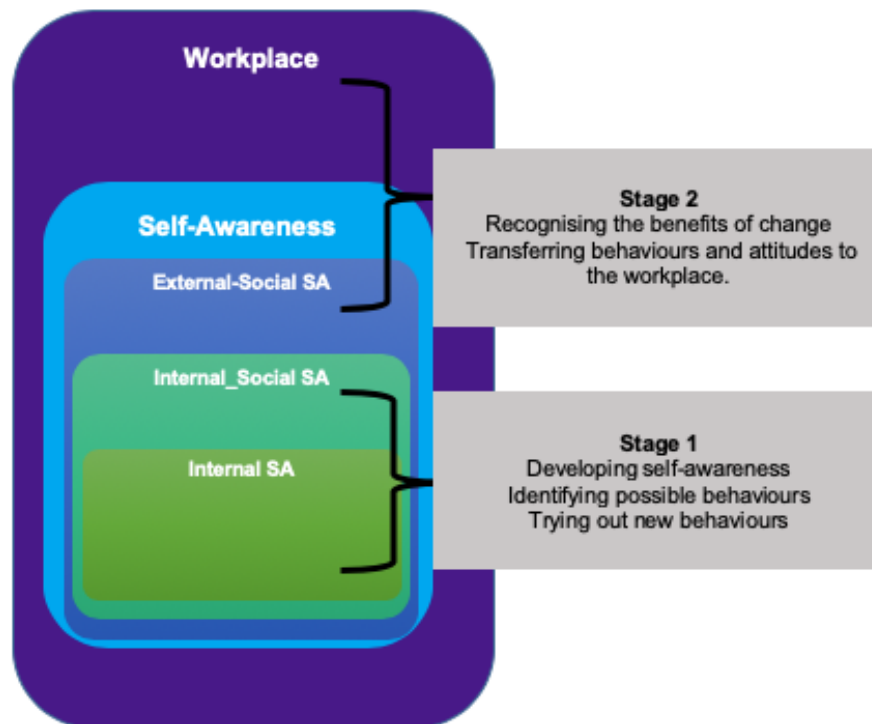
The second dimension of authentic leadership identified by Walumbwa et al. (2008b),

'relational transparency', refers to the leader's ability to present an authentic self, rather than a fake or distorted self, to promote trust. Authentic leaders "act in accordance with deep personal values and convictions to build credibility and win the respect and trust of followers" (ibid). Authentic leaders tell the truth and are trusted; they do what they say they are going to do and are prepared to suppress their own interests for a common good (Bass and Bass, 2009). This is echoed by Hoch et al. (2016) who identify that authentic leaders are high on moral character. In sum, authentic leaders must know themselves and thus be self-aware, in order to follow their moral compass to present themselves in an authentic and transparent way, to win the trust of their followers.

Within the authentic leadership model, the notion of self, on which self-awareness is built, is constructed in relation to others and self-awareness appears to have a particular focus on the outward element of the social self-awareness. As has already been explored, Sparrowe (2005) identifies that to be authentic, a leader requires an understanding of themselves in relation to others and need on-going clarification from others, listing self-awareness and self-regulation as key components of the model. This is supported by Bass and Bass (2009) who state that leader authenticity has a significant impact on staff members and in turn, the authenticity of both leader and staff contribute to the health and climate of an organisation. Dinh et al. (2014, p.42) describes authentic leaders as those who are self-aware and achieve "relational transparency" with others. This is of interest as the relationship between leaders and followers has been identified in numerous studies within the literature, as relevant to leader effectiveness (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005, Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Barbuto et al., 2014, Du Plessis et al., 2015, Alavi and Gill, 2017), and effective self-awareness is essential for effective relationships between leaders and followers (Riggio and Reichard, 2008). Authentic leaders are true to themselves and others (Bass and Bass, 2009). This supports the notion of leadership being a socially constructed concept.

The research paper by Baron and Parent (2015) focusses on developing authentic leadership through training. The description of the training method and the evaluation of learners is exciting and of interest to this thesis, as it could be suggested that the training programme is also a method to achieve self-awareness. One of the stages of the leadership programme is 'developing self-awareness'. The training programme is split into two stages; the first has three steps: developing self-awareness, identifying possible behaviours and trying out new behaviours. This stage could be deemed reflective of developing internal self-awareness and internal-social self-awareness. The second

stage has two steps: recognising the benefits of change and transferring behaviours and attitudes to the workplace. This stage could be deemed reflective of developing external-social self-awareness. Figure 3.1 maps the training programme onto the three-layer model of self-awareness, presented above.



**Figure 3.1 – Three Layer Model of Self-Awareness in the Workplace adapted from Baron and Parent (2015) Authentic Leadership Training Programme**

Fleener et al. (2010), in reviewing self/other rating agreement in leadership, present a number of studies that find positive correlation between self-ratings of leadership and level of education, where individuals with more education are in more agreement with others when self and others' ratings are compared. The study suggests that those with more education have higher levels of analytical and cognitive abilities which helps them better process information that is relevant to themselves. As has been described in chapter two, the development of self-awareness is cumulative, exemplified in the three-layer model of self-awareness. A training programme which supports learners to gain understanding, knowledge and skills about the three layers of self-awareness, in a staged, stepped way would seem appropriate to the development of the layers of self-awareness.

Developing increased self-awareness can be achieved in a number of ways, as described in the study by Baron and Parent (2015). In heightening awareness in relation

to others, participants became more aware of their influence on others and improved their ability to recognise and understand others' behaviours. This is reflective of what would be expected to happen as individuals become cognisant of themselves and thus develop internal self-awareness and internal-social self-awareness. In becoming more aware of others, participants were better able to interpret the actions of others and recognise their emotions. This appears to be further development of internal-social self-awareness. In increasing awareness of their impact on others, participants became more attentive to reactions to their behaviour, which is reflective of external-social self-awareness. Also participants became aware of their capacity to impact others, resulting in a realisation that they had the ability to change their behaviour to generate the impact that they wanted to achieve. In discussing the impact of authenticity in a variety of industries in Brazil, Reis et al. (2016) discover that authenticity mediates the impacts of a hierarchical organisational structure, which is identified as having a significantly negative effect on work engagement. This is of interest, in that the Welsh public service could be considered as hierarchical and more will be discussed later in considering complex adaptive systems and bureaucracy.

### **3.5 Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership, while older than transformational leadership theory, did not attract academic attention until the present millennium (Dinh et al., 2014). It is an area of leadership that "resonates with scholars and practitioners who are responding to the growing perceptions that corporate leaders have become selfish and who are seeking a viable leadership theory to help resolve the challenges of the twenty-first century" (Parris and Peachey, 2013). Due to a series of very public corporate scandals, such as Enron and Lehmann Brothers, servant leadership has become of increasing interest in recent years (Hoch et al., 2016).

The term servant leadership was first coined by Greenleaf (1977), who put forward the view that a leader first needs to be a servant before they can become an effective leader. Servant leadership is typified by interpersonal competence, i.e. emotional intelligence (Du Plessis et al., 2015) and leader behaviour (Hoch et al., 2016). Servant leaders who are self-aware are able to put their followers' needs before their own personal needs and are able to demonstrate self-sacrifice and self-control (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006, Barbuto et al., 2014). They can also respond quickly and accurately to the needs of followers due to their ability to understand and be sensitive to the emotions of others (Barbuto et al., 2014). This is supported by Du Plessis et al. (2015) who investigated the

relationships between servant leadership, emotional intelligence and trust in the manager. The paper (ibid) identifies that leaders who are able to understand and manage their emotions and display self-control act as role models for followers and enhance followers' trust and respect.

In reflecting on Greenleaf's initial philosophy of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), two clear groupings of characteristics appear in the literature which co-exist and complement each other. They are referred to as the humble service-orientated side or servant part and the action side or leadership part (Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). The humble service-oriented side is characterised by the dimensions of humility and standing-back. Humility refers to an internally focussed ability to acknowledge one's limitations and standing back refers to an outward focussed modesty (Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017). Humility has already been referred to above as an element of self-awareness (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a). It arises from a proper understanding or awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses. (Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). It is described by Van Dierendonck (2011) in three aspects: the ability to put one's accomplishments and talents in perspective; admitting one's fallibility and mistakes and understanding one's strong and weak points and seeking contribution from others to overcome limitations. These elements link to both internal and social self-awareness. One of the three dimensions of humility identified by Morris et al. (2005) is self-awareness, along with openness and transcendence. Standing back, conceptualised as modesty, is reflective of internal-social self-awareness (Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). Just as self-awareness is conceptualised as emotional intelligence and conversely, emotional intelligence is conceptualised as self-awareness, the same can be said of humility: self-awareness is described as having an element of humility and humility is described as having an element of self-awareness.

The action side of servant leadership is characterised by the dimensions of empowerment, accountability and stewardship by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017). Empowerment refers to the empowerment of followers, accountability refers to followers being responsible for the results of their actions and stewardship refers to a common framework of action and support (Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017). These three characteristics have similarities with external-social self-awareness in that they are reflective of a leader's recognition of the needs of others and a leader's behaviour towards others.

The study by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) views the humble service-orientated side and action side of servant leadership as paradoxical. The study aims to empirically test how these two sides co-exist, considering the hierarchical position of the leader as a contingency variable. The study found that humility has a positive impact on follower engagement, regardless of the hierarchical position of the leader. However, the combination of humility and action appears most effective for senior executives. This is of interest to this thesis, as the hierarchical position or job level of leaders will be considered in the research methodology, alongside self-awareness and leader effectiveness, as a means of establishing relevance. The hierarchical position of participants in the study by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) ranged from board level to junior professional. This ranking or stratification method will be further discussed in the research framework in chapter five.

A number of studies are presented that identify servant leadership traits, characteristics and behaviours that are linked to self-awareness and are emotion laden. In the study by Spears (2010), ten characteristics of servant leadership are identified: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and community building. In defining the characteristic of awareness, Spears (2010) refers to it as both relating to general awareness and “especially self-awareness”. In the study by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) eight elements are presented that characterise servant leadership. Humility and standing back have already been presented as being related to the humble service-orientated side and empowerment, accountability and stewardship have been presented related to the action side. However, the study also adds authenticity, interpersonal acceptance and courage. Authenticity is described as expressing one’s true self; interpersonal acceptance is described as the ability to understand people and to let go of grudges; and courage is described as taking risks and being pro-active. This suggests that leadership, regardless of whether it be authentic or servant leadership, is inextricably linked to self-awareness, relationships and behaviour.

The studies by Barbuto et al. (2014) and Du Plessis et al. (2015) focus specifically on emotional intelligence and its link to leader effectiveness. In the research by Barbuto et al. (2014) servant leadership is described as having five key dimensions: altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, organisational stewardship and transformational leadership. Each attribute is said to have an element of emotional intelligence. In order for a leader to be altruistic, they must possess emotional



intelligence as a means of understanding their followers' interests, desires, ambitions, feelings, beliefs, and internal states. A servant leader must demonstrate wisdom through an empathetic response and interpersonal skill through surveying and responding to the current and external environments and future changes to those environments. The research by Du Plessis et al. (2015) includes 'emotional intelligence' as an essential element of the servant leadership construct. These studies support the view that self-awareness and emotional intelligence are necessary components for servant leader effectiveness.

The article by Fernandez and Shaw (2020), describing academic leadership during the Coronavirus COVID-19 crisis identifies three leadership best practices, the first of which is connecting with people. The article states, "in a crisis, perhaps the most important of all is emotional intelligence and emotional stability that will allow the academic leader to place the interests of others above their own in servant leadership".

### **3.6 Resonant Leadership**

Through reviewing the literature, resonant leadership is distinguished from other theories of leadership by its foundation based on emotional intelligence (Laschinger et al., 2014, Bawafaa et al., 2015) and is therefore the model of leadership most closely connected with self-awareness in the literature. Resonant leadership is borne out of studies by Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee and presented through a number of articles and books ranging from 2002 to the present. Resonant leadership is identified by Bawafaa et al. (2015) as a leadership style reliant on positive relationships. As has been described in chapter two, the connection between emotional intelligence and self-awareness is evidenced in the literature (Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Groves, 2005, Bratton et al., 2011) and in some cases, emotional intelligence has been conceptualised as self-awareness (Shipper et al., 2003). The study by Winston and Hartsfield (2004), found strong similarities between the construct of emotional intelligence and self-awareness, listing: a leader's ability to appraise and express emotion, the ability to use emotion to enhance cognitive processes and the ability to regulate emotions. These three similarities are directly reflective of the three layers of self-awareness in that they consider internal self-awareness through appraisal and expression of emotion, internal-social self-awareness through the use of emotion to enhance cognitive processes and external-social self-awareness through the reflective regulation of emotions.

In discussing resonant leadership, Boyatzis and McKee (2005, p.28) state that emotional

intelligence, on which resonant leadership is based, accounts for 85% to 90% of the difference between average and outstanding leaders. The study by Boyatzis and McKee (2005) refers to resonant leaders as those that are ‘in sync’ with those around them and in tune with other people’s thoughts and emotions. This idea of synchronicity is supported by Laschinger et al. (2014) who state that resonant leaders are “empathetic, passionate, committed and have the ability to read people and groups accurately”, which is akin to internal-social self-awareness. Resonant leaders are leaders that are emotionally intelligent and understand and appreciate the impact of positive interpersonal relationships. They understand employees’ emotions and empower them (Lenka and Tiwari, 2016), knowing that “emotions are contagious” (Boyatzis and McKee, 2006) and thus impact people’s work performance. The study (ibid) describes the dimensions of resonant leadership across two areas of competence, four domains of emotional intelligence and 18 leadership competencies. The two competencies create a link between self-awareness and the model of resonant leadership: self-awareness and self-management are capabilities reflective of how individuals manage themselves and therefore internal self-awareness. Social awareness and relationship management are reflective of how individuals manage relationship with others and therefore, social self-awareness. This is presented below in table 3.2

**Table 3.2: Dimensions of Resonant Leadership (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005)**

Personal Competence		Social Competence	
Self-awareness	Self-management	Social awareness	Relationship management
Emotional self-awareness Accurate self-assessment Self-confidence	Emotional self-control Transparency Adaptability Achievement Initiative Optimism	Empathy Organizational awareness Service	Inspirational leadership Influence Developing others Change catalyst Conflict management Building bonds Teamwork and collaboration

Building on the study by Boyatzis and McKee (2005), Boyatzis et al. (2013) develop the model presented above in table 3.2. The study groups the capabilities presented, into clusters: emotional intelligence (self-awareness and self-management) and social intelligence (social awareness and relationship management), stating that they are the key components of resonant leadership relationships. This is relevant as it further develops the model of resonant leadership, bringing the model closer to the three-layer model of self-awareness developed in this thesis. Emotional intelligence links to internal

self-awareness and social intelligence links to social self-awareness. In the study, Boyatzis et al. (2013) also add a further, third cluster of intelligences, entitled 'cognitive intelligences'.

Cognitive intelligences include competencies such as systems thinking and pattern recognition (Amdurer et al., 2014). Competencies (Sturm et al., 2017) such as technical and functional knowledge, "deductive reasoning and quantitative reasoning" are viewed as "threshold competencies" and do not lead to increased leader effectiveness, when considering resonant leadership (Boyatzis et al., 2013, Amdurer et al., 2014). This means that cognitive competencies are needed for a leader to be adequate, but an increase in their proficiency does not lead to leader effectiveness (Amdurer et al., 2014). This supports the earlier discussion in this chapter identifying technical skills and IQ (first order knowledge) as less important than self-awareness (second order knowledge) (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005, Showry and Manasa, 2014) to leader effectiveness. However, the inclusion of this third cluster of capabilities can be viewed as firmly linking resonant leadership, self-awareness and emotional intelligence to the workplace. This is helpful to this thesis and further literature will be presented in chapter four concerning cognitive competencies, in the discussion about leaders' job levels in the Welsh public service. In conceptualising systems thinking as a cognitive competency (Palaima and Skarzauskiene, 2010), literature will also be presented that links emotional, social and cognitive competencies as necessary components of a complex adaptive system, which is relevant if the Welsh public service is indeed, viewed as a complex adaptive system.

Reflecting on the study by Stogdill (1948), writing soon after the end of World War II, the notion of self-awareness being of greater significance to leader effectiveness than cognitive intelligence echoes the views of Rosete and Ciarrochi (2005), Showry and Manasa (2014) and Amdurer et al. (2014). Stogdill (1948) surveyed the personal factors associated with leadership. The research concluded that intelligence was identified as positively correlated with leadership but it was found that the leader of a group would not be "too much more intelligent" (Stogdill, 1948) than the group led, due to the ability of the group to understand the vocabulary used by the leader. The findings of this study should be viewed as relative to the time in which it was written, where the most recent dominating experience of leadership had been military in context. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that the ability of leaders to resonate with followers was identified as more important than being more intelligent than those followers over 70 years ago.

Drath (2006), in reviewing the book, *Resonant Leadership* (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005),

offers an interesting perspective on the view of resonant leadership, stating that “the useful and generative metaphor of resonance seems to point to the future” (Drath, 2006, p.471). It suggests that resonant leadership might be a leadership model that will support leader effectiveness in the future, which has already been presented above as a changing, complex environment where work-based stress is prevalent. The review by Drath (2006) is also reflective of the discussions above concerning the increased presence of the impact of leader/follower relationships and the need for resonance between the parties.

Reflecting on the literature, consideration will be given to both leaders and followers as subjects within the research methodology, being that the relationship between leaders and followers is relevant to leader effectiveness (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005, Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Barbuto et al., 2014, Dinh et al., 2014, Du Plessis et al., 2015, Alavi and Gill, 2017), and self-awareness is essential for effective relationships (Riggio and Reichard, 2008). Also, as has been demonstrated by the findings of the self/other ratings studies, leader effectiveness is best judged by followers (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011).

In considering the practical application of resonant leadership in the workplace, Bawafaa et al. (2015) focus their research paper on the examination of the influence of managers’ resonant leadership on nurses’ structural empowerment and job satisfaction. Laschinger et al. (2014), also focus their study on resonant leadership in the nursing profession. This is further evidence that emotional intelligence based constructs are relevant to healthcare. The paper (ibid) states that there has been a call for stronger relational leadership skills with higher levels of emotional intelligence for nurse leaders, referencing resonant leadership specifically. Laschinger et al. (2014, p.8) states, “leadership styles that were conceptually consistent with the notion of resonant leadership were positively correlated with... lower levels of anxiety, emotional exhaustion and stress”. This is suggestive of resonant leadership being a leadership model relevant to organisations dealing with difficult situations and stress.

### **3.7 Public Service Leadership**

The Leadership Behaviours Framework for Senior Leaders developed by Academi Wales (Academi Wales, 2017), identifies self-awareness as one of four core leadership behaviours. The presentation entitled, ‘Public Service Values and Leadership

Behaviours' (Academi Wales, 2016a), available on the Academi Wales website identifies 16 leadership behaviours to support the improvement of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The 16 behaviours are presented below in table 3.3 and have been grouped into four areas: first order technical knowledge and capabilities in the form of cognitive intelligences and second order emotions and behaviours in the form of internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness, as a means of demonstrating relevance between guidance shared in Wales relating to self-awareness and leader effectiveness:

**Table 3.3: Leadership Values (Academi Wales, 2016a) linked to Knowledge**

	<b>Leadership Value</b>	<b>Knowledge Group</b>
1	I will reflect honestly on my personal style and its impact on others and I will develop my skills so that I can adapt my style as appropriate	Internal self-awareness
2	I will learn from my successes and mistakes and develop new areas of knowledge and expertise	
3	I will maintain a realistic and positive attitude to challenges, adversity and change and support other to do the same	Internal-social self-awareness
4	I will act with agility to adapt my role and purpose in response to the anticipated needs of the service	
5	I will communicate openly, build credibility, and be straightforward with people to generate trust and confidence in me	
6	I will communicate with citizens in a way they can understand and relate to; use appropriate channels, harnessing digital technology effectively	
7	I will seek to understand the different aims and agendas of those with whom I am working, and use this knowledge to address any potential conflict and to achieve a positive outcome	External-social self-awareness
8	I will plan ahead to identify and cultivate relationships that are likely to be important to the successful delivery of services now and in the future	
9	I will encourage and support others to think differently, to question and to try new ways of doing things, taking appropriate calculated risks	
10	I will work with others to generate a shared sense of purpose and a positive view of that the future looks like	
11	I will demonstrate trust in others, knowing when to support and when to step back	
12	I will understand and embrace the benefits of new technology and implement their use for managing and delivering public services	Cognitive Intelligence
13	I will pursue unpopular initiatives and plans if they represent progress and the 'right thing to do'	
14	I will lead across boundaries, see the public service as a single system and seek to break down silo thinking	
15	I will seek to continually improve financial performance and delivery value for money without compromising quality	
16	I will continually reinforce a culture of inclusive decision making and shared leadership	

The leadership values grouped within the internal-social and external-social self-awareness are broad and therefore could be considered to straddle both groups. Of interest is the phrase, 'knowing when to support and knowing when to stand back', which demonstrates a direct link with the servant leadership modality. Together these values demonstrate that Wales considers self-awareness and cognitive intelligences as necessary for leadership.

Particularly pertinent to this thesis, with its focus firmly on better understanding leadership in the public sector, is the research by Leslie and Canwell (2010). They identify four core capabilities that public sector leaders need to develop to be effective. They list: developing insights necessary for successful change within complex systems; building cognitive skills to manage effectively in demanding environments; demonstrating emotional intelligence to motivate people; and actively building leadership at all levels. Their study predominantly gathers information and data from civil servants and local government officers in the UK but also includes information from Sweden and Canada. In their research, they state that public sector leaders have traditionally been isolated in their roles in that they have had to develop ideas and lead change in isolation from their teams. This has subsequently limited the focus and interest of public sector organisations on developing emotionally intelligent leaders, due to leaders having limited need to interact and work collaboratively with others. However, the study highlights that leadership must be performed by multiple agents across an organisation and there should be greater focus on leadership capabilities, rather than the top leadership roles. This is supported in the policy paper by Needham et al. (2013) which states that individual 'hero leaders' are not the answer to creating a public service workforce fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Rather, distributed or dispersed leadership is seen as the future of leadership. The policy paper states that future council chief executives will need the ability to create whole system approaches. The study by Leslie and Canwell (2010), along with the policy paper are helpful to this thesis, as they introduces the third area of interest for this thesis, that being, identifying the job levels of leaders within the structure of Welsh Public Service organisations. More will be discussed later about distributed and dispersed leadership within the literature concerning complexity leadership theory and complex adaptive systems (chapter four), which suggests that leaders can be found at all job levels of an organisation.

Leadership is not synonymous with seniority and is not necessarily tied to positional posts (Krauss et al., 2010) even though in the literature the notion of the leader being an

individual in a specific senior role, such as a chief executive remains the dominant paradigm (Murphy et al., 2017). It is argued that in practice, leadership is actually “a collective endeavour and an ongoing process that is dispersed throughout effective organisations” (Leslie and Canwell, 2010). Allen (2012) focusses on the leadership challenge for public administrators and discusses complexity alongside unity of operation. The article discusses the increasingly complex challenges faced by the public sector, encapsulated in such terms as ‘nonroutine events’, ‘black swan events’ and ‘wicked problems’. The article highlights that no single person, department or organisation has the sole means to deal with such problems and working across traditional boundaries is essential. This style of working is referred to as ‘unity of effort’ and the concept involves five dimensions of leadership. The first, and interestingly so for this thesis, is the dimension of understanding oneself and one’s emotions, which is linked to internal self-awareness. This is followed by the remaining four dimensions of: understanding the event or the challenge; leading upwards between political leaders and experts; leading downward to support the people; and leading across organisational boundaries. These latter elements are more reflective of social self-awareness, being that they are concerned with interpersonal relationships. This notion of working across traditional boundaries, both within organisations and across organisations is supported by Needham et al. (2013) who state that leadership beyond boundaries and beyond spans of authority will become more important in the future.

In contrast to the literature presented above concerning leader effectiveness, the findings of the study by Barbuto and Burbach (2006) are not aligned to those already presented. The study focusses on the emotional intelligence and transformational leadership of publicly elected officials, rather than public service employees. The findings identify that publicly elected leaders who are less prone to regulating their moods, display greater degrees of transformational leadership. This is contrary to previous research findings which identify that mood regulation and effective leadership are aligned (Wong and Law, 2002, Goleman, 2004). However, in considering the reasons behind the differences in findings in the Barbuto and Burbach (2006) study to previous research, the study highlights that elected officials rely on popularity, impression management and public perception for role continuity. The ethical behaviour of councillors, conceptualised as telling the truth, standards of behaviour and actions, are positively related to public trust (Downe et al., 2013). This could lead to the conclusion that publicly elected officials who become enraged or impassioned about a topic are demonstrating vehement support for their community. The study (Barbuto and Burbach, 2006) also highlights that as leaders become more self-aware, they perceive themselves as being less inspirational and thus

less transformational. This is helpful in that it provides further evidence in support of a link between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership behaviours. However, it also serves as a warning for this thesis to be explicit about the subjects of the research, so as not to skew the data. The research methodology will identify the subjects of interest as paid, employed officers of the Welsh public service, not publicly elected officials, due to their different personal drivers, elected status and method of remuneration.

### **3.8 Barriers to Leader Effectiveness**

As has already been mentioned, studies that explore leader effectiveness present either characteristics or behaviours that leaders should aspire to or guard against, being termed the 'dark side' (Hogan et al., 1994, Burke, 2006). The research by Hogan et al. (1994) states that a number of leaders fail for personal rather than structural or economic reasons. The study by Shipper and Dillard (2000) supports this and attributes leaders' derailment to a lack of self-awareness. The study (ibid) states that a lack of self-awareness leads to defensiveness, over controlling tendencies, insensitivity, abrasiveness, being too assertive, loss of humility, coldness and arrogance

The notion that a lack of self-awareness is a barrier to leader effectiveness is further supported by Burke (2006, p.3) who states, "leadership failure is primarily a behavioral issue... It is who people are - not what they know or how bright they are that leads to success or failure". Rather it is about how well they know themselves and how well they work with others – effectively internal and social self-awareness. Diddams and Chang (2012, p.596), in their study exploring the nature of weakness in authentic leadership offer a stark warning that,

“Without significant self-awareness, authenticity as the mere fit between self-identity and action would lead to the concession that narcissists, miscreants and even the mere clueless could muster an authentic self. Therefore, a key definitional attribute of both authenticity and authentic leadership is a high level of self-concept clarity and extensive self-knowledge.”

Hogan et al. (1994) identifies that executives with overriding personality defects or character flaws that alienate subordinates preventing them from building effective teams, fail. The importance of a positive relationship between leader and follower is supported and highlighted by Sparrowe (2005), who states that “the hallmark of inauthentic or



pseudo-transformational leadership is unbridled self-interest that motivates leaders to treat followers as means to their own ends”. Literature has already been presented that highlights that effective self-awareness is essential for effective relationships between leaders and followers (Riggio and Reichard, 2008). If it is the case that leadership is “the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of an organisation” (Bass and Bass, 2009, p.23-25), then a leader who is not able to resonate with and establish effective relationships with followers, is certain to fail.

A list of barriers to leader effectiveness is presented by Hogan et al. (1994) which includes “vindictive... overcontrolling...abrasive, aloof, too ambitious, or unable to delegate or make decisions”. Burke (2006) draws on a mass of literature to list leaders’ behaviours, attitudes and actions that are negative and identifies particular behaviours that derail leadership success, listing: “arrogance, aloofness, perfectionism, insensitivity, selfishness and betraying the trust of others” – along a similar line to Hogan et al (1994). Caldwell (2009) states that betraying trust undermines effectiveness, asserting that leaders who are self-deceiving, having a warped view of reality, are more prone to overlook their duty to others and are then viewed as untrustworthy by colleagues leading to faith in them as individuals and their organisation as a whole, being undermined. Sturm et al. (2017) support the notion that arrogance and detachment are contributory behaviours to derailment. Gray and Jones (2018), focussing specifically on leaders in the Welsh public service describe such leadership traits that impede resilience and wellbeing as: distracted, negative, defeatist, disengaged, irritable, lacking compassion, bully, micro manage, blame, distrustful, chaotic and exhausted.

The presentation of a list of characteristics, behaviours and traits that operate as barriers to effective leadership are helpful to this thesis, in that they offer a different perspective on what equates to leader effectiveness. In the first part of this chapter, positive behaviours, traits and characteristics have been presented as those to which a leader should aspire. Latterly, negative behaviours, traits and characteristics have been presented as a means of explaining what leaders should avoid, to guard against derailment and failure. Presenting both positive and negative elements are helpful as they serve as practically useful guides to leaders, offering a holistic view.

### **3.9 A Summary of Leader Effectiveness**

The exploration of the literature regarding leader effectiveness has identified a number of behaviours, characteristics and traits necessary for leaders to be effective. However,

key themes are discernible within the literature as relevant to self-awareness. In considering elements related to internal self-awareness, the effective leader is required to be cognisant of both first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Boyatzis and McKee, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005, Brown and Treviño, 2006, Luthans et al., 2006, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Walumbwa et al., 2008b, Spears, 2010, Boyatzis et al., 2013, Yukl, 2013, Dinh et al., 2014, Baron and Parent, 2015, Du Plessis et al., 2015, Caldwell and Hayes, 2016, Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017).

Reflective of internal-social self-awareness, to be effective, leaders need to ensure social competence in terms of recognising the impact of their first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours on others (Stogdill, 1948, Boyatzis and McKee, 2005, Brown and Treviño, 2006, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Walumbwa et al., 2008b, Bass and Bass, 2009, Leslie and Canwell, 2010, Spears, 2010, Van Dierendonck, 2011, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011, Boyatzis et al., 2013, Barbuto et al., 2014, Dinh et al., 2014, Klare et al., 2014, Du Plessis et al., 2015).

To effectively achieve external-social self-awareness, a leader must recognise the impact that their first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours have on others, being able to regulate their behaviours to resonate with individuals, particularly followers, in the given situation (Boyatzis and McKee, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Walumbwa et al., 2008b, Bass and Bass, 2009, Leslie and Canwell, 2010, Spears, 2010, Van Dierendonck, 2011, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011, Boyatzis et al., 2013, Barbuto et al., 2014, Klare et al., 2014). This brings together a clear and succinct definition of leader effectiveness in the context of this thesis, summarised in table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 – Summary of Leader Effectiveness Aligned to Self-Awareness**

<b>Three Layers of Self-Awareness</b>	<b>Internal Self-Awareness</b>	<b>Internal-Social Self-Awareness</b>	<b>External-Social Self-Awareness</b>
<b>Knowledge necessary for Leader Effectiveness</b>	Awareness of first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours	Awareness of impact of first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours	Ability to regulate first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter examines the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service, which is the second objective of this thesis. It presents the background and history of leadership as an area of academic interest. It presents light side and dark side descriptors as a means of developing a rounded definition of leader effectiveness pertinent to this study. It draws from the literature discussing authentic and servant leadership and presents resonant leadership as being of particular importance to this thesis, with its foundations firmly embedded in emotional intelligence.

The chapter presents a new definition of leader effectiveness linked to self-awareness. Awareness of technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours; awareness of impact of technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours; ability to regulate technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions.

The following chapter considers leadership at all levels.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Literature Review of Leadership at All Levels**

## **4.1 Introduction**

The third objective of this study is to determine whether self-aware leaders can be found at all job levels of the Welsh public service. In order to achieve that, this chapter will focus on defining that leadership at all levels mean. It will begin by presenting the studies which conceptualise leadership as seniority and then explore studies that challenge this notion. It will present literature concerning complexity leadership and complex adaptive systems. It will conclude by presenting a model of self-awareness and leader effectiveness across all levels, combining the learning from chapters two, three and four into an integrated model.

## **4.2 Leadership and Seniority**

Leadership research has largely focussed on the behaviours and traits of individuals, rather than the complex systems and processes that make up leadership (Murphy et al., 2017). The individuals that appear to be of greatest interest within the literature are those holding senior positions, as has already been noted above. The critical review of the self/other ratings studies identified that a number of the studies were concerned with gathering data from individuals in senior positions or those training to take on senior positions (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011). The dominant paradigm in the literature ties leadership to a specific administrative leader or chief executive (Murphy et al., 2017).

In support of the notion of leaders being individuals holding senior positions within organisations, the research by Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) focusses on senior organisational roles at board level, specifically the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive. The study highlights the need for effective leaders to be emotionally intelligent and that “emotional intelligence tends to be hierarchically related” (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003, p.207). Throughout the paper leadership is conceptualised as seniority and the term leader is viewed as synonymous with individuals in senior positions. The findings of the first study in the paper identifies that emotional intelligence competencies are either vital or highly important for the two identified roles. Whereas, emotional intelligence is identified as very important for the executives, rather than vital. In the paper’s third study, managers and executives are included in the subject cohort. Directors are found to have significantly higher scores than managers in EQ competencies overall. It is also identified that the specific elements of interpersonal sensitivity and emotional resilience are areas where directors scored highly. However,

no differences are found between directors and managers in intellectual or managerial competencies. This supports the view already presented that first order technical skills are threshold competencies which do not lead to increased leader effectiveness (Boyatzis et al., 2013).

The research findings of this thesis will be compared with the findings from the above referenced study by Dulewicz and Higgs (2003), albeit the findings will relate to self-awareness rather than emotional intelligence. The very essence of this thesis is to identify whether individuals with self-awareness are also effective leaders and whether they can be found at senior organisational positions or at all job levels within the Welsh Public Service organisations which will either corroborate or contradict this study. In studying emotional intelligence of senior managers, employed in public sector organisations, Carmeli (2003, p.789) supports the view that leaders at the upper-echelon of organisations have greater emotional intelligence, stating,

“Underlying this research interest is the view that people with high emotional intelligence competencies are more likely than less emotionally intelligent people to gain success in the workplace. Particularly, scholars have noted that social skills are essential for executive level leaders; as individuals ascend the organizational hierarchy, social intelligence becomes an increasingly relevant determinant of who will and will not be successful”.

This suggests that social self-awareness in particular, has an impact on leadership success and therefore is identifiable in individuals whose job levels are at the senior levels of organisations. The study (Carmeli, 2003) found that emotionally intelligent senior managers perform their jobs better than senior managers with low emotional intelligence, which supports the study by Dulewicz and Higgs (2003).

The notion of directors being more emotionally capable is supported by Burke (2006, p.6) who states, “the higher one rises in an organization the more self-awareness lies at the centre of leadership development.” The study by Moorhouse (2007) examining emotional intelligence, rather than self-awareness, supports this position, stating that “EI levels are higher among workplace leaders, and are even further elevated as leadership levels rise in an organisation”. The study states that directors have significantly higher emotional intelligence, interpersonal sensitivity and emotional resilience when compared to managers. The notion of emotional resilience is also referenced by Dulewicz and Higgs (2003). However, in comparing intellect and managerial competencies, the study

by Moorhouse (2007) supports the findings already presented in this chapter that first order technical knowledge and capabilities do not account for increased leader effectiveness (Mackenzie, 1988).

This notion of senior leaders having greater emotional intelligence is also supported by Rode et al. (2017). Their study identifies that salary, as an indicator of career success and consequently job level, is positively correlated to emotional intelligence. They note that this link is even stronger at higher job levels. The model presented by Rode et al. (2017) explaining their hypothesis, is presented at figure 4.1.

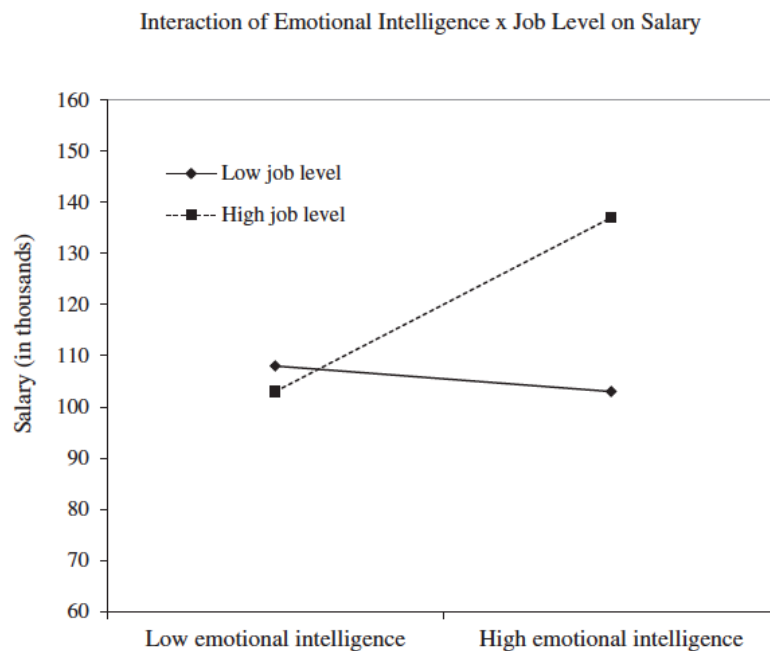


Fig. 2. Interaction of emotional intelligence × job level on salary.

**Figure 4.1 Emotional Intelligence, Job Level and Salary - Rode et al. (2017)**

The model reveals that high emotional intelligence, high job level and high salary are positively correlated. Conversely, low emotional intelligence, low job level and low salary are positively correlated. For the purposes of this thesis, if emotional intelligence is conceptualised as self-awareness, which is discussed in chapter two, this model would suggest that there is greater self-awareness at higher job levels within organisations. This will be challenged later in this chapter, based on the views and findings presented in the literature exploring leadership at all levels.

Rode et al. (2017) base their thinking on the idea that emotionally intelligent individuals are more able to develop strong interpersonal relationships, networking skills, and political acumen, which leads to career progression. This is reflective of the underlying

interest in the study by Carmeli (2003) which identifies that social skills such as social intelligence are essential for executive level leaders. The study by Riggio and Reichard (2008) referred to above, identifies the importance of social skills in their emotional and social skills framework. The study (ibid) also makes the connection with seniority, stating, “as managers rise in the hierarchy to higher levels of leadership, speaking skill and thus skill in social expressiveness will become more and more important” (Riggio and Reichard, 2008, p.175)

In defining job levels, the study by Rode et al. (2017) is also of interest to this thesis, in that it identifies: individual contributor (e.g., accountant, programmer/analyst); manager of individuals (e.g., senior accountant, senior programmer,); manager of managers (e.g., sales manager, programming manager); and senior executive (e.g., vice president, division manager) as job level descriptors. These definitions will be helpful to the research framework and will be considered in the next chapter. Defining an appropriate method for stratifying subjects' job level will be essential to the research methodology in meeting the aim of this thesis, to explore self-awareness and leader effectiveness across the whole of the Welsh public service.

### **4.3 Leadership at All Levels**

In challenging the notion of leadership linked with seniority, scholars in the field are questioning the assumption that leadership rests with those in supervisory roles (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). Some academics are of the view that leadership is not synonymous with seniority and not always linked to the hierarchical position of a post (Krauss et al., 2010). “The continued treatment of leadership as a role played by top executives runs the risk of failing to capture the full range of leadership behaviour” occurring in public organisations (Fernandez et al., 2010). This is supported by Murphy et al. (2017), as has already been highlighted earlier in this chapter, who state that leadership constructs, based on classical management theory, may be missing the nuances and intricacies of leadership, as it is operating in contemporary complex public sector environments. These studies helpfully point to the gap in current literature regarding knowledge about leadership constructs in complex public service organisations. This supports the concept of building leadership at all levels as a core leadership competency that public sector leaders need to develop to be effective (Leslie and Canwell, 2010).

Building leadership at all levels should be a top priority for organisations (Leslie and



Canwell, 2010). “Leadership is not about an individual in a senior role, it is about many people across an organisation involved in leadership activities” (Leslie and Canwell, 2010, p.297). The study by Leslie and Canwell (2010) states that the answer to achieving this is to move away from the more traditional focus on development programmes for individuals with high intellect, such as those from top universities, to an approach that focusses on leadership capabilities rather than individuals employed in senior leadership roles. This supports the notion that broad leadership capabilities are needed to achieve leader effectiveness rather than simply cognitive intelligences, which do not lead to increased leader effectiveness (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005, Boyatzis et al., 2013, Showry and Manasa, 2014). Leslie and Canwell (2010) state that emotional intelligence and cognitive skills are interdependent, which is supported elsewhere in the literature, i.e. “IQ + EQ = success” (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003).

In exploring the idea that leaders exist at all levels of the organisation, the concept of complexity leadership theory appears within the literature as relevant. Complexity leadership theory is the form of leadership that operates within complex adaptive systems (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). “Complex adaptive systems are defined as neural-like networks of interacting, interdependent agents who are bonded together in a collective dynamic by a common need” (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009). Complexity leadership theory supports the concept of leadership at all levels and moves consideration from individuals within senior roles to whole systems (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). Leadership approaches grounded in complexity theory are driven by the need to develop leadership models that more accurately reflect the complex nature of leadership as it is occurring in modern practice (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009). Recent research on complexity leadership has focussed on relational, dynamic and distributed leadership processes, which is a move away from the more traditional view of leadership being linked to the traits, characteristics and behaviours of a senior individual (Murphy et al., 2017).

Relational leadership underpins many of the new approaches emerging from the literature, such as collaborative, distributed, shared and complexity theories, (Murphy et al., 2017). Relational leadership research is most interested in relationships, not individuals - individuals are considered to be evolving (“co-evolving”) alongside others as part of a wider system and the system as a whole is the focus of attention, rather than the individuals who constitute it (Uhl-Bien, 2006). This idea supports the presentation of earlier literature which discussed the notion of the self being dynamic, changeable and constituted in relation to others (Sparrowe, 2005, Caldwell, 2009) and both self-

awareness and leader effectiveness being socially constructed concepts.

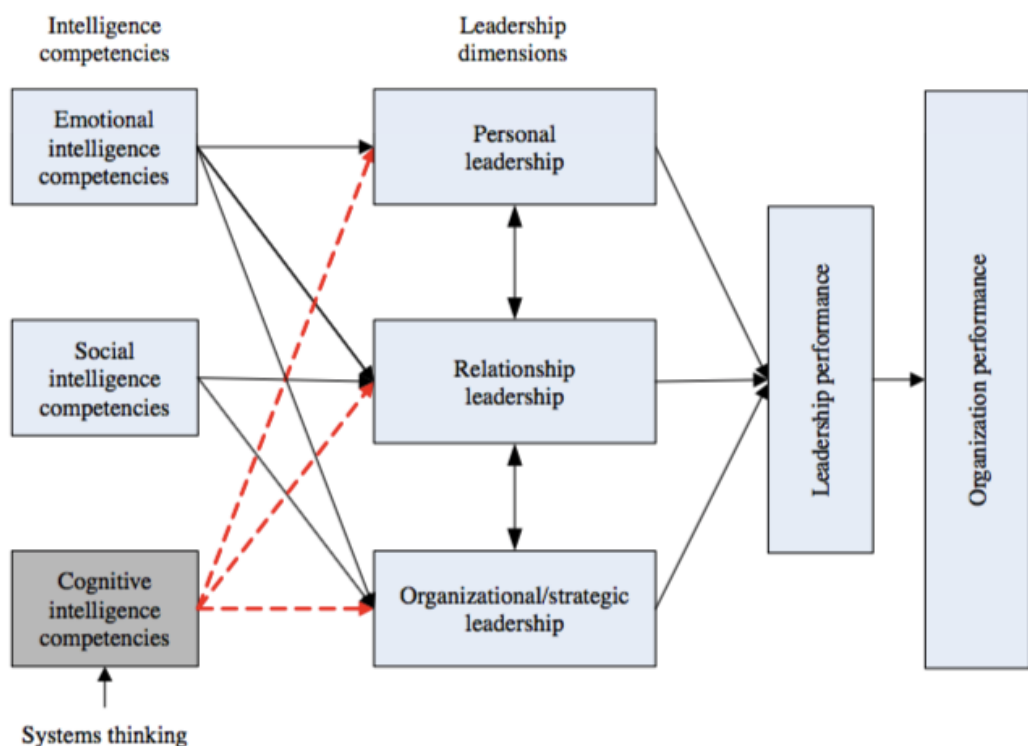
“Relations focussed leadership fosters a harmonious and emotionally supportive work environment” (Fernandez et al., 2010). Relations-orientated leadership involves behaving in such a way as to demonstrates a concern for the welfare of subordinates, recognising and appreciating their work contribution and also involving them in making decisions (Fernandez et al., 2010). This is supported in the literature that identifies servant leaders as those that are able to understand and be sensitive to the emotions of others (Barbuto et al., 2014).

The paper by Lichtenstein et al. (2006) identifies the “spaces between” people as key to leadership, that being, the relationships and connections between individuals rather than the actions of individuals themselves. This is reflective of social self-awareness, in that it describes the relationship between leaders and followers. Lichtenstein et al. (2006) support the view that relationships between leaders and followers are key to leader effectiveness, as has already been presented above (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005, Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Barbuto et al., 2014, Du Plessis et al., 2015, Alavi and Gill, 2017). The paper by Lichtenstein et al. (2006) is helpful in establishing a clear connection between social self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leaders at all levels, being that the focus of the paper is complexity leadership theory. However, the study by Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009) offer some clarification in that positive relationships should not be seen as devoid of conflict. When considering complex systems, they need heterogeneity in such areas as information, technology and worldviews where differences of viewpoint add to the richness of problem solving and decision making. The paper states, “complexity theory suggests that appropriate amounts of heterogeneity in terms of thought diversity and exposure to ideological differences is conducive to adaptive behaviour” (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009, p.643).

