



STAFF TURNOVER IN DUBLIN'S FOOD SECTOR: JOB SATISFACTION AND CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Staff Turnover in Dublin's Food Sector: Job Satisfaction and Culture

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This dissertation is a holistic study taken of cafés and restaurants in the Dublin city centre area. The study aims to provide an insight into the challenges that organisations in the food industry are faced with in terms of staff turnover. The study is inspired by personal experience in this industry and the challenges that business owners and managers face in regards to staff turnover. As staff turnover appears to hinder business growth and performance further investigation into how businesses manage this phenomenon can provide solutions for the industry as a whole.

Most research done about staff turnover focuses on the knowledge industry, and although a few studies have been done in hospitality the studies tend to focus on employees who have attended some form of schooling in hospitality. Very little research, especially post-boom studies have been done on this sector, and even less so in Ireland. The demographic of workers in this sector in Ireland is quite different from the knowledge industry. Additionally while most studies have used surveys, this study will contribute to new knowledge using interviews and inductive reasoning to find new knowledge.

Interviews were used to find out how employers managed staff turnover. Two solutions were found; organisations can provide rewards and promotional opportunities that overcome the prejudices of and preconceptions of the industry or they can adapt to the nature of the industry and find the silver lining in staff turnover. The silver lining for one organisation is that new employees bring new passions and ideas to the business. Providing a platform for employees to share those ideas means that the business can constantly improve and develop. As these organisations are still quite new further case studies would truly demonstrate the potential success of each model.

SUBMISSION OF THESIS AND DISSERTATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	II
SUBMISSION OF THESIS AND DISSERTATION.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
LIST OF FIGURES	VIII
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	IX
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 DISSERTATION	1
1.2 BUSINESS TYPES.....	1
1.3 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: PEOPLE	3
1.4 OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION	3
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2.2 TURNOVER.....	4
2.3TURNOVER INTENTION	4
2.4 JOB SATISFACTION	5
2.4.1 <i>Comfort</i>	5
2.4.2 <i>Rewards</i>	6
2.4.3 <i>Learning Experiences</i>	7
2.5 CULTURE	9
2.5.1 <i>Organisational Culture</i>	9
2.5.2 <i>Learning and Culture</i>	10
2.6 LEARNING ORGANISATION	10
2.7 CONCLUSIONS AND A CALL FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	11
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	13
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	15
4.1 ORIGINAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVES-ORGANISATION 1	15
4.2 REASONS FOR THE CASE STUDY	15
4.3 CRITICISMS FOR THE CASE STUDY	15
4.4 NON-COMPLETION.....	16
4.5 NEW RESEARCH OBJECTIVES-ORGANISATION 2	16
4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN-QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	17
4.7 RESEARCH SETTING	17

4.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	17
4.9 SELECTING A SAMPLE	18
4.10 INTERVIEWING	18
4.11 INTERPRETATION	19
4.12 CODING	19
4.13 CODING FAMILIES	20
4.14 HYPOTHESIS CREATION.....	20
4.15 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY	21
4.16 ETHICS	21
4.17 LIMITATIONS.....	21
4.18 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	22
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS	23
5.1 DATA COLLECTION.....	23
5.2 ISSUES DURING ANALYSIS.....	24
CHAPTER 6: TURNOVER -RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	25
6.1 INTRODUCTION	25
6.2 QUESTIONS ASKED	25
6.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	26
6.3.1 <i>Who is concerned with turnover?</i>	26
6.3.2 <i>Coding</i>	26
6.3.3 <i>Consequences of Turnover</i>	27
6.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES.....	29
6.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	30
CHAPTER 7: TURNOVER INTENTION-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	31
7.1 INTRODUCTION	31
7.2 QUESTIONS ASKED	31
7.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	32
7.3.1 <i>Axial coding: Grouping Causes Together</i>	36
7.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES.....	36
7.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	37
CHAPTER 8: JOB SATISFACTION-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	38
8.1 INTRODUCTION	38
8.2 QUESTIONS ASKED	39
8.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	39
8.3.1 <i>retention</i>	39