In exploring the literature concerning complex adaptive systems, the notion of systems thinking becomes relevant. Systems thinking has already been referenced above in the study by Boyatzis et al. (2013) and is identified as a cognitive intelligence necessary for effective leadership. The publication by Academi Wales, ‘Adaptive Leadership – Embracing Chaos and Courage for Sustainable Change’ (Academi Wales, 2018) presents definitions and descriptions of adaptive leadership and adaptive leaders. Almost half of the publication is dedicated to presenting systems leadership, clearly showing a connection between adaptive leadership and systems thinking. This is

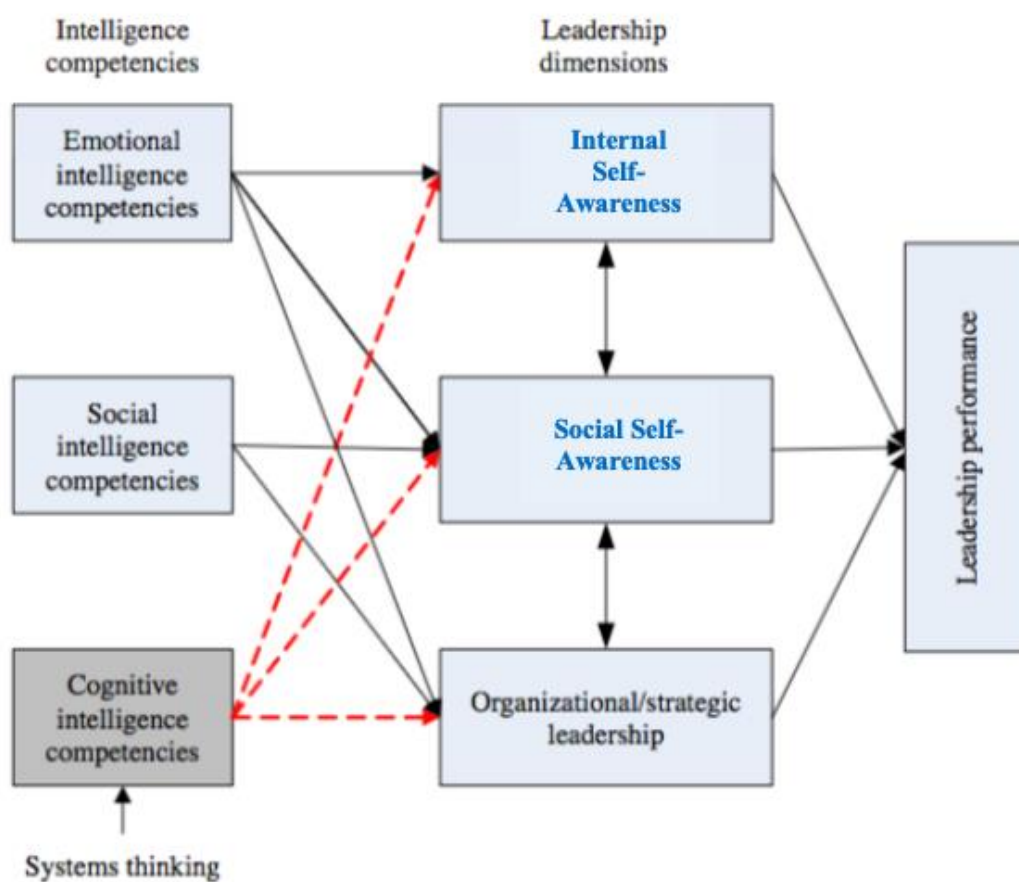
supported and developed by Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010), who focus on systems thinking in their paper, which states that there has been a shift in the conception of an “organisation as a biological model to a sociocultural model” and a shift from analytical thinking to systems thinking. These shifts have been driven by worldwide challenges such as global warming, and developments in technology and communication methods (ibid).

The research conducted by Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010) supports the connections between emotional intelligence, social intelligence and cognitive intelligence. The study presents a model that explains the impact of the three intelligence competencies on leadership/organisation performance. The model is replicated at figure 4.2 and demonstrates that systems thinking is envisioned as a cognitive intelligence which impacts on personal, relationship and organisational/strategic leadership dimensions. Similarly, emotional and social intelligence competencies impact on personal, relationship and organisational/strategic leadership. Together the three leadership dimensions impact on leadership performance and ultimately organisational performance.



**Figure 4.2: The impact of intelligence competencies on leadership/organisation performance taken from Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010)**

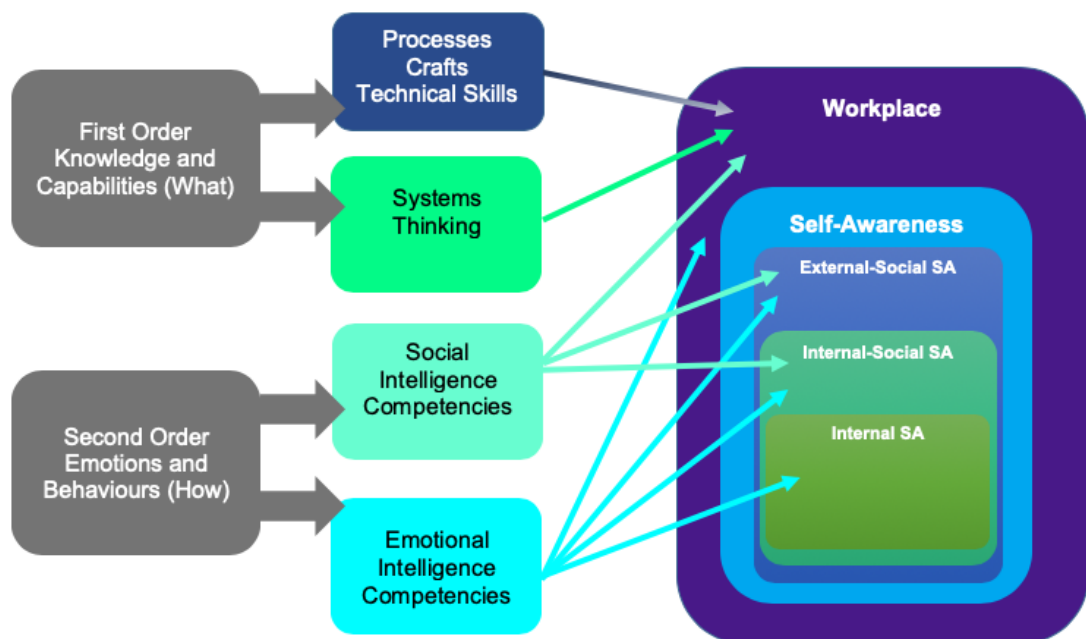
Reflecting on the three-layer model of self-awareness used within this thesis alongside the study by Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010), personal leadership is reflective of internal self-awareness. Relationship leadership is reflective of internal-social and external-social self-awareness. Organisational/strategic leadership firmly connects the personal and relationship leadership to the workplace, which is also a key aspect of the three-layer model of self-awareness. In considering the adaptability of the model by Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010) to the aim of this theses, some simple developments can be made to make it relevant to self-awareness and this is presented at figure 4.3. The differences to the model are highlighted in blue text.



**Figure 4.3 - The impact of intelligence competencies on leadership/organisation performance adapted from Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010)**

Internal self-awareness and social self-awareness are considered as leadership dimensions here, which is reflective of the summary presented in chapter three, table 3.4. In that table, internal self-awareness is connected to awareness of first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours and social self-awareness is connected to awareness of the impact of knowledge, capability,

emotions and behaviours. The adapted model demonstrates that emotional intelligence competencies impact on internal and social self-awareness. Emotional intelligence competencies impact on organisational/strategic leadership leading to leadership performance. Social intelligence competencies impact on social self-awareness and also organisational/strategic leadership, leading to leadership performance. Cognitive intelligence, conceptualised as systems thinking, impact on internal and social self-awareness and organisational/strategic leadership, leading to leadership performance. The 'organisational performance' element has been removed as it is not relevant to this thesis. For the purposes of this research then, self-awareness will be viewed as a broad construct which encapsulates awareness of cognitive and social abilities (Condon, 2011) as well as emotional abilities. This leads to the furtherance of the model of self-awareness and it is presented in figure 4.4, below. It demonstrates the links between emotional intelligence competencies, social intelligence competencies, systems thinking and self-awareness in the workplace. It also connects the competencies and systems thinking to the relevant layers of self-awareness.



**Figure 4.4 – The Three Layer Model of Self-Awareness and the Intelligence Competencies Developed by Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010)**

The research by Bakhshi et al. (2017) identifying employment skills for 2030 supports the importance of systems thinking and promotes it as an important future skill, alongside second order emotions and behaviours. The study states,

“We find a strong emphasis on interpersonal skills, higher-order cognitive skills and systems skills in both the US and the UK...In the UK, the findings support the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills too, though with an even stronger emphasis on cognitive competencies and learning strategies. System skills – Judgment and Decision-making, Systems Analysis and Systems Evaluation – feature prominently.” (Bakhshi et al., 2017)

This adds weight to the importance of research into self-awareness, particularly linked to leader effectiveness.

#### **4.4 Barriers to Leadership at All Levels**

As has been described in previous chapters, the presentation of dark side descriptions are helpful in generating a rounded definition of e.g. self-awareness and leader effectiveness. This section now moves on to consider barriers to leadership at all levels. Within the literature, bureaucracy is identified as a potential obstacle to leadership at all levels, which is of note to this thesis, being that public service organisations are thought to rely heavily on bureaucratic control mechanisms (Wright and Pandey, 2009), Bureaucratic organisations are described as hierarchical, co-ordinated by rules and separated into production (e.g. front line), organisational (e.g. middle management) and executive (e.g. strategic) functions (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009). The study by Wright and Pandey (2009) presents literature which indicates that transformational leadership is less prevalent within organisations that are highly centralised, formalised and bureaucratic. This notion is supported by Leslie and Canwell (2010), who state that if intellectually capable people, and “senior public sector leaders are typically highly capable individuals”, work in unnecessarily complex and inflexible organisations they are often unable to exercise effective leadership. Murphy et al. (2017) are also of the view that leaders in the public sector are severely constrained from making significant differences. This is supported by van Der Voet (2014); in the paper’s literature review, clear evidence is presented that centralisation, formulisation and red tape in an organisation can stifle innovative change.

There is, however, an alternate argument that suggests that bureaucratic organisations operate both formal and informal systems as a means of dealing with complexity. The research paper by Schneider and Somers (2006) states that organisations have changed from a “bureaucracy with clear boundaries and internal areas of authority to a new form,

which has fluid and flexible external and internal boundaries”. With this new form there is a new leadership style that is less reliant on managerial authority and more reliant on a new set of ideas, i.e. complexity theory. The paper (ibid) describes a complex adaptive system as one where a leader leads without authority, in a temporary capacity and without having formally taken on a leadership role, instead emerging as a leader rather than having been appointed to a leadership role. This is reflective of the view held by Lichtenstein et al. (2006) that the leadership function sits with an agents for an instance event or period of time where that individuals’ skills are needed. Leaders may also lead in tandem with others (Schneider and Somers, 2006). This adds to the concept put forward by Holden (2005) that agents operate without predictability, that their interactions are dynamic and their decisions impact others. Agents operate within a system and their decisions and actions are continually changing in response to energy into the system. This study (ibid) is of particular interest to this thesis as it connects a new and emerging model of leadership with the management of organisations faced with turmoil (Baron and Parent, 2015) that are dealing with increasingly complex and messy situations (Leslie and Canwell, 2010) where change is continuous and uncertain (Alavi and Gill, 2017). The model of complexity leadership therefore aligns well with organisations within the Welsh public service facing complexity in their day-to-day operation.

The paper by Fernandez et al. (2010), presents a number of studies that seek to merge models of leadership, particularly those concerned with “re-conceptualising leadership as a role performed by various organisational members operating at multiple levels of the hierarchy”. The paper (ibid) presents the concept of ‘integrated leadership’, also referred to as shared, distributed and dispersed leadership, in relation to public sector performance in the United States. It asserts that the following leadership functions are embedded within the roles of team leaders, supervisors, managers and senior executives: task, relations, change, diversity and integrity orientated leadership. Indeed, “middle managers serve a critical role in organizations as architects and champions for organizational change” (Fernandez et al., 2010). This supports the notion that agents operate as leaders at a given point in time and leaders can be found at all levels within organisations, being that leadership functions are inherent in job descriptions of numerous roles across organisations.

In the study by Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010) relationship leadership is also described as the interactions of agents within an organisation. The interactions between agents are said to generate change and therefore, for an instance or event, the

leadership function is vested in those agents (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). This suggests that leadership does not sit with individuals at senior positions within organisations but with agents who are discharging leadership functions at a given point in time. This is termed 'adaptive leadership' which is an informal leadership process that occurs when agents intentionally interact to "generate and advance novel solutions" to organisational challenges (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009).

The Wright and Pandey (2009) study findings identify that some bureaucratic characteristics reduce the practice of transformational leadership behaviours whereas other do not. They state that some public sector organisations operate bureaucratic practices in the areas of procurement and human resource management but this has no impact on behaviours associated with transformational leadership. The Wright and Pandey (2009) study concludes that structural constraints in the public sector do not necessarily stand in the way of superior performance and leadership. In many circumstances, "leadership can perform an integrating function to overcome structural constraints". This is supported by Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009) who opine that in reality, organisations have "fuzzy boundaries" and "exhibit 'meso interactive dynamics', which are a blend of structured and dynamic behaviors" creating formal and informal systems. The entangled meso functions operate across organisational levels (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009) which support the notion of leadership at all levels. This is supported by Murphy et al. (2017) who state that in such a complex environment, adaptive (i.e. informal (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009)) practices prevail.

In presenting recent complexity leadership thinking, the article by Murphy et al. (2017) describes a number of different forms of complexity leadership theory, listing administrative leadership, adaptive leadership and enabling leadership. Adaptive leadership focusses on harnessing new discoveries, innovation and problem solving as a means of adapting to change. The research findings identify that in the most complex environments, "adaptive practices predominate". The study (ibid) ends by stating that a "core function of leadership is to embrace leadership tensions and help shift actors beyond 'either/or' towards paradoxical thinking" to cope with the complex, collaborative, cross-boundary, adaptive work in which they are increasingly engaged. This is supportive of the view held by Klare et al. (2014, p.23), who states that one of the purposes of leadership is to move people towards a common goal. This study (Murphy et al., 2017) is helpful to this thesis in that it connects the notions of leadership at all levels with organisational complexity and supports the requirement for positive relationships, which is evidenced in the literature as underpinned by self-awareness.



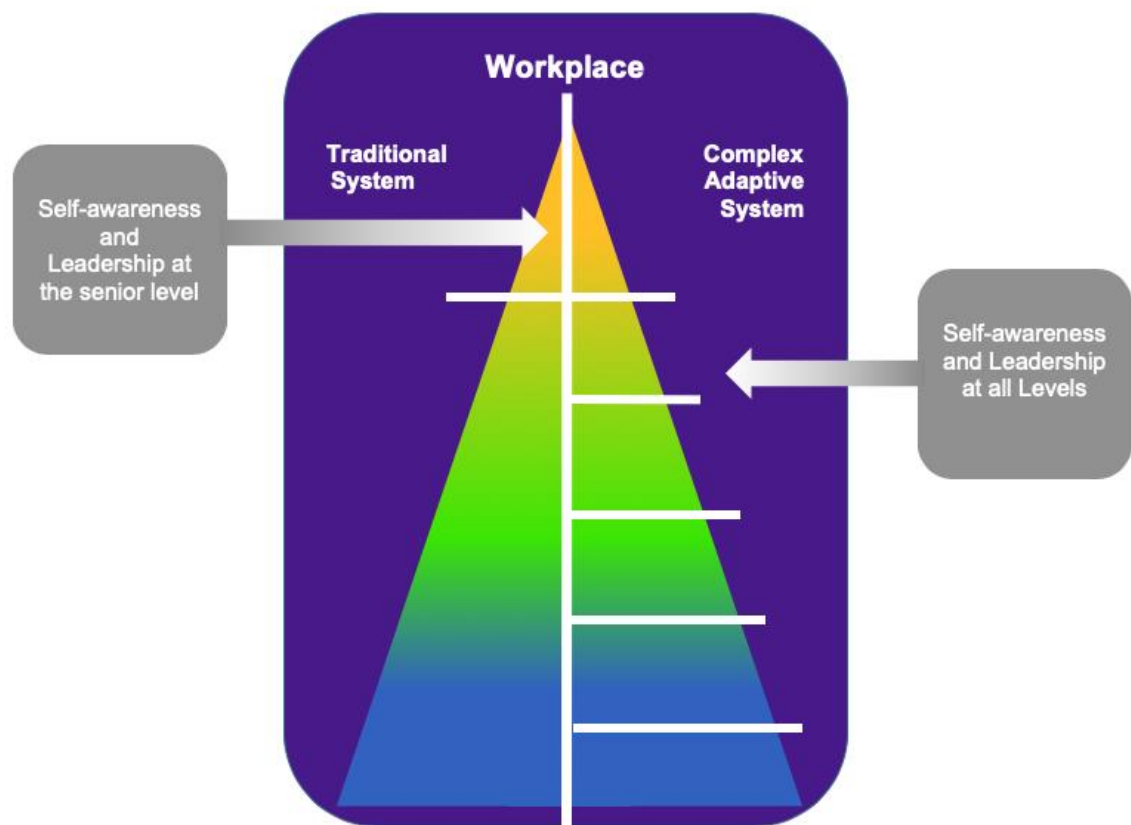
In considering the studies by Lichtenstein et al. (2006), Schneider and Somers (2006) and Wright and Pandey (2009) a paradox appears. Lichtenstein et al. (2006) and Schneider and Somers (2006), on the one hand, present the notion that organisations are becoming more complex with leadership appearing at all levels. Whereas the studies by Wright and Pandey (2009) and Murphy et al. (2017) state that public sector organisations remain bureaucratic in many areas but individuals within those organisation are learning to lead effectively regardless of these constraints through the operation of both formal and informal systems, described by Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009). Reflecting on the impact of cognitive intelligences, viewed as a vital element of leader effectiveness, a cautionary note should be included here. People who discuss systems and multiple-causal relationships with others might be seen as too analytical (Amdurer et al., 2014) which may have a negative impact on their ability to develop positive working relationships with others. This suggests that the idea presented by Stogdill (1948), that a leader should not be too much more intelligent than the group being led, due to followers' ability to understand the leader's vocabulary, was still pertinent and relevant, over 70 years later.

The impact of Coronavirus COVID-19 on organisations has been significant. In the article by Fernandez and Shaw (2020), distributed leadership is seen as a best practice in managing in a crisis. The article states in "a complex adaptive challenge.. top-down hierarchical approach is unlikely to be successful... Distributing leadership responsibilities is more effective than other leadership approaches in a crisis". 'Allostatic leadership' is presented in the article as a model of leadership which may be more suited and more able to deal with the stresses of the future.

#### **4.5 A Summary of Leadership at All Levels**

Within the literature, the dominant view is that leaders are found at the upper echelons of organisations and leadership is synonymous with seniority (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003, Carmeli, 2003, Burke, 2006, Moorhouse, 2007, Murphy et al., 2017). There is evidence that greater emotional intelligence is demonstrated through greater job performance, when job performance is conceptualised as salary, that being: the greater the emotional intelligence the greater the salary and therefore the higher the job level (Rode et al., 2017). However, in response to the complex situations in which organisations find themselves at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, complexity leadership theory is gaining interest and being viewed as increasingly relevant (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). Complexity

leadership conceptualises cognitive intelligence as systems thinking (Palaima and Skarzauskiene, 2010) and therefore the case can be made that emotional intelligence, or internal self-awareness, social intelligence or social self-awareness as well as cognitive intelligence or systems thinking are relevant to leader effectiveness. This is in contrast to the studies that argue that cognitive intelligences are merely threshold competencies and do not account for greater work success (Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005, Showry and Manasa, 2014, Boyatzis et al., 2013). This is summarised below in figure 4.5



**Figure 4.5: Self-Awareness and Leadership in Traditional and Complex Adaptive Systems**

Bureaucracy is raised as a potential barrier to the effective implementation of leadership at all levels, due to the policy and procedural restrictions prevalent within bureaucratic organisations (Wright and Pandey, 2009, van Der Voet, 2014). This is relevant to this thesis, being that public service organisations are generally viewed as bureaucratic. However, there is evidence that individuals are learning to lead, regardless of the constraints, through an adaptive leadership model (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009, Wright and Pandey, 2009, Murphy et al., 2017).

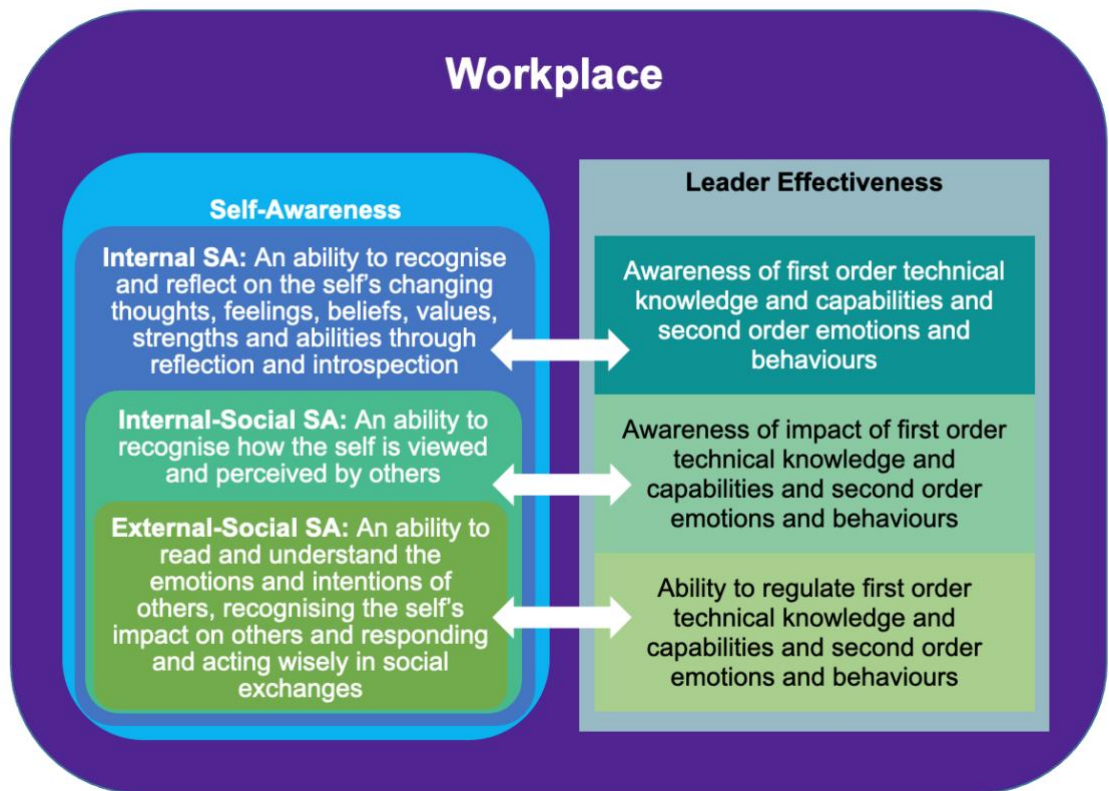
The research method for this thesis will be constructed in such a way as to identify at what job levels leaders can be found, thereby ensuring data will be able to be extrapolated across levels of hierarchy. This will allow findings regarding self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job levels to be correlated, as a means of better understanding the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness across the Welsh Public Service.

The literature states that the existence of leadership at low levels of the hierarchy is a positive organisational characteristic and a key determinant of work-team effectiveness (Fernandez et al., 2010). Therefore, if it is the case that leaders can be found at all levels within an organisation and self-awareness is required for effective leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Brown and Treviño, 2006, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Caldwell, 2009, Leslie and Canwell, 2010, Boyatzis et al., 2013), it appears a logical step to suggest that self-awareness can also be found at all levels.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has considered leadership synonymous with seniority, which is the dominant view held within the literature. It has also presented the literature concerning complex adaptive system and complexity leadership as the antithesis. It has explored how individuals are learning to lead in an adaptive way, even in bureaucratic organisation.

In culmination of the literature reviewed across chapters two three and four, an original model is presented which combines the three layers of self-awareness (internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness) with the three key elements of knowledge essential for leader effectiveness (awareness of, awareness of impact of and ability to regulate first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours). It presents this against the workplace backdrop where the workplace is conceived as a complex adaptive system.



**Figure 4.6: The Three Layers of Self-Awareness and the Knowledge Necessary for Leader Effectiveness**

The next chapter will form the bridge between the literature reviewed and the research methodology. It will discuss how the self/other ratings studies will be moved forward. It will also present a number of self-awareness and leader effectiveness instruments and identify those most pertinent to this thesis. It will also present the new five functions job level framework, developed specifically for this thesis. It will do so in reference to the literature related to organisational stratification and job levels. It will establish the Welsh public service context in which this research is conducted and will set out the research objectives and questions which will take this thesis from literature to action.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Research Framework**

## 5.1 Introduction

Chapters two and three explored the literature and defined self-awareness and leader effectiveness. Self-awareness has been defined as a three-layer model constituted of internal self-awareness and social self-awareness, made of internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness. Leader effectiveness has been defined as requiring awareness of, awareness of impact of, and ability to regulate first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours. Chapter four presented leadership synonymous with seniority and leadership discernible at all levels of an organisation, through a complex adaptive leadership model. The view of this thesis is that the Welsh public service is a complex adaptive system, with leadership functions moving between agents in response to priorities and demands.

This chapter now moves on to present the research framework, connecting the foundations and theory of this thesis with the research methodology. It will begin by exploring and considering the self/other ratings studies and how this thesis moves the topic of self-awareness forward. It will consider the challenges of using quantitative instruments within the socially constructed fields of self-awareness and leader effectiveness. It will then present research instruments relative to self-awareness and leader effectiveness, considering the appropriateness of each for this thesis and setting out the determined instrument for both. For self-awareness, the SA3Q questionnaire, developed specifically for this thesis will be presented

The chapter will then present the unique job levels framework which has been developed for this thesis, which is initially presented as a four-layer framework. It will begin by exploring the literature regarding organisational stratification before setting out the job levels framework in detail. It will then explore the Welsh public service context, considering the employment demographics of the sector and establishing the sector as the beating heart of this thesis.

It will present the research questions which have been developed to move from the theoretical aim of this thesis to the research activity. It will do so by presenting the research framework, linking the aim, objective and research questions and demonstrating the coherence and linkages between them. It will conclude by presenting the research onion, developed by Saunders et al. (2007 p.129-139), which is used to guide the considerations of the research methodology, presented at chapters six and seven.

## 5.2 Moving the Self/Other Ratings Studies Forward

This section compares this thesis to the self/other ratings studies presented in chapter two, as a means of demonstrating how this thesis moves the topics of self-awareness and leader effectiveness conceptually forward.

There is a tension between the study of socially constructed phenomena and the use of quantitative methods, such as those used in the self/other ratings studies (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011). Reflecting on the literature presented, both self-awareness and leader effectiveness are said to be constituted in relation to others (Brewer and Gardner, 1996, Sparrowe, 2005, Uhl-Bien, 2006, Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014), thereby establishing self-awareness and leader effectiveness as socially constructed concepts. However, the tools used in the research methodology of the self/other ratings studies (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011) are, in the main, questionnaires. This places the common research methods for gaining insight into self-awareness and leader effectiveness squarely into the positivist paradigm using quantitative methods.

A variety of techniques have been developed in the psychological sciences to measure attributes of soft systems, such as psychometrics, econometrics and psychophysics (Maul et al., 2016) yet “companies struggle to assess soft skills without a formal process” (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2019). Babones (2016) is highly critical of the preoccupation with quantitative research in the social sciences and the literature states that the positivist tradition is ill-equipped to fully answer many questions about the social world (D’Cruz et al., 2018). “How can an attribute that is constructed by humans be a quantity, or a real property at all?” (Maul et al., 2016). If an attribute is not quantitative, it is thought by some that it “therefore cannot be measured” (Michell, 2011). To justify the use of measurement scales in psychology, psychometrics would need to comply with the formal framework of measurement in physics, but this would be impossible because mental attributes (e.g. self-awareness and emotional intelligence) “are not as easy to handle and control as attributes are in physics” (Guyon et al., 2018). Michell (2011, p.245) argues that “there is no evidence that the attributes that psychometricians aspire to measure (such as abilities, attitudes and personality traits) are quantitative”. However, Pythagoras states that all things are made of numbers and quantity and numbers are “ubiquitous features of every real situation” (Michell, 2011). This gives validity to expressing human thoughts and feelings via enumerators.

A paradox is evident in the literature between social science exploration and quantitative measurement. Michell (2011) clarifies this problem, asserting that abilities, attitudes and personality traits are not quantitative, meaning that psychometric tests should be considered ordinal scaling not measurement tools. If it is the case that psychometric tests are therefore not viewed as deductive tools based on scientific protocols but are tools to support inductive reasoning they will accordingly produce ordinal scales, which is useful to this thesis.

The self/other ratings studies employed a number of different data sets, ranging from Scholastic Aptitude Test scores (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992) to formal instruments. The studies by Atwater and Yammarino (1992) and Van Velsor et al. (1993a) rely on one instrument whereas Sosik and Megerian (1999) rely on six. The administration of six questionnaires would be problematic due to differences in collation and interpretation, as well as the time required by respondents to complete all six, which would likely reduce the number of respondents completing the whole survey. The self/other ratings study by Church (1997) makes no reference to any specific instruments, rather it states that “a number of behaviourally based indices” were used. This is unhelpful and makes the research un-replicable. Being that the study by Bratton et al. (2011) uses two distinct instruments which explore both leadership and emotional intelligence, the former having been used in the initial study by Atwater and Yammarino (1992), the EQI and MLQ-5X will be examined further below, alongside other relevant self-awareness and leader effectiveness instruments. Here, (table 5.1) the instruments which could be identified from within the self/other ratings studies are listed, as a means of considering what instruments might be helpful to the study at hand:



**Table 5.1 – Instruments and Data Collection Methods From the Self/Other Ratings Studies**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Instruments / Data collection methods</b>
Atwater and Yammarino (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass, 1985; Bass &amp; Avolio, 1990): Self, Senior, Subordinate questionnaires</li> </ul>
Van Velsor et al. (1993a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benchmarks (Center for Creative Leadership, 1990), a multi-rater assessment instrument containing twenty-two scales. Sixteen of the twenty-two scales were used in the study.</li> </ul>
Sosik and Megerian (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feningstein (1975) 10 item private self consciousness scale and 7 item private self consciousness scales</li> <li>• Crambaugh (1968) 20 item Purpose in Life test</li> <li>• Snyder (1974) Self Monitoring Scales</li> <li>• Paulhus (1983) 10 item scales for personal efficacy</li> <li>• Hogan (1969) 3 item social self-confidence scale</li> <li>• MLQ-5X (Bass and Avolio, 1997) self and other forms</li> </ul>
Bratton et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MLQ-5X (Bass and Avolio, 1990) rater and leaders (self) form</li> <li>• Bar-On's (1997) EQI</li> </ul>

As has already been described above, multi-source feedback rating, or 360 degree feedback assessments (Atwater et al., 1998, Bratton et al., 2011), are the primary research methods discernible in the self/other ratings studies, which are positivist in stance. They have become the principal way to measure individual self-awareness in organisations (Taylor et al., 2012).

In general terms, in the self/other ratings studies, three direct reports complete an assessment about the senior subject (e.g. Sosik and Megerian (1999) but in this thesis, no individuals will be required to be assessed by a specified number of direct reports. Managers will not be required to complete questionnaires about subordinates, as this method has been repeated and found to have consistent findings.

In the self/other ratings studies, specific groups of individuals were sampled, such as student leaders in training at the US Naval Academy (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992) and managers and subordinates in a business unit of a large US based information services and technology firm (Sosik and Megerian, 1999). However, in this thesis, subjects will be more broadly identified and everyone employed within the Welsh public service will be given the opportunity to participate in the study.

The 2019 Global Talent Trends report (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2019) takes a forward view of assessment of second order emotions and behaviours and soft skills stating that,

“Other methods that go beyond the interview aren’t as popular yet, but could lead to less biased assessments. Projects let you see candidates’ soft skills in action; techbased assessments like Koru, Pymetrics, and Plum use AI [artificial intelligence] to measure candidates’ soft skills more systematically.” (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2019)

Koru7, developed by company Cappfinity, assesses for grit, rigour, impact, teamwork, curiosity, ownership and polish through a “simple and fun online 20-minute assessment” (Cappfinity, 2020). Pymetrics use ‘core games’ to measure cognitive and emotional attributes such as attention, fairness, emotion and generosity (Pymetrics, 2020).

The choice of methodology for this study will be guided by previous studies.

### **5.3 Self-Awareness Instruments**

As has already been mentioned the article by Bratton et al. (2011) criticised the study by Sosik and Megerian (1999) for its use of an invalidated emotional intelligence measurement tool. Therefore, it is important to consider validated tools in this thesis. This section will now go on to explore extant instruments, considering their merits and utility in meeting the aim of this thesis.

The EQ:i was developed by Bar-On in 1997 (Bar-On, 1997) and is one of the most widely used emotional intelligence measures, having been translated into over 29 languages (Ekermans et al., 2010). The EQ-i is a 133-item self-report inventory (Dawda and Hart, 2000). It assesses individual differences on a variety of traits and self-concepts organised into four broad dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability and stress management (Parker et al., 2011). The instrument generates a single score and is viewed as a good overall index of emotional intelligence (Dawda and Hart, 2000). However, research validating the factorial structure of the EQ-i and its different versions are limited (Ekermans et al., 2010).

Supporting the framework in the study by Riggio and Reichard (2008), presented in chapter two, is a self-assessment measuring tool, the Social Skills Inventory (SSI) (Riggio and Carney, 1989). It is a 90-item self-report measure that assesses all six of the skills presented in the framework: emotional expressiveness, emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social expressiveness, social sensitivity and social control. The SSI scales have shown good test-retest reliability (Riggio, 2005). Riggio et al. (2003) state

that using the SSI, they were able to explore the role of communication competence in predicting leader emergence and leader effectiveness and therefore applicability to this thesis would be high. However, the length of the survey would be of concern. A brief version of the social skills inventory has been developed by Riggio (confirmed by Ronald Riggio in email exchange of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018), but in conducting a literature search through FindIt, Scopus, Google Scholar and Google, of its development, uses and validity, no information was found which raises concerns about the tool's suitability and contemporary rigour and validity.

The article by Parker et al. (2011) acknowledges that the better validated emotional intelligence assessments are lengthy and time consuming. This would certainly be true of the SSI and EQ-i referred to above, being that both consist of 90 and 133 items respectively. Their inclusion in this research method would be impractical due to the time commitment required of subjects to complete them. In their study, Parker et al. (2011) review four of the more widely cited short emotional intelligence instruments, with 'short' being identified as having 40 items or less: the trait meta-mood scale (TMMS), assessing emotions scale, the trait emotional intelligence questionnaire short form (TEIQue-SF) and the EQ-i short form (EQ-i:S). These short forms are considered below.

The TMMS was developed by Salovey et al. (1995) and has 30 items. It measures three core meta-mood processes: attention to change in one's mood; discerning the causes of change in one's mood; and regulating one's mood. However, Parker et al. (2011) state that this is a weakness, as it does not seek to measure empathy, understanding of others' emotions and interpersonal skills. For the purposes of this thesis, the three meta-mood process measures appear to be related to internal self-awareness only and omit internal and external social self-awareness, which therefore limits its applicability here. In the study by Palmer et al. (2001) adaptations were made to the items to gain information about others as well as self.

The 'assessing emotions' scale was developed by Schutte et al. (1998) and has 33 items across the domains originally developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and presented in chapter two. However, the tool appears to be unreliable, with factor reliability being questioned in a number of studies (Parker et al., 2011, Nagy, 2012)

The TEIQue-SF was developed by Petrides (2009) and consists of 30 items. A concern with this survey is the factor reliability across the four areas of emotionality, self-control, sociability and well-being. Parker et al. (2011) state that the tool is suitable as a general

measure of global emotional intelligence which is supported in a later article by Siegling et al. (2015). They identify the TEIQue-SF as an effective tool to assess trait emotional intelligence in adults on a self-report basis. However, the article (Siegling et al., 2015) identifies construct validity problems with the full form which has transferred to the short form.

The EQ-i:S, was developed in 2002 by Bar-On (2002), as a shortened version of the full-length survey (Parker et al., 2011). The short version has 51 items rather than 133 grouped into six scales: intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, general mood and positive impression. In their study which reviewed 35 items of the short form (omitting the general mood and positive impression scales), Parker et al. (2011) highlighted that most of the short emotional intelligence measurement tools result in apparent compromise in results, but the Bar-On EQ-i:S is a notable exception. In two studies with more than 2,500 respondents, the EQ-i:S “produced internally consistent, temporally reliable, and theoretically meaningful responses that also followed a stable, gender-invariant, multidimensional measurement structure.” (Parker et al., 2011). This suggests that of all the instruments reviewed, the EQ-i:S is the instrument most likely to yield stable and accurate results. However, concerns were raised about the ‘fakability’ of the instrument in the study by Grubb and McDaniel (2007), which concluded that the EQ-i:S is ‘substantially fakable’, with respondents easily able to misrepresent themselves on the test to obtain a high score. Therefore, this instrument is also felt to be unable to appropriately answer this thesis’ aim to critically explore self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service, focusing in particular on leadership at all levels.

The multi-source feedback rating method will be utilised in this thesis, but not in the same form as it was in the self/other ratings studies. It is felt that the research method used in the self/other ratings studies has been tested on a number of occasions and findings have been consistently replicated. To replicate the method once again would limit the contribution that this thesis could make to the subject. The self/other ratings studies were focussed, in the main, on understanding individuals however, this thesis is concerned with the characteristics of different hierarchical layers or job levels within the public service organisations in Wales. Therefore, the multi-source feedback rating will not focus on individuals per se, but rather on what information can be gleaned about self-awareness and leader effectiveness of individuals at different job layers. The difference is that self-awareness studies have centred on an individual but in this thesis, self-awareness will centre on a whole job layer, as identified in the four (later developed to

five) functions job level framework presented below. This is relevant as the research method does not propose to identify direct reports and line managers of specified individuals, as this has been done in many previous studies.

From the literature search, no one instrument was identified that focussed on the elements of interest to this thesis or were felt to be sufficiently robust. Due to that, a bespoke self-awareness questionnaire has been developed, which also takes the study beyond the position of using emotional intelligence as a proxy for self-awareness. The content of the questionnaire will be presented in detail in chapter seven.

#### **5.4 Leader Effectiveness Instruments**

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was developed by Bass and Avolio (Avolio and Bass, 2004). Its short form is the MLQ-5X (Rodriguez et al., 2017) and is the most popular instrument for measuring transformational and transactional leadership (Schriesheim et al., 2009). It includes both self and rater (i.e. other) forms. The self form measures self perception of leadership behaviours. The rater form is used to measure leadership as perceived by people at a higher level, same level, or lower level in the organisation, than the leader. Each form has 45 questions (Mind Garden, 2018)

The MLQ is a well-known and widely used tool to measure leadership styles (Sudha et al., 2016). Many published studies have reported reliability and validity of the tool (Sudha et al., 2016). Since its introduction, the MLQ has undergone several revisions, partly to address concerns about its psychometric properties (Antonakis et al., 2003). However, the widespread use of the MLQ has not been without criticism (Antonakis et al., 2003). The study by Schriesheim et al. (2009) criticises the MLQ-5X for being ambiguous in terms of the frame of reference against which respondents should answer the questions; individuals could use individual, team, or organisation as the frame of reference in answering the questions. For the purposes of this thesis, the MLQ / MLQ-5X does not sufficiently emphasise aspects of leader emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness (Duncan et al., 2017) and therefore its relevance is debateable.

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (Walumbwa et al., 2008a) containing 16 self-report items “measures four dimensions of leadership: relational transparency, internal moral perspective, balanced processing and self-awareness” (Duncan et al., 2017). Its construct validity was reviewed in 2018 by academics involved in its original development (Avolio et al., 2018). They found that the original four dimensions remained valid and

the amendments and modifications made in later studies by other scholars were important advancements. For the purposes of this thesis, this questionnaire is relevant, however, an alternative instrument has been found that appears to have greater relevance – that being the Resonant Leadership Scale.

The Resonant Leadership Scale was identified in the study by Laschinger et al. (2014). It was developed by Cummings (2006) and has its foundations within the healthcare sector in Canada (Cummings, 2004). It uses a five point Likert scale where participants indicate the extent to which they feel their immediate supervisor displays particular types of leadership behaviours (Laschinger et al., 2014). It has both a self and an observer version and would therefore be adaptable to this thesis’s research methodology. The self version states “As a nursing leader, I...”. For this thesis, the statement will be amended to “As a leader, I...”. The observer version states, “The leader in my clinical program or unit ...”. For this thesis, the statement will be amended to, “My manager...”.

The questionnaire seeks to identify if an individual is a resonant leader. For the purposes of this study, it is acknowledged that an individual leader who strongly agrees with all ten statements is deemed an effective resonant leader, being that all ten statements are drawn from elements identified as necessary for leader effectiveness. Resonant leadership scores are the average of the sum of ratings given for each individual question (Cummings, 2006). The concept map which forms part of the instructions for the interpretation of results is presented below (table 4.3) and commentary is made on all ten items as a means of connecting them with appropriate element of the model of effective leadership presented in this thesis:

**Table 5.2 – Resonant Leadership Scale Connected to Leader Effectiveness**

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Concept</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Leader Effectiveness Model</b>
Self-awareness	Openness	1. Looks for feedback to ideas and initiatives even when it is difficult to hear.	Awareness of first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours
Self-management	Integrity	2. Acts on values even if it is at a personal cost.	
Self-management	Optimism	3. Focusses on successes and potential rather than failures.	
Self Management	Team Achievement	4. Supports teamwork to achieve goals and outcomes.	

Self Management	Self control	5. Calmly handles stressful situations.	
Social awareness	Empathic	6. Actively listens, acknowledges, and then acts on requests and concerns.	Ability to regulate first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours
Relationship management	Developing Others	7. Actively mentors and coaches individual and team performance.	
Relationship management	Conflict management	8. Effectively resolves conflicts that arise.	
Relationship management	Visionary / inspiring	9. Engages me in working toward a shared vision.	
Relationship management	Empowering	10. Allows me freedom to make important decisions in my work.	

For the purposes of this study, the Resonant Leadership Scale will be used in the leader effectiveness section of the questionnaire.

### 5.5 Four Functions Job Level Framework

In contrast to the self/other ratings studies, job level of respondents will not be identified as a part of the questionnaire qualifying sampling criteria, rather respondents will be asked to identify their own job level and those of their manager through the questionnaire. This aims to meet this thesis's aim to develop findings applicable to all Welsh public service organisations and leaders at all job levels within organisations. Similarly, the job level of interviewees as a secondary layer of sampling will not be exclusive, thereby not precluding any Welsh public service employee from volunteering to take part.

Within the literature, Stratified Systems Theory, first developed by Jaques (1978) is evident as one of the principal areas as investigation necessary to better understand organisational hierarchy and structure. The original theory developed by Jaques (1978) consists of seven work levels. The table below (table 4.4) is a simplification of that developed by Jaques and Stamp (1990) which presents a model of how work is structured across levels of increasing seniority within civilian and military organisations, from strategic to operational. It is simplified so as to remove more detailed elements of description and stratification that are not relevant to this thesis.

**Table 5.3: Levels of Work in Civilian and Military Organisations Adapted from Jaques and Stamp (1990)**

Level of Work by Grouping	Description	Civilian Organisation	Military Organisation
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Strategic	Strategic design, development, deployment of complex systems	Corporation	Army Board
	Direct deployment of complex systems	Group	Corps
Comprehensive	Complex systems, encompassing operating systems and modifying context	Subsidiary	Division
	Alternative operating systems – general management	General Management	Brigade
Operational	Direct operating systems – management of a mutual recognition unit	Unit	Battalion
	Direct operating methods – supervision of a mutual knowledge system	Section	Company
	Direct operating tasks	Shop floor	Squad

The inclusion of the military organisation (column) is helpful in this table, as the descriptors can be mapped across to Welsh public service organisation structures, rather than the multi-faceted corporate entity also presented, which is less reflective of the structures of Welsh public service organisation. The structure of the military organisation presented above is akin to one public service organisation (i.e. a single corporate entity) and thus the comparison with a Welsh public service organisation is achievable. It should be noted that this thesis will not seek responses from army, navy or air force personnel due to the contained nature of the forces – that being, having no direct operating link with local government or public bodies generally accessed by the public, unlike hospitals, schools, police stations etc

Gentry et al. (2013) give examples of the roles that constitute middle-level and upper-middle-level positions, listing: department executives, plant managers, senior staff, office managers or mid-level administrators. In describing top-level executives, the paper identifies them as having at least a bachelor’s degree and in the positions of chief executive officer, chief operating officer or president. The names given to the levels, e.g. upper-middle level and top-level executive, appear more ambiguous than the groupings presented by Jaques and Stamp (1990) and as such, would not be helpful to this thesis. The study by Horton et al. (2014) describes three positions, that of strategic, mid-level and operational roles, from within the British Navy. The strategic level represents the upper levels of the organisation. Mid-level personnel act under the command of strategic personnel and have technical expertise, often backed by academic qualifications. Operational personnel perform technical tasks within “tight-knit functional workgroups”



(Horton et al., 2014). In comparing these against the work level groupings put forward by Jaques and Stamp (1990), operational and strategic are the same, with only comprehensive and mid-level differing.

The study by Miles and Van Clieaf (2017) presents the seven work levels initially developed by Jaques (1989) and directly links them to private sector innovation, grouped into three work domains. Levels one, two and three are considered operational work domains. Levels four and five are grouped within the business development work domain. Levels six and seven are grouped within the global industry, or 'systems of systems' work domain. These three work domain groupings do not correlate across to those presented by Horton et al. (2014), which raises the question of whether organisational stratification in the public sector and the private sector are innately different, due to limited requirement in the public sector to compete for a share of the market, in the same way.

Below is a table (table 5.5) that aims to assimilate the studies by Jaques and Stamp (1990), Horton et al. (2014) and Miles and Van Clieaf (2017), and find commonality in the work domains presented as a means of combining extant literature to move towards relevance to the Welsh public service:

**Table 5.4: Work Domains Comparison Table**

<b>Work Domains: Jaques and Stamp (1990)</b>	<b>Work Domains: Horton et al. (2014)</b>	<b>Work Domains: Miles and Van Clieaf (2017)</b>
Strategic	Strategic	Global Industry (Systems of Systems)
Comprehensive	Mid-level	Business Development
Operational	Operational	Operational

As can be seen in the table, the most commonly used work domain is the operational level, with the strategic level being used in two out of the three studies. However, the middle layer is viewed differently across all three studies. This suggests that the operational and strategic work domains of job levels are more commonly recognised and understood whereas the middle management tiers are open to debate.

The study by Rode et al. (2017) identifies the following job levels: individual contributor (e.g., accountant, programmer/analyst); manager of individuals (e.g., senior accountant, senior programmer,); manager of managers (e.g., sales manager, programming manager); and senior executive (e.g., vice president, division manager). These groupings appear to be overly complex. For example, in large organisations such as

Welsh NHS Trusts there are a number of layers of 'managers of managers'. In effect, from the second layer of manager to the executive directors, this description could apply. It would therefore be of limited use to this thesis, being that the 'manager of managers' level would be too broad to capture nuances across large Welsh public service organisations.

In order to determine the hierarchical position in their organisation, participants in the study by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) were asked to classify their current rank according to six possible levels: board, director, senior management, junior management, intermediate non-managerial and junior professional. These categories appear of limited use to this thesis, in that clinical and nursing staff in the Welsh NHS and police constables and police sergeants in the Welsh police organisations may not recognise their roles, particularly at junior management and intermediate non-managerial level, being that the terminology is not in common use.

In considering the stratification frameworks presented above, this thesis will take a hybrid approach and develop an unique theoretical contribution to the subject. Taking the strategic and operational descriptions put forward by Jaques and Stamp (1990), Horton et al. (2014) and Miles and Van Clieaf (2017), this model adds a further two intermediate layers, that of management and business. The management job level is an amalgamation of management descriptions presented by Rode et al. (2017) and Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017). The business job level function is an adaptation of the business development work domain put forward by Miles and Van Clieaf (2017). This thesis presents a four-layer framework of job levels, determined by function performed by individual at that level. The layers are operational, business, management and strategic. This will broaden applicability of this study to employees at all levels of the Welsh public service.

Roles at the Strategic level are generally entitled 'directors' and 'deputy directors', akin to the senior executives work domain presented by Rode et al. (2017) and director level presented by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017). These roles have the most senior level of responsibility within an organisation, setting its direction and making ultimate policy decisions. Lower level strategic posts, such as assistant directors or heads of services may also have some line management responsibilities and be regularly involved in the 'exceptional people management issues' of their team, such as carrying out disciplinary hearings or making final decisions in matters of staff disputes. Therefore, individual subjects in this study will need to consider where the majority of their

responsibilities lie and decide whether their functions fit with the strategic or management job level.

The roles at the management level will be second and third line managers, involved in brokering communication between the strategic level and the business level. The description is akin to that put forward by Gentry et al. (2013) for middle-level management functions and upper-middle-level positions. The roles will ensure that organisational policies and procedures are implemented and will have overarching financial responsibility for services. Some roles within the Welsh public service organisations may straddle the business and management levels and indeed, in smaller organisations may straddle business, management and strategic levels. However, for the purposes of this thesis, roles will be presumed to sit predominantly within one particular job level. This will need to be tested within the pilot phase; individual subjects' ability to identify their main job level will need to be achievable within the study.

The roles at the business level are envisaged as being first and second line managers or managers of individuals (Rode et al., 2017), that being, team supervisors of operational level staff. They will be responsible for managing the business of an organisation, for example, signing off time-sheets, developing staff rotas, signing off leave and conducting sickness interviews. Such roles within the business job level may be deputy head teachers in smaller schools, ward sisters or duty managers.

The roles at the operational level will be frontline posts with direct operating tasks (Jaques and Stamp, 1990). They will be jobs that have direct contact with service users and clients, such as recycling operatives, nurses, social workers, teachers, speech and language therapists, doctors, police constables etc. The salary of operational staff is not always an indicator of their position within the levels, as many operational staff, such as doctors and teachers will be seen as 'well paid' even though they have direct contact with service users. Staff within this job level will have no supervisory responsibilities.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the unique four functions job level framework which is used and tested in the questionnaire pilot study.



**Figure 5.1 – Four Functions Job Level Framework**

These four functions will be summarily described in the pilot questionnaire, to ensure that they are not too lengthy so as to both maintain the interest of respondents in continuing to work through the questionnaire and also to ensure that the functional layers are understood by respondents. Consideration is given to ensuring that layer descriptors do not lead or bias respondents towards a particular job level.

The pilot study will be further considered later however, it should be highlighted at this point that the initial four-layer model is developed into a five layer model following respondent feedback to the pilot questionnaire.

As previously mentioned, this thesis is influenced by the study by Van Velsor et al. (1993a) which draws participants from three cohorts: managers randomly selected, upper-level managers and hospital administrators, not solely those in senior leadership positions or in training to take on leadership roles. Similarly, the subjects in the study by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) ranged from board level to junior professionals. Reflective of this approach, this thesis will also draw participants from all job levels of the Welsh public service.

## **5.6 Welsh Public Service Context**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimated that Wales had a population of some 3.1 million citizens in 2015 (2016), supported by a network of approximately 90 Welsh public service bodies and organisations (2016). A report (2012a) by the ONS, (reported

on the Welsh Government website) identified that there was an estimated 333,000 people employed in the public sector in Wales in 2011, quarter 3. The breakdown of the sectors shows that 138,000 were in central government, 174,000 in local government and 21,000 in public corporations. The public sector accounted for 25.6% of the total employment in Wales in 2011, quarter 3. This suggests that the impact and influence on Welsh life by the public sector, either through direct support to citizens and services to communities or by direct employment of individuals, is significant.

Only 291,000 people were employed in the public sector in Wales in 2016, quarter 3 (2016) a significant reduction from 2011. This highlights the significant impact of austerity and reducing Welsh public service budgets on the sector. This demonstrates that the Welsh public service is a changing sector, which will have different leadership demands now than it did 10 years before. The influence of and financial erosion of the Welsh public service is a cause for concern and it is anticipated that professionals' feelings of uncertainty and anxiety will filter through the research. It is however, possible that these uncertain times will produce stronger leaders and will give proactive professionals the opportunity to gain promotion over those that are passive bystanders and opposers of change; "increased competitive pressures will place demands for higher quality leadership" (Burke, 2006) and thus an impetus for greater leadership at all levels.

The promulgation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, relevant to 44 of the WPS bodies, will see the development of a different kind of public sector developing in Wales. Quoting directly from the 'Wales We Want' website, the Act will "...make the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach." The Act will insist on improved partnership working and it is suggested that only those who can actively participate in mutually beneficial partnerships will be able to make positive service change (Bourner, 1996, Boyatzis and McKee, 2006). Welsh public service organisations will have to "do things that will have a sustainable positive impact on the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales" (Gray and Jones, 2018). This will involve developing positive relationships through effective relational behaviours. Competencies that will be valued in the future will be: adaptability, self-awareness, boundary spanning, collaboration and network thinking (Petrie, 2014).

The legal and operating framework of the Welsh public service differs from other countries but that difference will not be explored in this thesis, as it does not seek to

compare findings across different countries. More will be discussed in chapter ten about potential extension of this study to different sectors and countries.

The majority of the extant literature that discusses self-awareness does so in relation to specific public sector professions rather than a generally applicable understanding, with a particular emphasis on nursing (Freshwater, 2002, Cook, 1999) and healthcare (Novack et al., 1999), Morgan (2009), teaching (Anzalone, 2001) and social work (Kondrat, 1999). There are elements of these discussions that are relevant to and transferrable to Welsh public service employees, as discussed in chapter two. Morgan (2009) writes as the Project Manager of the National Service Framework for Older People for the Welsh Assembly [correct as to the time of writing] and makes suggestion that self-reflection may be key to developing the public health workforce, neither the words Wales nor Welsh feature within the article, suggesting it has general rather than specific applicability. However, one study with applicability to whole Welsh public service organisations, has been identified. The study by Gray and Jones (2018) takes a whole Welsh public service approach. Participants were sought from local authorities, councils, NHS, Welsh Government, higher/further education, emergency services and prisons. Participants were ultimately drawn from the NHS, councils, a government sponsored body, police, Ministry of Defence, Welsh government, the Royal College of General Practitioners, and the Wales Deanery. Only 68 participants from a potential 400 leaders come forward.

The extant literature discussing leadership effectiveness and relevance to self-awareness in the public sector does so with limited reference to Wales. The focus of a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Leach, 2005) discussed political leadership and the impact of the Local Government Act, 2000 but no elements could be extrapolated to be relevant to employee leadership and used as a theoretical basis for further study. There is much to be read in the literature about the management and leadership in schools in Wales (Estyn, 2001, Wallace, 2002) and the Welsh NHS (White, 2012). Only one paper is identified that references leadership and self-awareness in Wales: that which explores the resilience and wellbeing of public sector leaders by Gray and Jones (2018). As referenced in chapter 2, the study seeks to discover whether a 'salutogenic' model of learning and development could facilitate increased resilience and wellbeing in Welsh public service leaders. The paper makes specific reference to internal self-awareness as a mitigating factor against overwhelm and stress. The findings suggest that the answers to increased resilience and wellbeing are held by leaders themselves and "leaders need to develop self-knowledge/awareness first" (Gray and Jones, 2018).

This supports the earlier discussion in chapter two that self-awareness is a layered process and awareness of self must come before internal self-awareness, which in turn must come before social self-awareness.

As has already been referenced, Academi Wales has produced a framework for leadership behaviours for senior leaders (Academi Wales, 2017). Learning and self-awareness is identified as core leadership behaviour, albeit focussed predominantly on growth and improvement following feedback. The framework lists behaviours that are efficient, effective and exemplary. Internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness behaviour are discernible.

In concluding the discussion on the Welsh context of this thesis, it would be remiss not to make reference to the importance and impact of the Welsh language on the make-up of the Welsh public service. The article by Schedlitzki et al. (2017) focusses specifically on leadership, management and the Welsh language and states, “as a consequence of this linguistic imperialism of the English language, within the public, education and organizational spheres, the dominant image of business leaders bears the imprint of their ability to speak English, leaving Welsh language speakers in the minority in leadership roles”. The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, 2011 made it a legal obligation for the Welsh public service to treat both Welsh and English equally; in producing documents, communicating with citizens and providing services. The Welsh Language Commissioner published a set of 172 legally binding standards in March 2016, applicable to the Welsh public service. The standards impact on resources and staff capacity, in terms of translation, cost, language training, compliance monitoring etc. These factors should be considered in terms of the responses received and indeed, in chapters nine and ten, discussion will be made about future studies, which will include comparatives between Wales and other nations.

## **5.7 Research Questions**

In searching for precision, positivists seek out general, abstract laws or ‘nomothetic statements’, “that ideally can be applied to an infinitely large number of phenomena, people, settings and times” (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The self/other ratings studies generally employ hypotheses to guide their work. The Atwater and Yammarino (1992) self/other rating study had four hypothesis which were articulated. However neither Van Velsor et al. (1993a) nor Sosik and Megerian (1999) articulated any hypothesis that they may have used sufficiently clearly so as to be replicable. In interpretivist study, no

hypotheses are needed as the “research questions and research go beyond what is already known” (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018).

For pragmatic study, flexibility of approach is important and the research outcome is viewed as overriding the requirement to establish an unwavering dogma of process. Therefore, as a means of moving from the high-level theoretical aim of this thesis, through the objectives to implementable questions, this thesis will utilise a set of research questions moving from theory to action. This is presented below in figure 5.2. It is important to ensure flexibility of framework and philosophy at the outset of the research project to ensure flexibility of method and analysis along the journey of discovery.

In their study Patino and Ferreira (2016) identified the criteria which research questions should meet, using the acronym FINGER: feasible, interesting, novel, good, ethical and relevant. Each of the six elements are considered below. Feasible: there is sufficient access to respondents, due to the questionnaire sampling including a broad spectrum of Welsh public service organisations, as taken from the Register of Welsh Public Bodies (Welsh Government, 2018), discussed in detail later. Also, the costs are low, due to the use of free software. Interesting: the results of the study will be applicable to all individuals and organisational development bodies across the Welsh public service. Novel: the study will present new findings, specifically through studying Wales as a particular area not previously studied. Good: the study will expand the career opportunities of the researcher. Ethical: the risk to participants is low and this is fully explored in chapter six. Relevant: the study is relevant and contributes new knowledge to the operation of Welsh public service and has potential applicability in other organisations, which will be discussed in this thesis’ concluding chapter.

For this thesis, the following research questions are considered fundamental in directing the research exploration and achieving the research aim and objectives. Their purpose is to move the framework of this thesis from the high-level theoretical aim and objectives to specific research actions.

**Research question 1: Is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?**

The self/other ratings studies (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011) evidence a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness. This thesis will seek to expand on this



by focusing on resonant leadership, which has its foundations in emotional intelligence (Laschinger et al., 2014, Bawafaa et al., 2015) and seek to generate a Wales-centric position, taking the topic of self-awareness and leader effectiveness forward.

**Research question 2: Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations?**

The literature presented in chapter four explores complex adaptive systems and discusses bureaucracy as a potential barrier to the effective implementation of leadership at all levels. It also presents evidence that individuals are learning to lead despite bureaucracy, through an adaptive leadership model (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009, Wright and Pandey, 2009, Murphy et al., 2017). This question seeks to discover whether leaders can be found at all job levels and develop data to determine whether Welsh public service organisations are, or are not, complex adaptive systems.

**Research question 3: Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations?**

Studies by Carmeli (2003), Dulewicz and Higgs (2003), Burke (2006), Moorhouse (2007), Murphy et al. (2017) and Rode et al. (2017) assert that those in senior leadership positions have greater self-awareness than others within organisations. This question aims to discover whether these study findings are replicated in a Welsh public service context.

**Research question 4: Do effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?**

This question draws from the concluding remarks made in chapter two: 'if it is the case that leaders can be found at all levels within an organisation and self-awareness is required for effective leadership, it appears a logical step to suggest that self-awareness can also be found at all levels.' This question aims to understand the relevance of self-awareness to leader effectiveness, self-awareness at different job levels and leader effectiveness at different job levels of the Welsh public service.

## 5.8 A Framework for Research

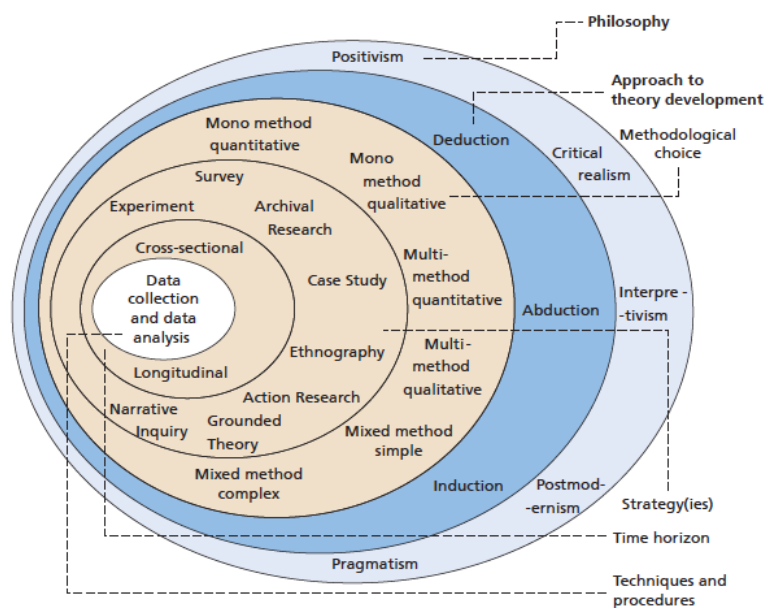
Below is a research framework which has been developed with direct reference to the and objectives set out in chapter one. It also sets out the research questions set out above, linking the three layers together. This framework will be revisited in chapter nine, as a means of ensuring that this thesis has achieved all it has set out to achieve.

<b>Research Framework</b>			
<b>Aim</b>			
To critically explore self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness across all levels of the Welsh Public Services			
<b>Objective 1</b>	<b>Objective 2</b>	<b>Objective 3</b>	
To explore the concept of self-awareness within the workplace context of the Welsh public service	To examine the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service	To determine whether self-aware leaders can be found at all job levels of the Welsh public service	
<b>Research Question 1</b>	<b>Research Question 2</b>	<b>Research Question 3</b>	<b>Research Question 4</b>
Is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?	Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all four levels of Welsh public service organisations?	Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other three job levels of Welsh public service organisations?	Do effective resonant leaders identified at all four levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?

**Figure 5.2 – Research Framework**

## 5.9 Methodology Framework

This thesis's methodology is presented across chapters six and seven. The chapters are guided by the research onion developed by Saunders et al. (2007 p.129-139), presented below at figure 5.3. The layers provide a helpful guide to considering the methodology of this thesis, ensuring that no stone of consideration is left unturned. The theoretical underpinnings of philosophy, approach and methodological choice are presented in chapter six. The practical elements of research strategy, time horizon, data collection and analysis processes are presented in chapter seven.



**Figure 5.3: The Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2003, p.130)**

## 5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the essential elements which connect the literature reviewed in chapters two, three and four with the research activity, which will be presented in chapters six and seven. It has discussed the rationale for using a questionnaire and interviews to move knowledge within the academic field forward, whilst also considering prior-used methods and the social constructionist nature of self-awareness and leader effectiveness.

The chapter then presented the instruments available to use within the study, considering both evidence-based self-awareness and leader effectiveness instruments. It states that due to a lack of suitable self-awareness instruments, a bespoke self-awareness instrument has been developed for this thesis, which is the second original contribution which this study makes to knowledge. It take into account internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness, highlighting stress as a particular area of interest. This is referred to as the SA3Q. The Resonant Leadership Scale, developed by Cummings (2006) has been presented as the most appropriate instrument to gather data regarding leader effectiveness in the context of this thesis.

The contribution this study makes to practice is the four functions job level framework which has been developed, as a tool to allow all Welsh public service employees to

identify their job level, regardless of job title and pay grade. In doing so, literature is considered concerning extant organisational stratification models in order to produce the four functions job level of: strategic, management, business and operational, later amended following the pilot questionnaire study to include 'senior management' between the layers of strategic and management. The chapter has discussed the Welsh public service context, highlighting the dearth of Wales centric studies in the field. However, the support available via Academi Wales is noted, in the form of a framework for leadership behaviours for senior leaders (Academi Wales, 2017), which draws out the importance of self-awareness.

The chapter has presented four research questions which seek to move this thesis from theory to actions. A combined research framework has been presented, linking this thesis's aim, objectives and research questions together as a means of forming the route map and parameters within which this thesis will operate. The chapter concludes by presenting the framework which will be used to present the methodology of this thesis – that being the research onion by Saunders et al. (2007 p.129-139):

The thesis now goes on to consider the theory and philosophy underpinning the research methodology. It will explore philosophy, approach and methodological choice. It will present the ontological and epistemological positions of this thesis, linking them to the approach, that being pragmatism. Positivism and interpretivism will be discussed and the debate concerning qualitative and quantitative study in the social sciences will be presented. The methodological choice of 'mixed methods' will be presented as the most appropriate method for this thesis, utilising both quantitative and qualitative means of study. It will conclude with a discussion about the ethical considerations of this thesis, taking the role of subjects and the stance of the researcher into consideration.

# **Chapter 6**

## **Research Methodology- Theory and Philosophy**

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter formed a bridge linking the literature reviews in chapters two, three and four to the research methodology. In doing so, it presented the methods employed in the self/other ratings study and considered both self-awareness and leader effectiveness instruments. It presented the four functions job level framework, developed specifically for this thesis. It also set out the Welsh public service context relevant to the time of writing. It concluded by presenting objectives and research questions linking the aim of this thesis to three objectives and four research questions, which will form the route map for the remainder of this thesis.

This chapter explores layers one to three of the research onion developed by Saunders et al. (2007 p.129-139): philosophy, approach and methodological choice, presented in chapter one. It will explore the pragmatic research philosophy and approach that underpins the gathering of data to meet the aim of this thesis. The chapter will consider the ontological and epistemological aspects of the research, in order to explain the researcher's standpoint and foundational philosophy, as the driver behind this thesis. It will present the interpretivist and positivist approaches, drawing from the literature presented in chapters two to four. The chapter will present the overall philosophical approach of this thesis which is pragmatism: "a philosophy of common sense" (Shields, 1998). Pragmatism will be presented as a means of connecting the concepts of self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels, under review in this thesis. In setting out the methodological choice, it will present mixed methods as the methodology which will be used to achieve the aim and objectives of this thesis. It will discuss the implications of using both quantitative and qualitative methods to research self-awareness and leader effectiveness, both considered to be socially constructed concepts, in line with this thesis's pragmatic philosophy.

It will concluding the theoretical and philosophical challenges of the research methodology, it will set out ethical considerations of this thesis by exploring the views of the researcher in conducting research where data and opinions are gathered from individual Welsh public sector employees at a time when the researcher was also employed in the same.

## **6.2 Philosophy**

This section begins by presenting the researcher's ontological and epistemological stance, as a means of explaining the connecting thread between the researcher's view of the world, view of evidencing the world and this thesis's topic and methodology. The definition of ontology, epistemology and methodology is succinctly encapsulated by Carson et al. (2001, p.4), who state, "essentially, ontology is reality, epistemology is the relationship between that reality and the researcher; and the methodology is the technique(s) used by the researcher to discover that reality". Gray (2014, p.19) describes this another way, stating, "while ontology embodies understanding what is, epistemology tries to understand what it means to know". Ontology is described as philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality; epistemology is described as a general set of assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world.

### **6.2.1 Ontology**

Ontology refers to a branch of philosophical study (Campbell, 2015) about the nature of reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008), essentially the study of being (Allmark and Machaczek, 2018). Simply put, it is the study of things or the 'what' of reality. It focusses "on the general nature of concepts or entities, particularly concerned with the identification, in a general sense, with the kinds of things that are existent" (Campbell, 2015) and what constitutes reality (Gray, 2014). Ontology relates to the values a researcher holds about what can be known as real and what someone believes to be factual (Ryan, 2018). Ontological questions about existence or the nature of existence are often deferred to science (Jarvie, 2011) and scientific protocols and experiments as a means of generating answers.

This thesis's ontological stance is social constructionism. In considering self-awareness and leader effectiveness, they are socially constructed, which has already been set out in chapters two to four. Saunders et al. (2003, p.137) explain social constructionism as a "reality...constructed through social interaction in which social actors create partially shared meanings and realities, in other words reality is constructed intersubjectively". This thesis postulates the view that the questionnaire responses and interview feedback gathered through the research strategy are derived solely from the opinion of the respondents and interviewees, driven by their experiences and views. There can be no correct or incorrect answers to the questions posed, unlike a question concerning the density of marble versus malachite or the force of the sea against the rocks. This can

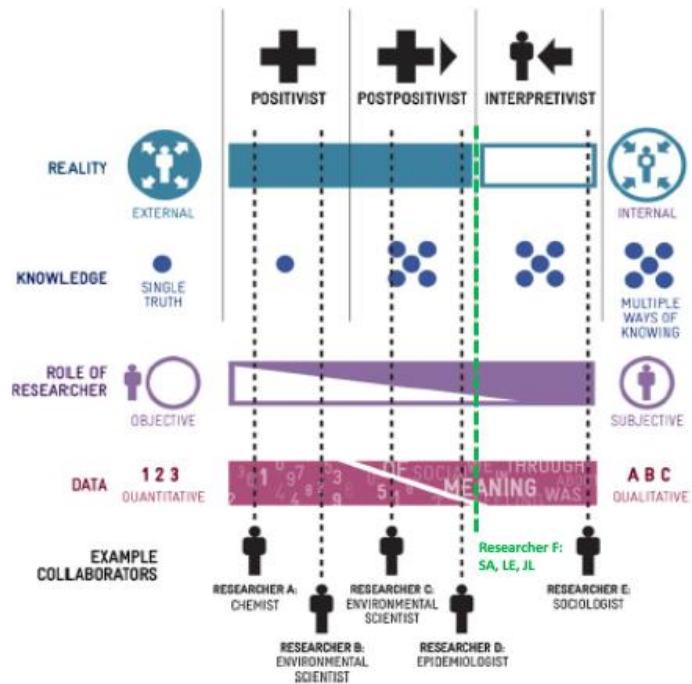
be seen in the questionnaire construction, in that respondents are asked to identify their agreement to statements posed along a Likert scale rather than asked to define a specific numerical answer or to choose yes or no, true or false.

### **6.2.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology refers to the philosophical study of knowledge (Allmark and Machaczek, 2018), its nature and range of scope (Campbell, 2015) or the 'how' of reality. It is "our belief about how we may come to know the world" (Ryan, 2018). Epistemology provides a philosophical background for deciding what kind of knowledge are legitimate and adequate (Gray, 2014). Such questions as "How do we know whether something is true or false? How confident can we be that we have found the truth?" (Campbell, 2015) would be considered epistemological. This thesis's epistemological stance is pragmatism – explored in detail later in the chapter. The method by which this thesis comes to better understand the 'problem' of the relationship between self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels is of less importance than understanding what those relationships are.

A helpful paradigm continuum has been developed by Phoenix et al. (2013) demonstrating where along a continuum different philosophical worldview are situated. The continuum at figure 6.1 is an adaptation from Phoenix et al. (2013) and an additional point has been added along the continuum. The pragmatic, philosophical position of this thesis is identified by the green dotted line linked to 'Researcher F'; squarely positioned between post-positivism and interpretivism. In considering reality, this thesis takes the 'external' position (interpretivist). In terms of knowledge, this thesis takes the view that there are multiple ways of knowing (interpretivism). For the role of the researcher, the questionnaire is objective and the interviews are subjective. In terms of data, the questionnaire is predominantly quantitative and the interviews are qualitative. Therefore, for every pull to the left, there is a pull to the right, drawing the philosophical viewpoint of this thesis towards a central, practical, pragmatic position.





**Figure 6.1 – Continuum of Philosophical Worldviews, adapted from (Phoenix et al., 2013)**

### 6.3 Approach

There are two main approaches to gaining knowledge in the social sciences (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988) and they are interpretivism and positivism (Carson et al., 2001). Interpretivism and positivism should be considered “summary labels” of general research approaches (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988) and effectively operate as umbrella terms for worldviews sitting either one side or another of the central point of the research philosophy continuum, as explained above in figure 6.1. Goldkuhl (2012) identify pragmatism as a third way, stating,

“...a major part of the meta-scientific debate has concerned the two rivals interpretivism and positivism. In a paradigm analysis within business ethics, Wicks & Freeman (1998) have added pragmatism as a third alternative besides interpretivism and positivism. A similar stand has been taken by Fishman (1999) in psychology.”

A literature review was conducted of research philosophies which yielded 40 different philosophical worldviews based on either interpretivist or positivist ideology. This section now goes on to explore some of those philosophies.

### 6.3.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism considers the world to exist based on human experiences and how individual humans understand those experiences (Ryan, 2018). Reality is therefore conceived as something subjective and given meaning by individuals through their interpretations of their experiences and interactions with others (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Interpretive studies assume that an individual's involvement in interactions with other people, instances, events and the world around them forms their reality and from that reality, individuals generate meaning (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991, Saunders et al., 2003). This is in direct contrast to positivism which views the world as fixed and absolute and not open to subjective interpretation (Flick, 2014, p.75)

In reviewing the interpretivist paradigm, no one school of thought was noted as being more prevalent in the literature than another, but the following were identified as most commonly referenced: naturalism (Gray, 2014, Hudson and Ozanne, 1988, Carson et al., 2001); phenomenology (Gray, 2014, Ryan, 2018, Carson et al., 2001); subjectivism (Gray, 2014, Ryan, 2018, Hudson and Ozanne, 1988); and social constructionism (Gergen, 1985, Saunders et al., 2003, Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, Campbell, 2015). These noted paradigms are discussed further below and reference is made as to why none are deemed appropriate overarching philosophies for this thesis.

Naturalism and phenomenology are concerned with understanding human behaviour from the researcher's perspective (Carson et al., 2001, p.7). In the naturalistic paradigm, inquiry develops organically in response to the researcher's experiences (Gray, 2014). It highlights that each individual is offering their subjective viewpoint and reflection on a situation which cannot be prejudged and pre-designed. This stance is of questionable benefit to this thesis, being that the researcher is primarily interested in the view of individual Welsh public service employees about other employees. It is accepted that this thesis, centred on self-awareness and leader effectiveness, is developed from the researcher's frame of reference, but in building the research methodology, through the questionnaire, respondents' opinions are given without interference by the researcher. Only once the questionnaire feedback has been received and analysed are interviews conducted, as a way of furthering the interpretation of the questionnaire findings.

Phenomenology centres on an individual's interpretation of a particular event or phenomenon. It is suggested that for every new phenomenon human understanding is "unadulterated by our preconceptions" (Gray, 2014). It is primarily orientated towards

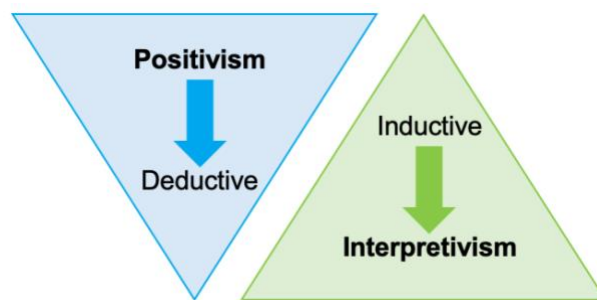
the immediate thoughts and feelings of an individual in a given situation (Carson et al., 2001, p.17). Even though Gummesson (2000, p.174) states that “phenomenology should be the prevailing approach to qualitative research in the social sciences”, its application to this thesis would not be helpful. This is because, to conceive of every event as new and not impacted by past experiences would underestimate the human capacity to remember and be influenced by the past. It is felt that without this accumulation of experiences, thoughts and feelings towards colleagues built up from past experience, Welsh public service respondents would be unable to complete the questionnaire and undertake the interviews.

Subjectivism asserts that reality is what we believe to be true based on “our own perceptions, experiences and feelings” (Ryan, 2018). These meanings are constructed from unconscious experiences such as dreams and religious beliefs and are internal rather than external influences (Gray, 2014). This worldview differs from the philosophy of this thesis, in that organisational culture is viewed as insufficiently fundamental to an individual to impact their perceptions to such an extent so as to influence their views about colleagues’ emotional intelligence and self-awareness. Albeit, organisational culture is recognised as having an impact on individuals’ behaviour and relationships in the workplace (Reis et al., 2016, Laschinger et al., 2014). This notion is supported by Lent (2012) who states that people’s work lives are not dictated exclusively by their workplace experiences or experiences outside the workplace. Rather, individuals have the capacity to co-construct their work lives in conjunction with important “social-economic-political-cultural-historical” elements impacted by a number of elements, such as “gender, race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, health/disability status, age” (Lent, 2012) etc.

Social constructionism is relevant to this thesis, as has already been mentioned, in that self-awareness and leader effectiveness are viewed as social constructs. Indeed, Hastings (2002) is of the view that the pragmatism developed by James (1907) is the main “theoretical precursor of the present-day social constructionist movement”. Social constructionism is thought to have developed in response to the use of positivism within social science (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Social constructionist inquiry is “concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live” (Gergen, 1985). Social constructionism opines that “any belief we hold must be a social construction because it derives from ourselves as individuals and our experiences in society” (Campbell, 2015), sharing experiences through language (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The impact of the

social constructionism of self-awareness and leader effectiveness duly influences the philosophical stance of this thesis and moves it to the centre of the continuum between positivism and interpretivism which is presented at figure 6.1.

Interpretivism takes an inductive approach to research, moving from “fragmentary details to a connected view of a situation” (Gray, 2014). Interpretivists study a particular phenomenon and seek to understand “motives, meanings and reasons” (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). This is explained in figure 6.2: inductive study begins with the details and seeks to understand the bigger picture whereas positivist study begins with the bigger picture and seeks to define the details.



**Figure 6.2 – Positivist and Inductivist Methods**

Due to the plethora of potential human interpretations of events, reality is seen as changing, because it is constituted from numerous perspectives (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Studies about psychology, organisational behaviour, organisational theory and strategy often rely on an interpretivist methodology and use research methods such as case studies and ethnography (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018).

For this thesis, it is felt that qualitative study methods alone would not meet the researcher’s demand for a large body of evidence with which to formulate general statements that are applicable to the Welsh public service, as a whole. This thesis seeks to understand the motives, meanings and other subjective reasons behind behaviour as a way of explicating questionnaire findings in order to understand two concepts and their interconnectivity across all levels, that could produce organisational development guidance beyond this thesis.

### **6.3.2 Positivism**

It is stated that August Comte, a French philosopher, developed the theory of positivism

in 1853 and it was the primary philosophy of social science research from the 1930s to the 1960s (Gray, 2014). Positivism views the world as external to the individual and only truly able to be measured through scientific and objective means, rather than thoughts feelings and interpretations, which is the directly opposite to the interpretivist stance (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). In reviewing the literature, realism was the school of thought identified as the positivist approach most often referenced (Saunders et al., 2003, Michell, 2011, Gray, 2014, Maul et al., 2016, Guyon et al., 2018). Realism itself was also identified as a broad heading under which fell a wide range of positions, such as scientific realism (Maul et al., 2016) and empirical realism (Guyon et al., 2018). The positions which fall under the umbrella term of realism broadly share the belief that at least one of the aims of inquiry is to acquire knowledge about reality, such as discovering the characteristics of natural systems that are independent to the researcher (Maul et al., 2016, Michell, 2011). Realism would not be appropriate to this thesis, being that a natural system such as the flow of a river, or the weight of a rock is not the focus of enquiry.

Post-positivism is one of the more widespread worldviews informing social science research (Gamlen and McIntyre, 2018). It emerged in response to criticism of positivism by natural and social scientists (Lach, 2014), although it does share some common ground with positivism in that both emphasise reality as existential (Phoenix et al., 2013). Post-positivists believe that whilst reality exists, that reality can only be understood “imperfectly due our limitations, including the limitations of our scientific methods and approaches” (Lach, 2014). It is “better suited to answering questions concerning human action and social life” (D’Cruz et al., 2018). Albeit a positivist stance, near the centre of the continuum between positivism and interpretivism, post-positivism is not thought to be sufficiently flexible to encompass both a research questionnaire and interviews in this thesis.

Positivism is generally linked with deductive, quantitative research methods. Positivist studies are “typically investigated with structured instrumentation” (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). The self/other ratings studies use a range of performance data, academic achievement data and survey results to develop their findings and are positivist in approach, using quantitative research methods throughout (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the instruments used within the studies generally seek to capture individual human views (i.e. qualitative viewpoints) through quantitative means.

The general understanding of the positivist worldview does not accept the social construction that builds self-awareness and leader effectiveness, as discussed in chapter two. Positivism strives to develop generally applicable findings and nomothetic statement whereas interpretivism considers the social constructivism behind an individual's reality and strives to understand individual experiences through open research methods and (Flick, 2014, p.76).

### **6.3.3 Pragmatism**

Self-awareness and leader effectiveness are considered socially constructed concepts and the philosophical position of this thesis is pragmatism, as can be seen in the paradigm continuum presented by Phoenix et al. (2013) at figure 6.1. The stance of this thesis moves along the continuum of research philosophies from positivism (i.e. the self/other ratings studies) to pragmatism on the basis that,

“Only when the structure of attitudes is identified will we know which methods are the most fruitful. In instances such as this, pragmatic criteria await further scientific knowledge, and the mistake of mainstream psychology lies not in a failure of pragmatism, but in the pre-emptive exclusion of a class of methods” (Michell, 2003).

The term pragmatism derives from the ancient Greek verb *prasso* meaning ‘I do’ or ‘I create’ and applies primarily to the doing of human, purposeful activity (Allmark and Machaczek, 2018) or inquiry (Shields, 1998). Being that this research is doctoral study, rather than philosophical study, practical application of the research findings are essential and therefore pragmatism's thirst for a purposeful activity makes it a wholly relevant philosophical approach to adopt for this thesis. Shields (1998) is also of the view that “pragmatic inquiry is well suited to facilitate...public administration”, which demonstrates fit with the contextual backdrop of this thesis.

James (1907) is of the view that the beliefs held by an individual are impacted by “language and discourse” that are influenced by and relative to different situations (Hastings, 2002). This is supported by Shields (1998) who states that “purposeful human inquiry... is viewed as a continuing process which acknowledges the qualitative nature of human experience”. This fits well with this thesis which is clear in presenting self-awareness and leader effectiveness as socially constructed ideas, impacted by relationships (for self-awareness see McCarthy and Garavan (1999), Sparrowe (2005)

Caldwell (2009), for leader effectiveness see Uhl-Bien (2006) Murphy et al. (2017)), as discussed in the literature review).

James (1907) states that pragmatism has no obstructive dogmas or doctrines, save its attitude of orientation and its methods – “she will entertain any hypothesis, she will consider any evidence”. Its methods may be many and varied, from literate to scientific, religious to mystical. Hastings (2002) asserts that James was a “methodological pluralist” who was of the view that no one subject dominated. Goldkuhl (2012) supports this notion, stating that pragmatism does not take a “dogmatic position” concerning different methods, but rather adopts a pluralist stance, using the most appropriate research method for the research focus at hand.

Pragmatism is usually associated with a deductive stance, starting from a broad concept and working back to the specifics (Gray, 2014). Reality is viewed as “divisible and fragmentable, therefore precise, accurate measurements and observation” of the world are possible (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Pragmatic data collection is able to rely on quantitative or qualitative methods or both, depending on the aim of the research - elements from both positivist and interpretivist philosophies can be used (Goldkuhl, 2012). As James (1907, p.72) states, “Now pragmatism, devoted though she be to facts, has no such materialistic bias as ordinary empiricism labors under”. Pragmatism is more concerned with method than ideology and this thesis’s philosophical stance is well encapsulated by Michell (2003) who states,

“Only when the structure of attitudes is identified will we know which methods are the most fruitful. In instances such as this, pragmatic criteria await further scientific knowledge, and the mistake of mainstream psychology lies not in a failure of pragmatism, but in the pre-emptive exclusion of a class of methods”.

#### **6.4 The Quantitative Qualitative Debate**

The appropriateness of “quantitative and qualitative research styles in social science research [is] hotly debated” (Masue et al., 2013) and for over a hundred years purists have “engaged in ardent dispute” about the merits of both methods (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). However, both quantitative and qualitative research styles pose challenges for the researcher and one style should not be viewed as better than the other (Barczak, 2015). This section will now go on to consider the literature that highlights this tension and also that which discusses combining both approaches, as is the case in this

thesis.

Positivism and interpretivism are said to be “incommensurable because they are based on different goals and philosophical assumptions... however this does not mean that the two approaches cannot peacefully coexist” (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Indeed, exclusively quantitative or exclusively qualitative methods are considered “anti-science” and research that is viewed as “methodological pluralism” is welcomed (Michell, 2011). Goldkuhl (2012) is of the view that even though qualitative research is often associated with interpretivism, qualitative research can be conducted through a pragmatic lens. As per the view held by Morgan (2007), to hold a paradigmatic position which takes no account of another paradigm is not possible in practice:

“...the only time that we pretend that research can be either purely inductive or deductive is when we write up our work for publication. During the actual design, collection, and analysis of data, however, it is impossible to operate in either an exclusively theory- or data-driven fashion... The pragmatic approach is to rely on a version of abductive reasoning that moves back and forth between induction and deduction”.

A conceptual pluralism (Maul et al., 2016) is discernible within social science research – if it is the case that self-awareness and leader effectiveness are viewed as socially constructed phenomena, how then can a quantitative research methodology alone begin to understand those phenomena? If self-awareness and leader effectiveness are considered psychological concepts, then it would seem that,

“qualitative methods can hold their own against quantitative methods... This is not just because no psychological attributes have ever been shown to be quantitative, it is also because psychological attributes present themselves to us, initially, as qualitative, and so, there are no scientific grounds on which to rule such methods out” (Michell, 2003).

This is supported by Masue et al. (2013) who highlight that there are methodological tensions among social science researchers who take either a qualitative or quantitative approach. However, Masue et al. (2013) conclude that “both qualitative and quantitative traditions are equally scientific and relevant to social science research” and can be used independently or in combination, depending on the research purpose.



The merit of a pluralistic approach in the social sciences is supported within the literature. A pluralistic notion is put forward by Guyon et al. (2018) who state that an epistemological position of pragmatism-realism is required to understand mental attributes. Guyon et al. (2018) are of the view that psychological attributes are both made up of human perception and reality and this 'in-between' position is related to an epistemological framework that is both pragmatist and realist. Babones (2016) advocates an interpretive quantitative approach to sociology, thus demonstrating a move to break through the chains of dogma and a stance where the end justifies the means.

There are criticisms of both qualitative and quantitative methods in the social sciences. The study by Maxwell (2010) states that using quantitative methods in qualitative research is controversial because it is insensitive to the complexities of social phenomena, in that it presumes the same truth is understood by everybody in the same way. Quantitative methods are thought to lose the subtleties of individual interpretation through a lack of research depth, rather focusing on breadth and generalisability (Masue et al., 2013). Some psychologists and cognitive scientists have concluded that deductive reasoning does not adequately capture how people really think (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018). Babones (2016) states that there is a strong bias in favour of research that is "perceived as scientific/positivist/analytical/quantitative over research that is perceived as humanistic/interpretive/historicist/qualitative". Conversely, qualitative research is said to be subject to researcher bias, lacks reproducibility, focusses on a small number of cases (Masue et al., 2013) and is 'anti-generalisable'.

It is therefore the conundrum that has had to be overcome within this thesis – to continue to research self-awareness and leader effectiveness following the quantitative approach taken by the self/other ratings studies or to push the boundaries of academic learning and consider an alternative approach.

## **6.5 The Mixed Methods Choice**

The current study adopted the mixed method approach to examine self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness across all levels of the Welsh public service.. It is guided by the quantitative methodology employed by the self/other ratings studies (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011). It also has qualitative aspects as employed in the study by Gray and Jones (2018).

The initial research methodology employed in this thesis: the questionnaire, is wholly responsible for steering the direction of the strategy of this thesis. The questionnaire responses were lower than expected and this generated the need to extend the study, in order to develop robust findings. The study by Baruch and Holtom (2008) identified that the average questionnaire response rate had levelled out at about 50% by 2008, taking elements such as questionnaire fatigue due to over-saturation, into consideration. Reflecting on this, being that it was known that 291,000 people were employed in the public sector in Wales in quarter 3 of 2016, (2016), it was projected that up to 145,500 individuals could have responded. Therefore, relying on the flexibility of a pragmatic philosophy, this thesis then looked to qualitative methods as a means of expanding the findings and ensuring that males, as the under-represented cohort of questionnaire respondents, were better represented within the thesis.

Drawing from the study by Edmondson and McManus (2007), that discusses methodological fit, the reproduction of the self/other ratings study methodology could be considered mature theory, whereas the methodology in this study could be considered intermediate, in that it leverages prior work allowing this study to address issues that refine the field's knowledge. As has already been highlighted in chapter two, studies regarding self-awareness, from a Welsh public service perspective, are limited, suggesting that the specific area of academic study is new. The study by Edmondson and McManus (2007) suggests that intermediate research frequently integrates quantitative and qualitative methods as a means of producing data that increases confidence and plausibility in the researcher's findings. It also states, "one trigger for developing intermediate theory is the desire to reinvestigate a theory or construct that sits within a mature stream of research in order to challenge or modify prior work" and is a way of moving along the continuum from nascent theory to mature theory. Following consideration of the literature and the methods employed in the studies referred to throughout this thesis, it is determined that this thesis will take the historical, quantitative methods employed in the self/other ratings studies and push the boundaries of learning by expanding on those methods and include a qualitative method, as a means of furthering knowledge and giving the Welsh public service the best opportunity to be imparted of new knowledge in the field, gathered from a broad spectrum of methods. Thus an intermediate methodology has emerged and mixed-methods is determined as the methodological choice.

"Structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews are often used in mixed method studies to generate confirmatory results" (Harris and Brown, 2010). This has

been the method employed in this thesis. In the study by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), taken from the study by Greene et al (1989), they identify five purposes or rationales for mixed-methods. The rationale for the mixed-methods approach in this thesis is threefold: complementarity, development and expansion. Complementarity, in the form of elaboration of the results derived from one method by the other method. This is due to the low questionnaire response rate, particularly from male Welsh public service employees. Development; that being, using the findings from one method to inform the other method. A lower than predicted number of male respondents completed the questionnaire and demographic findings were therefore used to inform the interview sampling exercise. Expansion; in the form of seeking to expand the breadth and range of research through different inquiry methods and pushing the boundaries beyond the methods used in the self/other ratings studies.

For the purposes of conducting the questionnaire, the researcher is considered an objective analyst (Saunders et al., 2003) who merely observes facts and does not impact the research methods or findings. As highlighted by Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014), the positivist paradigm requires a separation between the researcher and respondents on the basis that not to do so would “(1) bias the research, (2) disturb the natural setting, and/or (3) contaminate the results”. For the purposes of conducting the interviews, these three elements are not considered methodological problems but rather, the emotional involvement and responsiveness between researcher and interviewee are seen as providing a “rich resource” for this thesis (Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014). As has already been mentioned, the philosophical worldview held by the researcher underpins the reason to use quantitative means initially and qualitative means, subsequently, to explore socially constructed subjects and therefore researcher perceptions do, unequivocally impact on the research methodology and methods of this thesis.

Below is a summary table (table 4.2) which serves to compare the commonalities of the self/other ratings studies research methods and the mixed methods used in this thesis. It demonstrates that this thesis has adopted some elements of the tried and tested, ‘mature’ research methodology, when considering methodological fit, and adapted others as a means of moving the knowledge about the subject areas of self-awareness and leader effectiveness forward.

**Table 6.1 – Summary Table Comparing Self/Other Ratings Studies Research Method and This Thesis**

<b>Self/Other Rating Studies Research Method Commonalities</b>	<b>This Thesis</b>
Specific respondents identified	General respondents identified
Job level of subject specified as part of subject sampling criteria	Job level of subject identified as part of questionnaire responses
Evidence based survey instrument used	Bespoke and evidence-based survey instrument used
Individual completes questionnaire about themselves	Individual completes questionnaire about themselves
Job level of direct reports specified as part of subject sampling criteria	Job level of direct reports identified as part of questionnaire responses
Individual completes questionnaire about line manager	Individual completes questionnaire about line manager
Three direct reports complete questionnaire about manager	Not stipulated
Line manager completes questionnaire about subject	Not stipulated

## **6.6 Ethical Considerations**

This chapter now moves on to consider the ethical dilemmas encountered as part of the development of the research method. As a thesis with its central focus on self-awareness underpinned by emotional intelligence and resonant leadership, demonstrating respect towards participants and questionnaire respondents whilst maintaining theirs and the researcher's integrity has been considered throughout the establishment of theoretical principles, gathering of literature, establishment of methodological philosophies and development of the research method.

Ethics is primarily concerned with determining what is "morally good behaviour" (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003, p.326). Zhu et al. (2011) support the notion that ethics is defined by reference to morality and are of the view that there is a connection between leadership, moral identity and moral emotions. From the literature presented in chapter two, it is already known that identity and emotions are underpinned by internal self-awareness. This supports the need to consider ethical challenges within this thesis.

A number of ethical dilemmas have been considered in the formulation of the research method as a means of maintaining respondent and interviewee safety, anonymity and emotional wellbeing, and each one is discussed below. They draw on the four primary ethical principles highlighted within the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018): respect, competence, responsibility and integrity.

This thesis will not be drawing specific individual information to the fore with the purpose of scrutinising individual self-awareness, however, potential impact of greater self-awareness should be acknowledged. A statement will be included at the beginning of the questionnaire suggesting that subjects discuss concerns with their manager or occupational health department as appropriate. Protecting participants from harm is important and the research method should be proactive in taking “aversive action” (Ritchie et al., 2013, p.68) to mitigate against negative impact on participants.

Across the public service, Speers (2016) is of the view that officials span an ethical continuum ranging from those that “understand the intrinsic and instrumental importance of public trust and confidence” to those who focus on “self-aggrandizement” and require rules in order to be held to account. This is reflective of what is known about self-awareness; there are those who are self-aware and those who are not, at two ends of a spectrum. The literature is clear that those who are less able to assess their own self-awareness also perform less effectively in the workplace (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Bratton et al., 2011).

This research does not aim to become involved in any relationships between managers and their subordinates, but it is acknowledged that this research could reveal some competency gaps which may require managers to tackle underlying performance issues. This potential impact is mitigated in the questionnaire’s introductory statement where respondents are directed to discuss concerns with their line manager: “If you have any concerns about self-awareness, emotional intelligence and leadership in your organisation, please speak to your manager or contact your occupational health department.”. Also, it is determined that should concerns be raised by interviewees during the interview process or interviewees become in any way distressed, the researcher will direct them to speak to appropriate professional colleagues such as their line manager, human resources or occupational health advisors, or seek health and social support through their general practitioner or mental health support charities, such as Mind or the Samaritans.