8.3.2 Performance	43
8.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES.....	44
8.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	45
CHAPTER 9: LEARNING EXPERIENCE- RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	46
9.1 INTRODUCTION	46
9.2 QUESTIONS ASKED	46
9.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	47
9.3.1 <i>Types of Training Used</i>	47
9.3.2 <i>Management Experience</i>	48
9.3.3 <i>Owner's Responses</i>	48
9.3.4 <i>New Starters Training and Induction</i>	50
9.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORY.....	50
9.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS.....	51
CHAPTER 10: LEARNING CULTURE- RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	53
10.1 INTRODUCTION	53
10.2 QUESTIONS ASKED	53
10.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS.....	53
10.3.1 <i>Learning Organisations</i>	54
10.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES	56
10.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	57
CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSIONS.....	58
11.1 SUMMARY	58
11.2 FURTHER RESEARCH IS NEEDED	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	60
APPENDIX 1.....	67
TYPES OF TRAINING USED.....	67
<i>Change of Training Used-By Organisation: Figures A1-A6</i>	67
<i>Owner's Approach to Training: Figures A7-A10</i>	68
APPENDIX 2.....	69
CULTURAL FINDINGS	69
<i>Culture Combinations: Figure A11</i>	69
<i>Cultural Type By Organisation: Figures A12-A18</i>	69

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Figure 1A: <i>VARIATION OF BUSINESS TYPES</i>	2
Figure 1B: <i>TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS</i>	2
CHAPTER 6: TURNOVER	25
Figure 6A: <i>IS TURNOVER A PROBLEM?</i>	26
Figure 6B: <i>FIVE C'S OF TURNOVER</i>	26
Figure 6C: <i>CONSEQUENCES OF TURNOVER</i>	27
Figure 6D: <i>WHY THESE ORGANISATIONS ARE CONCERNED WITH TURNOVER</i>	28
CHAPTER 7: TURNOVER INTENTION	31
Figure 7A: <i>WHY DO PEOPLE LEAVE? BASED ON RESPONSES</i>	32
Figure 7B: <i>NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS THAT CITED CAUSES</i>	32
Figure 7C: <i>REASONS WHY PEOPLE LEAVE-PER ORGANISATION</i>	33
CHAPTER 8: JOB SATISFACTIONS	38
Figure 8A: <i>REASONS WHY PEOPLE STAY-BY NUMBER OF RESPONSES</i>	39
Figure 8B: <i>REASONS WHY PEOPLE STAY-BY CATEGORY</i>	40
Figure 8C: <i>REASONS WHY PEOPLE STAY-BY ORGANISATION</i>	40
Figure 8D: <i>WHAT REWARDS ARE GIVEN</i>	41
CHAPTER 9: LEARNING EXPERIENCES	46
Figure 9A: <i>TYPES OF TRAINING USED BY ALL ORGANISATIONS</i>	47
Figure 9B: <i>TRAINING TECHNIQUES- BY ORGANISATION</i>	47
Figure 9C: <i>PROBATION AND TRAINING PERIODS</i>	50
APPENDIX 1	67
Figures A1-A7: <i>CHANGE OF TRAINING USED IN ORGANISATIONS 1-3</i>	67
Figures A8-A11: <i>OWNER'S APPROACH TO TRAINING IN ORGANISATIONS 4-7</i>	68
APPENDIX 2	69
Figure A12: <i>WHICH ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE</i>	69
Figures A13-A19: <i>CULTURAL TYPES BY ORGANISATION</i>	69

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: FIGURES ON THE LEARNING TECHNIQUES OF EACH ORGANISATION.....	66
APPENDIX 2: FIGURES ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.....	68

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 DISSERTATION

Staff turnover is typically high in the food sector in Ireland, which causes substantial problems for organisations looking to grow and obtain a competitive advantage. This project will look at staff turnover, its consequences and causes, why people stay and leave, and how learning and learning culture impact on retention and organisational performance. Respondents represent a variety of organisational types allowing for a holistic study and overview of industry trends. Using an inductive qualitative approach this project does not attempt to hypothesise during the literature review, as the study is interested in how and why employers think about turnover, not to consider whether they can fit into a current organisational type.

1.2 BUSINESS TYPES

The organisations in this study are sometimes grouped together by their size, purpose, or ownership. When talking about the size of the organisation Zheng *et al.* (2009) propose using the industry as a defining variable, as knowing the range of sizes within an industry can make subdivisions more accurate.