As has already been alluded to above, this research has the potential to unearth views held by others about the self that were previously not known, albeit through participant interactions rather than sharing of any questionnaire responses. Those views may not be wholly positive which may impact on the respondents and their ability to continue working with their colleagues. Therefore, this research is conducted with the utmost confidentiality. The questionnaire will involve the need for respondents to rate their

manager's level of self-awareness and therefore respondent anonymity is paramount. In discussion with colleagues, when planning the research method of this research, anecdotal information was shared with the researcher that the organisation's annual 360 degree appraisal method had become ineffective. In the operating model employed, the individual being appraised was responsible for identifying the appraisers, which meant that all feedback transpired as positive and lacking in transparency for fear of negative consequences. This is borne out by the literature, where concerns have been raised that "those in higher echelons of power do not get candid feedback due to the fear of retaliation or reprisal." (Showry and Manasa, 2014). This is echoed by Burke (2006). Therefore, confidentiality as well as anonymity is essential to ensure that the information gathered is valid. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) state that one of the most likely ethical dilemmas is for a researcher to betray the confidence of a junior manager when cross examined by a senior manager. The questionnaire in this case is designed so as not to be able to capture individual identity and therefore, this dilemma is negated and the element of respect, as highlighted by the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) is maintained.

For the purposes of the interview, the identity of the interviewee is maintained and any direct reference to their employing organisation or sector is omitted from the transcription. When presenting the profile of the interviewee, the interviewee characteristics are not set out. Whether the individuals met the sampling profile is the only identifier, which is insufficiently detailed so as to identify an individual.

As has been mentioned above, greater self-awareness can have an impact on an individual's view of self; it can bring to light poor performance and potentially create an environment requiring change and service improvement. In order to prepare managers, teams and organisations for the consequences of greater self-awareness in its staff, it is appropriate to seek informed consent from the chief executive of the subject's organisation, to pursue research. However, if respondents and interviewees unilaterally choose to complete surveys and interviews in their own time, for example a Welsh public service officer deciding to complete the survey anonymously through connection with the researcher via e.g. LinkedIn, this could prove problematic. Nevertheless, individual as well organisational consent is sought to proceed to complete the questionnaire and take part in the interview.

At the very outset of this thesis, the researcher's long-standing interest in the subject of self-awareness is set out. However, it is equally important to explain the researcher's

connection with the Welsh public service, so as to give the reader sufficient information to make the connections between this professional area of interest and the environment. The researcher began work within the Welsh NHS in 1999, moving across to Welsh local government in 2007, moving on to the English NHS in 2019. The research method took into account and capitalised on the researcher's access to Welsh public service employees and colleagues. It is important to emphasise the voluntary nature of the participation in the questionnaire and interviews, especially when there is a professional relationship between researcher and participants which may lead to feelings of obligation or gratitude (Ritchie et al., 2013, p.67). For this reason, colleagues are not quizzed as to whether they have completed the questionnaire.

The researcher has no desire to become the self-awareness 'inspector' of Welsh public service employees, as to do so would be to go beyond the researcher's sphere of competence, which is noted in the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct Society (2018). Therefore, the research findings are based on the analysis of findings only, in order to minimise any natural, unconscious bias the researcher may have. The views of the researcher have been made clear throughout the contextual narrative of the thesis, but analysis and findings have been drawn solely from the information and data gathered. This is reflective of the pragmatic approach taken throughout this thesis.

Respondents are treated fairly. They are required to consent to be a part of the study and that consent is informed and voluntary (Ritchie et al., 2013, p.66-67). Respondent and interviewee autonomy is respected. The research method ensures participant confidentiality and anonymity. The research is administered with integrity, thereby meeting the third principle of the British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018). Chief executives are part of the wider consent for this research, to ensure that any consequences following from the research are well managed and participants are appropriately supported within their organisation. The research aims to seek the best results. This is achieved by avoiding or minimising harm and by using resources as beneficially as possible. Respondent and interviewee feedback is used for the purpose of developing a practically useful understanding of self-awareness and its link to effective leadership across all levels of the Welsh public service.

## 6.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the pragmatic stance of this thesis and explained how that stance connects with the ontological and epistemological challenges of the aim and objectives. The ontology of this thesis is social constructionism and the epistemology is pragmatism. The chapter presented the different philosophical worldviews, from positivism at one end of the continuum to interpretivism at the other and explored pragmatism as a stance at the centre of that continuum. In summarising the ontological, and epistemological philosophies within this chapter, the table and questions posed by Saunders et al. (2003, p.135) has been adapted and is presented below (table 6.1). The responses pertinent to this thesis are underlined in blue. In the same way as the continuum adapted from Phoenix et al. (2013) (figure 6.1) demonstrates that the views and opinions underpinning this thesis draw from both side of the continuum from positivism to interpretivism, so too does this adapted table

**Table 6.2: ‘Philosophical assumptions as a multidimensional set of continua’ adapted from Saunders et al. (2003, p.135)**

Assumption type	Questions	Continua with two sets of extremes		
		Objectivism	↔	Subjectivism
<b>Ontology</b>	• What is the nature of reality?	Real	↔	<u>Nominal/decided by convention</u>
	• What is the world like?	External	↔	<u>Socially constructed</u>
	• For example:	One true reality	↔	<u>Multiple realities</u>
	– What are organisations like?	(universalism)	↔	(relativism)
	– What is it like being in organisations?	Granular (things)	↔	<u>Flowing (processes)</u>
	– What is it like being a manager or being managed?	<u>Order</u>	↔	<u>Chaos</u>
<b>Epistemology</b>	• How can we know what we know?	Adopt assumptions of the natural scientist	↔	<u>Adopt the assumptions of the arts and humanities</u>
	• What is considered acceptable knowledge?	<u>Facts</u>	↔	<u>Opinions</u>
		<u>Numbers</u>	↔	<u>Written, spoken and visual accounts</u>
	• What constitutes good-quality data?	<u>Observable phenomena</u>	↔	<u>Attributed meanings</u>
	• What kinds of contribution to knowledge can be made?	Law-like generalisations	↔	<u>Individuals and contexts, specifics</u>

This chapter discussed the qualitative/quantitative debate within the social sciences and presented mixed-methods as the method of choice, being that it fits with the pragmatic philosophy and allows the socially constructed models of self-awareness and leader effectiveness to be explored using the most appropriate method, rather than being bound by dogma. Finally, ethical considerations were presented as a means of evidencing that



questionnaire participants' and respondents' needs were considered fully and holistically. Also, the researcher's role as a Welsh public service employee at the time of researching was considered.

This next chapter considers the practical implication of the research methodology and will present layers four, five and six of the research onion: strategy, time horizon, and techniques and procedure. It will discuss the questionnaire content, pilot study, changes made following pilot study learning, wholesale questionnaire process and the subsequent data analysis procedure. It will then discuss the interviews, exploring analysis techniques and the process of the determined technique.

**Chapter 7**

**Research  
Methodology -  
From Theory  
to Action**

## 7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter considered the philosophy, approach and methodological choice of this thesis. It presented the ontological position of social constructionism and epistemological position of pragmatism. It considered interpretivism at one end of the continuum and positivism at the other and determined that pragmatism, as a middle ground, would be most appropriate for this thesis. It also presented the quantitative/qualitative debate within the social sciences and asked the question of how could a socially constructed concept such as self-awareness or leader effectiveness be explored using a solely quantitative approach? It presented mixed-methods as the chosen methodology for this thesis, well-matched with pragmatism. It concluded by setting out the ethical dilemmas which have been considered within this thesis

This chapter now considers layers four, five and six of the research onion (Saunders et al., 2003): strategy, time horizon, and techniques and procedure. It will present the determined strategy of this thesis, that being a questionnaire followed by interviews. The chapter will also discuss the time horizon of the study, that being cross-sectional (i.e. snapshot in time) rather than longitudinal. It will then detail the questionnaire pilot study, implemented as a way of identifying areas for improvement before implementation of the wholesale questionnaire, and subsequent changes made to the questionnaire and the four/five functions job level framework. It will explore and present the practicalities of conducting the questionnaire, discussing methods by which subjects were identified through the sampling method and how the data was collected, through electronic survey and data management tools. It will present the questionnaire data analysis procedure. It will then discuss the interviews, used to build on the findings from the quantitative element of the study due to questionnaire responses being low. It will present the methodology used for identifying interviewees' characteristics and how the interviews were conducted. It will explore interview analysis techniques and the practicalities of implementing the chosen technique.

It is acknowledged that this study has a number of limitations, discussed in detail in Section 10.6. In summary, they are low number of questionnaire responses; low number of responses from individuals at the strategic job level; statistical knowledge and experience of the researcher; cross-sectional timeframe; focus on the Welsh public service in terms of country and sector; questionnaire was not completed by identified respondents and identified managers and therefore, no data could be compared between individuals, as per a 360-degree type review.

## 7.2 Strategy

The research strategy adopted in this thesis was an initial questionnaire followed by interviews. In reaching this decision, different methods of data collection were considered as potential means of researching the relationship between self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels of the Welsh public service. Indeed, the quantitative study by Atwater and Yammarino (1992), in underpinning all of the self/other ratings studies identified that multiple sources should be used to assess leadership ratings and self-awareness.

This section will begin by exploring the strategies presented by Saunders et al. (2003) within the research onion: experiment, archival research, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded theory, narrative enquiry and survey and discuss their suitability for this thesis. This will also include comparison with the strategies employed by the self/other ratings studies, which were predominantly quantitative. Interviews will then be considered and discussed.

In searching for the term 'experiment as research method', the FindIt database located over 420,000 peer reviewed articles (accessed 1/3/20) within the subject area of engineering and over 250,000 within chemistry. The subject area of business found just over 28,000 articles. No articles were identified within the subject area of leadership or psychology. This suggests that experimentation, as a strategy, is highly scientific in focus with limited applicability to the study at hand.

Archival research entails analysing data that were stored other than for academic research purposes and is underutilized in social psychology (Heng et al., 2018). However, in considering the objectives and research questions pertinent to this thesis, data and findings are sought from Welsh public service employees about their current experiences. This thesis does not aim to compare the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness fifty years ago with such today. Therefore, this method has limited application here. However the study by Heng et al. (2018) is of interest in that it references the changing nature of information archivization, referencing Google trends, Twitter tags and online marketplace bidding logs. There is the potential for future research methods to use social media and online behaviour to study self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels. This will be further discussion in chapter nine.

Case studies narrow a research focus (Popil, 2011) whilst simultaneously increase the depth of potential knowledge. A case study is usually a description of an “actual situation, commonly involving a decision, a challenge, an opportunity, a problem or an issue faced by a person or persons in an organisation” (Popil, 2011). Reflecting on this thesis’s aim to provide findings generally applicable to the Welsh public service as a whole, the use of a case study is considered too narrow to be the main or only research strategy employed. However, there would be validity in conducting a case study for development and expansion of findings and again, more will be discussed in chapter ten.

Ethnography is the study of culture typically achieved via “participant observation and *in situ* interviews” (Schembri and Boyle, 2013). Participant observation has four core aspects: long-term engagement, understanding a group of people and their social processes, studying all aspects of social life and befriending strangers (Shah, 2017). New technology is extending the methodological breadth of ethnography through the use of visual and recording capability (Schembri and Boyle, 2013). In translating ethnography to the workplace, in the context of this thesis, it had limited applicability due to the number of different organisation types which would have needed to be observed, the number of layers of job levels and the number of individuals in each of those layers, the researcher judgement involved in observing self-awareness and leader effectiveness and researcher time in carrying out such intensive study methods. However, in reviewing organisational implementation of learning from this thesis, an ethnographic study could have merit. Ethnographic methods may be ideal for the purpose of reflecting and reviewing organisational culture and behaviour, with a view to continuous improvement.

Action research is grounded in the Delphi method, linked to a study conducted during the Cold War, to identify potential American industrial targets and their vulnerabilities to Soviet attack (Fletcher and Marchildon, 2014). The name’s etymology links back to the Greek oracle of Delphi (Fletcher and Marchildon, 2014) which was referenced in chapter two when the aphorism, ‘know thyself’ was presented as one of the Delphic maxims (Mackenzie, 1988). The purpose of action research is to collect “informed judgement on issues that are largely unexplored, difficult to define, highly context and expertise specific or future-oriented” (Fletcher and Marchildon, 2014). Its application is broad and its influence can be seen in Welsh public service practice. Referred to as action learning, generally conducted via action learning sets, a similar method is supported by Academi Wales in their publication, ‘Sowing Seeds, action learning. The opportunity to engage in reflection’. As a method for conducting research into self-awareness and leader effectiveness, action research does not appear appropriate as this thesis seeks to

develop learning rather than implement action. However, as with ethnographic methods, action research has the potential to support implementation of learning. Indeed, a continuum of methods can be seen to be forming: development of this thesis using questionnaire and interviews, implementation of learning using action learning and review of implementation using ethnography. This will be explored later as a potential for future research.

The study by Kempster and Parry (2011) focussed on grounded theory and leadership, stating that the use of grounded theory in leadership research was in its infancy. The paper considers grounded theory as a method of presenting qualitative research in such a way as to counter the criticism that qualitative leadership studies are journalistic or unscientific and lack the rigour of good science. The process of developing grounded theory is said to help “the researcher to engage in several iterations of data gathering and analysis such that the emerging explanation is as valid and reliable as possible”. It could be argued that the method of analysis undertaken from the findings of the interviews could be considered grounded theory, however the research method as a whole, is not.

Narrative inquiry is described as an approach which enquires into the narratives or stories of lived experiences and includes the multiple voices of the researcher and participants (Jha, 2018). In terms of Welsh public service leadership, there is no recognised storytelling method used by employees to reflect on their situation, feelings and beliefs etc. Although a learning journal has been produced by Academi Wales as a guiding template to support individuals capture learning during the course of working life with the purpose of self-reflection, which is intrinsically linked to self-awareness (Academi Wales, 2019). This journal could feature as the focus of narrative inquiry if completed. Future studies into self-awareness and leader effectiveness could focus on the narratives written in these journals, however at present there is no requirement to use them, other than for personal development. Therefore, this thesis would not be able to draw on narratives, without having expressly stated that they should be completed from the outset. This would also have taken the timescale for this study from cross-sectional to longitudinal.

Surveys are also referenced within the strategy layer of the research onion (Saunders et al., 2003). In common speak, surveys and questionnaires are generally considered to be one and the same, however:

“Surveys and questionnaires are not synonymous. Information within surveys can be gathered through many means, including face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, or most commonly through self-administered questionnaires.

Questionnaires refer to a specific tool, also known as an instrument, for gathering information. Questionnaires are also known as scales when their assessment creates a quantified score” (Slattery et al., 2011).

The tool most frequently used for gathering data and information within the managerial and behavioural sciences is the questionnaire (Baruch and Holtom, 2008) and this is evident in the self/other ratings studies. All of the self/other ratings studies employ questionnaires, as can be seen in table 7.1 below. This formed the main influence on the strategy employed in this thesis. The study by Atwater and Yammarino (1992) also used a number of other data sets, including achievement scores from education, workplace performance and potential, and athletics.

**Table 7.1 – Self/Other Ratings Studies – Research Strategies**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
Atwater and Yammarino (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire (self, subordinate, superior)</li> <li>• SAT scores (verbal and maths)</li> <li>• Recommendations by high school officials</li> <li>• Engineering/science interest scores</li> <li>• Conduct</li> <li>• Responsibility level of leadership positions in preceding years</li> <li>• Athletic participation</li> <li>• Performance measures</li> <li>• Promotion recommendation</li> <li>• Early promotion recommendation</li> </ul>
Van Velsor et al. (1993b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire (self, direct report)</li> </ul>
Church (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire (self, direct report)</li> </ul>
Sosik and Megerian (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire (self, subordinate, manager)</li> </ul>
Bratton et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire (self, subordinate, manager)</li> </ul>

Other quantitative research methods have been considered in this thesis, such as reviewing demographic data across Welsh public service organisations (gender, age, ethnic origin, sexuality) along with length of employment in Welsh public service and individual organisations, salary and academic qualification level. However, this would

not have drawn out the specifics of self-awareness and leader effectiveness, being that neither are consistently monitored and recorded across the Welsh public service. The Welsh public service also has no standardised performance criteria against which to monitor and compare individuals making statistical comparisons problematic.

Based on the mixed method approach, both the questionnaire and interviews were used to collect primary data for the study. This was driven by four key influencers: the driver to move the subject of self-awareness and leader effectiveness on from exploration by quantitative means alone to quantitative and qualitative; the social constructionism of self-awareness and leader effectiveness and the determination to utilise a qualitative strategy well suited to capture socially constructed concepts; the low number of questionnaire responses; and the need to ensure males were better represented in this thesis. This mixed methods strategy is also an appropriate fit to the philosophical underpinning of pragmatism within this thesis.

### **7.3 Time Horizon**

This thesis is interested in understanding the views and opinions of Welsh public service employees at a point in time or cross-sectionally e.g. “surveys completed by a single respondent at a single point in time” (Rindfleisch et al., 2008), rather than longitudinally. The self/other ratings studies were also cross-sectional. The study method of this thesis was part-time, due to the researcher’s demanding work situation at the time of studying. Being that the researcher worked full time throughout the thesis, to choose a longitudinal research method would have seen the thesis timescale extend well beyond the maximum six year study period, which had the potential to result in subject fatigue and a thesis never to be completed. It is acknowledged that a cross-sectional timeframe is considered one of the limitations of this study, being that it draws findings from 2018 to 2019, considered a snapshot in time. To mitigate against this, a longitudinal study is proposed. This is further explored in Section 10.6 – limitations and opportunities for future research.

The study by Rindfleisch et al. (2008) cites common method variance as being a concern for cross-sectional studies, that being, a “systematic method error due to the use of a single rater”. However, this assumes that a survey has correct and incorrect answers. This thesis is clear that there are no right and wrong answers, being that the subjects of interest are socially constructed and opinions of Welsh public service employees are at the centre of what is sought to be known. Rindfleisch et al. (2008) go on to state that collecting longitudinal data is a “worthy endeavour” as a means of reducing common



method variance. It could also be argued that an alternative study method, such as interviewing, could also counter that argument.

The methods employed in this thesis could be repeated in the future thereby generating longitudinal findings through a number of repeated cross-sectional studies over time. This will be further explored in chapter ten.

## **7.4 Techniques and Procedures**

This section moves on to consider the techniques and procedures utilised in the research methodology. It will present the pilot questionnaire and the implications for the wholesale study. It will then go on to present the procedure of implementing the wholesale questionnaire. It will also discuss the procedure for analysing the data gathered from the questionnaire. It will present the interview procedure and the techniques available to analyse the interview feedback, culminating in a presentation of the chosen method and the procedure implemented.

### **7.4.1 Pilot Questionnaire Procedure**

A pilot study was conducted as a means of testing the proposed questionnaire. The questionnaire was tested with a small number of Welsh public service employees from across different job levels. 31 individuals were approached with the aim of achieving ten responses, a response rate of 32%. The pilot survey was open from the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018 to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and 6 responses were received (one male, five female), a response rate of 19%. Feedback was sought from respondents on the time taken to complete the questionnaire which was confirmed to be ten to 15 minutes.

Subjects were asked to complete the survey independently. The questionnaire began with instructions for completion and ended with pilot specific questions focusing on: ability to understand survey completion instructions, ability to determine at which job level they and their line managers were; time taken to complete the survey; and feedback about the survey questions in general. The questions posed were as follows:

- Could the introduction be changed to make it better? If so, how?
- What is your view about the length of the questionnaire?
- Were you able to identify your job level? What did you think about the descriptions of the job levels?

- Were you able to identify your organisation from the list given?
- Thinking about the self-awareness questions relating to your manager, were you able to answer all statements? If not why? Please tell us the number of each of the questions you were not able to answer
- If you have any other thoughts to share that could improve this questionnaire, please share them here

Responses to each of the pilot specific questions were not received from all six participants.

Respondents were generally happy with the introduction, identifying it as outlining and explaining expectations and commitments. Therefore, no changes were made to the introduction for the wholesale study. The questionnaire length was not identified as a problem and respondents stated that the length was “okay” and “just right”, with one making reference to the multiple-choice answers, stating, “sounds like a lot of questions but multiple choice allows for quicker completio[n]”. Therefore, no changes were made to the number of questions in the questionnaire, taking completion time into consideration.

The responses to the job levels was interesting in that two out of the three responses to this question raised concern that there was no level between management and strategic, stating “Would have benefitted from a senior manager level between manager and strategic levels” and “...not suitable level for manager who is higher level but not quite strategic”. Although, the descriptions of the job levels were identified as being clear and easily identifiable. Taking this into consideration, the management job level was separated into two. Following the terminology used by Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017), a ‘senior management’ layer was included to create middle, senior and executive management functions with which individuals could better identify. For the wholesale study, a descriptor was included and the management descriptor was duly modified. This new five functions job level framework can be seen at figure 7.1. This development of the framework required amendment to be made to research questions two, three and four, with the words changed highlighted below:

- Research question 2: Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all **five** levels of Welsh public service organisations?
- Research question 3: Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other **four** job levels of Welsh public service organisations?

- Research question 4: Do effective resonant leaders identified at all **five** levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?



**Figure 7.1 – Five Functions Job Level Framework**

Of the four responses received in the pilot study regarding ability to identify employing organisations from the given list, four stated they were able and one stated they were not. No change was therefore made to this element of the questionnaire as the feedback did not highlight significant concerns.

In response to the feedback sought regarding the self-awareness questions, three responses were received. Two responses identified that they were able to assert an agreement rating for all statements with only one raising concerns about the personal nature of the statements given. This respondent identified that for these statements, they chose neutral answers. Therefore, no changes were made to the self-awareness statement in the questionnaire because respondents were still able to assert an agreement rating for each statement.

No respondents included other thoughts on how the questionnaire could be improved. At the end of the pilot phase, a thorough review was carried out of the questionnaire and any typing errors were corrected. Also, the data presentation ability of Google Forms was reviewed. The data was able to be presented in the form of charts and also able to be exported into Google Sheets and onward into Microsoft Excel. However, the combined format of the questions concerning organisation type, and job level of both the respondent and their manager, did not produce data in a helpful format. Therefore, the questions were separated into two parts: questions regarding respondent's organisation type and manager's organisation type, and respondent's job level and manager's job

level, effectively making each question a separate question.

#### **7.4.2 Questionnaire Procedure**

This chapter now moves on to present in detail the implementation of the wholesale questionnaire. The focus of this thesis was to gain feedback from employees of all public services in Wales. This mirrors the approach taken by Gray and Jones (2018), who sought participants from local authorities, councils, NHS, Welsh Government, higher/further education, emergency services and prisons. As has already been discussed in chapter two, this did not include elected members (Barbuto and Burbach, 2006). Since the method did not seek feedback from individuals about their direct reports, rather only seeking feedback about colleagues upwards in the chain of hierarchy (i.e. direct line managers), all individuals across organisations were able to participate in this questionnaire. Findings were gathered from respondents at all job levels, acknowledging that the operational job level could only be reviewed from one point of focus – the individuals themselves, as they had no direct reports, unless both individual respondent and their line manager were identified as being within the operational job level. This allowed for data gathering across the levels of hierarchy and expansion of current knowledge about the Welsh public service as a complex adaptive system, or otherwise, thereby answering research question two.

The following identifiers, taken from the Register of Welsh Public Bodies from the Welsh Welsh Government (2018) were used: national government, education and skills, planning, business and economy, housing and regeneration, environment and countryside, transport, culture and sport, Welsh language, people and communities, improving public services, health and social care, local government. The questionnaire was sent to organisations listed in the Register. Organisations listed as subsidiary companies were omitted as they were identified as limited companies (e.g. Careers Wales, Design Commission for Wales Ltd., Finance Wales, Cardiff Airport) which placed them in a different operating position to Welsh public service bodies. Organisations listed under the headings of joint arrangement, public companies and limited liability partnership were also omitted as they operated either wholly or partially on a commercial basis. Community and town councils were omitted due to their locality focus and heavy reliance on leadership and direction from elected councillors.

Within the researcher's employing organisation at the time, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), the questionnaire was shared by email and paper copy,

being that the researcher had access to a number of different individuals through meeting attendance and proximity to other employees by being based with them in a large open plan office space. Also, as the second largest local authority in Wales, wide distribution of the questionnaire within RCTCBC would ensure representations of individuals from a broad range of departments. Agreement was received from the Chief Executive to do this, as it was seen as a potential conflict of interest for the researcher to approach colleagues to seek support to complete the questionnaire without corporate awareness of, and agreement for, employees to complete the questionnaire. Contact was made with the chief executives of the other 21 local authorities in Wales and the eight health boards to introduce the research and ask that employees be given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire. Also, the Head of Legal Operations for Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) in Wales was contacted. HMCTS does not appear in the Register of Welsh Public Bodies (Welsh Government, 2018), it does however state on the Gov.Uk website that "HMCTS is an executive agency, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice" (Gov.uk, 2018), thereby identifying the organisation as having an UK wide remit with Wales offices and operating as a public service employer and service deliverer in Wales. This is reflective of the approach taken by Gray and Jones (2018) who included participants in their study from their Ministry of Defence and the Royal College of General Practitioners, neither of which are found in the Register of Welsh Public Bodies. Both are London/Whitehall based with UK wide remits and Wales offices, departments and branches. In the sample cohort, this study includes individuals from healthcare, social care and (statutory) education in line with studies by (Novack et al., 1999, Freshwater, 2002, Morgan, 2009, Bawafaa et al., 2015, Beyrer, 2015), (Kondrat, 1999) and (Anzalone, 2001).

The Chief Constables of the five Welsh police forces and the Chief Fire Officers of the three Welsh fire and rescue authorities were also contacted to notify them of the research and seek their support in disseminating the survey to colleagues. All contact was made via email using either generic contact emails via organisation websites or by direct email to individuals whose email addresses were discernible online. Emails were written in English only, as the questionnaire sections were only available in English. It was felt to be unhelpful to establish expectations of bilingualism in an introductory email but then not to follow that through with a bilingual questionnaire. A hyperlink to the questionnaire was included in all emails sent. A copy of an example email can be found at appendix 1

The questionnaire was also shared via email with other Welsh public service officers via the chair of national and regional forums, such as the Flying Start National Co-ordinators

Network and the All Wales Association of Representatives of Early Years. Support was sought from Children in Wales, as the servicing body to these groups, to distribute the questionnaire. The questionnaire was publicised and included as an article in the Opportunities Bulletin produced by Academi Wales which was distributed to an all Wales public service email distribution list, held by Academi Wales. The questionnaire was promoted via the researcher's social media accounts on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the express instruction that the questionnaire was to be completed by Welsh public service employees only, to prevent inappropriate responses being populated by non-Welsh public service employees or internet 'bots'. This was supplemented in the body of the questionnaire by the inclusion of a 'none of the above' category within the list of employing organisations. This was a secondary means of distilling appropriate respondents. The broad sampling method sought to seek respondents from as broad a range of organisations, ages and specialty areas from the Welsh public service organisations as possible.

Consideration was given as to whether school based staff and teachers should be asked to complete the questionnaire. It was determined that their feedback should be included due to the close working relationship between schools and local authorities. Even though the education profession is viewed as a specific profession, such staff as teachers, caretakers, school link workers and secretaries' views about the self-awareness and the leader effectiveness of their line manager were considered important as a means of gaining a rich and full picture of the Welsh public service generally. Hard copy questionnaires were distributed to Welsh public service employees with whom the researcher came into contact in her day to day work as an employee of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and a Magistrate.

This study's focus on the Welsh public service is recognised as a limitation, both in terms of country and sector. In being a limitation, it offers opportunities to others to extend this study to different countries and different sectors. It generates the possibility for comparisons between countries and sectors, thereby extending the potential for learning and cross-fertilisation of good practice.

The questionnaire was generated and distributed electronically and all responses were completed electronically, as a means of ensuring consistency in response approach. An electronic survey builder was used to generate an electronic questionnaire to gather responses. A variety of questionnaire builders were considered. Snap Survey, Survey Monkey and Online Surveys (previously Bristol Online Surveys) were all identified as

paid tools ranging from £222 per annum for the single user option from Online Surveys to £695 per annum for Snap Survey professional licence (prices correct as of 20/09/18). Due to the ongoing nature of this thesis, it was felt to be too great a risk to purchase a time limited, annual licence which could potentially bar the researcher from her data if access was required beyond a 12 month period. Also, the researcher's financial position could not be guaranteed beyond a 12 month period which would add an unwarranted financial pressure on the researcher. Therefore, Google Forms was explored. It was identified as a free questionnaire builder with appropriate functionality to meet the needs of the questionnaire in this case. The questionnaire-builder software was identified as simple to use and intuitive in style, being that the icons and buttons used were in common usage across the internet, social media and Microsoft Office software packages. Also, the Google Forms software was able to export findings into Microsoft Excel which was helpful in using the findings software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 19). The data capture phase was initially set for 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 and extended to 31<sup>st</sup> December, due to low numbers of responses. The low number of responses is considered a limitation of this study: 152 responses were received from a potential population of 145,500. In mitigation of this limitation, supplementary interviews were conducted. Also, the particularly low number of responses from individuals at the strategic job level is acknowledged as a limitation. Future studies exploring the Welsh public service are recommended to consider a number of methods to ensure the study's reach goes beyond that of this study and greater representation from individuals at all job levels and organisations are gathered.

The questionnaire began with an introduction, giving respondents a brief overview of the questionnaire's purpose, the expected length of time to complete the questionnaire, an explanation of the questionnaire sections and a privacy notice, ensuring General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/697 compliance. A statement was also included, directing respondents to their manager or occupational health department should they have any concerns regarding self-awareness, emotional intelligence and leadership in the organisation. Respondents then moved into the body of the questionnaire which was grouped into five sections, the first concerning demographics related to gender, age and organisation. The questions concerning gender, age and organisation were intended to better understand the respondent cohort and subsequently the data were used to direct the researcher to who should be included in the interviews, rather than to form key elements of the research.

Questionnaire respondents were asked their gender and age as a means of extrapolating

data and identifying any trends, but as has already been referred to in chapter two, neither age nor gender was a focus of this study, being that both areas are considered to be worthy of separate research. In terms of gender, male, female and non-binary/other were the categories provided and respondents were asked to make a choice about the gender with which they identified and the gender with which their manager identified. In terms of age, respondents were asked to identify their own age grouping and, if known, identify their manager's age grouping. The groupings followed those used by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 (StatsWales, 2018b), the under 16 and over 65 age groupings being merged into two distinct groups; '0-16' and '65 and over'. 16-64 is the age range presented by StatsWales in the reports regarding 'persons employed' (StatsWales, 2018a) and this would suggest that employed persons younger than 16 and older than 64 are in a minority. The data highlighted that 26.6% (385,300 individuals) of the Welsh population was employed in the Welsh public services in 2018. Respondents were asked to identify in which organisation type they worked, as to identify a profession could cause confusion as, for example, social care is provided in the National Health Service as well as Local Government organisations. For clarity a hyperlink to the Register of Welsh Public Bodies was included for respondents to view and check.

Respondents were not asked to include their names on the survey, as a means of ensuring confidentiality, being that literature has already been presented which suggests that subordinates rating senior colleagues find it difficult to be open, for fear of reprisals (Burke, 2006, Showry and Manasa, 2014). Through this research there was no intention to make contact with individual respondents following the survey as to suggest such at the outset of the survey could have raised concerns about individuals' anonymity and restrict respondents from answering the survey openly. Indeed, following interview number seven, the interviewee contacted the researcher some days later to check that the comments would be anonymised, even though the researcher had made this clear at the outset, exemplifying the imperative for confidentiality throughout this research process.

The second section of the questionnaire was concerned with respondent and line manager job levels. Respondents were asked to determine with which of the five layers of the job level framework they identified. The third section was concerned with self-awareness and respondents were asked to identify their agreement for both themselves and their manager. The self-awareness questions consisted of 24 statements specifically developed for this research study. Respondents were asked to indicate their



level of agreement against a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (one) to strongly agree (five).

The questionnaire was made up of a set of statements against which respondents were requested to identify their level of agreement using a Likert scale. The statements were developed from the three layers of self-awareness presented in chapter two – internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness. Due to that, this element of the questionnaire was given the name, the 'SA3Q'. The statement groupings are presented below in table 7.2. Statements one to ten are related to internal self-awareness with statements eight to ten being specifically focussed on stress, due to the literature highlighting the impact of stress on individuals and the workplace (Bourner, 1996, Rochat, 2003, Boyatzis and McKee, 2006, Boyatzis et al., 2013, Lenka and Tiwari, 2016). Statements 11-19 were related to internal-social self-awareness and 20-24 were related to external-social self-awareness.

The scoring replicated the scoring methodology used by Cummings (2006) in the Resonant Leadership Scale, the leadership questionnaire used to form the leadership element of this questionnaire, as it was felt to be of practical benefit to ensure consistency for the purposes of respondent familiarity, easy of completion and data analysis. Respondents and managers having nearer to the maximum average or mean agreement level of five were identified as having high self-awareness and those having nearer to the minimum of one were identified as having low self-awareness. The points on the Likert scale were as follows: one, strongly disagree, two, disagree, three, neutral, four, agree and five, strongly agree. Therefore, being that an average agreement rating of one or two were considered negative and three, neutral, only average agreement ratings of four or more ( $\geq 4$ ) were considered to be positive and therefore leading to self-awareness and leader effectiveness. Average agreement ratings of three point nine and below ( $\leq 3.9$ ) were considered low/no self-awareness and ineffective leadership.

**Table 7.2: SA3Q groupings across the 3 self-awareness layers (respondent and manager)**

<b>Self-Awareness Questionnaire</b>		
	<b>Respondent: In work...</b>	<b>My Manager: In work...</b>
<b>Internal self-awareness</b>		
1	My emotions and moods change	My manager's emotions and moods change
2	My behaviour changes	My manager's behaviour changes
3	I know my strengths and what I am good at	My manager knows their strengths and what they are good at
4	I know my weaknesses and what I am not good at	My manager knows their weaknesses and what they are not good at
5	I am true to my core values	My manager is true to their core values
6	I reflect on my behaviour	My manager reflects on their behaviour
7	I learn from my mistakes	My manager learns from their mistakes
8	Stress impacts my emotions	Stress impacts on my manager's emotions
9	Stress impacts my behaviour	Stress impacts on my manager's behaviour
10	Stress impacts my ability to make decisions	Stress impacts on my manager's ability to make decisions
<b>Internal-Social Self-Awareness</b>		
11	I see myself as others see me	My manager sees himself/herself as others see them
12	I have good people skills	Has good people skills
13	What other people think of me is important to me	What other people think of my manager is important to them
14	I am aware of my body language when I am communicating with others	My manager is aware of their body language when they are communicating with others
15	What I wear and how I look is important to me	What my manager wears and how they look is important to them
16	I can tell how other people are feeling	My manager can tell how other people are feeling
17	My behaviour impacts on my colleagues	My manager's behaviour impacts on their colleagues
18	I seek feedback from colleagues	My manager seeks feedback from colleagues
19	I do what I say I will do	My manager does what they say they will do
<b>External-Social Self-Awareness</b>		
20	I am able to regulate my emotions	My manager is able to regulate their emotions
21	I am able to regulate my behaviour	My manager is able to regulate their behaviour
22	I change my communication style to suit others' mood	My manager changes their communication style to suit others' mood
23	I change my body language to suit different situations	My manager changes their body language to suit different situations
24	When I am sad, angry or unhappy I hide it from colleagues	When my manager is sad, angry or unhappy they hide it from colleagues

The third section of the questionnaire was related to resonant leadership, however within the questionnaire it was referred to as solely 'leadership'. It was felt that highlighting the type of leadership under scrutiny would not have added anything to the questionnaire and may well have generated questions around the theory of resonant leadership that could not be answered through the questionnaire method, thereby causing more confusion than elaboration. The section consisted of the ten statements from the Resonant Leadership Scale developed by Cummings et al. (2008) and discussed in chapter three. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement against the same five point Likert scale. High self-awareness and effective leadership was deemed to be a mean score of four or more ( $\geq 4$ ) across all statements. Low self-awareness and ineffective leadership was deemed to be a mean agreement score of here point nine or less ( $\leq 3.9$ ) across all statements.

The questionnaire concluded with the question, "Please share any thoughts, views and comments you have about self-awareness, leadership and job levels in the Welsh public service here. If you have anything to share about this questionnaire, please also include it here". The questionnaire can be found at appendix 2.

### **7.4.3 Questionnaire Data Analysis Procedure**

The analysis process began by transferring the data from Google Forms to Excel. Responses were coded to allow for ease of manipulation both in Excel and SPSS. For example, female was identified as 1; male, 2; age group 35-39, 6, 40-44, 7; business and economy organisation, 1, culture and sport 2; strategic job level, 5, senior management, 4 etc. The Likert scale was coded as follows: strongly disagree, 1; disagree, 2; neutral, 3; agree, 4; strongly agree, 5. The analysis process occurred in three stages: first, demographic data; second, self-awareness and leader effectiveness data; and third, research question responses.

Firstly, the demographic data was separated across the four themes of gender, age, organisation and job level, in order to generate a profile of respondents and also a profile of line managers. With this, bar and line graphs were produced to graphically represent the demographic make-up of respondents and their managers. No cross-referencing was carried out between e.g. age and gender or age and job level etc., being that this thesis's main area of focus from within the demographic data was job level.

In comparing age profile of questionnaire respondents and all-Wales employee data, the StatsWales (2018) report did not split Welsh public service employee age data into the same groupings as it did for the section of the report concerned with gender (by age). Therefore, a request was made to StatsWales to provide a specific report on the Welsh public service employee age profile. StatsWales were unable to provide employee ages in the same groupings as used in this thesis, therefore, in order to provide similar comparisons, the age groupings of this research were combined into general groupings as near as possible to those that were available from StatsWales. The findings are presented in chapter eight, section 8.2.2.2.

The process then progressed to analysis of the agreement ratings against the self-awareness and leader effectiveness statements. For ease of analysis and manipulation, the subject matter of each question was given an acronym: RSA – respondent self-awareness; MSA – manager self-awareness; RLE – respondent leader effectiveness; MLE – manager leader effectiveness. The first step in the process was to generate mean scores for each of the self-awareness statements (question 9 - RSA and 10 - MSA, statements 1-24) and each of the leader effectiveness statements (question 11 - RLE and 12 - MLE, statements 1-10) to generate a profile of responses by job level, both for respondent and line manager. The next step was to generate a mean agreement rating for each individual respondent for question 9, 10, 11 and 12, thereby giving each respondent, and line manager, a mean score for self-awareness and leader effectiveness. The second step was to group each of the mean scores into job levels and separate these groupings by self-awareness (questions 9 and 10) and leader effectiveness (questions 11 and 12). This generated an understanding of self-awareness and leader effectiveness levels by job level of respondents and managers. The next step in the process was to extrapolate the data identifying respondents and line managers with self-awareness (mean Likert agreement ratings of 4 or more) and without self-awareness (mean Likert agreement ratings of 3.9 or less), who were effective leaders (mean Likert agreement ratings of 4 or more) and ineffective leaders (mean Likert agreement ratings of 3.9 or less). This data was then able to be cross referenced against job level.

Data was transferred from Excel to SPSS to generate a number of the graphs presented below. SPSS was used as it was commonly used within the University of South Wales and was a statistical software package used by other researchers worldwide. This meant that the researcher was able to draw on knowledge and expertise from within the University as a means of using SPSS to its best advantage. SPSS, along with Excel,

was used to extrapolate the data across the areas of self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job level. It was used to cross reference data concerning gender, job level and organisation as a means of identifying relationships and trends, which is presented in the following chapter.

Through the analysis process it became clear that the research questions became more complex as they progressed, with each research question adding a layer of analytical complexity to the research question before. Research question 1 required understanding, analysis and evaluation of the data relating to the self-awareness and leader effectiveness statements. Research question 2 necessitated the same for the leader effectiveness statements cross-referenced against job levels. Research question 3 sought data from across the leader effectiveness statements and self-awareness statements to be cross-referenced against the job levels. Research question 4 culminated in analysis of self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job levels to be compared and contrasted. This is presented in table 7.3 below which summarises which data set was analysed to answer each of the four research questions, as a development of the research framework presented in chapter five.

**Table 7.3: Data Set and Research Questions**

<b>Thematic Area of Analysis</b>		<b>SA</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>JL</b>
<b>Research question 1</b>	Is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?	X	X	
<b>Research question 2</b>	Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations?		X	X
<b>Research question 3</b>	Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations?	X	X	X
<b>Research question 4</b>	Do effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?	X	X	X

In order to analyse the responses to question 13, the analysis process used for development of the interview themes was used. Here, a summary description is provided of the process, taken from Braun and Clarke (2006). It will be described in detail in section 7.4.6 when discussing the interview analysis procedure, which involved analysis of the most lengthy qualitative feedback. The qualitative feedback received from the questionnaires was short, in comparison. In phase one of the analysis, familiarisation with the data took place through the process of reading and reviewing the comments.

Initial codes were generated at phase two, beginning the process of theme-generation. At phase three, higher level descriptors were added to each of the initial codes, as a means of aggregating initial codes into higher level themes. Phase four involved a refinement of the phase three list, generating a shortlist of final themes. A higher level of aggregation and grouping of themes was carried out at phase five in order to define and name the themes.

The statistical knowledge and experience of the researcher are recognised as limitations of this study. A researcher more adept at analysing and manipulating data may have taken a different approach to reviewing the questionnaire data. In Chapter 10, suggestion is made of replicating the aim and outcomes of this study using a quantitative study as a means of testing findings presented here.

#### **7.4.4 Interview Procedure**

The second element of this research involved carrying out a number of interviews. The interview sample was drawn from the questionnaire responses, that being, the group of individuals most under-represented in the demographics of respondents, which were: males; within the 16 to 34 and 55 and over age groups; employed in organisation predominantly focussed on environment and countryside, planning, transport and the Welsh language; and at the strategic job level. The only interview criteria which was stipulated as essential was that the interviewees were male, the other elements were considered secondary, due to their specificity and potential to rule out a number of interested parties willing to undertake an interview. It was determined that the interview questions would be formed from the research questions, to ensure consistency, rather than seeking views on the findings made from questionnaire responses, as a means of giving male Welsh public service employees, a voice within this thesis which was not biased by the findings from the questionnaire.

The method of interview was a semi-structured interview, which is considered to have affinity with the quantitative paradigm, in that it has the structure and suitability for quantification and is the most frequent qualitative method included in mixed-method research (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). Cachia and Millward (2011) also propose that telephone medium and semi-structured interviews are complementary, in that telephone conversations naturally follow an agenda-driven format, initiated by the caller, similar to a semi-structured interview.

All interviewees received the four questions by email prior to the interview and were directed to the researcher's website to find out more about self-awareness, leader effectiveness, job levels, the researcher herself and other research related information. The purpose of this was to provide interviewees with further information, should they wish to access it. The researcher set up her research website prior to commencement of the questionnaire stage as a means of giving potential respondents an opportunity to learn more about the researcher and the ongoing research. The website can be accessed at [www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk](http://www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk). Interviewees were not advised that this was a pre-requisite for the interviews, as a means of limiting researcher bias. Each of the interviewees were asked the same questions in the same order (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). Further questioning interjected the pre-determined questions as a means of eliciting further information, seeking clarification or seeking explanation.

Volunteer interviewees were sought through the same canvassing method as was used for the questionnaire. E-mails were sent to the chief executives of the Welsh public organisations and notices were placed on the researchers' social media profiles. Through this method, three interviewees were identified as volunteer participants. A further five male Welsh public service employees were approached by the researcher as either having been a former work colleague and/or an enduring friend. A minimum of 30 participants were recommended for initial recruitment to ensure adequate data collection (McIntosh and Morse, 2015), however eight individuals presented as interested and willing to be interviewed.

All interviews were conducted over the telephone, between 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 and 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019, taking between 8 minutes, 35 seconds and 20 minutes 49 seconds. A complete schedule of interviews can be found at appendix 3. Interviews are "traditionally conducted on a face-to-face basis" (Farooq and De Villiers, 2017) and "comparatively very few qualitative studies opt for this means of data collection" (Cachia and Millward, 2011). Criticism has been levied against telephone interviews as it is felt that a lack of face-to-face contact restricts the development of rapport between interviewer and interviewee (Irvine et al., 2013) and interviewees cannot benefit from non-verbal communication in the form of body language and the signals they derive from the physical environment (Farooq and De Villiers, 2017). However, Farooq and De Villiers (2017) cite a number of studies that compare telephone and face to face interviews with no discernible difference in data quality, conversation duration, number of responses, or need for clarification.

The main advantages to telephone interviews are noted in the literature as convenience rather than any methodological strength (Cachia and Millward, 2011). They have the advantage of flexibility in scheduling (Cachia and Millward, 2011), savings in time and travel costs as well as offering greater anonymity to interviewees discussing a sensitive topic (Irvine et al., 2013). Distance between interviewee and interviewer was a factor considered when determining interview mode, as well as maintaining a separation between researcher and interviewees, particularly given the fact that by the time the interviews were being conducted, the researcher had relocated from south Wales to London. "Telephone interviewing is a cost-effective way of capturing data from people over a large geographical area" (Lord et al., 2016).

Virtual interviews, using software such as Skype, Microsoft Teams, Bluejeans or Zoom were not offered, due to the potential to cause duress and embarrassment for interviewees that were unfamiliar with the technology or felt that a video would be intrusive. In the study by Farooq and De Villiers (2017), the interviewee opted not to use the video function of the one Skype call conducted, prompting the researchers to dispense with the offer of a computer-based interview for all new recruits. The future of virtual interviews will be discussed in the section on limitations in the final chapter of the thesis, given the impact and exponential rise in use of computer-based meetings impacted by the Government's stay at home message during the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Interview findings are presented in chapter eight.

Each interview was conducted as similarly as possible, using the four questions stated above. The first interview was conducted in Welsh and the other seven interviews were conducted in English. The Welsh language interview was manually transcribed through listening to the recorded conversation via the TapeACall application and typing up. The transcription was then put through Google translate as a means of quickly generating an English version. This was then checked and corrected by the researcher to ensure that the correct meanings had been appropriately conveyed, both translating ('cyfieithu') and 'translanguaging' ('trawsieithu') the transcript for accuracy and meaning. This process of establishing an "equivalence of meaning" is described by Chen and Boore (2010) in their article concerning translation and back-translation in qualitative nursing research. They highlight the role of the translator as being an active role whereby the translator must consider both linguistic meaning and cultural nuances to ensure accuracy of interpretation and thus translation. They proffer translation by an individual who is fully bilingual and is familiar with both languages in question, which the researcher and translator in this case. Back translation is recommended as a means of ensuring



accuracy, that being translating from one language to the other, and seeing each translation as an independent exercise, until the two texts are “acceptably equivalent” (Chen and Boore, 2010). The other recommendations made in the article, namely the use of two translators and back-translation (translating texts independently from one language to the other until the meaning is secured) have not been pursued in this thesis due to time constraints and the fluidity and flow of the interview, which was felt to be at risk if the transcription became more script-like and less conversation-like.

The researcher prompted interviewees as little as possible to ensure that interviewees were not led or biased by the interviewer. The interviewer also specifically stated at the beginning of interviews one, two and six, when asked to provide points of clarity, that interviewees had not been given a definition of self-awareness because there was no right or wrong answer and researcher opinion was aimed to be kept to a minimum so as not to influence interviewees’ interpretation. A number of prompting questions were asked during the interviews. Also, some interviewees sought clarification during the discussion about such things as the meaning/definition of self-awareness. There were occasions where the researcher sought to clarify the interviewees response and made procedural clarifications during the interview. At the end of each interview, interviewees were asked whether they had anything else which they wished to say to the researcher regarding self-awareness, leader effectiveness, job levels or the interview itself.

#### **7.4.5 Interview Analysis Techniques**

In researching suitable analysis methods for qualitative research within psychology, a number of methods were identified. Braun and Clarke (2006) make reference to conversation analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, thematic discourse analysis, thematic decomposition analysis, grounded theory and thematic analysis. All of these methods look for patterns across an entire data set (interviews) rather than within a data set (an interview) (Braun and Clarke, 2006) which is relevant to this thesis.

Conversation analysis or ‘discourse analysis’ (Boyatzis, 1998) is concerned with the different discourses available to individuals to allow them to describe or “make sense of experiences using culturally available accounts that do not have to be either rational or predictive of behaviour” (Willig, 2002, p.283). Parker (2013) is of the view that conversation analysis is more interested in how interviewees talk rather than what they say. This is of limited application in this thesis, being that what interviewees said was of primary interest, rather than how they said it.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is described as being “wed to a phenomenological epistemology” (Braun and Clarke, 2006), where researchers are able to access the meanings or themes that underlie the accounts they gather and “make them public” (Parker, 2013), which would not be helpful to this thesis which takes a pragmatic worldview.

Thematic discourse analysis is linked to a “social constructionist epistemology” (Braun and Clarke, 2006) which, albeit connects with self-awareness and leader effectiveness in this thesis, it does not provide a direct connection to the thesis’s overarching worldview of pragmatism. Thematic decomposition analysis is a specific form of thematic discourse analysis which theorises language as having a social meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Grounded theory was identified as requiring further investigation due to its accessibility “to those trained in quantitative methods” (Willig and Stainton Rogers, 2017, p.34) and therefore its potential adaptability to a pragmatic research philosophy. Grounded theory uses three key strategies. Firstly, constant comparative analysis, which allows the researcher to identify sub-categories as well as categories at an increasingly higher level of abstraction, thereby both building up and breaking down themes whilst also testing the categorisation through negative case analysis (Willig and Stainton Rogers, 2017, p.34-36). The ability to break down the themes and then build up the level of abstraction would be helpful in generating findings within this thesis. Secondly, theoretical coding, which conforms to a particular which involves describing themes and labelling categories using interviewees’ language, meanings and contexts. Theoretical coding would provide a framework within which to conduct constant comparative analysis however, it would potentially be restrictive and limit the breadth of analysis from the interviews conducted. Thirdly, theoretical sampling, which checks emerging theory against reality, thereby analysing and refining categories to the point of theoretical saturation (Willig and Stainton Rogers, 2017, p.36-37). This would appear less helpful to this thesis as it could potentially add a third data collection element to the research which would be prohibitive, due to researcher time constraints.

Thematic analysis is a way of seeing and often, what is seen through thematic analysis is not seen by others, even if they are observing or experiencing the same events (Boyatzis, 1998, p.1). It does not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge of approaches such as grounded theory, is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework and is a widely used qualitative analytical method within

psychology (Braun and Clarke, 2006). “Thematic analysis means researchers need not subscribe to the implicit theoretical commitments of grounded theory if they do not wish to produce a fully worked-up grounded-theory analysis” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.8) For the purposes of this thesis, thematic analysis appears to be most helpful, in that it is not rigid in its approach and thus sufficiently flexible to allow the interview analysis to fit within a pragmatic paradigm, indeed researcher openness and flexibility are considered necessary competencies to carry out thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998, p.8). One competency required to conduct thematic analysis is pattern which can be generated using an inductive or deductive approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In considering the interview narrative, an inductive approach would be most helpful, being that the themes, as previously noted, appear wide ranging at first glance and require analysis to generate findings applicable to the Welsh public service in general.

Braun and Clarke (2006), later adapted in Clarke and Braun (2013) offer a guide to conducting thematic analysis, which is used in this thesis: phase one - familiarisation with the data through conducting the research, transcription and reviewing; phase two – generating initial codes through simple analysis producing semantic level themes; phase three – searching for themes through refining the initial long list of themes; phase four – reviewing themes through further refining the list developed in phase three through reviewing at a detailed level and an abstract, whole data set level; phase five– defining and naming the themes; phase six – writing up. This phased approach is supported by Belotto (2018) who refers to adding codes to ‘meaning units’, described as words and sentences that convey similar meanings, then adding a secondary label connecting the transcript to the profession under scrutiny and finally coding to convey the essence of the meaning. For the purposes of this study, interviews were coded into increasingly higher levels of abstraction as per the approach taken by Braun and Clarke (2006), Clarke and Braun (2013) and Belotto (2018).

In researching thematic analysis, it is of note that a book has been written by Richard Boyatzis on the subject (‘Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development’ Boyatzis (1998)). There are a number of references to the work by Boyatzis and colleagues relating to resonant leadership and emotional intelligence. This highlights a connection of philosophical interest between the areas of thematic analysis, resonant leadership and emotional intelligence, which are the foundation of this thesis.

#### **7.4.6 Interview Analysis Procedure**

The process of data analysis in this qualitative element of the research study was conducted using the six phases suggested by Clarke and Braun (2013). In phase one of analysis of the interview feedback, familiarisation took place through the process of correcting transcriptions. All interviews were recorded using the TapeACall application, however, the transcription functionality generated a number of inaccuracies throughout each interview transcription. Following fellow researcher recommendation, the website [www.otter.ai](http://www.otter.ai) was used to transcribe the interviews. This was considerably more effective nevertheless, a number of hours of correction was required. This was helpful in ensuring researcher familiarisation with the interviews and themes began to emerge at this phase. An example of an interview transcript can be found at appendix 4.

At phase two, initial codes were generated and added to each point of interest within the interviews. These points of interest did not coincide with sentence start/finishes, as such were very little discernible within the flow of interviewee voice. Rather, points of interest were considered to be points at which interviewees introduced new ideas, views or concepts into their response or reiterated previous narrative, so as to reinforce what they had said earlier in the interview, thereby highlighting the importance of the point to them.

At phase three, higher level descriptors were added to each of the initial codes, beginning the process of refining the long list of initial codes and generating groups of descriptors as a means of sorting interviewee responses into discernible themes. Phase four began by sorting the refined list from phase three and, using the functionality within Microsoft Excel, ending by sorting the descriptors into thematic groups. Phase five involved a higher level of aggregation and grouping of themes in order to define and name the themes.

#### **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented three layers of the research onion (Saunders et al., 2003); strategy, time horizon, and techniques and procedures. The strategy of survey by questionnaire and subsequent interviews has been presented. This chapter discussed the cross-sectional time horizon of this thesis, driven by the personal and professional circumstances of the researcher, albeit with the potential of being replicated in the future. The questionnaire pilot conducted as a means of testing out both the structure of the questionnaire and the appropriateness of the instruments has been presented. The

modifications made to the questionnaire following the pilot have also been set out, with the most notable change being the development of a five functions job level framework from the initial four-layer model. Therefore, the original contribution here is a five functions job level framework, from the initial four. It has set out the procedure followed for conducting the questionnaire, from identifying subjects, sampling to data collection. It has also presented the data analysis procedure. It then presented the methodology used for identifying interviewees' and the interview procedure. It explored interview analysis techniques and the chosen analysis technique of thematic analysis.

In drawing together all of the elements that have made up the research methodology in chapters six and seven, the table below is presented that summarily sets out each of the six layers of the research onion, developed by Saunders et al. (2007 p.129-139).

**Table 7.4: Research Methodology - Summary**

Layer Ref	Research Methodology Layer	Summary Description	
1	Philosophy	Pragmatism	
2	Approach	Social Constructionism	
3	Methodological Choice	Mixed Methods	
4	Strategy	Questionnaire and Interviews	
5	Time Horizon	Cross-Sectional	
6	Techniques and Procedures	<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Interviews</b>
		Demographics, SA3Q, Resonant Leadership Scale, free-text question	Four interview questions, telephone
		Descriptive statistics	Thematic analysis

This thesis now moves on to present the findings from the questionnaire and the interviews. It will present the demographics of questionnaire respondents and their agreement levels to the self-awareness and leader effectiveness statements. It will consider each of the four research questions and, using the data gathered from the questionnaire, present findings. It will also present the themes discernible from the thoughts, views and comments made by respondents in the free text section of the questionnaire. It will then move on to present the data analysis process followed in determining the interview themes. It will present overarching themes that became evident as relevant to a number of questions and will then discuss each interview question in turn.

# **Chapter 8**

## **Findings**

## 8.1 Introduction

Chapter seven presented the research strategy of this thesis, that being a questionnaire followed by interviews. It then discussed the time horizon of this thesis, that being cross-sectional. It went on to discuss and present the techniques available and the procedures used to conduct the questionnaire and interviews. Firstly, it set out the pilot questionnaire procedure and learnings from it, resulting in changes to the job levels framework and questionnaire. It then presented the wholesale questionnaire implementation procedure and the data analysis procedure used to generate findings. It also briefly set out how the free text comments from question 13 were analysed. Secondly, it set out the interview procedure, detailing how they were conducted. It then sets out the techniques available to conduct analysis of the feedback received, presenting the method of choice as thematic analysis. The chapter culminated with a presentation of the ethical dilemmas considered within this thesis, influencing the methodology, taking the role of the researcher into consideration at a time when the researcher was also a Welsh public service employee herself.

This first part of this chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire. The demographic data gathered from the questionnaire will be explored, presenting analysis on the gender, age, organisation and job level of respondents. It will present answer each of the four research questions by setting out the agreement levels to the 24 self-awareness statements and ten leader effectiveness statements, exploring the relationship between self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels. It will present the themes derived from the free-text comments made by respondents to the final question of the questionnaire.

The second part of the chapter presents the findings from the interviews. It will firstly explore the demographic make-up of the interviewees, being that this was an important factor in determining sampling parameters. It will then present the interview feedback, drawing out the themes discussed by the interviewees, firstly considering overarching themes and moving on to consider each of the research questions in turn.

The final section will bring together the themes derived from the questionnaire and the interviews, presenting commonalities and differences, which will be critical to the corollary model presented in chapter nine.

## **8.2 Questionnaire Findings**

### **8.2.1 Overview**

The questionnaire sought responses about both the respondent and their direct line manager across the themes of: gender (question 1 - respondent, question 2 - manager), age (questions 3 – respondent, question 4 - manager), organisation (questions 5 – respondent, question 6 - manager), job level (questions 7 – respondent, question 8 - manager), self-awareness (questions 9 – respondent self-awareness or RSA, question 10 – manager self-awareness or MSA) and leader effectiveness (questions 11 – respondent leader effectiveness or RLE, question 12 – manager leader effectiveness or MLE). The final question (question 13) sought thoughts, views and comments from respondents.

Throughout this chapter, where data and information is related to the respondents, it will be presented in green and the manager, in blue.

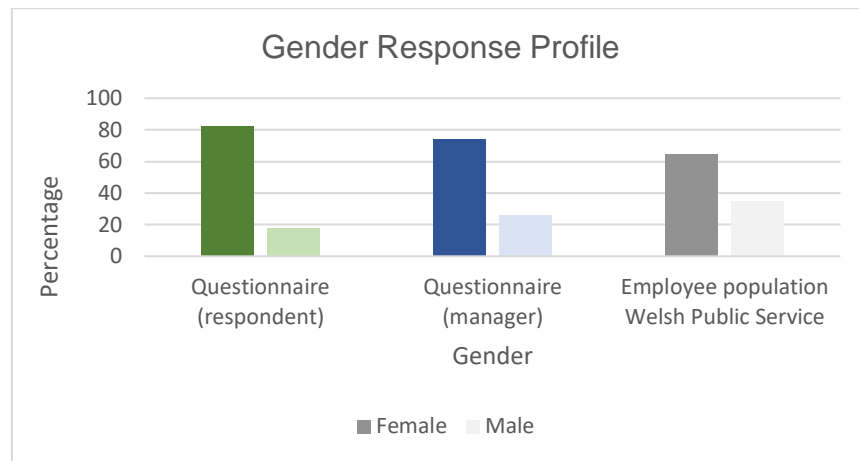
### **8.2.2 Demographic Data**

This section will now go on to present the findings related to each of the four demographic themes of gender, age, organisation and job level, in turn.

#### **8.2.2.1 Gender**

Of the 152 respondents, 125 respondents (82.2%) identified themselves as female and 27 (17.8%) identified themselves male. Respondents identified that 74.3% (113 individuals) of their managers were female and 25.7% (39 individuals) were male – it should be noted that the gender of managers was reported by respondents and was therefore subjective opinion. No respondents identified themselves as non-binary. However the Stats Wales (2018) report suggests that the gender split of employees is 65.1% female (250,900 individuals) and 34.8% male (134,400 individuals). This means that the gender split of respondents to this questionnaire is peculiarly weighted towards females by 17.1%. Figure 8.1 below shows the national gender split versus the questionnaire response rate.





**Figure 8.1 – Gender Response Profile**

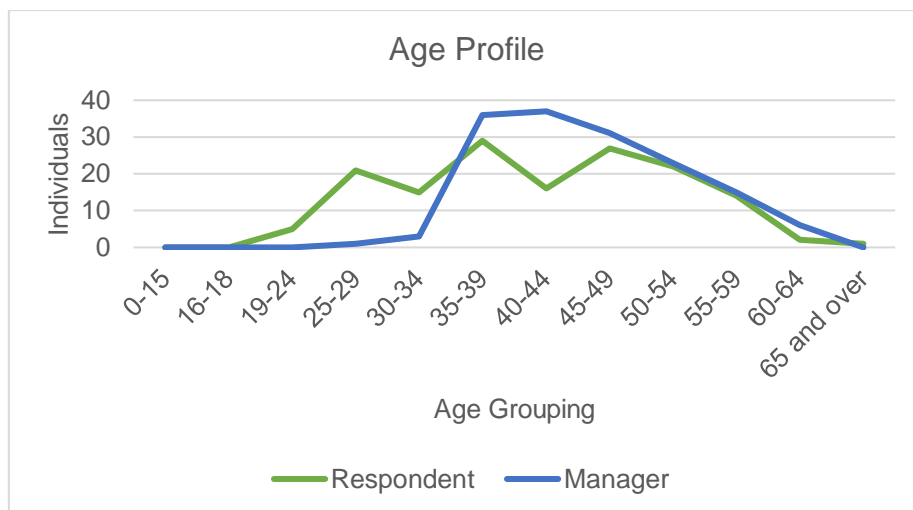
### 8.2.2.2 Age

The youngest respondents identified themselves within the 19-24 age group and the oldest within the over 65 age group. The most frequently chosen age grouping was the 35-39 age group. The youngest managers identified by respondents were within the 25-29 age group and the oldest within the 60-64 age group. The most frequently chosen age grouping was the 40 - 44 age group. No managers were identified within the 19-24 or 65 and over age group. Table 8.1 below, evidences the age profile of respondents and managers:

**Table 8.1 – Respondent and Manager Age Profile**

Age Grouping	Q3: Please choose YOUR age grouping:		Q4: Please choose YOUR MANAGER'S age grouping:	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
19-24	5	3.3	0	0
25-29	21	13.8	1	0.7
30-34	15	9.9	3	2.0
35-39	<b>29</b>	<b>19.1</b>	36	23.7
40-44	16	10.5	<b>37</b>	<b>24.3</b>
45-49	27	17.8	31	20.4
50-54	22	14.5	23	15.1
55-59	14	9.2	15	9.9
60-64	2	1.3	6	3.9
65 and over	1	0.7	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 8.2 demonstrates the age frequencies across respondents and their managers, demonstrating a general trend for managers to be older than respondents.



**Figure 8.2 – Age Profile Comparison**

As noted in chapter seven, section 7.4.2, StatsWales were unable to provide employee ages by the same groupings as used in the questionnaire, taken from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014 (StatsWales, 2018b), but they were able to group ages into 16-34, 35-44, 45 to 54 and 55 plus. In order to provide comparisons, the age groupings of this thesis were combined, producing the following information (table 8.2). It shows that respondents at the 16-34 and 45-54 are appropriately represented with less than a 4% difference between questionnaire responses and employee numbers, the 35-44 being somewhat under-represented by some 5.5%, and the 55 plus age group is under-represented by 9.1%.

**Table 8.2 – All Wales Comparative Age Profile**

Research Age Grouping	Stats Wales Age Grouping	Number of Respondents	Number of Managers	Number of WPS Employees
19-34	16-34	41 (26.9%)	4 (2.6%)	103,100 (26.7%)
35-44	35-44	45 (29.6%)	73 (48%)	93,000 (24.1%)
45-54	45-54	49 (32.2%)	54 (35.5%)	111,300 (28.8%)
55 plus	55 plus	17 (11.1%)	21 (13.8%)	77,900 (20.2%)

### 8.2.2.3 Organisation

The organisation identified by respondents as best representing the organisation in which they worked most frequently was local government (43 respondents, 28.3%), followed by health and social care (38 respondents, 25%) and education and skills (26 respondents, 17.1%). Seven respondents identified that their organisation was not found within the list of 14 organisations provided at questions 5 and 6. This was closely reflected in responses given for managers: local government (43 managers, 28.3%), health and social care (40 managers, 26.3%) and education and skills (25 managers, 16.4%). No respondents identified themselves or their manager as working in: environment and countryside, planning, transport or Welsh language organisations. Further exploration would be required here to understand whether the number of organisations categorised within the overarching organisation name groupings influenced the lack of responses, or whether, for example town planners and Welsh translators have identified their employing organisation as local government. Table 8.3 presents the findings for respondent and manager organisation profile.

**Table 8.3 – Respondent and Manager Organisation Profile**

Organisation	Q5: Please identify which description type best represents the organisation in which you work.		Q6 - Please identify which description type best represents the organisation in which your manager works.	
	N	%	N	%
Local government	43	28.3	43	28.3
Health and social care	38	25.0	40	26.3
Education and skills	26	17.1	25	16.4
People and communities	13	8.6	12	7.9
Safety and criminal justice	13	8.6	13	8.6
National government	7	4.6	7	4.6
None of the above	7	4.6	8	5.3
Culture and sport	2	1.3	2	1.3
Business and economy	1	0.7	1	0.7
Housing and regeneration	1	0.7	1	0.7
Improving public services	1	0.7	0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>

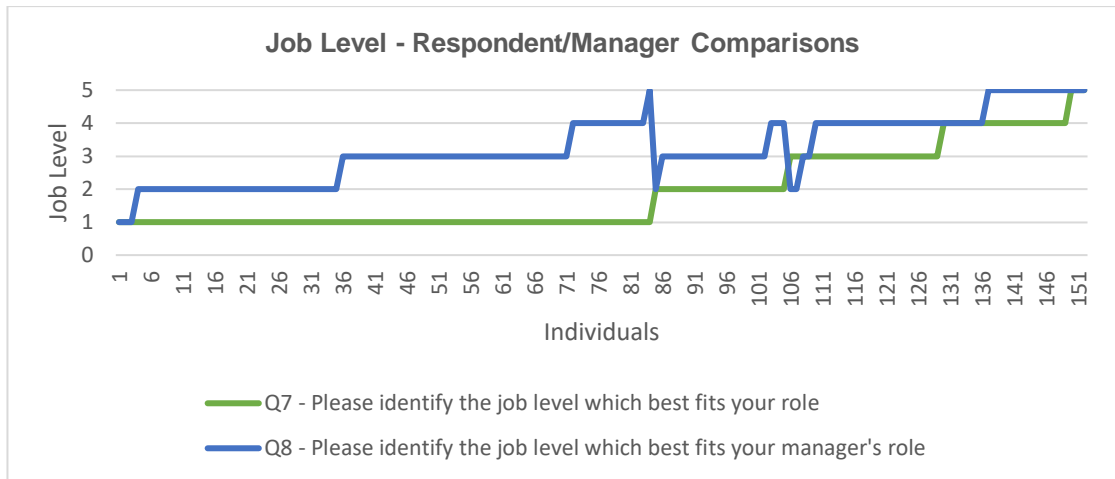
#### 8.2.2.4 Job Level

The majority (84 respondents, 55.3%) of respondents identified their job level as operational with only 3 (2%) respondents identifying themselves within the strategic job level. Respondents identified their managers as predominantly within the management job level (55 managers, 36.2%) with senior management (42 managers, 27.6%) and business (35 managers, 23%) levels also being identified frequently. This is presented in table 8.4 below.

**Table 8.4 – Respondent and Manager Job Level Profile**

Job Level	Q7 - Please identify the job level which best fits your role		Q8 - Please identify the job level which best fits your manager's role	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Operational	84	55.3	3	2.0
Business	21	13.8	35	23.0
Management	24	15.8	55	36.2
Senior Management	20	13.2	42	27.6
Strategic	3	2.0	17	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A further observation is that respondents and their managers are not always directly above or below each other in the job levels i.e. one level above/below. Thirteen respondents who identified themselves at the operational job level, identified their managers in the senior management or strategic job levels. Respondents identifying themselves at the operation level have the greatest spread of manager job levels, ranging from operational to strategic. Two respondents at the management job level identified their manager in the business job level. This is presented in figure 8.3 below, which shows respondents and managers may be at the same job level or up to four job levels apart. Respondent job levels have been grouped by job level to show the differences in manager job levels.



**Figure 8.3 – Job Level – Respondent/Manager Comparison**

In summary, respondents were predominantly female (82.2%), between the ages of 35-39 (19.1%) working in local government (28.3%), at the operational job level (55.3%). Managers were predominantly female (74.3%), between the ages of 40-44 (24.3%), working in local government (28.3%), at the management job level (36.2%).

This leads to the need for further research to focus on gathering interview feedback from: males; within younger and older age groupings (19-24, 60-64, and 65 and over); employed in organisations predominantly focussed on environment and countryside, planning, transport and the Welsh language; and at the strategic job level. This will ensure that the data and views gathered in this study better represent the views of Welsh public service employees.

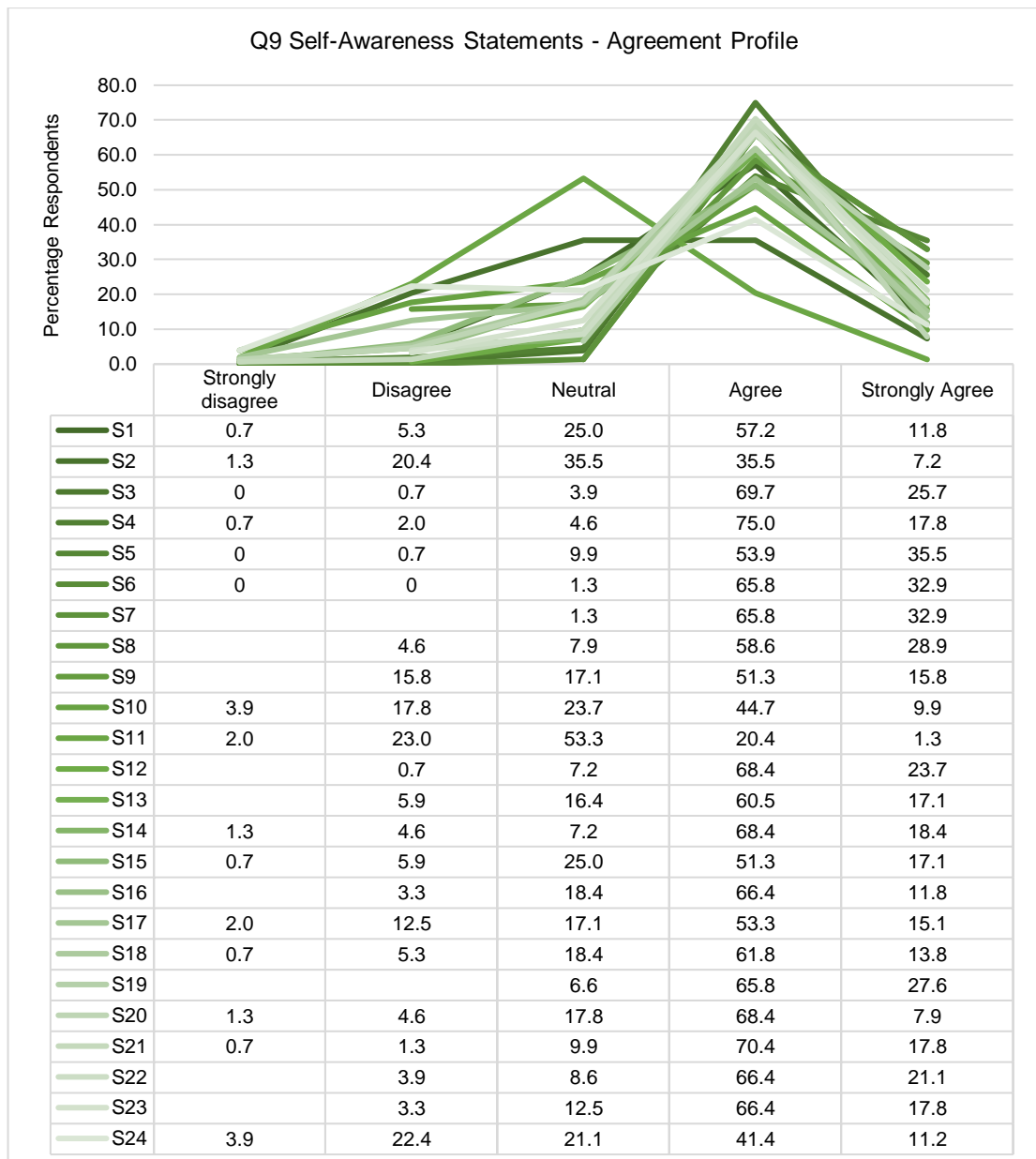
### **8.2.3 Self-awareness and Leader Effectiveness Findings**

The section focusses on the agreement levels to the self-awareness statements, leader effectiveness statements and the answers to the four research questions posed in this thesis. It will begin by considering the profile of responses to questions 9 (respondent self-awareness or RSA) and 10 (manager self-awareness or MSA), questions 10 (respondent leader effectiveness or RLE) and 11 (manager leader effectiveness or MLE) and then considering the four research questions. The section will culminate with a presentation of data that offers comparison and corroboration of the self/other ratings studies.

#### **8.2.3.1 Self-Awareness**

The questionnaire posed 24 statements relating to self-awareness, grouped into internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness (see section 7.2 for each statement). Respondents identified their agreement level to each statement along a Likert scale, where 1 showed strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3, neutral, 4, agree and 5, strongly agree. For the purposes of this thesis, the data collected regarding self-awareness is considered independent, ordinal variable data.

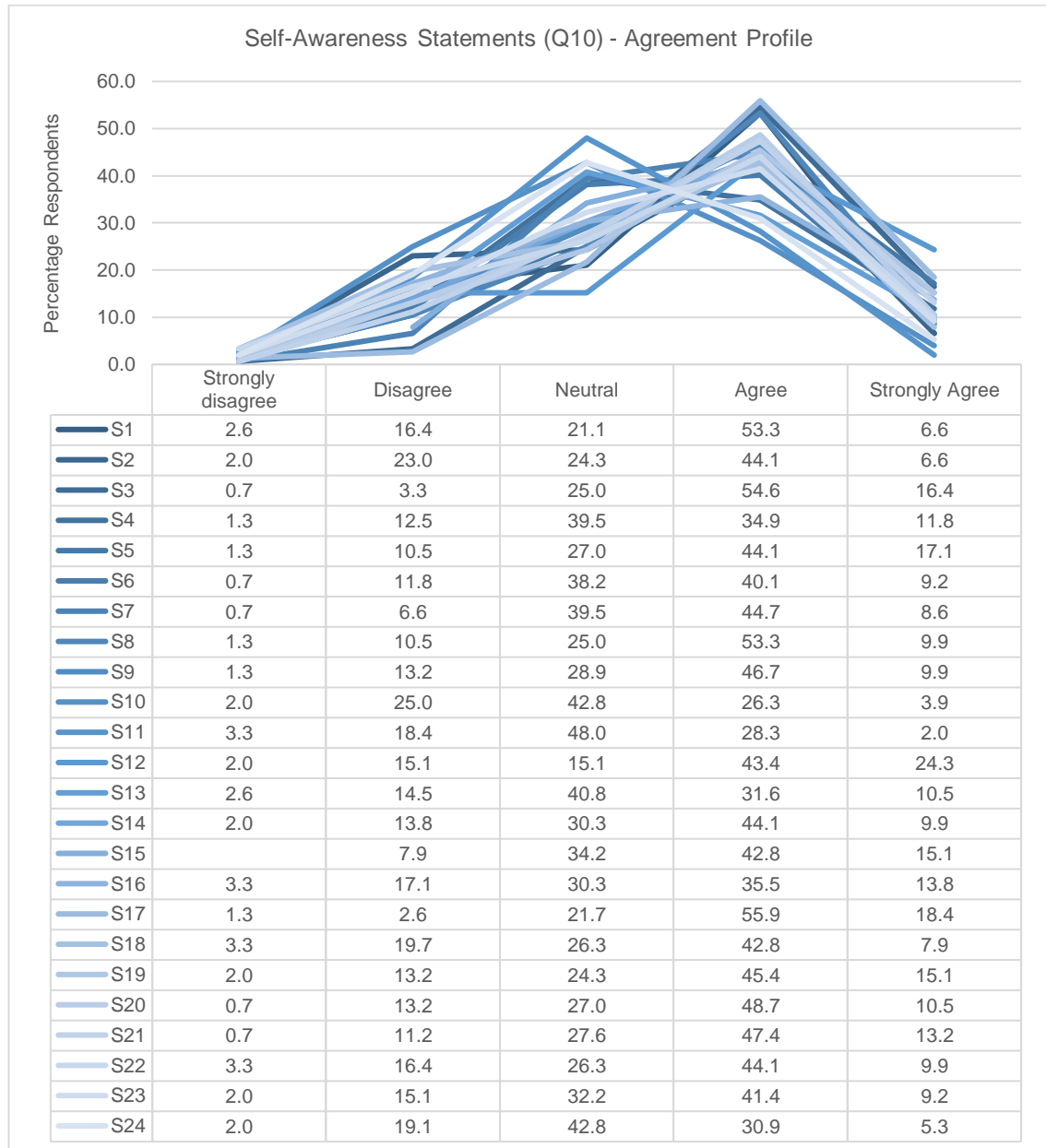
The frequencies of each response for each of the 24 statements in question 9 have been profiled and are presented below in figure 8.4. The statement with the highest percentage of respondents strongly agreeing is statement 7 ('I learn from my mistakes'). The statement with the highest percentage of respondents agreeing is statement 4 ('I know my weaknesses and what I am not good at'). The statements with the highest percentage of respondents strongly disagreeing are statements 10 ('stress impacts my ability to make decisions') and statement 24 ('when I am sad, angry or unhappy I hide it from colleagues'). It is of note that statement 2 ('my behaviour changes') and statement 11 ('I see myself as others see me') have different agreement profiles to the other statements, in that the questions have a higher number of respondents choosing a neutral point on the Likert scale. 'S' refers to the statement within the question.



**Figure 8.4 – Self-Awareness Statements (Question 9 - RSA), Respondent Agreement Profile**

The frequencies of each response for each of the 24 statements in question 10 have also been profiled. Notably, a higher number of strongly disagree and disagree were identified in comparison to those identified in question 9. Respondents felt more positive about the statements in relation to themselves than they did about their manager. Statement 12 ('my manager has good people skills') had the highest percentage of respondents agreeing strongly. Statement 17 ('my manager's behaviour impacts on their colleagues') was identified as having the greatest number of respondents agreeing. Statement 24 ('when my manager is sad, angry or unhappy they hide it from colleagues') has the highest number of respondents disagreeing. Statement 11 ('my manager sees

himself/herself as others see them') was once again highlighted as having a different agreement profile to other statements and more neutral stances were held. The manager agreement profile is presented in figure 8.5 below. S refers to statement



**Figure 8.5 - Self-Awareness Statements (Q10 MSA), Manager Agreement Profile**



### 8.2.3.2 Leader Effectiveness

Questions 11 (RLE) and 12 (MLE) focussed on leadership and for the purpose of this thesis, the data collected regarding leader effectiveness is considered dependent, ordinal data. There was less variation in the agreement ratings of respondents to questions 11 and 12 and therefore, presentation of agreement profiles, akin to questions 9 and 10 above (figures 8.4 and 8.5) were not produced.

Respondents scored themselves as more in agreement with all statements in relation to themselves than they did their manager, bar statement three, where they were least in agreement in relation to themselves ('focusses on successes rather than failures'). It is apparent that individuals felt their manager focussed more on successes than they themselves did. For question 11 (RLE), respondents were most in agreement with statement 4 (support teamwork to achieve goals and outcomes) in relation to themselves. For question 12 (MLE), respondents were also most in agreement with statement 4, denoting that their manager focussed on successes rather than failures, and least in agreement with statement 1 (looks for feedback even when it is difficult to hear). As can be seen, mean agreement levels range from 3.3 to 4.3: from neutral to agree. This is presented in figure 8.6 below.

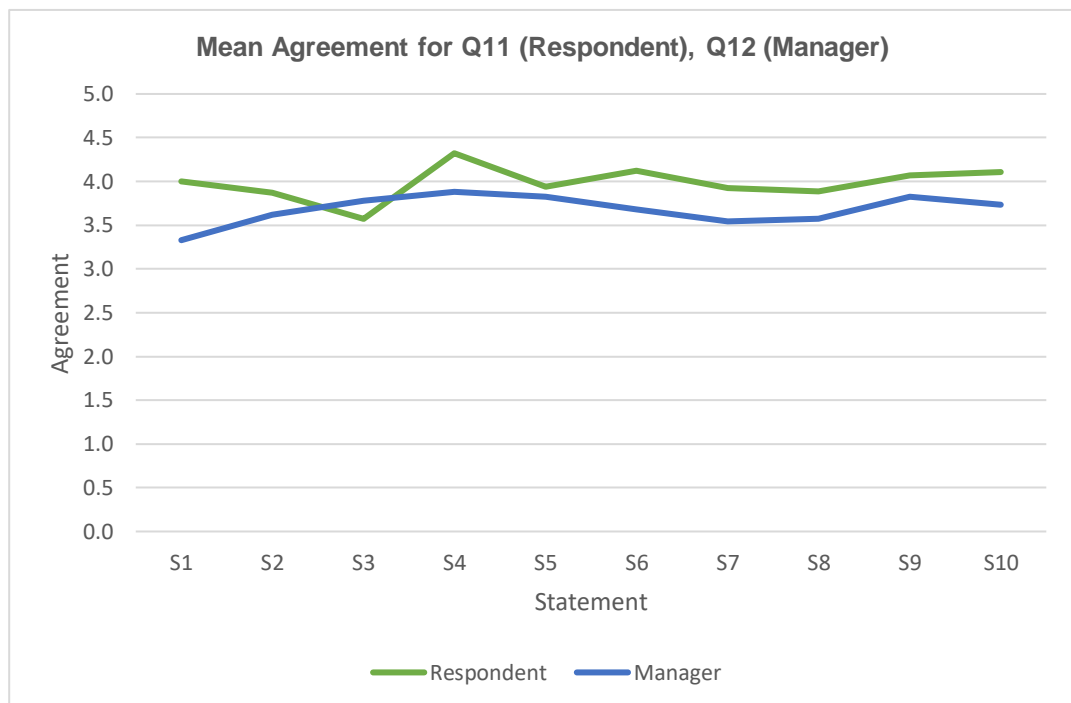


Figure 8.6 – Mean Agreement, Questions 11 (RLE) and 12 (MLE)

Due to the similarity of questions 9 and 10, statement 18 - 'I seek feedback from colleagues / my manager seeks feedback from colleagues', and questions 11 and 12, statement 1 – 'looks for feedback even when it is difficult to hear', a comparison was conducted. Clear similarities can be seen between the mean levels of agreement – from 3.32 (neutral) to 3.88 (agree), which supports the validity of the questionnaire in that respondents made similar choices to similar statements. However, the agreement rating of respondent by respondent was higher (3.83 and 3.88 respectively) than agreement rating of respondent of manager (3.32 and 3.33 respectively).

**Table 8.5 – Feedback Statements Agreement Comparisons (Q 9, 10, 11, 12)**

Question/Statement	Q9/18 - "In work..." [I seek feedback from colleagues]	Q10/18 - "In work..." [my manager seeks feedback from colleagues]	Q11/1 - "As a leader, I..." [Look for feedback even when it is difficult to hear]	Q12/1 - "As a leader, my manager..." [Looks for feedback even when it is difficult to hear]
<b>Mean</b>	3.83	3.32	3.88	3.33

This correlation between question 9 and 11, and question 10 and 12 is reflective of the findings presented below in answer to research question one.

#### 8.2.4 Answering the Research Questions

**The aim of this thesis is to critically explore self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness across all levels of the Welsh public service**

The research questions seek to achieve this by exploring whether there is a relationship between: self-awareness and resonant leadership, resonant leadership and job levels, self-awareness of strategic level leaders compared to all other levels and lastly, resonant leadership, job levels and self-awareness. This chapter will now go on to explore each research question in turn and present the data gathered from the questionnaire to aide in doing so.

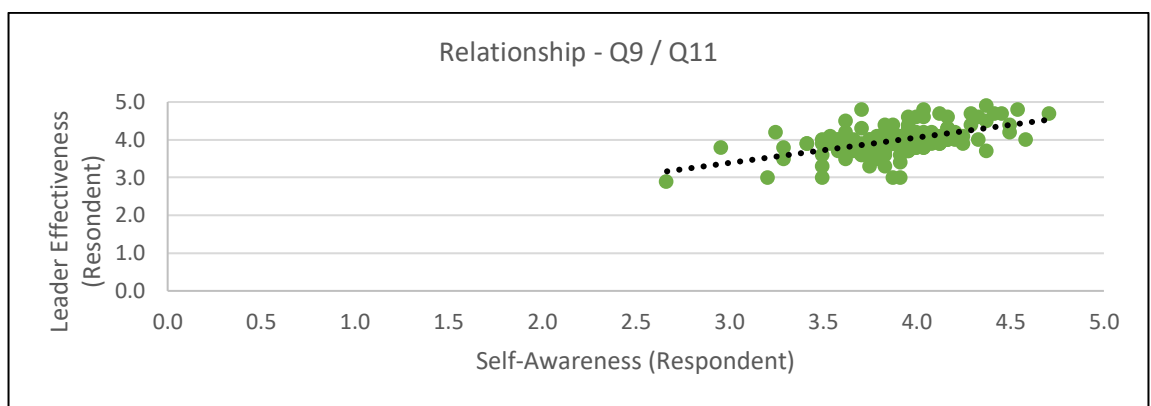
**Research question 1: Is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?**

In considering this research question, the respondents' agreement with both self-awareness and leader effectiveness about themselves and their manager were

compared. In order to do this, the mean agreement level was calculated for each respondent for question 9 (respondent self-awareness or RSA), 10 (manager self-awareness or MSA), 11 (respondent leader effectiveness or RLE) and 12 (manager leader effectiveness or MLE). For each respondent, four mean scores were therefore calculated. To further explore this research question, comparisons were made between questions 9 and 11 (RSA and RLE), 9 and 12 (RSA and MLE), 10 and 11 (MSA and RLE) and 10 and 12 (MSA and MLE), thereby ensuring that at each point of comparison, a data set for both self-awareness and leader effectiveness were compared. Comparison between only self-awareness (questions 9 and 10) and only leader effectiveness (questions 11 and 12) were not included at this time because such comparison would not have answered the question 'is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?'.

Scatter plots were initially generated to understand the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness as they were considered an essential first step when conducting any correlation analysis, due to their ability to present general trends (Field, 2005). Being that there were two variables under scrutiny, a bivariate correlation using a two-tailed Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted for each question pairing.

The agreement ratings for questions 9 (RSA) and 11 (RLE) were compared. This is presented below in the scatter plot at figure 8.7 and the Pearson Correlation is presented in table 8.6. The scatter plot suggests that there is close relationship between the levels of agreement for both questions. The Pearson correlation concluded that there was a positive relationship with a coefficient of  $r = 0.232$ . This denotes that there is a positive correlation between the agreement levels of questions 9 and 11 and as the agreement levels to statements in question 9 increase, so do the agreement levels to the statements in question 11. However, the positive relationship of  $r = 0.232$  indicates that there is variation around the line of best fit and the strength of association between the two variables is small.



**Figure 8.7 – Scatter Plot of Relationship Between Question 9 (RSA) and 11 (RLE)**

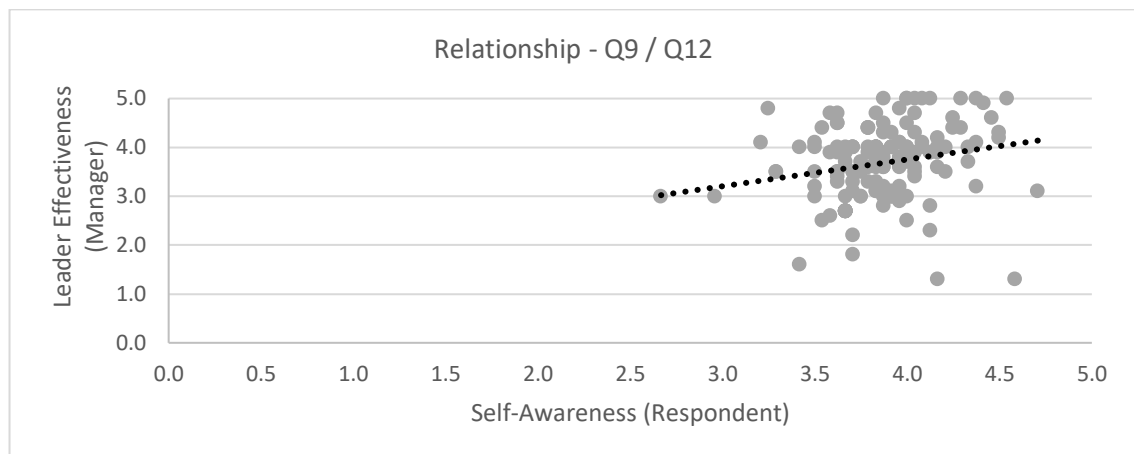
**Table 8.6 – Pearson Correlation Between Question 9 (RSA) and 11 (RLE)**

		Q9	Q11
Q9	Pearson Correlation	1	.232**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004
	N	152	152
Q11	Pearson Correlation	.232**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	
	N	152	152

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It would appear logical for there to be a relationship between the self-awareness and leader effectiveness of the respondent when conducting a self-assessment, such as in this questionnaire.

The relationship between questions 9 and 12 are presented in the scatter plot (figure 8.8) and table 8.7 below. The Pearson correlation concluded that there was a negative relationship with a coefficient of  $r = -0.021$ . This determines that there is a small negative correlation between the agreement levels of question 9 and 12, which denotes that as the mean agreement level for manager leader effectiveness rises, the mean agreement level for respondent self-awareness falls and vice versa.



**Figure 8.8 - Scatter Plot of Relationship Between Question 9 (RSA) and 12 (MLE)**

**Table 8.7 – Pearson Correlation Between Question 9 (RSA) and 12 (MLE)**

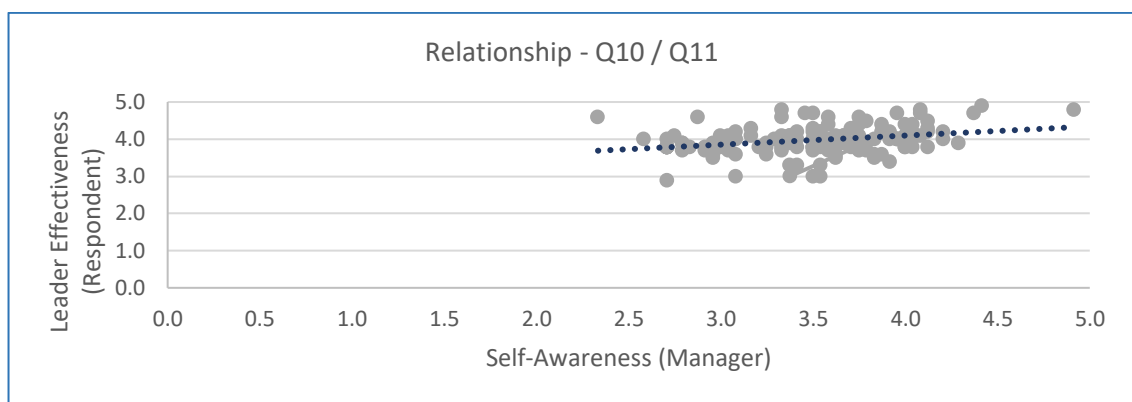
		Q9	Q12
Q9	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.801
	N	152	152
Q12	Pearson Correlation	-0.021	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.801	
	N	152	152

This finding warrants further exploration beyond this study as to the possible reasons for this negative relationship – questions should be asked as to whether the Kruger-Dunning effect (Kruger and Dunning, 1999) may be in play here, that being, individuals with low ability over-estimating their abilities and assessing the abilities of their manager as lower than their own. However, it could also be a symptom of strategic level disconnect, where individuals feel disconnected from their managers and those at the strategic job level, as described by interviewees, and presented later in the chapter.

The relationship between questions 10 (MSA) and 11 (RLE) is presented in the scatter plot (figure 8.9) and table 8.8 below. When comparing questions 10 and 11, the Pearson

correlation concluded that there was no significance in the relationship with a coefficient of  $r = 0.098$ . This confirms that there is no relationship between the agreement levels indicated by respondents for questions 10 and 11.

It is of interest that there is no relationship between these two variable, being that the relationship between questions 9 and 12 emerged as a negative correlation. It is apparent that as mean agreement level for manager leader effectiveness rises, the mean agreement level for respondent self-awareness falls and vice versa. However, as the leader effectiveness of the respondent rises, the mean agreement level for manager self-awareness may rise or fall independently, and vice versa.

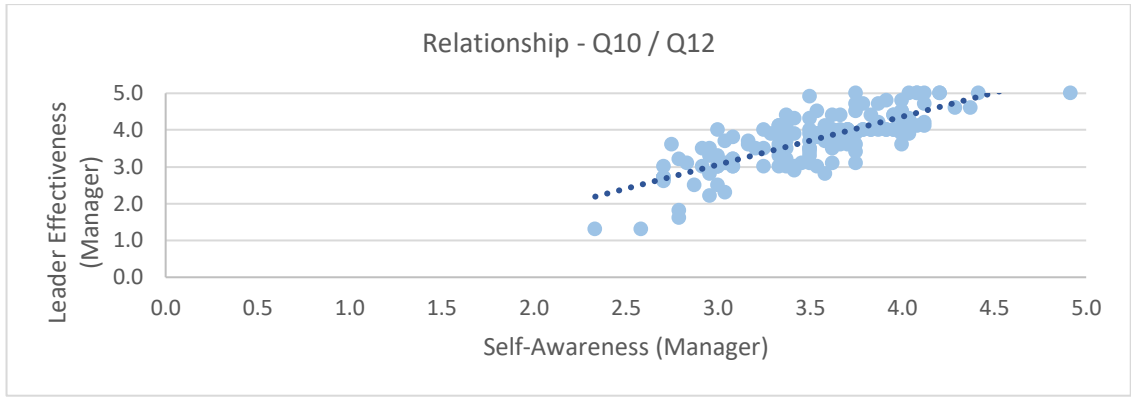


**Figure 8.9 - Scatter Plot of Relationship Between Question 10 (MSA) and 11 (RLE)**

**Table 8.8 – Pearson Correlation Between Question 10 (MSA) and 11 (RLE)**

		Q10	Q11
Q10	Pearson Correlation	1	0.098
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.231
	N	152	152
Q11	Pearson Correlation	0.098	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.231	
	N	152	152

The relationship between questions 10 (MSA) and 12 (MLE) are presented in the scatter plot (figure 8.10) and table 8.9 below. When comparing questions 10 (MSA) and 12 (MLE), the Pearson correlation concluded that there was a positive relationship with a coefficient of  $r = 0.614$ . This determines that the strength of association between agreement levels for question 10 and 12 is positive, denoting that respondents linked the self-awareness of their managers with the leader effectiveness of their managers.