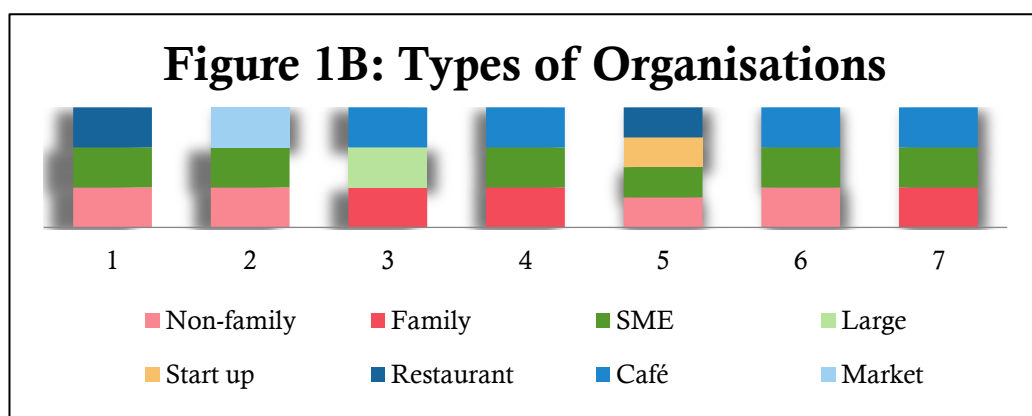
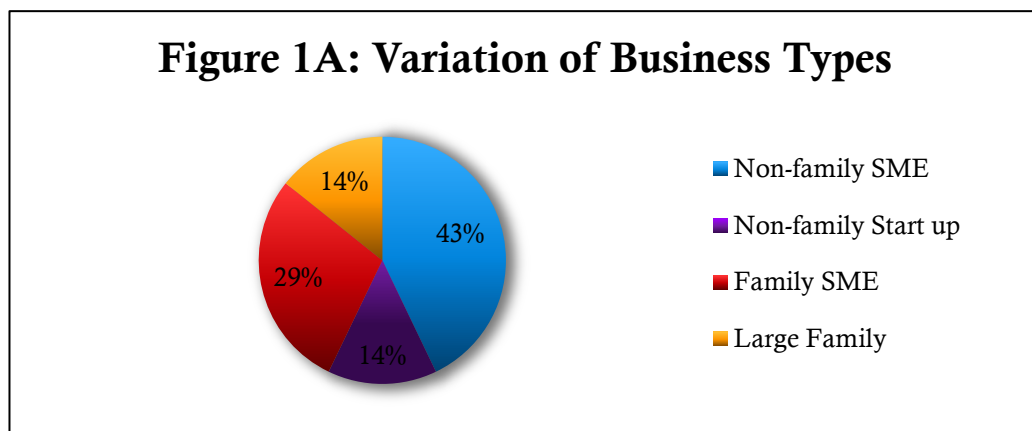
Birdthistle's (2006) studies on job satisfaction in Irish Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) called for more inductive research regarding turnover and retention. Therefore this study will use her guidelines of SMEs, which have fewer than 250 employees, to produce a more valid contribution to the current literature in Ireland. This study looks at six SMEs and one large organisation.

Two of these SMEs are family run SMEs, and the large organisation is also family run. Family businesses have predominant family ownership and considerable family management (Barnes & Hershon, 1976). They can also be identified by a combination of age, size, and strategy (Daily and Dollinger, 1993) as profitable family firms tend to stay small, do not aim for the highest profit margins (Schwass *et al.*, 2010), and are defenders in terms of strategy (Daily and Dollinger, 1993). This study however, continues to use Birdthistle (2006) as a reference. Her understanding comes from Leach's (1991, p. 4) definition of a

family SME, as one where the “family body” has a considerable impact on the business, and when a significant family group is in control of the business.

Finally, the term “start-up” is used to describe one organisation. This organisation searches for a “repeatable and scalable business model” (Blank, 2013, p. 5). The start-up builds and rebuilds as each business model fails until they succeed, searching for a model that can grow quickly (Blank, 2013). Only one organisation has been categorised as a start-up as it not only provides a food service, but also is searches for the best model to solve the problem of staff retention in the food sector.

The chart below shows the range of organisations interviewed in this study.



This chart gives a graphic representation of what each organisation is.

The pink marks represent whether the organisation is a family or non-family enterprise, the greens represent the size, the blue represents the type of business, and the yellow indicates which organisation has start-up characteristics.

1.3 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: PEOPLE

Organisations must establish a competitive advantage in order to survive. In the growing global economy, arguably the only thing a company can do to differentiate itself is through its people (Chaston *et al.*, 1999; Birdthistle, 2006), who can learn faster than others in order to adjust to their ever-changing environment (DeGuess, 1988 & Woodruff, 1977). Knowledge is your organisation's most valuable resource according to Birdthistle (2008), but Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) and Zheng (2009) insist that employees are potentially the biggest competitive advantage. If employees are your biggest competitive advantage then ensuring that they stay in your organisation is vital. This project is concerned with turnover and how it impacts the food industry, which has yet to be studied in Dublin.