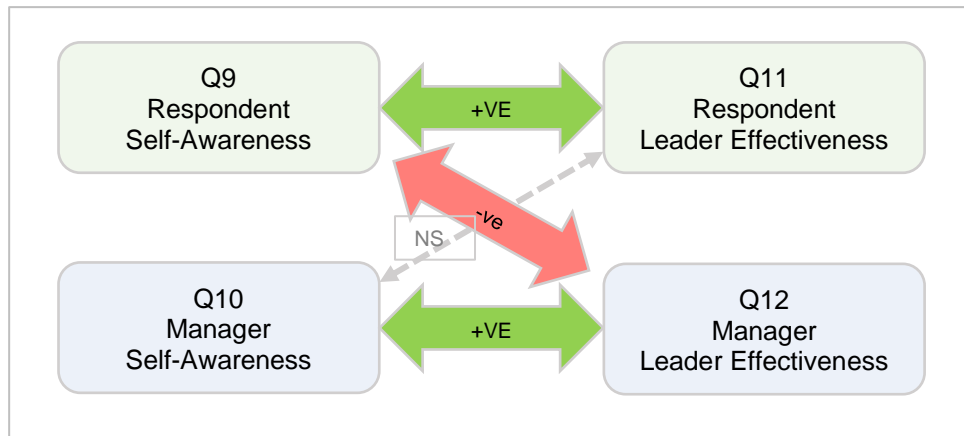
**Figure 8.10 - Scatter Plot of Relationship Between Question 10 (MSA) and 12 (MLE)**

**Table 8.9 – Pearson Correlation Between Question 10 (MSA) and 12 (MLE)**

		Q10	Q12
Q10	Pearson Correlation	1	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	152	152
Q12	Pearson Correlation	.614**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	152	152
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

It would appear logical for there to be a relationship between the self-awareness and leader effectiveness of the manager when such is being assessed by the respondent, who is consistent throughout the exercise, such as in this questionnaire.

Following statistical testing, it has been determined that: there was a positive correlation between question 9 (RSA) and question 11 (RLE); there was a negative correlation between question 9 (RSA) and question 12 (MLE); there was no significant correlation between question 10 (MSA) and question 11 (RLE); and there was a positive correlation between question 10 (MSA) and Q12 (MLE). This is delineated in figure 8.11 below.



**Figure 8.11 – Relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness.**

In reflecting on the research question, ‘is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?’, the findings point towards there being a relationship between respondent self-awareness and respondent leader effectiveness when assessed by the respondent on the basis of ‘self-assessment’. The findings also point to there being a relationship between the respondents’ managers’ self-awareness and their leader effectiveness when assessed by the respondent. This therefore suggests that within the Welsh public service, there is a link between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness. The answer to the first of the research questions, which this thesis will contribute to knowledge and practice is:

**Answer 1: There is a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service**



**Research question 2: Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations?**

As described in chapter four, an effective resonant leader, as determined by the questionnaire used, is the highest score when the average sum of the ratings is calculated (Cummings et al., 2008). That being, the higher the mean agreement level against all ten statements, the more effective the resonant leader. For the purposes of this research, individuals' whose mean resonant leadership agreement level was calculated as being equal to or greater than 4 ( $\geq 4$ ) was considered, being that 4 and 5 are positive scores within the Likert scale, i.e. agree and strongly agree. In considering this research question, the responses to question 7 (respondents' job level) were compared with question 11 (RLE) and question 8 (manager's job level) was compared with question 12 (MLE). In total there were 78 respondents and 62 managers whose mean agreement level was 4 or more. The greatest number of respondents with a mean agreement level of 4 or more were in the operational job level (38, 25%) and lowest, in the strategic level (3, 2%). The greatest number of managers with a mean agreement level of 4 or more were in the management job level (23, 15.1%) and the lowest, in the operational level (1, 0.7%). In considering the number of respondents at each job level, the percentage of respondents identifying themselves as effective resonant leaders was fairly consistent across the business (12), management (13) and senior management (12) job levels. The percentage of managers identified as effective resonant leaders was fairly consistent across the business (16) and senior management (17) job levels. The number of individuals grouped by job level is detailed in table 8.10 below

**Table 8.10 – Frequency of all respondents compared with frequency of respondent with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of  $\geq 4$**

	Respondent Frequency (N)	Respondent Frequency (%)	$\geq 4$ Respondent Frequency (N)	$\geq 4$ Respondent Frequency (%)	Manager Frequency (N)	Manager Frequency (%)	$\geq 4$ Manager Frequency (N)	$\geq 4$ R Manager Frequency (%)
<b>Operational</b>	84	55.3	38	25.0	3	2	1	0.7
<b>Business</b>	21	13.8	12	7.9	35	23	16	10.5
<b>Management</b>	24	15.8	13	8.6	55	36.2	23	15.1
<b>Senior Management</b>	20	13.2	12	7.9	42	27.6	17	11.2
<b>Strategic</b>	3	2	3	2.0	17	11.2	5	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>40.8</b>

**N: number, %: percentage**

Due to the variation in respondent frequency across each of the job levels, the frequency of respondents with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level equal to or more than 4 was then considered as a percentage of the number of respondents in each job level, in order to generate a percentage figure by job level rather than by the total, as a whole. This is presented in table 8.11 below. Across all job levels, approximately 63% of respondents identified themselves as effective resonant leaders, with a range from 45.2% to 100%. The same exercise was then carried out for managers. Across all job levels, approximately 39% of managers were identified as effective resonant leaders, with a range from 29.5% to 45.7%. This is presented in table 8.12 below.

**Table 8.11 - Respondents with mean leader effectiveness agreement level of  $\geq 4$**

Job Level	Respondent Frequency (N)	$\geq 4$ Respondent Frequency (N)	$\geq 4$ Respondent Frequency (%)
Operational	84	38	45.2
Business	21	12	57.2
Management	24	13	54.4
Senior Management	20	12	59.8
Strategic	3	3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>63.3</b>

N: number, %: percentage,  $\geq 4$ : equal to or more than 4

**Table 8.12 - Managers with mean leader effectiveness agreement level of  $\geq 4$**

Job Level	Respondent Frequency (N)	$\geq 4$ Respondent Frequency (N)	$\geq 4$ Respondent Frequency (%)
Operational	3	1	35.0
Business	35	16	45.7
Management	55	23	41.7
Senior Management	42	17	40.6
Strategic	17	5	29.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38.5</b>

N: number, %: percentage,  $\geq 4$ : equal to or more than 4

This suggests that the research question, 'will effective resonant leaders be identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations?' is answered positively, with between 39% and 63% of Welsh public service employees identifying themselves or their managers as effective resonant leaders. This thesis will therefore contribute, to knowledge and practice the response:

**Answer 2: Effective resonant leaders can be identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service organisations**

**Research question 3: Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations?**

The responses gathered from strategic job level respondents and managers identified as effective leaders were compared with those at the operational, business, management and senior management job levels. As described in chapter five, leader effectiveness is deemed to be individuals whose average agreement level across all statements is 4 or more.

The table below (table 8.14) presents the data for respondents who identified themselves as effective resonant leaders (question 11 - RLE) and respondents who had an average agreement level of 4 or more for each of the 24 self-awareness statements (question 9 - RSE). Of the 38 respondents at the operational job level with a mean resonant leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more, 73.7% also had a mean self-awareness agreement of 4 or more. For respondents at the business level, the percentage of individuals with mean leader effectiveness and self-awareness agreement rating of 4 or more was 50%. At the management level this was 46.2% and for both the senior management and strategic job levels, this was 33.3%. This demonstrates a clear reduction in the number of respondents who were identified as both effective resonant leaders and self-aware, as job levels increase. This is expressed in table 8.13, below.

**Table 8.13 - Respondents with mean leader effectiveness and self-awareness score of 4 or more**

	<b>Respondent with LE ≥4</b>	<b>Respondents with LE ≥4 and SA ≥4</b>	<b>SA of ≥4 expressed as % of Respondents with LE ≥4</b>
<b>Operational</b>	38	28	73.7
<b>Business</b>	12	6	50.0
<b>Management</b>	13	6	46.2
<b>Senior Management</b>	12	4	33.3
<b>Strategic</b>	3	1	33.3

**%; percentage, ≥4: equal to or more than 4**

Table 8.14 presents the data extrapolated in the same way as above, for managers. At the operational level, only one manager was identified as an effective resonant leader. One manager was also identified as self-aware. At the business level, 37.5% of managers were identified as having a mean leader effectiveness and self-awareness

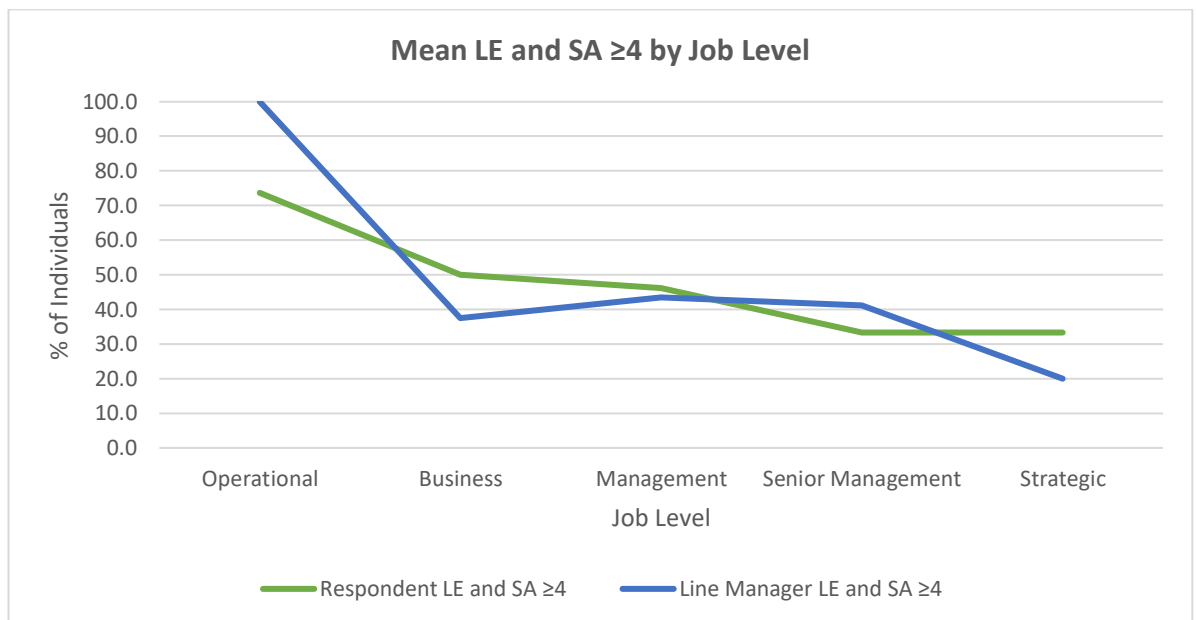
agreement rating of 4 or more. At the management level this was 43.5%, senior management level 41.2% and strategic level, 20%. This demonstrates a general downward trend as job levels rise, albeit the trend is not linear.

**Table 8.14 – Manager with mean leader effectiveness and self-awareness score of 4 or more**

	Manager with LE of $\geq 4$	Manager with LE of $\geq 4$ and SA $\geq 4$	SA of $\geq 4$ expressed as % Manager with LE of $\geq 4$
<b>Operational</b>	1	1	100.0
<b>Business</b>	16	6	37.5
<b>Management</b>	23	10	43.5
<b>Senior Management</b>	17	7	41.2
<b>Strategic</b>	5	1	20.0

#: percentage,  $\geq 4$ : equal to or more than 4

The graph below (figure 8.12) brings together the data for both respondents and managers with mean leader effectiveness and self-awareness agreement levels of 4 or more. It demonstrates that there is a general trend for self-awareness to decline as job levels increase in seniority.



**Figure 8.12 – Respondent and manager leader effectiveness and self-awareness mean agreement score of  $\geq 4$  by job level**

This suggests that the research question, 'do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of

the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations?’ is answered in the negative. Rather, the data suggests the converse, generating this answer to the research question:

**Answer 3: Effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have less self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations**

However, it must be noted that the sample of individuals at the strategic job level was small, with only 3 respondents and 17 managers identified as working at that job level. Nevertheless, this response is reflected in the responses given by interviewees during the qualitative phase of research, which is presented in detail in section 2 of this chapter.

**Research question 4: Do effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?**

This question builds on the exploration of research question three. In order to explore research question four, respondents and managers have been grouped into two sets: those who have a mean agreement level of 4 or more across all effective resonant leadership statements (questions 11 and 12) and those who have a mean agreement level of 3.9 or less across all effective resonant leadership statements. They have been further extrapolated by those who have a mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 3.9 or less.

As has already been noted above, there were 84 (55.3%) respondents out of the total 152 who identified themselves at the operational job level. 38 (45.2%) of the 84 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 38, 28 (33.3%) individuals were identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 10 (11.9%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (41, 48.4%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (5, 6%). In comparing respondents with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (28, 33.3%) than 3.9 or less (5, 6%). Considering research question 4, for respondents at the operational job level, it can be answered in this way: effective leaders identified

at the operational job level have greater self-awareness (28, 33.3%) than those who are identified as ineffective (5, 6%). It is clear that for respondents at the operational job level, research question four is answered positively.

There were 21 (13.9%) respondents out of the total 152 who identified themselves at the business job level. 12 (57.1%) of the 21 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 12, 6 (28.6%) individuals were identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 6 as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (7, 33.3%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (2, 9.5%). In comparing respondents with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (6, 28.6%) than 3.9 or less (2, 9.5%). Considering research question four, it can be answered in this way for business level respondents: effective leaders identified at the business job level have greater self-awareness (6, 28.6%) than those who are identified as ineffective (2, 9.5%). For respondents at the business job level, research question four is answered positively.

There were 24 (13.9%) respondents out of the total 152 who identified themselves at the management job level. 13 (54.2%) of the 24 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 13, 6 (25%) individuals were identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 7 (29.2%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (6, 25%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (5, 20.8%). In comparing respondents with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (6, 25%) than 3.9 or less (5, 20.8%), albeit this difference was one individual. Considering research question four, it can be answered in this way for management level respondents: effective leaders identified at the management job level have greater self-awareness (6, 25%) than those who are identified as ineffective (5, 20.8%). For respondents at the management job level, research question four is answered positively.

There were 20 (13.2%) respondents out of the total 152 who identified themselves at the senior management job level. 12 (60%) of the 20 had a mean leader effectiveness

agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 12, 4 (20%) individuals were identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 8 (40%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (7, 35%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (1, 5%). In comparing respondents with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (4, 20%) than 3.9 or less (1, 5%). Considering research question four, it can be answered in this way for senior management respondents: effective leaders identified at the senior management job level have greater self-awareness (4, 20%) than those who are identified as ineffective (1, 5%). For respondents at the senior management job level, research question four is answered positively.

There were 3 (2%) respondents out of the total 152 who identified themselves at the strategic job level. All 3 (100%) had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 3, 1 (33.3%) individual was identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 2 (67%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. There were no respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less or a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. Therefore, for respondents at the strategic job level, there is insufficient data to provide a comparison and research question four cannot be answered for individuals at this job level.

In total, 78 (51.3%) respondents out of the total 152 were identified as having a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more and 74 (48.7%) were identified as having a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less. Of the respondents with a mean leader effectiveness agreement of 4 or more, 45 (29.6%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 4 or more and 33 (21.7%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 3.9 or less. Of the respondents with a mean leader effectiveness agreement of 3.9 or less, 13 (8.6%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 4 or more and 61 (40.1%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 3.9 or less. In comparing the total number of respondents with a mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (58, 38.2%), there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 (45, 29.6%) or more than 3.9 or less (13, 8.6%). In sum, when considering research question four, effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified

as ineffective, is only partially supported, due to a lack of data for respondents at the strategic job level. Rather, the following is the case:

**Answer 4: Effective resonant leaders at the operational, business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective**

This is presented below in table 8.15.



**Table 8.15: Respondent mean agreement level of 4 or more and 3.9 or less for leader effectiveness and self-awareness, by job level**

Row Ref	RESPONDENT DATA							
		LE≥4 SA≥4	LE≥4 SA≤3.9	SUB-TOTAL	LE≤3.9 SA≥4	LE≤3.9 SA≤3.9	SUB-TOTAL	TOTAL FREQUENCY
1	Operational N	28	10	38	5	41	46	84
2	Operational as % of 152	18.4%	6.6%	25.0%	3.3%	27.0%	30.3%	55.3%
3	Operational as % of 84	33.3%	11.9%	45.2%	6.0%	48.8%	54.8%	100.0%
4	Business N	6	6	12	2	7	9	21
5	Business as % of 152	3.9%	3.9%	7.9%	1.3%	4.6%	5.9%	13.8%
6	Business as % of 21	28.6%	28.6%	57.1%	9.5%	33.3%	42.9%	100.0%
7	Management N	6	7	13	5	6	11	24
8	Management as % of 152	3.9%	4.6%	8.6%	3.3%	3.9%	7.2%	15.8%
9	Management as % of 24	25.0%	29.2%	54.2%	20.8%	25.0%	45.8%	100.0%
10	Senior Management N	4	8	12	1	7	8	20
11	Senior Management as % of 152	2.6%	5.3%	7.9%	0.7%	4.6%	5.3%	13.2%
12	Senior Management as % of 20	20.0%	40.0%	60.0%	5.0%	35.0%	40.0%	100.0%
13	Strategic N	1	2	3	0	0	0	3
14	Strategic as % of 152	0.7%	1.3%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
15	Strategic as % of 3	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
16	<b>TOTAL N</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>152</b>
17	<b>TOTAL AS % OF 152</b>	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>48.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**N: number, %: percentage, ≥4: equal to or more than 4, ≤3.9: equal to or less than 3.9**

Only 3 (2%) managers of the 152 were identified at the operational job level. 1 (33.3%) of the 3 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. That one individual was identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, 2 (66.7%) were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less and none as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more. In comparing managers with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (1, 33.3%) than 3.9 or less (0, 0%). Therefore, for managers at the operational job level, there is insufficient data to provide a comparison and research question four cannot be answered for individuals at this job level.

There were 35 (23%) managers out of the total 152 who were identified at the business job level. 16 (45.7%) of the 35 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 35, 6 (17.1%) individuals were identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 10 (26.8%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (18, 51.4%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (1, 2.9%). In comparing managers with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (6, 17.1%) than 3.9 or less (1, 2.9%). Therefore, for managers at the business job level, research question four is answered positively.

There were 55 (36.2%) managers out of the total 152 who were identified at the management job level. 23 (41.8%) of the 55 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 23, 10 (18.2%) individuals were identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 13 (23.6%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (32, 58.2%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (0). In comparing managers with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (10, 18.2%) than 3.9 or less (0). Therefore, for managers at the management job level, research question four is answered positively.

There were 42 (27.6%) managers out of the total 152 who were identified at the senior management job level. 17 (40.5%) of the 42 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 17, 7 (16.7%) individuals were identified as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 10 (23.8%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (24, 57.1%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (1, 2.4%). In comparing managers with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there were a greater number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (7, 16.7%) than 3.9 or less (1, 2.4%). Therefore, for managers at the senior management job level, research question four is answered positively.

There were 17 (11.2%) managers out of the total 152 who were identified at the strategic job level. 5 (29.4%) of the 17 had a mean leader effectiveness agreement rating of 4 or more. Of those 5, 1 (5.9%) individual was identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more and 4 (23.5%) as having mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less. For respondents identified as having mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less, more were identified as having a mean self-awareness agreement level of 3.9 or less (11, 64.7%) than having mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more (1, 5.9%). In comparing managers with mean self-awareness agreement level of 4 or more, there was the same number with a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more (1, 2.9%) as 3.9 or less (1, 2.9%). Therefore, for managers at the strategic job level, research question four cannot be answered definitively, due to an equal number of managers agreeing and disagreeing.

In summary, 62 (40.8%) managers were identified as having a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 4 or more and 90 (59.2%) were identified as having a mean leader effectiveness agreement level of 3.9 or less. Of the managers with a mean leader effectiveness agreement of 4 or more, 25 (16.4%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 4 or more and 37 (24.3%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 3.9 or less. Of the 90 managers, 3 (2%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 4 or more and 87 (57.2%) had mean self-awareness agreement levels of 3.9 or less.

When considering research question four, do effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective, it is only partially answered, due to a lack of data for managers

at the operational and strategic job level. Rather, the following is the case: line managers identified as effective resonant leaders at the business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective. This is presented below in table 8.16.

Therefore, the research answer which this section of the thesis will contribute to knowledge and practice is:

**Answer 5: Line managers identified by their direct reports as effective resonant leaders at the business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective.**

**Table 8.16: Manager mean agreement level of 4 or more and 3.9 or less for leader effectiveness and self-awareness, by job level**

Row Ref	MANAGER DATA							
		LE≥4 SA≥4	LE≥4 SA≤3.9	SUB-TOTAL	LE≤3.9 SA≥4	LE≤3.9 SA≤3.9	SUB-TOTAL	TOTAL FREQUENCY
1	Operational N	1	0	1	0	2	2	3
2	Operational as % of 152	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.3%	1.3%	2.0%
3	Operational as % of 84	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	66.7%	100.0%
4	Business N	6	10	16	1	18	19	35
5	Business as % of 152	3.9%	6.6%	10.5%	0.7%	11.8%	12.5%	23.0%
6	Business as % of 21	17.1%	28.6%	45.7%	2.9%	51.4%	54.3%	100.0%
7	Management N	10	13	23	0	32	32	55
8	Management as % of 152	6.6%	8.6%	15.1%	0.0%	21.1%	21.1%	36.2%
9	Management as % of 24	18.2%	23.6%	41.8%	0.0%	58.2%	58.2%	100.0%
10	Senior Management N	7	10	17	1	24	25	42
11	Senior Management as % of 152	4.6%	6.6%	11.2%	0.7%	15.8%	16.4%	27.6%
12	Senior Management as % of 20	16.7%	23.8%	40.5%	2.4%	57.1%	59.5%	100.0%
13	Strategic N	1	4	5	1	11	12	17
14	Strategic as % of 152	0.7%	2.6%	3.3%	0.7%	7.2%	7.9%	11.2%
15	Strategic as % of 3	5.9%	23.5%	29.4%	5.9%	64.7%	70.6%	100.0%
16	<b>TOTAL N</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>152</b>
17	<b>TOTAL AS % OF 152</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>57.2%</b>	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

N: number, %: percentage, ≥4: equal to or more than 4, ≤3.9: equal to or less than 3.9

### 8.2.5 Thoughts, Views and Comments

The questionnaire concluded with the question, "Please share any thoughts, views and comments you have about self-awareness, leadership and job levels in the Welsh public service here. If you have anything to share about this questionnaire, please also include it here". It was not envisaged that many comments would be received and therefore at the development of the questionnaire, the comments question was not expected to attract respondent interest. However, the number of responses and variety of comments received were of significant interest, particularly when compared, contrasted and combined with interview feedback, discussed in detail later. In chapter 9, the qualitative responses made in the questionnaire and the interviews are combined, generating important findings for consideration by the Welsh public service.

In total, 24 respondents shared their thoughts, views and comments. Three comments specifically referred to the respondent's ability to complete the questionnaire, one referred to the questionnaire's structure and one made reference to the impact the questionnaire had on their future functioning, stating "helpful questionnaire to consider our self-perceptions and our perceptions of our line manager." Therefore, 19 responses were considered as part of the analysis. Below (table 8.17) are the codes, higher level descriptors and themes identified through the analysis process, beginning with the long list at phase two and completing with the succinct list at phase five. Also included are reasons and descriptions of the themes, for example: behaviour, situational behaviour and unethical behaviour have been grouped together within the theme of behaviour.

**Table 8.17: Analysis and Aggregation of Comments, Thoughts and Views (Q.13)**

Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 4 Theme: Reason and Description	Phase 5	Phase 5 Theme: Reason and Description
<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Behaviour</b>	All phase 3 descriptors are related to behaviour	<b>Behaviour</b>	No aggregation
<b>Situational behaviour</b>				
<b>Unethical behaviour</b>				
<b>Self-awareness leader effectiveness link</b>	<b>Benefits of self-awareness</b>	All phase 3 descriptors were positive in focus and therefore fitted well under the signal banner of benefits	<b>Benefits of self-awareness</b>	No aggregation
<b>Benefits of self-awareness</b>				
<b>Definition of self-awareness</b>	<b>Definition of self-awareness</b>	No aggregation	<b>Definition</b>	Considering the literature and the definitions offered by respondents, it was important to capture that respondents were suggesting definitions both the definitions themselves and
<b>Definition of leader effectiveness</b>	<b>Definition of leader effectiveness</b>	No aggregation		
<b>First order/second order</b>	<b>First order/second order</b>	No aggregation	<b>First order / second order</b>	No aggregation
<b>Self critical</b>	<b>Individual experience</b>	Being self critical was related to the experience or conduct of the individual and therefore fitted well under the banner of individual experience	<b>Individual experience</b>	No aggregation
<b>Individual experience</b>				
<b>Leadership v management</b>	<b>Leadership v management</b>	No aggregation	<b>Leadership v management</b>	No aggregation
<b>Organisational standards</b>	<b>Organisational standards</b>	No aggregation	<b>Organisational standards</b>	No aggregation
<b>Pay</b>	<b>Pay</b>	No aggregation	<b>Pay</b>	No aggregation
<b>People management</b>	<b>People management</b>	Acknowledging individual differences was related to equality and diversity and therefore an element of people management	<b>People management</b>	No aggregation
<b>Acknowledging individual differences</b>				
<b>Reflection</b>	<b>Reflection</b>	No aggregation	<b>Reflection</b>	No aggregation
<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	No aggregation	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	No aggregation
<b>Transformation</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	No aggregation	<b>Transformation</b>	No aggregation

Before moving to discuss the themes in detail, one particular observation is made: the comments made in the questionnaire refer to the respondent and generally look inwardly, focusing on 'about me', whereas the interviews conducted and presented later, generally focus on 'about others' and look outwardly. Albeit, some interviewees share examples of how they themselves behave, in generating definitions or providing examples. This is reflective of the interviews conducted in the study by Gray and Jones (2018), also focusing on Welsh public service leaders, where "participants did not interpret the questions from a personal perspective... So they spoke...in terms of how they observed the leaders around them". It is noted that this influenced the title of this thesis: Knowing Self, Knowing Others.

12 phase five themes were evidence across the 19 comments made by respondents. Some comments included more than one theme. The themes, in order of importance were: people management, benefits of self-awareness, behaviour, organisational standards, leadership versus management, definitions of self-awareness and leader effectiveness given by respondents, individual experience, first order/second order, strategic level disconnect, transformation, reflection and pay.

The theme people management generally related to respondents' treatment by others. Respondents referred to people skills and stated that they were treated as per their grade, not as individuals. One comment referred particularly to the role of social work being an "extremely difficult and emotional profession", requiring management team support to help individuals to recognise stress levels and develop strategies for managing their own wellbeing. One respondent referred to their current manager micromanaging and undermining their confidence and self-esteem thus impacting on their productivity and loyalty to their team.

The benefits of self-awareness were referenced in six comments specifically linked to there being a link between self-awareness and leader effectiveness. The benefits were stated as: awareness of own strengths, awareness and recognition of impact on others leading to adaptation of style to lead more effectively, and awareness of impact own behaviour has on managing change and career progression. The specific comments embody the three layers of self-awareness in this thesis: internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness.

The theme behaviour drew together the three elements of situational behaviour, behaviour and unethical behaviour. Situational behaviour referred to particular



behaviour related to a particular situation. Behaviour was the theme given to interviewee definitions or descriptors containing commentary about behaviour. Unethical behaviour was the overarching theme given to descriptions about a detrimental lack of self-awareness or ineffective leadership which resulted in negative impact.

It was recognised that being in disagreement could be appropriately managed through professional behaviour. Also, behaviour modelling was mentioned by one respondent who stated, “My current manager lacks any self awareness and certainly doesn’t demonstrate leadership, right down to rarely being present in the office and then being surprised when others model that behaviour.” Unethical behaviour was highlighted as individuals demonstrating a lack of care about others as they progressed up the career ladder and “people who are nice to your face wouldnt think twice about not supporting you if it didnt benefit them.” This notion of care as an element of effective, self-aware leaders is further discussed below, when exploring interview findings.

The theme organisational standards encompassed comments made by respondents about organisational activity, or inactivity, regarding self-awareness or leader effectiveness. Organisational deficit in challenging a lack of self-awareness was highlighted, with one respondent stating that individuals lacking self-awareness are moved and promoted instead of being held to account. This lack of challenge was also highlighted in the interviews conducted and is discussed later. Comment was made about organisational process around interviewing candidate but not testing for self-awareness or leader effectiveness but “Instead we send managers on training courses that essentially cannot change personalities and behaviours.”. This is echoed by an interviewee who stated that, “I’m not convinced that any amount of training will make you into a lead that if you’ve not got that in you to start with.”

Respondents were clear that leadership did not equate to management, stating that without self-awareness, “a person is a manager and not a leader”. Management versus leadership was also connected to the first order/second order theme, where first-order was considered knowledge of an object, process or craft and second-order knowledge was derived through emotional intelligence and self-awareness, as described in chapter two (Mackenzie, 1988, Atwater et al., 1998, Goleman, 2004, Showry and Manasa, 2014, Klare et al., 2014). One comment succinctly articulated the conundrum stating, “a manager will be appointed as they are technically competent at their role but they will not necessarily have the leadership qualities required to bring their team along with them.”

A number of definitions of self-awareness and leader effectiveness were discernible through the comments received. Respondents felt that the connections between self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job levels were evident and emotional intelligence was key to self-awareness. In defining self-awareness, one respondent described their manager as demonstrating the antithesis: “questioning all of my professional recommendations and criticising how I deal with enquires”. In defining leader effectiveness, respondents made reference to acknowledgement/vision of how “behaviour affects the lower staff who follow them”, focus on outcomes required, emotional intelligence, impact on change and impact on progression, as has already been mentioned above.

The theme of individual experience referred to the experiences that respondents had during the course of their working life. One respondent made reference to being self-critical and found it difficult to focus on positives and strengths in the present due to experiences in the past. Another made reference to an expectation that self-awareness developed with progression, stating, “I think you develop and learn as you progress so the self awareness should grow as you work your way up”, suggesting that the development of self-awareness was experiential.

The themes of strategic level disconnect, transformation, reflection and pay were little referenced within the comments. Strategic level disconnect was linked to the notion of care, as has already been referenced, with one respondent stating, “It appears that the higher you get at management level, the less you care about others and just look out for yourself.”. This was a theme of much greater prominence within the interview findings and will be discussed in depth later in the chapter. In terms of transformation, one respondent made reference to there being an increasing emphasis on leadership and self-awareness during their 17 years of working in the Welsh public service, but this was not tested through recruitment processes. Reflection was referenced once, with the respondent stating that reflection on performance was not always “feasible due to time constraints or lack of ability in using reflective practice to enhance performance at work”. Pay was of particular concern to one respondent, who made reference to inequality of pay.

## **8.3 Interview Findings**

### **8.3.1 Overview**

This chapter now moves on to discuss the interviews conducted. It will begin by presenting the demographic profile of the individuals interviewed and the themes discernible from the discussions held, firstly presenting overarching themes and then themes relevant to each research question.

The four interview questions posed were adapted from the four research questions:

- 1. Do you think there is a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in your organisation?**
- 2. Do you think effective leaders can be found at all levels of your organisation?**
- 3. Do you think that effective leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other job levels of your organisation?**
- 4. Do you think that effective leaders identified at all job levels of your organisation have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?**

### **8.3.2 Interviewee Demographics**

Interviews were carried out as a means of giving the under-represented male cohort of Welsh Public Service employees a voice, thus maximising the opportunity offered by the pragmatic approach. Male volunteers were sought. Those with the following demographics were sought as the ideal interviewee, but the factor given greatest importance in the profile was gender. Interviewees with the following secondary demographics were sought to be interviewed: 16 to 34 and 55 and over age groups; employed in organisation predominantly focussed on environment and countryside, planning, transport and the Welsh language; and at the strategic job level. In total, 8 interviews were carried out with male interviewees. 50% also met the secondary profile of age, 50% met the organisation profile and 12.5% met the job level profile. Therefore, the interviews met the purpose of giving voice to male Welsh public service employees. Below is a summary table (table 8.18) presenting primary and secondary characteristics of interviewees:

**Table 8.18: Interviewee Demographics (Primary and Secondary)**

	Demographic	Profile	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6	Interviewee 7	Interviewee 8	Summary
Primary	Gender	Male	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8
Secondary	Age	16-34	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	4
		>55									
	Organisation	Environment and countryside	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	4
		Planning									
		Transport									
	Welsh language										
	Job Level	Strategic	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	1

### 8.3.3 Interview Themes

This chapter now presents the themes drawn from the interviews conducted. It begins by setting out the overarching themes drawn from the interviews, being that they presented themselves so powerfully through the process as to warrant presentation first. The section will then move on to discuss each of the four interview questions in turn.

The process of thematic analysis, set out by Braun and Clarke (2006) and described in chapter seven, was followed for each of the four research questions. Below (tables 8.19 – 8.22) are the higher-level descriptors and themes identified through the phases of analysis for each of the research questions and the reasons and descriptors of the aggregated themes. Phase two is not included to ensure that no interviewee can be identified. It was felt that as only eight individuals were interviewed, the risk to confidentiality should be mitigated by avoiding the release of information from this more detailed step in the process.

**Table 8.19 – High Level Descriptors and Themes for Interview Question 1: Do you think there is a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in your organisation?’**

Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 4 Theme: Reason and Description	Phase 5	Phase 5 Theme: Reason and Description
Representing others	One voice	Phase 3 theme was related to speaking up for and representing others - speaking with one voice	Behaviour	All phase 4 themes were related to positive and negative behaviours, by individuals and expected by organisation
Behaviour standards	Organisational standards	All phase 3 themes were related to the conduct and behaviour of individuals, as tolerated/encouraged by organisations		
Behaviour standards for communication				
Use of language				
Behaviour reflects situation	Situational behaviour	All phase 3 themes were related to individual conduct/behaviour in a particular situation		
Get the best out of others				
Need range of behaviours				
People are individuals				
Benefits of self-awareness	Benefits of self-awareness	No aggregation	Benefits of self-awareness	No aggregation
Underutilisation of position	Defining leader effectiveness	The phase 3 theme was concerned with defining what did not equate to effective leadership (i.e. the dark side of leadership)	Definitions	All phase 4 themes were concerned with defining either self-awareness or leader effectiveness
Self-awareness is 3 layers	Defining self-awareness	All phase 3 themes were concerned with defining what equated to self-awareness		
Depends on role				
Effective people can see different perspectives				
Self-awareness is empathy and reflectiveness				
Self-awareness depends on background	Life experience	The theme linked increasing self-awareness with upbringing/background/work experience		

<b>Measurement of self-awareness</b>	<b>Measurement of self-awareness</b>	No aggregation		
<b>Impact of decisions</b>	<b>Impact of decisions</b>	All phase 3 themes related to understanding and a lack of understanding of self's impact on others	<b>Impact of decisions</b>	Both phase 4 themes were concerned with the impact of the behaviour and decisions made by self and others
<b>Self-awareness is role function and impact</b>				
<b>Underestimation of impact</b>				
<b>Middle management barrier</b>	<b>Middle management</b>	Both phase 3 themes were related to the role of middle managers		
<b>Middle manager impact</b>				
<b>Leadership is reflecting on behaviour</b>	<b>Reflection</b>	Both phase 3 themes were related to reflection	<b>Reflection</b>	No aggregation
<b>Unreflective leaders</b>				
<b>Detachment at strategic level</b>	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	Both phase 3 themes were concerned with relationships / disconnection between strategic level individuals and others,	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	No aggregation
<b>Direct relationship needed for self-awareness and effective leadership/relationship</b>				
<b>Old school / new reflection</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	The theme was concerned with describing the transition from then to now	<b>Transformation</b>	No aggregation
<b>Lack of self-awareness evident in Welsh Public Service</b>	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	The theme referenced the Welsh public service specifically	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	No aggregation

**Table 8.20 – High Level Descriptors and Themes for Interview Question 2: Do you think effective leaders can be found at all levels of your organisation?**

Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 4 Theme: Reason and Description	Phase 5	Phase 5 Theme: Reason and Description
Leadership is about behaviour	Behaviour	Phase 3 theme description shortened	Behaviour	All phase 4 themes were related to positive and negative behaviours, by the self and others
Middle management barrier	Middle management	Both phase 3 themes were related to the role of middle managers		
Middle management impact				
Respect for managers	Respect	Phase 3 theme description shortened		
Promotion by longevity	Unethical behaviour	All phase 3 themes were concerned with individuals behaving in a non-transparent, unethical way		
Promotion by longevity (men)				
Job for life	Cooperation	The phase 3 themes were related to working together, cooperating to ensure achievement		
Effective leaders and unwilling colleagues				
Senior has the final decision				
Succession planning	Succession planning	No aggregation	Cooperation	All phase 4 themes were concerned with the impact of working in partnership and cooperation between individuals
Experience of working with others	Work experience	Phase 3 theme description shortened		
Everyone can lead	Everyone can lead	Phase 3 themes related to the potential of all people to be able to lead	Everyone can lead	Phase 4 themes related to the potential of all people to be able to lead, as has been seen through history
Role function related to effectiveness				
Leaders from history	History	Phase 3 theme description shortened	Individual experience	All themes were related to the life experiences of individuals
Academic affects leadership	Academia	Phase 3 theme description shortened		
Leader's background affects leadership	Background	Phase 3 theme description shortened	Natural born leaders	No aggregation
Leadership is a natural ability	Natural born leaders			

<b>Leadership training ineffective</b>		Phase 3 descriptors are related to innate leadership ability		
<b>Senior message v operational implementation</b>	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	Themes was concerned with relationships / disconnection between senior level individuals and others,	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	No aggregation
<b>Things are changing</b>	<b>Transformation</b>	The themes were concerned with describing the transition from then to now	<b>Transformation</b>	No aggregation
<b>Older male v younger females</b>				
<b>Limited effective leaders in Welsh Public Service</b>	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	The theme referenced the Welsh public service specifically	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	No aggregation



**Table 8.21 – High Level Descriptors and Themes for Interview Question 3: Do you think that effective leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other job levels of your organisation?**

Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 4 Theme: Reason and Description	Phase 5	Phase 5 Theme: Reason and Description
Barrier of lack of self-awareness	Benefits of self-awareness	All phase 3 themes are concerned with the impact, need and benefit of self-awareness	Benefits of self-awareness	No aggregation
Benefit of self-awareness				
Need self-awareness to influence change				
Effective leadership is...	Defining leader effectiveness	Theme related to defining leader effectiveness	Definitions	Both phase 4 themes were concerned with proposing definitions for leader effectiveness and self-awareness.
Self-awareness is...	Defining self-awareness	Theme related to defining self-awareness		
Behaviour is formulaic not natural	Behaviour	Phase 3 theme description shortened	First order/second order	Phase 4 themes acknowledge first order technical knowledge and second order emotions and behaviours
Intelligence and self-awareness not the same	First order/second order	Both phase 3 themes differentiate first order technical knowledge and second order emotions and behaviours		
Promotion does not equal effectiveness				
Leaders from history	History	Phase 3 theme description shortened	Individual experience	The phase 4 themes were related to the experiences of individuals impacting on their leadership capability and self-awareness
Academic affects self-awareness	Life experience	Both phase 3 themes were related to the experiences of individuals		
Gain experience as you progress	Work experience			
Organisational standards proliferate strategic leadership	Organisational standards	Phase 3 theme description shortened	Organisational standards	No aggregation
Detachment at strategic level	Strategic level disconnect	Themes was concerned with relationships / disconnection between senior level individuals and others	Strategic level disconnect	No aggregation
Lack of self-awareness at strategic job level				

<b>Senior message v operational implementation</b>				
<b>Strategic leadership v people leadership</b>				
<b>Limited effective leaders in Welsh Public Service</b>	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	Phase 3 theme description shortened	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	No aggregation

**Table 8.22 – High Level Descriptors and Themes for Interview Question 4: Do you think that effective leaders identified at all job levels of your organisation have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?**

Phase 3	Phase 4		Phase 5	
Everyone is an individual	Situational behaviour	All phase 3 themes were related to individual conduct/behaviour in a particular situation	Behaviour	All phase 4 themes were related to positive and negative behaviours, by individuals and expected by organisation
Behaviour reflects situation				
Need range of behaviours				
Benefits of face to face				
Using position to get what want	Unethical behaviour	All phase 3 themes were concerned with individuals behaving in a non-transparent, unethical way		
Promotion by circumstance				
Unethical use of position				
Ethical and unethical use of power				
Bad manager is manipulative and knows how to play the game and butter people up				
Bad manager tramples on people that care.				
Benefits of self-awareness	Benefits of self-awareness	No aggregation	Benefits of self-awareness	No aggregation
Working and living in same community	Community connections	All phase 3 themes were related to impact of relationships outside of work on work	Community connections	No aggregation
Difficult to build relationships from outside the community				
Poor practice due to community connections				
Effective leadership is confidence	Defining leader effectiveness	The phase 3 theme was concerned with defining what did and did not equate to effective leadership (i.e. the dark side of leadership)	Definitions	All phase 4 themes were concerned with defining either self-awareness or leader effectiveness
Ineffective leadership is discernible				
People want to work for effective leaders				
Leaders muck in				

<b>Little things mean a lot</b>				
<b>Leader effectiveness is ability to defend decisions</b>				
<b>Ineffective leaders struggle with challenge</b>				
<b>Leader effectiveness is ability to defend decisions</b>				
<b>Effective leadership is self-awareness and confidence</b>				
<b>Barrier of lack of self-awareness</b>				
<b>Leader effectiveness is ability to defend decisions</b>				
<b>Effective leader is...</b>				
<b>Effective leadership is confidence</b>				
<b>Example behaviour</b>				
<b>Effective leadership is ethical deployment of power</b>				
<b>Ineffective leadership is inflexibility</b>				
<b>Building rapport</b>				
<b>Ineffective leadership is not being able to drive things forward</b>				
<b>Ineffective leadership is a lack of care</b>				
<b>Effective leadership is believing in what you're doing and people</b>				
<b>Effective leadership is clear, precise instruction</b>				
<b>Effective leadership is clear, strong vision that everyone buys into</b>				

<b>Ineffective leadership is no plan, no strategy</b>				
<b>Leadership is a clear, strong, understandable vision that everyone can understand and buy into</b>				
<b>Effective leader has an unbelievable way of influencing</b>				
<b>Ineffective leader is manipulative, divisive but still has power</b>				
<b>People buy into a strong, understanding visionary</b>				
<b>Likeable person</b>				
<b>Calm</b>				
<b>Get the best out of others</b>				
<b>Measuring self-awareness</b>				
<b>The self-awareness question</b>	<b>Defining self-awareness</b>	All phase 3 themes were concerned with defining what equated to self-awareness		
<b>Managing v leading</b>	<b>Managing v leading</b>	No aggregation		
<b>Not everyone gets the opportunity</b>	<b>Everyone can lead</b>	Theme related to the potential of all people to be able to lead	<b>Everyone can lead</b>	Phase 4 themes related to the potential of all people to be able to lead, as has been seen through history
<b>Everyone is self-aware</b>				
<b>Self-awareness depends on background</b>	<b>Life experience</b>	Theme is related to the experiences of individuals		
<b>Self-awareness from childhood</b>	<b>Natural born</b>	Theme is related to innate leadership ability		
<b>Misinterpretation of written communication</b>	<b>Communication</b>	Phase 3 theme description shortened	<b>Organisational standards</b>	All phase 4 themes related to the conduct and behaviour of individuals, as tolerated/encouraged by organisations
<b>Individual v organisation</b>	<b>Organisational standards</b>	Theme related to the conduct and behaviour of individuals, as tolerated/encouraged by organisations		

<b>Connecting operational and strategic</b>	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	Themes was concerned with relationships / disconnection between senior level individuals and others	<b>Strategic level disconnect</b>	No aggregation
<b>Senior message v operational implementation</b>				
<b>Wales centric</b>	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	Phase 3 theme description shortened	<b>Welsh Public Service</b>	No aggregation
<b>Limited effective leaders in Welsh Public Service</b>				

### 8.3.3.1 Overarching Interview Themes

Following the aggregation of themes from phase two to phase five of the analysis process, the following aggregated themes were discernible within the responses to three or more interview questions. They are presented in order of importance: strategic level disconnect, behaviour, the benefits of self-awareness, interviewee definitions of the main topics, and the context of the Welsh public service. Each of these is described in detail below.

Interviewees articulated that they felt there was a disconnect between strategic decision making and implementation of decisions at a practical, operational level, stating that strategic level managers had little awareness of the impact of their decisions, and messages from the top were distorted by the time they reached the sharp end/shop floor. Strategic ideas were viewed as flawed at the point of implementation. This was felt to occur within organisations as well as between organisations, when one organisation was commissioning another to deliver a service.

One organisation was felt to have established its promotion culture based on the ability of individuals to implement difficult, strategic decisions rather than their ability to implement good people-leadership based on self-awareness, to the point that the interviewee felt that this could be due to traits of autism within a number of the strategic level post-holders. The interviewee felt that it was better to think of strategic leaders as having limited ability to be self-aware rather than them not caring, stating

**“And often there are very intelligent people who have no ability to, no ability to understand their own behaviour and impact on other people. And I think I’d rather not think that, that than they don’t care.”**

Of note, the notion of a leader being an individual that demonstrates care was also mentioned by an interviewee when describing leader effectiveness. The interviewee stated,

**“...ineffective leadership is, you know, it’s like a lack of care”**

This idea was also referenced within the questionnaire comments and is a theme which will be discussed further in the discussion in chapter nine.

In contrast, another interviewee referenced two organisational chief executives who had spent time with operational level staff shadowing them in their roles and felt that this was likely to have been as a result of their self-awareness and likely to have enhanced their self-awareness.

The phase five aggregation and development of the theme behaviour was made up of situational behaviour, behaviour and unethical behaviour, as referenced in discussion concerning questionnaire question 13. In discussing situational behaviour, the need to manage people as individuals and appreciate that different people require a different approach, was referenced on three occasions whilst the notion of managers requiring a balance of behaviours was also expressed. One interviewee recognised that their understanding in a situation was influenced based on their mood, sharing an example of receiving an email;

**“You know, if you’re in a particularly bad mood sometimes, you know, you look at an email or text you think, “What? What?”, and come back to it in 5 minute when you’ve calmed down and think, “ooh....”.**

It was noted that different behaviours were favoured depending on the situation.

In discussing unethical behaviour, interviewees made reference to: promotion by longevity or circumstance, rather than ability or effective leadership, which was felt to be more prominent for men. Interviewees also discussed the negative use of position or rank as a lever to “get what they want” and justify decisions made. One interviewee shared an experience of a manager using personal details following a psychometric/behavioural analysis activity against subordinates. Poor behaviour was described as manipulative, divisive and individuals that would...

**“trample on the people that care”,**

once again highlighting ‘care’ as a vital element of a positive workplace.

The benefits of self-awareness were highlighted; interviewees felt that by being self-awareness it gave individuals an opportunity to question and reflect on their approach before acting. One interviewee stated that without self-awareness, individuals were initially seen as “doers” who then stagnate because they are not reflective enough to change. In connection with the notion of strategic level disconnect, one interviewee felt



that self-awareness of position-power allowed individuals to influence change. In describing the benefits of self-awareness, interviewees connected it with the concept of reflection, both before acting and following action, with one interviewee referring to it as “self-reflectiveness”, another stating,

**“And I think it’s that ability to pause and decide your approach, rather than jump in and act, knee jerk reactions act emotionally, without thinking those through first.”**

This aligns with the theme of reflection, as raised within the questionnaire comments; reflective practice enhances performance at work.

Interviewees shared their own definitions of self-awareness and leader effectiveness. In many cases interviewees presented their definitions through describing the antithesis, i.e. what a lack of self-awareness/leader effectiveness looked like, felt like, sounded like etc. In defining self-awareness, interviewees articulated the notion of self-awareness being multi-faceted, with one interviewee referring to self-awareness being understanding one’s own needs, others’ needs, impact of self on others, impact of others on self, reflecting the three layers of self-awareness developed and presented in this thesis – internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness. Another interviewee presented the definition as a question,

**“as to whether you're what you think you are and what you think, is actually what others think of you”**

which is the very nub of the self/other ratings studies.

In defining leader effectiveness, three concepts were prominent: relationships, confidence and the ability to defend decisions.

**“Leadership is about relationships”**

...stated one interviewee. This was supported by another interviewee who stated that “building up that rapport” was key to developing positive relationships. This supports the notion that leader effectiveness is socially constructed.

Confidence was presented as a fundamental element of leader effectiveness, with one interviewee stating that leader effectiveness was made up of self-awareness and confidence. This was supported by other interviewees who opined that a lack of confidence or self-confidence equated to ineffective leadership. A lack of confidence was also viewed as a barrier, “preventing sensitive, respectful individuals progressing through the job levels”. The ability to defend decisions was also linked to confidence, with one interviewee stating,

**“And I think, effective leaders ... have the ability to make a decision and are prepared to explain and defend the decisions they made and don't feel threatened, because somebody challenges that decision ... I've got to be honest there's a lack of confidence when you really delve”.**

The references made to the Welsh public service context were consistent in tone and message. Interviewees felt that there was a lack of self-awareness and effective leadership “higher up” the Welsh public service. Interviewees stated that they did not feel that effective leaders made-up the biggest part of the Welsh public service and effective leaders that were self-aware were few and far between, with one interviewee stating,

**“I'm trying to think of some people who would be effective, to be honest”.**

This section now moves on to explore the themes derived from the responses to each of the four individual interview questions posed.

### **8.3.3.2 Themes - Interview Question 1**

The first question posed to each of the eight interviewees was, “Do you think there is a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in your organisation?”. It was generally answered positively by interviewees and eight themes emerged: behaviour, benefits of self-awareness, definitions, strategic level disconnect, impact of decisions, reflection, transformation and the Welsh public service context. The themes not already discussed above are presented below.

Interviewees felt that there was a lack of self-awareness and leader effectiveness in terms of underestimation by leaders of impact of the decisions which they made and lack of awareness of the impact of their position power. This was connected to the notion of strategic level disconnect. It was discussed in terms of a lack of forward thinking at a

strategic level about consequences and impact of decisions versus on the ground implementation. However, some interviewees stated that they felt there was a burgeoning change across the Welsh public service. This was articulated by one interviewee who stated,

**“There’s definitely a change. And I think it's something that's happening over time. I think that now the structure is different the way that [organisations] operate, or [particular organisation], operate is different. And the other thing that I think is really interesting is that there seems to be a really high proportion of female management now that is coming through and I think yes, you have a lot of older male managers, and then younger female managers, which I think is an interesting mix and an interesting relationship, definitely to what I've observed, and I think that that is something that that is changing and continues to change. But I think you still have the, the hangover a bit there.”**

The reference to women in the Welsh public service workplace is of interest and women are referred to three interviews. However, as stated at the outset of this thesis, data and information regarding gender has been collected solely to identify trends. The topic of women working in the Welsh public service deserves its own thesis and to make a simple comment here would not do the subject justice.

### **8.3.3.3 Themes - Interview Question 2**

The second question posed was, ‘do you think effective leaders can be found at all levels of your organisation?’. This was generally answered positively, with six interviewees answering positively and two answering negatively. The evident themes were: behaviour, cooperation, everyone can lead, individual experience, natural born leaders, strategic level disconnect, transformation and Welsh public service context. As above, themes not already explored are discussed below.

Cooperation was felt to be one of the key elements of leader effectiveness, particularly in terms of peer support. It was felt that a leader could be effective in managing their team but in amongst a peer group of ineffective leaders, the effective leader would be a lost voice and would find it difficult to influence and drive things forward.

It was felt that everyone had the potential to be a leader and being at a strategic level was not necessary for an individual to be a leader. This was linked with the theme of natural born leaders and fundamental to the argument that the Welsh public service operates as a complex adaptive system, discussed in chapter four. One interviewee stated,

**“...when you look at all the great leaders in history, you know, they haven't necessarily been trained to be a great leader. They simply have it in them. And people have naturally followed... And on that basis...you don't need to be at a strategic level to be an effective leader.”**

One interviewee gave an example of managers preparing staff at operational and business job levels for promotional opportunities and senior positions, due to seeing potential in those individuals. Everyone can lead was also connected to individual experience, with a number of interviewees stating that experiences, such as having studied at university, working with people of different backgrounds to achieve success, and gaining experience through career progression impacted leader effectiveness.

#### **8.3.3.4 Themes - Interview Question 3**

The third question posted was, ‘Do you think that effective leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other job levels of your organisation?’. Interviewees generally answered negatively to this question; three interviewees answered positively with five answering negatively. The emergent themes were: benefits of self-awareness, definitions, first order/second order; individual experience, organisational standards and strategic level disconnect. First order/second order and organisational standards are explored below.

It was felt that “intelligence and other behavioural things don't necessarily come hand in hand.”, evidencing the need for second order emotions and behaviours, not only first order technical knowledge and capabilities. One interviewee stated,

**“I think that you don't necessarily become a more effective leader, as you progress up the ladder...people that have been promoted to a higher level because of circumstances, but certainly not, but in my opinion wouldn't be regarded as an effective leader.”**

The standards of some organisations were identified as being at odds with the standards and values of individual interviewees, in that organisations actively encourage promotion of individuals with first order technical knowledge and capabilities whilst paying insufficient heed to second order emotions and behaviours, to the detriment of team development. One interviewee described a move within his organisation to establish behaviour standards, particularly around language when canvassing the electorate and communication/marketing material encouraging citizens to sign up to the electoral role. Organisational standards were also highlighted as important within the questionnaire comments.

#### **8.3.3.5 Themes - Interview Question 4**

The fourth question posed was, 'Do you think that effective leaders identified at all job levels of your organisation have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?'. Four interviewees answered positively, one gave a neutral agreement and three answered negatively. The identified themes were: benefits of self-awareness, behaviour, community connections, definitions, everyone can lead, organisational standards, strategic level disconnect and the Welsh public service context. The one theme not already addressed above is that of community connections.

It was felt that where individuals lived and the communities in which they lived impacted on their ability to adequately discharge their duties. It was stated that Welsh public service employees often work and live in the same areas, meaning that people know each other well and have social or familial relationships. This was viewed as a barrier to managing staff, due to not wanting to spoil relationships and 'upset the apple cart'. The community connection was felt to have the potential to impact on workplace atmosphere and some individuals were seen to be able to "get away with" too much because of that familiarity. It was stated that in some cases, poor behaviour was normalised, due to relationship outside of work and the close connections. This theme was closely aligned with behaviour and organisational standards.

#### **8.3.3.6 Interview Questions - Themes Summary**

Below (table 8.23) is a summary of the themes from each question. Themes which identified themselves as most important, referred to above as the overarching themes, are highlighted in green. Other themes identified in response to more than one question are highlighted in amber and themes identified once are identified in red.

**Table 8.23: Summary of Interview Themes by Question**

Q1: Do you think there is a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in your organisation	Q2: Do you think effective leaders can be found at all levels of your organisation?	Q3: Do you think that effective leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other job levels of your organisation?	Q4: Do you think that effective leaders identified at all job levels of your organisation have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?
Themes	Themes	Themes	Themes
Behaviour	Behaviour	Benefits of self-awareness	Benefits of self-awareness
Benefits of self-awareness	Strategic level disconnect	Definitions	Behaviour
Definitions	Welsh public service	Strategic level disconnect	Definitions
Strategic level disconnect	Everyone can lead	Individual experience	Strategic level disconnect
Welsh public service	Individual experience	Organisational standards	Welsh public service
Transformation	Transformation	First order/second order	Everyone can lead
Impact of decisions	Cooperation		Organisational standards
Reflection	Natural born leaders		Community connections

#### 8.4 Integrating Questionnaire and Interview Themes

Through thematic analysis of the thoughts, views and comments shared in the questionnaire (question 13) and the interviews, a number of similarities have been identified across both methods. Of the 27 themes identified across both elements of the study, 18 themes are duplicated, generating nine themes common to both elements of the research strategy. The themes identified from within the questionnaire and interviews are presented below (table 8.24) in order of importance, where frequency of reference has been deemed a proxy for importance. Themes which are replicated across both question 13 and the interviews are highlighted in green and will be referred to as primary themes. Primary themes, in terms of the relationship between self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job levels are: strategic level disconnect, behaviour, benefits of self-awareness, definitions, individual experience, organisational standards, transformation, first order/second order and reflection. The themes which are not replicated across both comments and interviews and highlighted in amber, referred to as secondary themes are:

people management, leadership versus management, Welsh public service, everyone can lead, community connections, cooperation, pay, impact of decisions and natural born leaders.

**Table 8.24 – Integrating the Themes from Questionnaire and Interviews**

Level of importance	Theme (question 13)	No of comments in which theme appears	Theme (interviews)	Number of questions in which theme appears
1	People management	6	Strategic level disconnect	4
2	Benefits of self-awareness	6	Behaviour	3
3	Behaviour	5	Benefits of self-awareness	3
4	Organisational standards	4	Definitions	3
5	Leadership v management	4	Welsh Public Service	3
6	Definitions	4	Everyone can lead	2
7	Individual experience	3	Individual experience	2
8	First order / second order	2	Organisational standards	2
9	Strategic level disconnect	1	Transformation	2
10	Transformation	1	Community connections	1
11	Reflection	1	Cooperation	1
12	Pay	1	First order/second order	1
13			Impact of decisions	1
14			Natural born leaders	1
15			Reflection	1

## 8.5 Conclusion

This first part of this chapter set out the findings made from the questionnaire, considered the quantitative element of this mixed methods study. It presented the demographic profile of respondents which directed the profile of interviewees. It presented respondents' analysis of agreement ratings against the self-awareness and leader effectiveness statements for both themselves and their managers and considered each of the four research questions in turn, presenting statistical analysis as exemplification.

The second part of the chapter then set out the overarching themes discernible from each of the eight interviews conducted. Initially overarching themes were presented and then the themes pertinent to each of the four question were set out. The chapter closed by comparing the themes derived from the comments made by questionnaire respondents (question 13) and interviewees, as a means of combining the findings from the qualitative element of this mixed-methods thesis developing primary and secondary themes.

The next chapter discusses the implication of the findings made in this thesis to the extant literature. It will explore the four research questions and the findings made in relation to the extant literature from the questionnaire and interviews. It will establish a set of topics for discussion as a tertiary layer of themes for consideration by the Welsh public service along with the primary and secondary themes. It will discuss the self/other ratings studies and present comparative findings. The chapter will conclude by presenting the corollary model which draws together the primary themes, secondary themes and topics for discussion.



# **Chapter 9**

## **Discussion**

## 9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter set out the findings made within this thesis from the questionnaire and interviews. It set out the demographic profile of questionnaire respondents and their agreement ratings to the self-awareness and leader effectiveness statements. It also considered the themes developed from the free text section of the questionnaire and the feedback gathered from the interviews undertaken. All findings were considered in relation to the four research questions posed and answers were compiled.

This chapter now moves on to consider the implication of the findings made in this thesis to the extant scholarly studies, already presented across the previous chapters of this thesis. It will consider each of the four research questions and the findings made, comparing and contrasting them with the extant literature. In response to research question one, predominantly focussed on the definitions of self-awareness and leader effectiveness, it will discuss: the benefits of self-awareness; the requirement for clarity of definition; negative behaviour of individuals; detachment as a derailing leadership behaviour; inclusive decision making; reflection as a positive leadership behaviour; and the view that the leadership style within the Welsh public service is transforming.

Research question two, focussed on leader effectiveness at all job levels will discuss: leadership and the position held within this thesis that it is not synonymous with seniority; leadership being about relationships; cooperation between peers; the impact of lived experiences; the potential of individuals; and innate leadership capability. Research question three, focussed on strategic job level individuals' self-awareness and leader effectiveness will discuss: the stance that self-awareness is not linked to seniority; the importance of second order emotions and behaviours (i.e. self-awareness); and the benefit of having recruitment processes cognisant of self-awareness. Research question four, focussed on self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels will discuss: the leader/follower relationship as key to leader effectiveness; managers having people skills; and the express inclusion of a lack of care, as a means of describing the dark side of leadership.

The chapter will then discuss the self/other ratings studies. It will present a table of key findings from the five self/other ratings studies explored in this thesis and will offer corroborative and additional knowledge to them, respectively. The chapter will conclude by presenting the corollary model which draws the findings from the questionnaire and interviews together into one integrated model.

The theme of the Welsh public service context will be explored in chapter ten, being that it is considered the beating heart of this thesis, warranting particular exploration.

Throughout this chapter, the salient discussion points are emboldened as a means of delineating a pathway through the important discussions which combine to evidence the contribution that this thesis has made to the extant literature regarding self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels of the Welsh public service.

## **9.2 Research Question 1 – Discussion of Findings**

The first research question posed was:

**Research question 1: Is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?**

The findings generated the following answer:

**Answer 1: There is a relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service**

The relevant interview themes for research question one were: behaviour, benefits of self-awareness, definitions, strategic level disconnect, Welsh public service, transformation, impact of decisions and reflection. These themes are discussed below in relation to the literature presented in this thesis.

The **benefits of self-awareness** for managers and those being managed is a theme drawn out from the interviews as relevant to research question one. This supports the literature which highlights the role that self-awareness plays in effective authentic leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Baron and Parent, 2015), transformational leadership (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Barbuto and Burbach, 2006, Bratton et al., 2011), servant leadership (Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2017, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011) and resonant leadership (Boyatzis et al., 2013, Laschinger et al., 2014, Bawafaa et al., 2015). It also supports the findings by Gray and Jones (2018) that self-awareness is an internal resource that Welsh public service leaders can draw on to boost resilience and wellbeing, and mitigate against overwhelm. This confirmatory finding highlights that the Welsh public service is similar to other countries and sectors in its appreciation of the collegial and organisational

benefits of individuals who are self-aware. This position should be noted as supportive of a Welsh public service moving towards a new, transformative style of leadership.

The need for absolute **clarity of definition** is supported in this thesis. The definition of self-awareness and leader effectiveness and the requirement for there to be a common understanding of both was drawn out as a theme from the interviews conducted. In presenting a well-rounded definition of self-awareness and leader effectiveness in chapters two and three, both positive and negative characteristics and behaviours were evident within the literature. This is reflective of the description of 'best self' and 'periphery descriptors' (i.e. elements that are outside the description of best self) in the study by Gray and Jones (2018), focussing on leaders in the Welsh public service. In the self-awareness literature, presentation was made of the look, sound and feel of both self-awareness and a lack of self-awareness. Similarly, presentation was made of the bright side and the dark side of leadership (Hogan et al., 1994, Burke, 2006). Questionnaire respondents and interviewees offered positive and negative descriptions which were clearly helpful to them in explicating their points. This suggests, for future research, definitions of terms should be crystallised at the outset of any research and researchers should provide polar descriptions as a means of providing rounded, holistic definitions that can be understood by parties from all levels and different professional and organisational perspectives and backgrounds.

Describing the **negative behaviour of individuals** enhances understanding of the definition of self-awareness and leader effectiveness, in terms of what they are and what they are not. In considering definitions of terms, the study by Shipper and Dillard (2000) suggests that a lack of self-awareness leads to defensiveness, over controlling tendencies, insensitivity, abrasiveness, being too assertive, a loss of humility, coldness and arrogance. The studies by Hogan et al. (1994), Shipper and Dillard (2000), Sparrowe (2005) and Gray and Jones (2018) identify: personality defects, character flaws that alienate subordinates, inability to build a team and unbridled self-interest, unable to communicate, micromanagement and defensiveness as barriers to leader effectiveness and the development of positive working relationships. This thesis supports these notions and the negative behaviour of individuals demonstrating a lack of self-awareness and poor leadership were highlighted by a number of interviewees. In describing a lack of self-awareness and poor leadership, questionnaire respondents and interviewees listed a number of negative behaviours and characteristics: micromanagement and undermining staff confidence; modelling behaviour then questioning that behaviour in others; providing support only when it benefits them;

questioning and criticising staff actions; promotion due to longevity; using position to get what they want; manipulative; divisive; trample on people; struggle with being challenged; inflexible; unable to drive things forward; have no plan, no strategy. This would point to the need for the Welsh public service, or individual organisational, to describe and delineate positive and negative behaviours as a means of clarifying behaviour expectations and generating relevant organisational standards, based on self-awareness and resonant leadership tenets and values.

A contributory behaviour of leader derailment, as stated by Sturm et al. (2017), is detachment. **Detachment** is encapsulated within this thesis in the theme of strategic level disconnect. The findings offers support to Boyatzis et al. (2013) who identify that leaders who operate in dissonance to others impacting on the effectiveness of individuals and organisations as a whole. The findings also support Gray and Jones (2018) who found that descriptors of worst self in terms of resilience and wellbeing as “leaders are disengaged” and “shut themselves away”, evidencing a functional detachment from others. The notion of detachment underpins the interview theme of strategic level disconnect and links to the theme of impact of decisions. Detachment between strategic level understanding and challenges of operational implementation and the divide between the views of individuals at both ends of the five functions job level framework are documented in the interview findings. This focus on detachment suggests that the Welsh public service needs to explore methods to bring individuals together, through cultural shift, communication and greater visibility of individuals at the strategic level. A number of methods should be considered and explored, recognising that different organisations will have different needs in bridging the gap which detachment creates.

This thesis supports the notion of **inclusive decision making** being that it would serve to bridge the gap of detachment, explored above. Linking to the topic of detachment and the challenges of operational implementation of strategic level decisions, Holden (2005) is clear that decisions impact others. It has been referenced by George (2000) that feelings are linked to the way people make decision, think and behave. Fernandez et al. (2010) are of the view that relations-orientated leadership involves behaviour that includes subordinates in decision making. Academi Wales also includes decision making as a leadership value in ‘Public Service Values and Leadership Behaviours’ (Academi Wales, 2016a); the final leadership value states, “I will continually reinforce a culture of inclusive decision making and shared leadership”. Gray and Jones (2018) also list inclusive decision making as a descriptor of resilience and wellbeing leadership. Inclusive decision making would support implementation of decisions, being that

strategic level decisions would be co-produced with individuals at the other job levels of the organisation. It is therefore suggested that the Welsh public service needs to consider innovative methods to ensure inclusive decision making, beyond the predominantly consultative method currently employed, which would also support the closure of the gap between individuals at the strategic job level and individuals at all other job levels.

**Reflection** was identified in the findings as a key to developing positive behaviour and bridging the gap between strategic decision making and implementation. Indeed, this thesis includes reflection in its definition of internal self-awareness, describing it as ‘an ability to recognise and reflect on the self’s changing thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, strengths and abilities through reflection and introspection’. In order to know thyself, Betz (1981) states that one has to “see the self as if in a mirror”. In describing internal self-awareness, reflection is referenced by Church (1997), Kondrat (1999, p.455), Silvia and Duval (2001) Sparrowe (2005) and Morgan (2009) therefore the inclusion of reflection as an element of self-awareness is supported by this thesis. Academi Wales includes reflection as a leadership value (Academi Wales, 2016a) and the first leadership value of the list of 16 states, “I will reflect honestly on my personal style and its impact on others...”. This would suggest that in describing and delineating organisational standards of behaviour, the Welsh public service should include reflection as a positive activity. In order to ensure the implementation of reflection as a part of business as usual, the Welsh public service needs to consider the time element required for reflective practice, highlighted in the questionnaire, and the leap required by individuals currently uncomfortable with facing their own emotions. This links well with the importance currently placed on mental health and wellbeing by the Welsh public service, taking the Together for Mental Health – A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales (Welsh Government, 2012b) and the 2019-22 delivery plan (Welsh Government, 2020) into consideration.

The interview findings highlighted a recognition that a change is occurring within the Welsh public service and **leadership style is transforming**: reference was made to a new female management versus older male managers. This was not mentioned in the literature, however a parallel discussion was evident, in terms of organisational change. Within the literature, reference was made to how organisations are changing to deal with “wicked problems” (Allen, 2012). The need for a “unity of effort” (Allen, 2012) and a “collective endeavour” (Leslie and Canwell, 2010) were highlighted alongside complex adaptive systems (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). The interview theme of transformation

suggests that within organisations there is an evident shift in the kind of individuals that are being employed in the Welsh public service - they embody self-awareness and effective leadership behaviours. This is reflective of the report produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, 'Who runs Wales?' in 2017 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2017) which stated, "while women make up the majority of the public sector workforce in Wales, this is not generally reflected in positions of power. Two sectors made considerable progress, showing that it can be done.", referring to the health sector and education. Therefore, this finding suggests that the Welsh public service should maintain the momentum of transformative change demonstrated by health and education organisations and capitalise on the benefits of increased gender diversity in the workplace for better decision making and organisational performance.

### 9.3 Research Question 2 – Discussion of Findings

The second research question posed was:

**Research question 2: Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations?**

The findings generated the following answer:

**Answer 2: Effective resonant leaders can be identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service organisations**

The relevant themes for research question two were: behaviour, strategic level disconnect, Welsh public service, everyone can lead, individual experience, transformation, cooperation and natural born leaders. The themes of behaviour and strategic level disconnect have already been discussed above and will not be revisited here. The themes of everyone can lead, individual experience, transformation, cooperation and natural born leaders are discussed below in relation to the literature presented in this thesis.

The questionnaire data suggests that between 39% and 63% of Welsh public service employees, across all five job levels, identify themselves or their managers as effective leaders. This supports the proposition that **leadership is not synonymous with seniority** and not always tied to senior roles (Krauss et al., 2010). This is reflected in the complex adaptive systems literature in the research by Holden (2005), Schneider

and Somers (2006), and Lichtenstein et al. (2006). The Welsh public service organisations are, when considering the definitions by Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009), bureaucratic organisations and therefore, when considering the views held by Schneider and Somers (2006), there appears to be a new leadership style that is less reliant on managerial authority and more reliant on new ideas such as complexity theory. The Welsh public service organisations should seek to better understand complexity leadership theory and complex adaptive systems and consider the benefit a more conscious move to working in this more flexible, fluid way could have on individuals and organisational performance, in an environment where leadership is transforming, particularly in light of the impact of Coronavirus COVID-19 and the need for different professional areas to lead, based on the needs of the community at a given point in time and their corresponding expertise.

Uhl-Bien (2006) is of the view that the basic unit of analysis in leadership research should be relationships, rather than individuals. This is supported in this thesis. The interviewee who stated '**leadership is about relationships**', evidenced this and demonstrated an unambiguous support to Lichtenstein et al. (2006) who identified the "spaces between" people as key to leadership. Palaima and Skarzauskiene (2010) describe relationship leadership as the "interactions of agents within an organisation". If the Welsh public service is viewed as a bureaucracy implementing complex adaptive systems thinking and leadership functions sit with an agent for an instance or an event, then this thesis supports the notion of the importance of the relationships between leadership agents in the Welsh public service. The coronavirus COVID-19 situation may have seen a shift in leadership from traditional leaders to emergency planners and infection control specialists as agents operating in leadership positions for the duration of the event. Only with time and scholarly exploration will more be known about the impact of the turmoil (Baron and Parent, 2015) faced by Welsh public service organisations in 2020 on the question of leadership at all levels. However, changes in relationships, both positive and negative, should be captured as a means of exploration and learning for the future, based on the proposition that such wicked events as pandemics, wild-fires, floods and extreme weather are likely to become more commonplace.

This thesis raises the debate about **cooperation between peers** within the context of the Welsh public service. Cooperation, in terms of managers supporting each other, is highlighted in the interviews as relevant to research question two. However, the literature reviewed made little comment on interaction and cooperation between managers/peers. The literature essentially focusses on vertical relationships – line managers and



subordinates, and little is presented regarding horizontal relationships. Cooperation is, however, explored in the research by Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009) who make reference to interdependent agents who are “bonded together in a collective dynamic by a common need”. The need for support via a peer group is also referenced by Gray and Jones (2018) as a means of addressing fear. Therefore, the Welsh public service would be prudent to consider horizontal relationships, particularly where organisations are moving to a complexity leadership model, where leadership agents change in line with priorities and relationships are viewed as key to effective leadership.

Within the literature, the **lived experiences** generated by learning and career progression were referenced. Interviewees felt that individual experience impacted on a leader’s ability to be effective, which supports the proposition by Gray and Jones (2018) that “leadership is hardwired through the experience of adversity” and “socio-constructed learning becomes neurologically embedded”. These same subjects of academic experience and career progression were also raised by interviewees supporting Fleenor et al. (2010) who identified a positive correlation between the lived experience of gaining an education and learning and self-ratings of leadership. Individuals with more education were in more agreement with others when self and others’ ratings were compared. In the publication by Academi Wales, entitled *Sowing Seeds – Telling Stories* (Academi Wales, 2016b) they state, “...telling the story enables knowledge to unfold through the exchange of experience and replicate itself in different circumstances and environments using the vehicle of individual imagination”. This indicates that the benefits of storytelling are already acknowledged within the Welsh public service. Nevertheless, more work needs to be done in terms of developing case studies and facilitating storytelling as a means of developing individuals working their way up the career ladder and through the job levels of the Welsh public service. Mentoring, in part seeks to achieve this on a one to one level, however, organisational storytelling of professional experience should be expanded and further promoted. Through a change in focus from outputs to outcomes, the Welsh public service uses citizens and service users case studies to evidence external impact but there is limited use of this media for internal development. Mentoring, case studies, digital stories, storytelling and other appropriate media should be considered as a means of expanding the benefit of sharing lived experiences.

Connected to individual experience, the research findings of this thesis identified the theme of everyone can lead, relating to the **potential of individuals** at different levels to become leaders. No literature was sought or reviewed particularly relating to leadership potential however, that which was referenced did not draw on self-awareness,

leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels, suggesting that leadership potential at all levels, influenced by lived experience is an area of interest which requires further exploration in the Welsh public service context. It is possible that a new leadership style, underpinned by a focus on different and changing leadership agents will give individuals with potential, the opportunity to raise their profile and be noticed in a way that they would not have been ten years ago. This finding should also act as a flag to the Welsh public service that organisations should be more cognisant of seeking out potential, which directly supports the Welsh Government's social research publication, 'Leadership development and talent management in local authorities in Wales' (Prosser et al., 2019, p.89) which states,

“Local authorities may wish to consider making provision for a combination of universal and targeted LD to develop a consistent approach to leadership development at every tier of management. There is evidence to suggest that a universal internal LD offer that makes coaching widely available to staff at all tiers of management may support staff to take ownership of their development, challenge existing working practices and adopt new ways of working which may be effective across other service areas.”

Closely connected to individual experience and the potential of individuals, is the theme of natural born leaders, that being, **innate leadership capability** versus learnt skill, acquired through training. Literature is presented that suggests leadership as a distinct skill, can be learnt (Fleenor et al., 2010, Baron and Parent, 2015). Participants in the Gray and Jones (2018, p.148) study suggest the development of “a team leading programme that includes self-awareness/wellbeing”. This is contradicted in the interview findings in this thesis. Respondents and Interviewees were of the view that training could not make an individual into a leader and stated that training courses could not change personalities and behaviours. The view of interviewees within this thesis is more supportive of the sentiment conveyed by Burke (2006, p.3) who stated, “It is who people are - not what they know or how bright they are” that leads to success. Therefore, consideration should be given to giving individuals with potential and have an innate leadership capability, greater exposure to leadership opportunities rather than merely providing them with training. In environment where leadership is fluid and is vested in changing agents, this kind of experiential exposure would be achievable.

## 9.4 Research Question 3 – Discussion of Findings

The third research question posed was:

**Research question 3: Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations?**

The findings generated the following answer:

**Answer 3: Effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have less self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations**

The relevant themes for research question three were: benefits of self-awareness, definitions, strategic level disconnect, individual experience, organisational standards and first order/second order. The themes of benefits of self-awareness, definitions and strategic level disconnect of have already been discussed above and will not be revisited here. The themes of organisational standards and first order/second order will be discussed below, drawing from the literature presented within this thesis.

This thesis supports the studies by Lichtenstein et al. (2006), Krauss et al. (2010), Leslie and Canwell (2010), Murphy et al. (2017) that challenge this argument and are of the view that **self-awareness is not linked to seniority**. The literature generally conceptualises leadership as seniority and in turn, connects seniority with high levels of EQ (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2003, Carmeli, 2003, Burke, 2006, Moorhouse, 2007, Riggio and Reichard, 2008). The study by Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) identifies that directors were found to have significantly higher emotional intelligence scores than managers. The study by Church (1997) identifies that high-performing managers were able to more accurately assess their own behaviours in the workplace. The study by Rode et al. (2017) found that a higher salary, considered a proxy for career progression, correlated positively with increased emotional intelligence, in that individuals were more able to develop strong interpersonal relationships, networking skills, and political acumen. However, the questionnaire data suggests that effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have less self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations. This is exemplified in the interviewee feedback already referenced in chapter eight, stating, “there are very

intelligent people who have no ability to understand their own behaviour and impact on other people". In being clear that relationships are important for effective leadership, this thesis is equally clear that strategic level employees within Welsh public service organisations have less self-awareness than those at the other job levels of organisations. It is suggested that with greater focus on bridging the void created by detachment, discussed above, the self-awareness of individuals at the strategic job level could be developed and/or better expressed.

Interviewees acknowledged the **importance of second order knowledge**, emotions and behaviour. They recognised the negative impact of individual managers lacking in second order emotions and behaviours and the impact of organisational standards which appear to value first order technical knowledge and capabilities over second order emotions and behaviours. First order, 'what' knowledge and second order, 'how' behaviours are referenced in chapters two, three and four (Mackenzie, 1988, Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005, Palaima and Skarzauskiene, 2010, Boyatzis et al., 2013, Amdurer et al., 2014, Sturm et al., 2017). A number of studies highlight that second order emotions and behaviours are more important than first order technical knowledge and capabilities (Atwater et al., 1998, Goleman, 2004, Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005, Showry and Manasa, 2014, Klare et al., 2014). A number of studies highlight that competencies (Sturm et al., 2017) such as technical and functional knowledge, deductive reasoning and quantitative reasoning do not lead to increased leader effectiveness (Boyatzis et al., 2013, Amdurer et al., 2014). A number of studies highlight that emotional intelligence competencies, social intelligence competencies and cognitive intelligence competencies impact on leadership performance (Palaima and Skarzauskiene, 2010, Condon, 2011). Interviewees shared descriptions and definitions that demonstrated their understanding of the differences between first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours. First order skills can be taught but second order skills are, it is found in this thesis, innate abilities developed by experience and reflection and cannot readily be taught. The Welsh public service should therefore, consider placing greater emphasis on second order emotions and behaviours and raising the profile of skills referred to as 'soft skills', but which transpire to be the hardest to acquire.

**Recruitment processes cognisant of self-awareness** would benefit individuals and organisations. It has already been presented in chapter eight that interviewees stated that some organisations actively encourage promotion of individuals with first order technical knowledge and pay insufficient heed to second order knowledge, to the detriment of team development. One interviewee referred to managers being appointed

due to technical competence but lacking leadership qualities for team leadership. The study by Sosik and Megerian (1999) stated that elements of EQ associated with self-aware leadership “may provide human resource managers with selection criteria for identifying potentially effective management candidates”. In stating that self-awareness is not linked to hierarchy, this thesis is supportive of the view held by Van Velsor et al. (1993a) that self-rating of leadership ability and self-awareness, considered in isolation will proliferate promotion of poor all round performers, which equates to those with limited self-awareness. This thesis is also of the view that where organisational standards are insufficiently cognisant of the impact of emotional intelligence and self-awareness, i.e. second order knowledge, individuals with low self-awareness will continue to be promoted. Therefore, the Welsh public service should consider modifying recruitment processes to account for second order emotions and behaviours and prioritising them as highly as first order technical knowledge and capabilities.

#### **9.5 Research Question 4 – Discussion of Findings**

The fourth research question posed was:

**Research question 4: Do effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?**

The findings generated the following answers:

**Answer 4: Effective resonant leaders at the operational, business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective**

**Answer 5: Line managers identified by their direct reports as effective resonant leaders at the business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective.**

The relevant interview themes for research question four were: benefits of self-awareness, behaviour, definitions, strategic level disconnect, Welsh public service, everyone can lead, organisational standards and community connections. The themes of benefits of self-awareness, behaviour, definitions, strategic level disconnect, Welsh

public service, everyone can lead and organisational standards have been discussed above and will not be revisited here. The theme of community connections will be discussed here, in relation to literature presented in this thesis.

This thesis is beyond doubt that **leader/follower relationships are key to leader effectiveness**. It is also highlighted within the themes that relationships outside of the workplace impact relationships within the workplace. The community connections theme recognises the impact that living and working within the same community has on leader/follower relationships and managers' abilities to implement professional boundaries and organisational standards. Interview feedback highlighted that community/social relationships allowed poor behaviour to proliferate. The literature is unambiguous about the social constructionist nature of both self-awareness and leader effectiveness and the importance of the leader/follower relationship has been identified in numerous studies (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992, Van Velsor et al., 1993a, Church, 1997, Sosik and Megerian, 1999, Avolio and Gardner, 2005, Sparrowe, 2005, Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006, Lichtenstein et al., 2006, Riggio and Reichard, 2008, Bratton et al., 2011, Dinh et al., 2014, Barbuto et al., 2014, Du Plessis et al., 2015, Alavi and Gill, 2017). The Welsh public service should give greater consideration to locating employees outside of their communities, where possible. Anecdotally this occurs within social work and health visiting practice, but this appears to be due to safeguarding issues, rather than due to an inability of managers to fully discharge their management duties. Teachers have long worked and lived in their communities with children bumping into their headteachers in the local convenience stores. Traditionally, this local knowledge has been viewed as beneficial in terms of Welsh public service employees' awareness of community needs, however, this does not appear to have been balanced against the challenge of implementation of good management practice. One interviewee raised the challenge of feeling like an outsider, in relation to the community connection theme, thereby connecting the theme to the leadership is transforming theme, and the need to ensure not only gender diversity but cultural and geographical diversity as a means of ensuring individual satisfaction and organisational success.

Findings derived from questionnaire, questions 9 and 10, statement 12, '**my manager has good people skills**' had the highest percentage of respondents agreeing strongly. This thesis has a clear stance on the question of the importance of relationships between leaders and followers, and therefore the notion of people skills is pertinent. This thesis supports the study by Riggio and Reichard (2008) that highlight the need for effective leaders to have 'people skills'. People management was a theme drawn out of the

comments (question 13) written by questionnaire respondents, evidencing the weight of support for leaders to have people skills. This directly links to the need for the Welsh public service to shift the weight of importance from first order skills equally to second order skills, due to the need for roles to be filled and carried out by individuals with people skills. Recruiters should consider overtly sectioning recruitment stages into first order technical assessments and second order self-awareness assessments to ensure candidates are clear and the organisational stance is unambiguous about the importance they place on first order technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours.

Respondents and interviewees made reference to care. Interviewees referenced care in their feedback, providing dark side definitions of leadership as a **lack of care**. This thesis offers support to Fernandez et al. (2010), Spears (2010), Klare et al. (2014) and Gray and Jones (2018). In discussing complex adaptive systems, relations-orientated leadership is presented as involving behaviour that demonstrates concern for subordinates' welfare and wellbeing (Fernandez et al., 2010). Klare et al. (2014, p.21) states that appearing to be uncaring, undermines successful leadership and Spears (2010) refers to caring behaviour. Gray and Jones (2018, p.146) state "Leaders need to care about leadership, about why and how they are leading. If leaders no longer care, then there is no will to "comprehend" or "manage" the workplace". The purpose of a public sector is to provide care to its community by keeping it healthy, safe, clean, well maintained, sustainable, fed, watered, dry, housed and taught etc. If then its external outcome is care of its community, care should similarly be extended to the individual employees providing that care. It would be logical to assume that an organisation that cares about the work it does should also care about the individuals that carry out that work. Conversely, an organisation that shows no care for its people internally would be unable to show care for its community externally. Welsh public service organisations should consider mirroring their high external standards of care, internally, as a means of recognising the often selfless contribution employees make in a sector which cannot recognise commitment or high performance through pay. Following the role played by health and social care professionals during the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic care for staff health and wellbeing has risen to the fore, alongside the need to recognise that immeasurable commitment to fellow humans.

## 9.6 Implications for the Self/Other Ratings Studies

The self/other ratings studies by Atwater and Yammarino (1992), Van Velsor et al. (1993a), Church (1997), Sosik and Megerian (1999) and Bratton et al. (2011) are the fundamental drivers behind this thesis. The tenets of the self/other ratings studies are that: individuals who over rate their self-awareness and leader effectiveness are generally rated as having low self-awareness and leader effectiveness by others; and individuals who under rate their self-awareness and leader effectiveness are generally rated as having high self-awareness and leader effectiveness by others.

It was determined from the outset that this thesis would not seek to replicate these findings, due to the number of studies that had been conducted which corroborated findings. Alternatively, this study sought to further knowledge in this area and offer original contribution and to that end, the key findings from each of the self/other ratings studies have been considered and commentary is provided below in table 9.1. Where this study corroborates findings, the commentary is highlighted in green, where the study adds to findings, the commentary is highlighted in amber. Where this study has no comparative findings or is contradictory, the commentary is highlighted in red. The colour of each comment is denoted at the end of each comment to allow for black and white printing or reading by interested parties who are visually impaired. Of the eight key findings identified from the self/other ratings studies, this thesis supports two, adds to one and has no comparatives for five.

The findings that provide support are: categorising individuals into groups on the basis of job levels affects the correlations between self-awareness and leader effectiveness; the number of line managers identified as effective leaders differed according to whether leaders were identified as having a self-awareness agreement level of above or below four. This thesis has successfully taken the studies by Atwater and Yammarino (1992), Church (1997) and Sosik and Megerian (1999) forward by corroborating and adding to their findings.



**Table 9.1 – Self/Other Ratings Study Findings Summary and Commentary**

Self/Other Ratings Study	Key Findings	Commentary
Atwater and Yammarino (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorizing individuals into groups on the basis of the agreement between self-ratings and observer ratings of their behaviour affects the correlations between predictors and leader behaviour and between leader behaviour and performance.</li> <li>• Individuals who rate themselves most favourably receive lower than average transformational leadership ratings from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Categorising individuals into groups on the basis of job levels affects the correlations between self-awareness and leader effectiveness [GREEN]</li> <li>• Scores/agreement ratings were captured by job level not individual [RED]</li> </ul>
Van Velsor et al. (1993a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underraters score highest on both components of self-awareness (knows self and willingness to improve)</li> <li>• Gender difference in self-awareness appears to be in the 'knows self' component of self-awareness, rather than in the 'willingness to improve' aspect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scores/agreement ratings were captured by job level not individual [RED]</li> <li>• Analysis was carried out by self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job level. No analysis by gender was carried out [RED]</li> </ul>
Church (1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-performing managers were able to assess more accurately their own behaviours in the workplace, yielding greater congruence in self-reports versus direct reports' ratings compared with average performers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scores/agreement ratings were captured by job level not individual [RED]</li> </ul>
Sosik and Megerian (1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correlations between EQ predictors of leadership and leadership behaviour differed based on categorizations of self-awareness (defined as self-other agreement) of focal leaders</li> <li>• Correlations between subordinate ratings of transformational leadership and performance outcomes differed based upon categorizations of self-awareness of focal leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of line managers identified as effective leaders differed according to whether leaders were identified as having SA<math>\geq</math>4 and SA<math>\leq</math>3.9 [GREEN]</li> <li>• Number of respondents identified as effective leaders differed according to whether leaders were identified as having SA<math>\geq</math>4 and SA<math>\leq</math>3.9 [AMBER]</li> </ul>
Bratton et al. (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and follower ratings of transformational leadership for managers who are under estimators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratings were captured by job level not individual [RED]</li> </ul>

## 9.7 The Corollary Model

This chapter now concludes by presenting the corollary model which has been developed from the questionnaire findings, interview findings and discussion topics as the culminating model of findings for this thesis. The five answers developed in response to the research questions are displayed at the top of the pyramid as the overarching findings discovered through this thesis. The primary and secondary themes developed from the free text comments section of the questionnaire and the interviews are then presented as the second and third layers of the pyramid. Finally, following exploration and comparison of the literature presented throughout the thesis within this chapter, unique topics for discussion are presented. These topics are those that do not overlay directly onto either the primary or secondary themes and therefore warrant highlighting as topics that should be discussed and included alongside the primary and secondary themes.

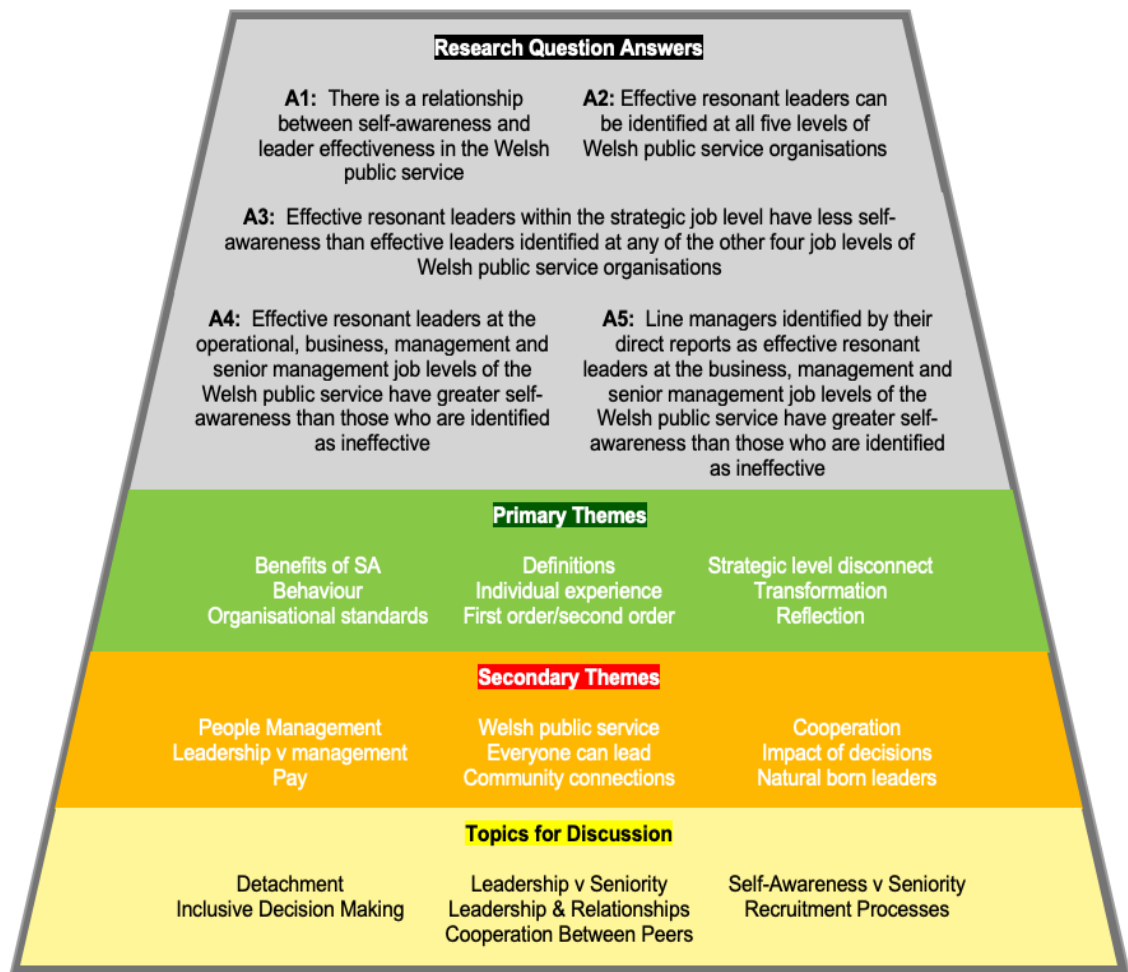


Figure 9.1 – Corollary Model

## 9.8 Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting the four research questions and the responses generated from the findings of the questionnaire and interviews. Discussion regarding research question one identified that the benefits of self-awareness were confirmatory to those presented in the literature. Negative behaviours and detachment were offered by respondents and interviewees in describing the dark side of leadership, as a means of explaining what they felt leadership was and was not, supportive of the literature. The benefits of inclusive decision making was presented as being a positive behaviour and a means of bridging the gap between strategic decision making and operational implementation, supporting extant literature. The importance of reflection as a finding of this thesis was discussed as a means of developing self-awareness and in ensuring leader effectiveness, supportive of that presented in the literature. Findings were also presented evidencing interviewee feeling about a burgeoning transformation in leadership style, paralleling discussions within the literature about organisational change in response to complexity.

In discussing research question two, the findings of this thesis supported the literature which stated that leadership was not synonymous with seniority and which proposed that the Welsh public service is a bureaucracy that operates as a complex adaptive system, reliant on a leadership which is about relationships. Cooperation between peers, as part of an effective system was a notion raised by interviewees and identified as supportive of the limited literature presented within this thesis. The findings supported the literature in discussing the impact of lived experience on leader effectiveness, with specific focus on learning and career progression. These findings connected with the idea of the potential of individuals at all job levels, included within the theme of everyone can lead, which was not an area of academic interest explored within this thesis, and innate leadership capability, supporting the literature conveying the view that leadership is who you are not what you do.

The findings related to research question three presented the view that self-awareness is not linked to seniority, recognising that this is contrary to the popular scholarly view. Rather, self-awareness is found to decrease as job levels increase, with the strategic job level identified as the least self-aware of all five job levels. The importance of second order knowledge and the negative implications on individuals and organisations who prioritise first order technical knowledge and capabilities is presented, confirming extant

research. The merit of a recruitment process cognisant of self-awareness is discussed, supporting literature presented in chapter two.

In discussing community connections linked to research question four, the findings of this thesis support the literature which identify leader/follower relationships as key to leader effectiveness. In achieving this, people skills are identified as requisite, in support of the literature. The concept of care is also discussed as a matter highlighted by interviewees and viewed as a prerequisite for leader effectiveness, also supportive of extant literature.

The self/other ratings studies were then reviewed in parallel with the findings generated by this thesis and corroborative findings and additional findings were made to the studies.

The self/other ratings studies were then reviewed in parallel with the findings generated by this thesis and corroborative findings and additional findings were made to the studies. The chapter concluded by presenting the corollary model, which brought together the questionnaire findings, the primary and secondary themes and the topics for consideration, discussed in this chapter.

This thesis will now move on to the tenth and final chapter. It will present the theoretical and practical implications of this study and the unique contribution offered by the **model of self-awareness and leader effectiveness, the five functions job level framework and the bespoke self-awareness questionnaire, the SA3Q** developed in this thesis. It will present and explore the Welsh public service context in light of the findings made in this thesis. Chapter ten will then highlighting the limitations which have become apparent through the process of developing this theses and conducting the research and considering future research, both by extending the research undertaken in this thesis and also research beyond this thesis, by taking the learning forward in a different direction. It will present the personal reflections of the researcher, as a means of giving the reader a glimpse into the views, challenges and joys experienced by the research throughout this journey of exploration. It will culminate in a final conclusion, drawing this thesis to a close.

# **Chapter 10**

## **Conclusion**

## 10.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the relationship between extant research and the findings from this study, examining each of the four research questions in turn. For research question one, it drew out a number of topics, namely: benefits of self-awareness, clarity of definition, negative behaviour of individuals, detachment, inclusive decision making, reflection, and leadership style is transforming. For research question two, it discussed: leadership is not synonymous with seniority, leadership is about relationships, cooperation between peers, lived experiences, potential of individuals and innate leadership capability. For research question three, the following topics were explored: self-awareness is not linked to seniority, importance of second order knowledge, and recruitment processes cognisant of self-awareness. Research question four discussed: leader/follower relationships are key to leader effectiveness, my manager has good people skills, and lack of care. It also explored the self/other ratings studies and the contribution and corroboration made by this thesis. It concluded by presenting the corollary model, bringing together the questionnaire answers to the research questions, primary and secondary themes from questionnaire question 13 and the interviews and the topics for discussion drawn from the extant literature and findings.

This chapter will begin by discussing the impact of the findings from this thesis and the relevance these findings have for the Welsh public service. It will present five recommendations for improvement for the Welsh public service. It will then provide a rapid review of the previous chapters, as a means of reflecting on the research journey travelled throughout through this thesis. It will discuss the unique **theoretical and practical contributions made by the self-awareness and leader effectiveness model, the new five functions job level framework and the SA3Q self-awareness questionnaire**. It will present concluding remarks regarding the Welsh public service as the contextual locale and beating heart of this thesis. It will move on to present limitations and future opportunities for research, both in extension of this thesis and beyond its scope. It will culminate in a personal reflection of the learning journey travelled through this doctorate, to bring this thesis to a close.

## 10.2 Impact, Relevance and Recommendations

In answering the aim, objectives and research questions set out in this thesis, it has also served to raise a challenge to the Welsh public service – it has raised a fundamental concern regarding the self-awareness and leader effectiveness of individuals at the

strategic job level of the Welsh public service. It has demonstrated that there is a clear relationships and decision making disconnect between those at the strategic job level and those at the other four job levels of the organisation. It has also raised the debate about the potential of those individuals working at the strategic level to improve their self-awareness and leader effectiveness. Themes have emerged which question the benefits of training and the real potential of individuals to change, proffering innate ability as underpinning leader effectiveness, driven by self-awareness as an essential characteristic. The theme of natural born leaders has been presented as a means of describing those with innate ability, and those with that innate ability have been identified at all job level of the Welsh public service. This signals towards the Welsh public service operating as a complex adaptive system rather than a hierarchy where leadership is synonymous with seniority.

This challenges the Welsh public service to reconsider organisational culture and recruitment and promotion processes. Organisations should raise the profile of second order emotions and behaviours, recognising the importance and impact of positive emotions and behaviours within the workplace on individuals, teams and organisational performance as a whole. Organisations should better support employees to understand their strengths and weaknesses, giving them a safe and supportive environment in which to admit their fallibility and mistakes. This would help to dispel any outdated view of emotional and self-awareness as weakness and help organisations advance the change now perceived from within as burgeoning. Organisations should maintain the momentum of the wave of new, younger female managers coming through the job levels as a means of changing organisational dynamics.

The organisational standards theme includes recognition by interviewees that organisational recruitment and retention processes promote first order technical knowledge and capabilities to the detriment of second order emotions and behaviours. It is therefore recommended that there should be a re-focus of organisational priorities. This would impact and influence people management, communication and recruitment-marketing strategies, policies and procedures. The standards would be evident in recruitment, retention, capability management, training and organisational development policies and procedures. This would ensure that organisational culture and standards were transparent and communicated both inside and outside organisations. Individuals' self-awareness should also be assessed and scrutinised through the recruitment and promotion process. This would ensure operationalisation of new organisational

standards to help create and embed a new culture. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed at all organisational job levels – strategically through to operationally.

The primary and secondary themes and topics for discussions drawn out of the open-ended items in questionnaire, interviews and literature are essential considerations for the Welsh public service organisation. For each theme and topic, organisations must ensure an organisation-wide discussion and debate to determine the organisational stance on each theme and topic, relying on the principle of inclusive decision making. This will support organisation to move to a position that considers second order emotions and behaviours as equally important to first order technical knowledge and capabilities.

The corollary model is therefore translated from a model of findings to a model of recommendations. The recommendations are set out below:

**Table 10.1 – Recommendations for Improvement**

<b>Responsible Job Level</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	
Strategic	Strategic review of organisational culture in order to raise the profile of second order emotions and behaviours	
Senior Management	Re-focus of organisational priorities in people management, communication and recruitment-marketing strategies, policies and procedures to align with organisational culture	
Management	Review of recruitment, retention, capability management, training and organisational development policies and procedures to align with organisational culture and priorities	
Business	Assessment of individual self-awareness through recruitment and promotion processes	
Operational	Operationalisation of organisational standards	
<b>Essential Considerations</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	
Primary Theme	Benefits of self-awareness Behaviour Organisational standards Definitions Individual experience	First order/second order Strategic level disconnect Transformation Reflection
Secondary Theme	People management Leadership versus management Pay Welsh public service Everyone can lead	Community connections Cooperation Impact of decisions Natural born leaders
Topics for discussion	Detachment Inclusive decision making Leadership versus seniority Leadership and relationships	Cooperation between peers Self-awareness versus seniority Recruitment processes



### 10.3 Review of The Research Journey

**The study aimed to critically explore self-awareness and its relevance to leader effectiveness across all levels of the Welsh public service**

The thesis explored the literature relevant to self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels. A number of key themes were identified from the extant literature: internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness, external-social self-awareness, the self/other ratings studies, resonant leadership, the connection between leadership and seniority and complex adaptive systems.

The objectives that were developed from the literature were:

**Objective 1: To explore the concept of self-awareness within the workplace context of the Welsh public service**

**Objective 2: To examine the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service**

**Objective 3: To determine whether self-aware leaders can be found at all job levels of the Welsh public service**

In supporting the development of a practicable research methodology, four action focussed research questions were developed:

**Research Question 1:** Is there a relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness?

**Research Question 2:** Will effective resonant leaders be identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations?

**Research Question 3:** Do effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level have greater self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of Welsh public service organisations?

**Research Question 4:** Do effective resonant leaders identified at all five levels of the Welsh public service have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?

These four questions influenced the research journey taken in this thesis.

The questionnaire and interviews undertaken were underpinned by the philosophical

worldview of pragmatism. The social constructionist nature of the concepts of self-awareness and leader effectiveness influenced both the worldview and the mixed methods research activities undertaken within this thesis.

Initially, the questionnaire was conducted and made accessible to all employees of the Welsh public service. The questionnaire, made up of four sections relating to demographics, self-awareness, leader effectiveness and comments, views and opinions, resulted in 152 responses. Due to the under-representation of male respondents in the questionnaire, the need for further exploration was generated and eight interviews were subsequently conducted.

The data and information from the research activities were analysed and evaluated, generating the findings to each of the research questions. A relationship between self-awareness and resonant leader effectiveness was found. Effective resonant leaders were identified at all five levels of Welsh public service organisations. Effective resonant leaders within the strategic job level were found to have less self-awareness than effective leaders identified at any of the other four job levels of the Welsh public service organisations. Effective resonant leaders at the operational, business, management and senior management job levels were found to have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective. Line managers identified by their direct reports as effective resonant leaders at the business, management and senior management job levels of the Welsh public service, were found to have greater self-awareness than those who are identified as ineffective.

A number of important themes were developed from the questionnaire and interviews. Primary themes identified in both the questionnaire and the interviews were: the benefits of self-awareness, highlighting a need to articulate the relationship between self-awareness and leader effectiveness and thus the benefits of developing greater self-awareness; behaviour and the need to define positive behaviours to aspire to and negative behaviours to assuage; organisational standards, in terms of proliferating a lack of self-awareness and poor leadership within organisations through policies and procedures, particularly relating to recruitment and promotions; the need to define self-awareness and leader effectiveness to ensure an organisation wide understanding; using individual experience as a means of elaborating definitions and increasing awareness through story telling of lived experience; organisational need to understand first order/second order knowledge and to ensure a weight of focus on the latter as a means of ensuring a balance of skills within organisations; strategic level disconnect, in

terms of the detachment between individuals at the most senior level of organisations and others at the other four job levels, in relation to interaction and implementation of strategic decisions; transformation relative to a burgeoning change visible and palpable within the Welsh public service from an old style to a new, more self-aware style; and reflection, as a key behaviour for effective self-awareness and thus, leader effectiveness.

Themes identified in the questionnaire and interviews, but not replicated across both, referred to as secondary themes, were: people management and the need to develop people focussed skills underpinned by self-awareness and emotional intelligence; the difference between leadership and management, one not being synonymous with the other; pay viewed as unequal; the Welsh public service context, viewed as being relevant to individual interactions and strategic level leader effectiveness; everyone can lead, related to individual potential; community connections and the impact of living and working in the same community; cooperation between peers; impact of decisions, closely connected to strategic level disconnection; and natural born leaders concerned with innate human ability.

In reviewing the findings from this thesis with extant literature a number of topics for discussion emerged. The topics were: detachment, inclusive decision making, leadership versus seniority, leadership and relationships, cooperation between peers, self-awareness versus seniority and recruitment processes. These topics were identified as relevant for organisations to consider and on which to determine an organisational perspective.

## **10.4 Contribution to Theory, Literature, Knowledge and Academia**

### **10.4.1 New Definition of Self-Awareness and Leader Effectiveness**

This study put forward a new definition of self-awareness extending the initial two-layer definition of internal and social self-awareness into a three-layer definition by separating social self-awareness into two layers creating: internal self-awareness, internal-social self-awareness and external-social self-awareness. Through the literature review of leader effectiveness, a definition of leader effectiveness was developed through the lens of self-awareness, setting out: awareness of technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours; awareness of impact of technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions and behaviours; ability to regulate technical knowledge and capabilities and second order emotions. These definitions were

combined to generate a model of self-awareness and leader effectiveness (see Figure 4.5). The purpose of the model was to connect the definition of self-awareness with the definition of leader effectiveness in the workplace, demonstrating the inextricability of self-awareness and leader effectiveness.

This model has potential applicability in the Welsh public service, as a means of raising the profile of self-awareness and the impact it has on leader effectiveness, through presentation of the model and discussion about its relevance and applicability to individuals, teams and organisations. The development of the Leading Professional Learning guidance, with which the National Academy for Educational Leadership Wales is tasked may benefit from the learning of this thesis. Also, the two day Self-Awareness and Personal Development course run by Children in Wales (postponed from June 2020 due to Coronavirus COVID-19) which aims 'to crease a personal development plan that builds on strengths' (Children in Wales, 2020), may benefit from the model. It may also have equal applicability in other countries and sectors, as a tool for awareness raising. It could be used to further the definition of resonant leadership, encompassing a novel definition of self-awareness.

The model also has the potential to be used as a framework of a manual for leadership development. A suggested format would be to use positive/light side and negative/dark side definitions to describe each of the six elements. Individual experiences could be gathered as case studies to exemplify the impact where some or all parties in a relationship demonstrate light side and dark side behaviours. The questionnaire used in this thesis could be included as a mid-way activity to direct the reader to specific sections of the manual relating to development and growth. Development and growth experiences could also be presented using case studies of individual experiences.

#### **10.4.2 Self-Awareness Questionnaire**

From the literature search, no instrument was identified as wholly relevant to self-awareness and this study, which stimulated the development of the SA3Q. The purpose of the instrument was to focus on self-awareness, rather than emotional intelligence, the main area of focus of other instruments identified within the literature. It also moved away from using emotional intelligence as a proxy for self-awareness. It was designed to include each of the three layers of self-awareness identified within the thesis, thereby making it specific to the new definition of self-awareness developed in this thesis.

Taking the Resonant Leadership Scale (Cummings, 2006) as inspiration, 24 statements were developed. They were grouped into: internal self-awareness (statements 1-10) with statements 8-10 being specifically focussed on stress; internal-social self-awareness (statements 11-19); and external-social self-awareness (statements 20-24). Respondents rated their agreement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from one – strongly disagree, to five – strongly agree, reflective of the Resonant Leadership Scale.

The SA3Q has the potential to support the recommendations set out at the beginning of the chapter and be used as part of a reviewed recruitment and promotion processes. There is already precedent for job applicants to be eliminated at the application stage due to not having appropriate academic qualification e.g., Masters degrees, and for interviews to be conducted through a number of stages, such as psychometric testing. The SA3Q could be used as sifting tool alongside the application process to support organisations aiming to change their cultural to raise the importance of second order emotions and behaviours.

The SA3Q also has the potential to be developed into a self/other awareness tool, with self rating and other rating versions. This would extend its use to that of a 360 degree type review tool, focussed specifically on self-awareness. This could support the employee annual review process, embedding second order emotions and behaviours into everyday practice whilst regularly reinforcing the organisation's cultural message.

## **10.5 Contribution to Practice**

### **10.5.1 Five Functions Job Level Framework**

The five functions job level framework (figure 7.2) was developed as a means of identifying job levels across Welsh public service organisations where there was no commonality of job title, grade/band or pay scales. Within the questionnaire, the framework was presented with summary descriptions for each level, giving respondents sufficient information to determine their job level and the job level of their manager. It ensured accessibility of the study to all Welsh public service employees and the opportunity for responses to be compared across different organisations. The job levels are: operational, business, management, senior management and strategic.

This framework has the potential to be used in a number of ways in the future. For example, to achieve equalisation of pay scales across Welsh public service

organisations by function. This could be valuable in moving towards a reduction/eradication of the gender pay gap. It could also influence the debate about low-skilled versus skilled workers in one professional area versus another, for example NHS matrons and nursing home managers. It could also be used to develop professional skills passports across the whole of the sector, allowing employees to move across levels and between Welsh public service organisations, benefitting their careers and the organisations in which they work. For example, health care assistants and domiciliary social care staff could be trained to achieve equal skills levels to allow organisations to draw on their capacity during times of crisis. The framework could be used to compare Welsh and English public service organisation. This would be helpful in evidencing any differences in pay/skills levels, supporting the equal work for equal pay agenda. It could also highlight geographical differences in roles and pay, for example, the difference between the demands of Band 8a roles in the Welsh NHS in Cardiff and Band 8a roles in the English NHS in London. The framework could also be used by future researchers for exploration across the private and charitable sectors, as well as public sectors in other countries.

The framework could be used to help identify appropriate attendees for training courses. Courses are often publicised as being appropriate for e.g., budding managers, women in senior management roles, etc. These kinds of descriptions are ambiguous and have different meanings in different organisations. If the framework were adopted across the Welsh public service, it would reduce ambiguity and ensure that courses were appropriately attended and more valuable to learners. This is particularly relevant when course costs are borne by employing organisations. The framework is replicated below, for reference.

## **10.6 Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research**

The limitations of this thesis offer opportunities for future research, either through extension of the current study or expansion beyond it. The number of questionnaire responses, including the low number of strategic job level responses offer opportunities to extend the study through maximisation of the mixed methods approach.

152 questionnaire responses were received from a population of 291,000. Based on a potential 50% response rate, 145,500 individuals could have responded. In mitigation of this limitation, a supplementary research method was utilised in this thesis to expand the findings. Interviews were conducted adding a qualitative element to the initial quantitative

study. In combination, the mixed methods approach and research activities of the questionnaire and interview produced rich findings which were able to meet the aim and objectives of this thesis. It is recommended that future research focusing on the Welsh public service, employs a minimum of two methods to gather findings, particularly if the research focus is self-awareness and leader effectiveness. This is to ensure that the study attracts individuals with different preferences. For example, introverts may prefer an email exchange; extroverts may prefer group discussions; visual learners may prefer Skype interviews etc.

The number of questionnaire responses from individuals at the strategic job level, and identified managers, is recognised as a limitation. Three respondents identified themselves at the strategic job level and 17 managers were identified at the strategic job level. As a means of expanding this study and mitigating against this in the future, it is suggested that strategic job level individuals be identified as a particular subject cohort and the research methodology be developed specifically to seek their contribution. This methodology may be different depending on profession and organisation. For example a medical director may be accessed on a ward, a finance executive may be found in their office and a planning director may be found on a building site. Developing case studies of individuals employed at the strategic job level could be a means of extending beyond this limitation.

As part of maximising the opportunities offered by mixed methods, different research methods could be explored. This is particularly pertinent in light of the changing face of the digital working-world, living with coronavirus COVID-19, in 2020. The learning journal produced by Academi Wales (Academi Wales, 2019) could feature as a strategy for data collection, being that it gives the opportunity to record reflections. The use of social media and online communication approaches could also be considered as a means of furthering study into self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels. Blogs, video diaries, online forums and video focus groups could be explored. The application of web-based and digital communication methods is particularly pertinent, as organisations are moving to conducting more meetings through video conferencing as part of business as usual, to maintain social distancing guidance.

The statistical knowledge and experience of the researcher is recognised as a limitation in that further statistical tools would be available to those researchers more adept at using them. Future research could replicate the aim, objectives and research questions of this thesis and take a purely quantitative approach to the study. As has already been

mentioned in this thesis, the questionnaire and interviews drew out similar findings. It would therefore be interesting to understand whether a mono-methods study would provide confirmatory or contradictory findings.

Extending the cross-sectional methodology into a longitudinal methodology offers the opportunity to understand the changing nature of the working-world, over time. The cross-sectional nature of this study is considered a limitation, in that it captures findings from a moment in time – the end of 2018 to early 2019. A longitudinal study could be considered, using the same profile of subjects, the same questionnaire and interview questions, to understand whether and/or how Welsh public service employees change over time. This thesis could be considered the first phase (2018), with a phase two study being conducted in 2023, year five, and a phase three study being conducted in 2028, year ten. The importance placed by the Welsh public service on second order emotions and behaviours may change with the changing demands of leading and managing a workforce where extended home-working and video conferencing is business as usual. Working relationships built and maintained by virtual interactions may require different skills than those contemplated prior to 2020.

The focus of this thesis has been the public service within Wales and that should be considered a limitation as it does not offer data from or comparisons with other sectors or countries. The limitation of the focus on the Welsh public service opens up opportunities for exploration of self-awareness and leader effectiveness in different countries and sectors. It would be exciting to compare a Welsh response to an English, Irish and/or Scottish response to understanding whether findings were confirmatory or contradictory. It would also be of interest to conduct the study across two countries (or more) simultaneously, ensuring societal, environmental and other extraneous biases were comparable across all cohorts. For example, to study Wales and Ireland during a period of high winter-pressures, or England and Scotland during a period of UK government change etc may generate findings of commonality across job levels and professional groups and differences across gender cohorts and organisations.

It would also be advantageous to reproduce this study across the private and charitable sectors, comparing the findings with the public sector. In conducting the study across sectors, it would be hoped that one sector would generate positive findings from which the other sector(s) could learn. This could generate another potential route of future study – testing the implementing of knowledge gathered from the study into the operational practices of an organisation.



The primary element of research which would extend this thesis and ensure its contribution to day to day operational practice, would be the transposition of the corollary model into an assessment and awareness raising tool. The development of the corollary model into an awareness-raising tool provides future researchers with opportunities to explore, confirm, develop and adapt this thesis. Acknowledgement is made of the interviewee feedback concerning natural born leaders and the debate concerning the true value of training in generating effective leaders. However, the corollary model, it is suggested, could be used as a model for individual employee awareness raising, transforming organisational standards and furthering recruitment and selection processes. Indeed, a continuum of research can be envisaged: development of this thesis using questionnaire and interviews, implementation of learning using action learning and review of implementation using ethnography.

The extended study would potentially have two parts. The initial part of the study would involve the transposition of the corollary model into an assessment and awareness raising tool, taking into consideration the policies and practices employed by Academi Wales alongside scholarly articles and guidance. The second part of the study would be pilot implementation of the tool. It is proposed that action learning could be used as a means of developing an implementation plan for the training tool, being that it is recognised and understood in Wales. Action learning would also ensure that implementation was individualised to each organisation, fitting with its policies and procedures and key priorities at the time.

In generating findings, an ethnographic approach could be taken and could consider the following aim: to develop a training tool to raise self-awareness to improve leader effectiveness across the five job levels of the Welsh public service. The objectives would be to: develop an awareness raising tool from the corollary model; to implement the tool in Welsh public service organisations through action learning; to ethnographically observe leader effectiveness following implementation; and to stratify evidence across the five job levels of the Welsh public service.

The different approach taken in this thesis to the self/other ratings studies extends knowledge beyond previous boundaries. The self/other ratings studies, by definition considered the view of the self by the self, and the view of the self by others. From the outset, this thesis determined not to replicate the methodology of the self/other rating studies due to confirmatory findings having been produced by a number of studies. A

limitation of this thesis is that the questionnaire was not completed by identified respondents and identified managers and therefore, no data could be compared between individuals, as per a 360 degree type review. Rather, data was compared across job levels. It is suggested that, should the corollary model be developed into an assessment and awareness raising tool, it could then be developed into a tool for use by self and by others, extending the opportunities for conducting a self/other rating study in the Welsh public service.

## **10.7 Summary of Future Research Opportunities**

The presentation of the unique contributions made in this thesis in Section 10.4 and the limitations and opportunities for future research in Section 10.5 offer a glimpse into the future that this study could generate. Below is a summary of all of the future research opportunities, combined.

Beyond this study, the Model of Self-Awareness and Leader Effectiveness could be used to raise the profile of self-awareness through learning events and as a framework for a manual for leadership development. The new Five Functions Job Level Framework could be used to further the discussion about equal work for equal pay and the gender pay gap. It could also be used as a professional skills passport across Welsh public service organisation and to identify appropriate attendees for training. The Self-Awareness items could be used as a recruitment and promotion tool and developed into a 360 degree type self/other awareness tool.

Across the study the limitation of the low number of questionnaire responses was mitigated by using a mixed methods approach. The low number of responses from individuals at the strategic level job could be mitigated through a research method developed specifically for strategic level job holders, e.g., one to one interviews. Also, exploration into digital research methods could be advantageous.

The statistical knowledge and experience of the researcher is recognised. In the future, a mono study method using qualitative methods could be employed to determine comparative findings. The cross-sectionality of the study could be extended into a longitudinal study through replication. The Welsh public service focus could be extended through exploration of self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels in different countries and sectors. Exploration could be made through comparison of findings from different countries, if the study were carried out concurrently. The corollary

model could be of further utility by exploration into its transposition into an assessment and awareness raising tool.

## **10.8 The Welsh Context**

The Welsh public service has been the contextual framework and the beating heart of this thesis. The interviews highlighted the importance of recognising and exploring Welsh context. The community connections theme brought the Wales of the home and the community, into the workplace and the first interview was conducted through the medium of Welsh.

The literature did not consider Wales as a country of significant interest. The study by Atwater and Yammarino (1992) centred on the United States and the study by Leslie and Canwell (2010) focussed on local government officers in the United Kingdom, taking information from Sweden and Canada. No reference was made to Wales. The study by Sosik and Megerian (1999) made reference to the potential impact of cultural differences on emotional intelligence. No studies were found that considered Wales. Morgan (2009) wrote from the perspective of a Welsh Assembly Manager but the article makes no explicit reference to Wales or the Welsh. The one relevant article was that by Gray and Jones (2018), discussing the resilience and wellbeing of public sector leaders, making specific reference to self-awareness and leadership. This thesis has contributed to closing the gap through focussing specifically on the Welsh public service.

The Welsh public service theme was drawn from the interview findings, suggesting that Wales should not be seen as an adjunct to other countries nor should it be included in United Kingdom wide studies without the Welsh context and frame of reference being appropriately acknowledged and set out. The Welsh legal framework for public services and demands and expectations on Welsh public service organisations differs to those of other countries and should be acknowledged as such. The theme of community connections highlighted the impact of community relationships on professional conduct and ability of managers to manage, thereby proliferating a 'Welsh-ness' within the workplace, generated by individuals influenced by their families, home communities and societies.

Welsh was the preferred language of the first interviewee. This alone sets Wales apart from other countries, as already referenced in chapter five. The Welsh language is

protected and promoted by a legal framework which establishes an obligation on the Welsh public service to give equal weight to English and Welsh. There is an expectation that citizen communication preferences are explicitly sought and services are delivered through the language of choice. This linguistic difference should be recognised, as should the seeping of Welsh vocabulary into the English language spoken in Wales, creating a Wenglish (Schedlitzki et al., 2017)

## **10.9 Personal Reflections**

Reference was made to the role of the researcher in chapter six. In relation to the questionnaire, the researcher has been objective due to having no direct interaction with respondents. In relation to the interviews, the role of the researcher has been subjective, in that the researcher was directly involved in the discourse of the interviews thereby both consciously and unconsciously directing the conversation through direct questioning and indirectly through tone of voice, prompting etc. Reflexivity, seen as a method to establish rigour in qualitative study, is defined as a “self-questioning, self-understanding” (Cumming-Potvin, 2013) process where a researcher engages in “explicit self-aware meta-analysis” (Finlay, 2002) and becomes “rigorously self-aware” (Pillow, 2003). Therefore, to omit personal reflection from the conclusion of this thesis would be wholly remiss.

Finlay (2002) presents four types of reflexivity: introspection, intersubjective, mutual collaboration and social critique. This thesis will rely on introspection, which is well suited to the introverted researcher. This personal reflection will take the approach of highlighting memories of note by thesis part. The reflections related to the literature review are: learning a new writing style and the ebb and flow of excitement and despair experienced with writing, submitting and receiving feedback. Mention will also be made of the models developed in this thesis, that have added imagery and colour to the black and white page. In reflecting on research and findings, the new language of ontology and epistemology will be reviewed and the challenge of statistical analysis will be revealed. There will be reflection on the questionnaire and interview process and the enjoyment of thematic analysis. The discussion and conclusion part of the thesis will be considered in terms of the sense of wholeness and closure which it brought, with a tangible sense of personal development and growth.

“In the beginning I knew nothing and as I progressed, I realised I knew less. But, I persevered and learnt that not only was this thesis about self-awareness, leader

effectiveness and leadership at all levels, it was also about learning a new style. A new style of writing and presenting information that I had not encountered before.

My background is in the public sector where the rule of thumb is to write succinctly and never write more than is absolutely necessary. However, the academic style I discovered, was more complete. It was rounded, unabridged and involved leaving no stone unturned. Paragraphs, sections and chapters needed to connect, and the reader needed to be taken on the journey. The thought process of the researcher had to be explicit. I was used to implied.

My first few experiences of submission and receiving feedback were heart breaking. On more than one occasions I wondered whether I could have an MPhil and run. But, as I took time to step back and reflect, I realised that the critique and comment was solely for the purpose of my success. So, I sucked it up and decided that I would just do as I was told – JDI (just do it!). I put on my armour, took the criticism in the spirit in which it was meant and JDI.

The literature review allowed me to draw models. I've developed a real passion for translating words into models and transposing complex theories and ideas into three circles and a box. It acts as an aide memoir and extends accessibility of this thesis to so many people at so many levels. Once you have a picture you can present it and describe it to an audience using the language that they understand. I'm a real advocate of illustrations, infographics and pictures to make a point. And they catch people's attention. They make an otherwise black and white page 'pop'.

On reflection, I enjoyed the literature review more than anything else. I was immersed in a topic that I'd watched and heard and felt. Leader effectiveness began as a hook on which to hang self-awareness but it became more important and interesting as I learnt more. My interest in job levels emanated from observing work colleagues and watching how those at the lowest levels of organisations had the ability to rally colleagues and whip up a storm without any level of seniority.

I became aware of my writing and learning styles and conscious of my needs. I'm a bigger picture thinker and I need a skeleton on which to hang the flesh. I

always write with a structure first and the detail second, but in academic writing, the literature sets the direction, so you need the detail first. I struggled with that - not having a framework but just having lots of details and putting them together in themes and then the themes making up sections. It was uncomfortable to start. But I understand it now. So, my advice is to start with a framework from another thesis or study guide or YouTube video and work on filling it in. You can move your content around later to create the logic and the flow. I'll know next time!

The methodology was tricky. The words ontology and epistemology were strangers to me. I had to get to a point of understand them well enough to be able to make my thoughts and views about the world and self-awareness relevant to these two strangers. And the best way I could do that was to simplify their meaning – ontology is what and epistemology is how.

That's something else I discovered - I thought that academic writing would expect long words and highly complex ideas – but that's not the case at all. I've read some articles and I have no idea what they're saying and I think that's pretty un-academic. Rather than making knowledge accessible, it makes it inaccessible and elitist. If you are researching an area of interest, why would you not want it to be accessible to as many people as possible? Plain English has been my goal throughout.

I decided that my thesis would be quants based. If you work in the public sector, you know we're judged on the data and by the numbers. I wanted to be able to present a thesis where the data spoke for itself. But when I had the data in my hands, I struggled to make it speak. I had to learn quickly. And it was not easy. I wish I had known, and I wish I could encourage all research students that come after me to build up their stats knowledge and skills in readiness for when they have their data, so that their ownership of the data is positive and their analysis is fruitful right from the beginning. I struggled, until a conversation with my supervisor took me on the journey to mixed-methods.

By the time I started conducting my interviews, I'd moved from South Wales to London and accessing Welsh public service employees worried me. But, the phone is a marvellous invention.

It took a bit of preparation to find interviewees, to get the tech set up and to make sure I actually pressed record. But they were good. And the more I read and got to know the transcripts - they were really good. I had something meaty here. I had some flesh to put on my skeleton. I'd never analysed words and phrases like this before, but I oh so enjoyed it. The interviews were, in hindsight, perfect. About 20 minutes per conversation, with eight people and then I could go away and think it through, tumble it over and generate something brilliant!

I wish that I'd understood more about thematic analysis early on in my research. Now I've done it once, I want to do it again. I enjoyed the analysis and I'd like to try analysing written words and observed behaviour. I enjoyed aggregating the words and developing the high-level themes and getting to my bigger picture. It seems like such an excellent way of ensuring peoples' voices are heard. And if you can do stats, putting this and stats together just seems like the best of both worlds and you can generate a really strong piece of research.

And then it was the end. My supervisor laughed when I said I didn't want to merge my chapters together in case I broke it.

Since the literature review, I knew all of the files would need to be combined to make one document and I'd been so excited about it. But I daren't do it in case I jinxed it, like buying a crib for the baby that's yet to come. Word has a habit of making beautifully formatted documents turn to gibberish. But it worked and it's all in one place. And I've reformatted everything at least twice. And renumbered everything a least three times.

It was such a privilege to get to a point where I could re-read the literature alongside my findings and put it all together. It was interesting – the findings brought together opinions from lots of people, they brought together information from across quants and quals and now my thesis brought together my findings with other people's findings. It was all about making connections and once connected, stretching the sphere of knowledge that little bit further than it had been stretched before.

And I look back on this personal reflection and realise that much of it has been about describing the process and little of it has been about my precious themes.

But you'll have already read a lot about them. And I hope you'll have enjoyed them as much as me!"

## **10.10 Conclusion**

The aim, objectives and research questions of this thesis have been answered. Literature related to self-awareness, leader effectiveness and leadership at all levels of the Welsh public service has been reviewed and presented. A research framework has been developed which has guided the research journey. The philosophy, approach, methodological choice, strategy and time horizon has been set out. The data collection methods of the questionnaire and interviews have been presented and the data has been analysed to generate the findings. The findings have been related back to the aim, objectives and research questions to ensure that the learning loop has been securely tied. The recommendations for learning by the Welsh public service have been presented and the unique contributions to knowledge and practice have been set out. The limitations and future opportunities for research have been explored as a means of preparing the research stage for the next researcher who will stretch that sphere of knowledge beyond that which it has been stretched before. Finally, a personal reflection has been shared as a means of uncovering the mask of the researcher and evidencing self-awareness in practice.

This unique learning journey has achieved a number of successes. It has extended knowledge about self-awareness, developing a three-layer definition. It has extended knowledge about leader effectiveness, as it pertains to self-awareness by developing three key elements. It has combined these two definitions to create a unique model and theoretical contribution. It has developed a new five functions job level framework for universal application across the Welsh public service, and beyond. It has considered complex adaptive systems thinking in a Welsh public service context and found it to be more relevant than the common view of leadership linked to seniority. It has highlighted a disconnect between individuals at the strategic job level and those at the other four job levels of the Welsh public service. It has identified a need for a review of organisational culture, strategies, policies and procedures, particularly in relation to people management, communication and marketing. It has developed a unique self-awareness questionnaire suitable for adaptation into a recruitment and promotion assessment tool, to support the implementation of improved organisational standards and recognition of the importance of second order emotions and behaviours.



The future beyond this thesis is action focussed. Implementation of new knowledge, ways of thinking and recommendations in the Welsh public service will take energy, commitment, time and dedication. Above all, it will take relationships – to understand, to agree, to disagree, to accept and to progress the learning presented here. With self-awareness and leader effectiveness, the learning can be translated into action and will be of benefit to each and every individual at all five job levels of the Welsh public service.

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# **Appendix 1**

## **Example of Questionnaire Introduction Email**

**From:** [info@knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk](mailto:info@knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk) <[info@knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk](mailto:info@knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk)>

**Sent:** 21 October 2018 20:57

**Subject:** Request for Support - Doctoral Research

Dear Sirs

**Re: Doctoral Research Study**

I'm a part time research student at the University of South Wales currently studying my doctorate in business administration. My area of interest is self-awareness and its relationship to leader effectiveness. I am particularly interested in whether there are differences in this relationship across different job levels of Welsh public service organisations. In order to explore this relationship, I would be grateful if I could ask for your support in distributing my questionnaire to colleagues within your organisation. I would also be grateful if you could complete my research questionnaire which can be found here:

**Questionnaire: Is there a relationship between self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job level in the Welsh Public Service?**

The questionnaire will take around 20 minutes to complete and will be available from 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct – 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2018.

If you would like to find out more about me and my research, please visit my website: [www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk](http://www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk)

Thank you for taking the time to support my research, the findings of which I hope will be of interest and benefit to all Welsh public service organisations and colleagues.

**Nia D Thomas JP  
LLB, MSc**

**Doctoral Student at the University of South Wales**

**Mae croeso i chi gyfathrebu yn Saesneg neu Cymraeg**

# **Appendix 2**

# **Questionnaire**



# Is there a relationship between self-awareness, leader effectiveness and job level in the Welsh Public Service?

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS QUESTIONNAIRE CAN ONLY BE COMPLETED BY WELSH PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

## **Introduction and Guidance**

Your help and support to complete this questionnaire is very much appreciated.

This questionnaire will take around 15 minutes to complete. You will need to answer the questions about yourself and also about your direct line manager.

- Section 1: Demographics - The first group of questions will ask you about gender, age and organisation. Please choose the organisation type that describes your organisation not your profession, so for example if you are a Social Worker in a Council, please choose 'local government'. If you are a Social Worker in a hospital, please choose 'health and social care'.
- Section 2: Job Levels - The second section will ask you to identify your job level and your manager's job level. Please choose that which best fits the majority of the work that you and your manager do.
- Section 3: Self-Awareness - The third section will be a list of 24 statements about self-awareness which you will need to answer about yourself and your manager.
- Section 4: Leadership - The fourth section will be a list of 10 statements about leadership which you will need to answer about yourself and your manager.
- Section 5: Comments - At the end, you will be given the opportunity to share your thoughts and add any further comments.

All of your responses will be anonymous and no information about your name and contact details will be asked in this survey. All of the information you provide will be stored securely, in line with data protection legislation and will be used for the purpose of producing research findings in line with this study. By answering the questions in this questionnaire, you are consenting to your information being used in this way. Please only continue if you consent to this.

If you have any concerns about self-awareness, emotional intelligence and leadership in your organisation, please speak to your manager or contact your occupational health department.

Thank you for your time. To find out more about me and my research, please click here: [www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk](http://www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk)

**Mrs Nia D Thomas JP  
LLB, MSc**

**Doctoral Student at the University of South Wales**

## Demographics

Please complete the below information about you and your manager:

**1. Please choose with which gender YOU identify:**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/other

**2. Please choose the gender with which YOUR MANAGER identifies:**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/other

**3. Please choose YOUR age grouping: \* Mark only one oval.**

- 0-15
- 16-18
- 19-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65 and over

**4. Please choose YOUR MANAGER'S age grouping: \* Mark only one oval.**

- 0-15
- 16-18
- 19-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65 and over

**5. Please identify which description type best represents the organisation in which you work. Please read the whole list before choosing.**

You can access a complete list of the Welsh Government's Register of Welsh Public Bodies here to check under which organisation type your particular organisation is listed: <https://gov.wales/topics/improving-services/devolution-democracy-delivery/register-of-public-bodies/?lang=en>

*Check all that apply.*

My sector

Business and economy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture and sport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment and countryside	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and social care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing and regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving public services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local government	<input type="checkbox"/>
National government	<input type="checkbox"/>
People and communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety and Criminal Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. Please identify which description type best represents the organisation in which your manager works.**

*Check all that apply.*

My Manager's Sector

Business and economy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture and sport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment and countryside	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and social care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing and regeneration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving public services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local government	<input type="checkbox"/>
National government	<input type="checkbox"/>
People and communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety and Criminal Justice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **Job Levels**

Each job level has a descriptor. Please read the descriptor carefully before choosing your job role and your manager's job role.

### **7. Please identify the job level which best fits your role.**

*Mark only one oval per row.*

---

STRATEGIC - The most senior level of responsibility within an organisation, setting its strategic direction, making ultimate policy decisions and implementing significant organisational change

You

---

SENIOR MANAGEMENT – Has overall responsibility for the implementation of organisational policies, procedures and budgets across a number of service areas and influencing the strategic direction of the organisation

---

MANAGEMENT - Ensure that organisational policies and procedures are implemented and will have overarching financial responsibility for services

---

BUSINESS - Responsible for managing the business of the organisation, for example signing off time-sheets, developing staff rotas, signing off leave and conducting sickness interviews. May have some direct contact with service users and clients

---

OPERATIONAL - Have direct contact with service users and clients. Have no line management responsibility

### **8. Please identify the job level which best fits your manager's role.**

*Mark only one oval per row.*

---

STRATEGIC - The most senior level of responsibility within an organisation, setting its strategic direction, making ultimate policy decisions and implementing significant organisational change

Your Manager

---

SENIOR MANAGEMENT – Has overall responsibility for the implementation of organisational policies, procedures and budgets across a number of service areas and influencing the strategic direction of the organisation

---

MANAGEMENT - Ensure that organisational policies and procedures are implemented and will have overarching financial responsibility for services

---

BUSINESS - Responsible for managing the business of the organisation, for example signing off time-sheets, developing staff rotas, signing off leave and conducting sickness interviews. May have some direct contact with service users and clients

---

OPERATIONAL - Have direct contact with service users and clients. Have no line management responsibility

## Self-Awareness Questions

9. In answering the following, please think about yourself at work. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. "In work..." \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
my emotions and moods change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my behaviour changes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know my strengths and what I am good at	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know my weaknesses and what I am not good at	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am true to my core values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I reflect on my behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learn from my mistakes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stress impacts my emotions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stress impacts my behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stress impacts my ability to make decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see myself as others see me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have good people skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
what other people think of me is important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of my body language when I am communicating with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
what I wear and how I look is important to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can tell how other people are feeling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my behaviour impacts on my colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I seek feedback from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do what I say I will do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to regulate my emotions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to regulate my behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I change my communication style to suit others' mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I change my body language to suit different situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I am sad, angry or unhappy I hide it from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. In answering the following, please think about your manager at work. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. "In work..." \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
my manager's emotions and moods change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager's behaviour changes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager knows their strengths and what they are good at	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager knows their weaknesses and what they are not good at	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager is true to their core values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager reflects on their behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager learns from their mistakes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stress impacts on my manager's emotions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stress impacts on my manager's behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stress impacts on my manager's ability to make decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager sees himself/herself as others see them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has good people skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
what other people think of my manager is important to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager is aware of their body language when they are communicating with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
what my manager wears and how they look is important to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager can tell how other people are feeling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager's behaviour impacts on their colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager seeks feedback from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager does what they say they will do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager is able to regulate their emotions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager is able to regulate their behaviour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager changes their communication style to suit others' mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my manager changes their body language to suit different situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When my manager is sad, angry or unhappy they hide it from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## **Leadership Questions**

11. In answering the following, please think about yourself at work. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. "In work..." \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Look for feedback even when it is difficult to hear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Act on values even if it is at a personal cost.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus on successes rather than failures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support teamwork to achieve goals and outcomes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calmly handle stressful situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Actively listen, acknowledge, and then respond to requests and concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Actively mentor and coach performance of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effectively resolve conflicts that arise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage others in working toward a shared vision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allow others freedom to make important decisions in their work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. In answering the following, please think about your manager at work. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. "In work..." \*

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Looks for feedback even when it is difficult to hear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acts on values even if it is at a personal cost.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focuses on successes rather than failures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supports teamwork to achieve goals and outcomes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Calmly handles stressful situations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Actively listens, acknowledges, and then responds to requests and concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Actively mentors and coaches performance of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effectively resolves conflicts that arise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engages others in working towards a shared vision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Allows others freedom to make important decisions in their work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## **Comments**

13. Please share any thoughts, views and comments you have about self-awareness, leadership and job levels in the Welsh Public Service here. If you have anything to share about this questionnaire, please also include it here:

## **Concluding remarks and thanks**

Thank you for taking the time to complete my questionnaire. Your responses will be collated and will then be published on my website no later than June 2019:

[www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk](http://www.knowingselfknowingothers.co.uk)

**Mrs Nia D Thomas JP  
LLB, MSc**

**Doctoral Student at the University of South Wales**



# **Appendix 3**

## **Interview Schedule**

## Interview Schedule

Ref	Date Conducted	Duration (minutes / seconds)
1	23 / 09 / 19	11m 33s
2	23 / 09 / 19	12m 2s
3	03 / 10 / 19	11m 14s
4	07 / 10 / 19	8m 35s
5	08 / 10 / 19	10m 49s
6	12 / 10 / 19	19m 55s
7	26 / 10 / 19	17m 26s
8	26 / 10 / 19	14m 53s

# **Appendix 4**

## **Example Interview Transcript**

## Example Interview Transcript

Interview No X , Day/Month/2019

Demographic	Parameter	Interviewee Profile
Gender	Male	Y/N
Age	16-34	Y/N
	>55	
Organisation	environment and countryside	Y/N
	planning	
	transport	
	Welsh language	
Job Level	Strategic	Y/N

Speaker (Researcher / Interviewee)	Question Type	Commentary
R		<b>Okay, right you're on right. Let me go to question number one, then.</b>
I		Yes.
R	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Do you think there's a relationship between self awareness and leader effectiveness in the Welsh public service organisation?</b>
I		Definitely. I think if you if you are self aware and you you know your strengths, you know your weaknesses, you know, your sort of biases, your unconscious biases you're more aware. I think that that leadership element essentially comes from having 'been there', having experience yourself, knowing what your personal view are, know that what it's sort of compatible with what the strategic direction the organisation is going to go and I suppose know that what when that, okay, what you're thinking and being not set that part of that self awareness, knowing what you're thinking of being able to distinguish what you're thinking between it is a personal held belief
R		<b>Yeah, yeah, yeah</b>
I		Or is this the way I want the organisation to go, I will do what I believe is on the work ethos, I suppose. So yeah, definitely a correlation there.
R	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Lovely. Question two, do you think effectively leaders can be found at all levels of the Welsh public service organisation?</b>
I		Yes. When I first became a part of the [organisation], I was part of the [training] scheme. So it was a two year placement where you sort of parachuted into different service areas, about six, six to nine months in that service, working on doing a specific project. And then you sort of wrapped up everything, you needed to present findings back and then you moved on to the next project. Now when I first started working here, I was on the [name] project, which was The [project],

		we were linked in with [name] University and they're project so basically how we could promote, you know, women in the workplace and how we could make, an not so much how we could make women's lives easier, but demonstrate the value that women have in the workplace ... [Redacted]
R		<b>Yeah.</b>
I		And I think there was definitely effective leadership. Higher grades, don't get me wrong, but lower grades and those people, when I spoke to their manager, their managers were already earmarking them for progression opportunities, further training for the leadership opportunity so they were running really efficient teams you know on very tight budget. People underneath them so to speak to people they like they had a management responsibility for, looked up to them you know, they looked to them to director, for direction, for input, sort of the validation. [Redacted]
R	Q3	<b>Brilliant. Question three, do you think that effective leaders within the strategic job level have greater self awareness then effective leaders that are identified in the other job levels of the Welsh public service organisation?</b>
I		[Redacted]
R	Q4	<b>Brilliant. And you've part answered question 4 as well, do you think that effective leaders identified at all levels of the Welsh public service have greater self awareness than those who are identified as ineffective?</b>
I		[Redacted]
R	AOB	<b>Yeah. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me in terms of the questions or any thoughts that you've had, I know you haven't had the questions for very long. But what I've had from other people that they've gone overnight, I don't know, a lightbulb moment for them. There may not be and that's fine too.</b>
I		I have got the questions printed off in my office in [location] so when I have a chance to have a look at them, if I do think of anything, I'll most definitely
R	Clarification	<b>Okay, but you don't have to, for me the conversation's the important part of the research, brilliant Thank you, your time has been very valuable. Thank you very much. Much appreciated</b>
I		No problem
R		<b>Bye</b>
I		Bye