1.4 OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION

This paper will start with a literature review to highlight what research has been done in relation to turnover, job satisfaction, and learning techniques and cultures. It will identify gaps in the literature and further demonstrate how this study's research will contribute to current literature around similar themes. The methodology sections of this paper will review the research method used for this study and the process of finding and analysing information. Themes will be discussed in five chapters: Turnover, Turnover Intention, Job Satisfaction, Learning Experiences, and Learning Cultures. Each chapter will provide an overview of the questions posed, the findings, and analysis. Each chapter will conclude with theories about the relevant theme in the industry. This paper will conclude with a restatement of the relevant findings and a call for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter will discuss the theories behind turnover intention. It will examine its causes and consequences and suggest why managing turnover should be a concern for employers in the food sector, not just the knowledge industry. With experience employees gain specialist, operational (Kim, 1993) and tacit knowledge (Garengo *et al.*, 2005), they become competent, and become the competitive advantage (Armstrong and Mahmud, 2008). However, employees only become valuable if organisations are able to retain them. Turnover and retention are important because if employees leave, the organisation then loses its main competitive advantage, its people and their knowledge, to other organisations.

2.2 TURNOVER

Turnover rates are inversely correlated to retention rates and as retaining people allows the organisation to establish a competitive advantage reducing turnover rates is important. Poor retention affects business performance (O'Neal, 1998; Egan *et al.*, 2004) as the organisation can suffer financial costs, a loss of knowledge and productivity, jeopardised customer service, and a failure to meet demand, which in turn jeopardises competitive advantage (Blomme *et al.*, 2010; Hughes & Rogue, 2008). Turnover was a concern in the hotel industry (Deery & Shaw, 1999), but how is it affecting current businesses in Dublin's food sector?

2.3 TURNOVER INTENTION

While turnover rates show performance related consequences, the discussion of turnover intention, the deliberate intention of the employee to leave the organisation (Egan *et al.*, 2004), investigates the causes (Lee-Kelly *et al.*, 2007). The food industry has typically high turnover rates, and in an economy where SMEs are currently fire-fighting to survive (Birdthistle, 2006) taking the pressure off constantly replacing and retraining staff might help these organisations to progress to pro-active planning instead of reactive fire-fighting.

Job Satisfaction

Organisations should look to reduce turnover intention by looking at its causes. There are two primary contributors to turnover intention: job satisfaction and culture. Although Mitchell *et al.* (2001) argue that job embeddedness is the most effective measure of turnover intention, job satisfaction has continued to be used in more recent studies, as it has an inverse relationship with turnover intention (Egan *et al.*, 2004; MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010; Medina, 2012).

Culture

Certain cultures can also reduce turnover intention. Although Sheridan (1992) only finds a weak link between culture and turnover, controlling culture can greatly impact turnover retention (Medina, 2012; Deery and Shaw, 1999), especially if it is a learning culture (Egan *et al.*, 2004). Birdthistle (2006) has researched learning organisations in SME's in Ireland, but as of yet no inductive research has been done to find out how employers perceive learning and why it is important in the food sector.

2.4 JOB SATISFACTION

Job Satisfaction is consistently inversely related to turnover intention and therefore needs to be considered carefully. Job satisfaction is affected by working atmosphere, rewards, job content, opportunities, and connectedness to the organisation (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010; Blomme *et al.*, 2010; Deery & Shaw, 1999; Egan *et al.*, 2004), but does job satisfaction matter in this low-skill industry? This review will look at contributing causes to job satisfaction that have been found in other industries: rewards and opportunities, learning experiences and learning culture.

2.4.1 COMFORT

Job satisfaction is highly correlated with the working environment. MacIntosh and Doherty (2010) define the environment by the atmosphere and qualify by how happy and fun it is. Deery and Shaw (1999) and Medina (2012) judge the health of the environment by its provisions of clear expectations. Sheridan (1992), however takes a different approach and simply categorises the environment as social or task-based. Lee-Kelley *et al.* (2007) include these differing perceptions of environment in the inclusive term "comfort," taking a personal perspective on a positive environment as one that is happy, healthy, and

social. Despite the variety of suggestions around the idea of environment and atmosphere, studies agree that ensuring comfort in a job increase job satisfaction and therefore indirectly reduce turnover intention. Is the idea of comfort taken into account by managers in this industry, and do they think that it matters for staff on minimum wage?

2.4.2 REWARDS

Rewards also affect job satisfaction, turnover rates, and turnover intention. The total compensation scheme is composed of relational and transactional rewards (O'Neal, 1998). Relational rewards consist of learning and development or personal opportunities. Gibbons (2006) argues that emotional attachment to the job creates commitment to the manager and the organisation that cannot be achieved through pay alone. However, while these relational benefits of the job may enhance the job, they do not make the job, financial rewards and pay must come first (O'Neal, 1998; Hughes & Rogue, 2008). In a low paying industry where total rewards are minimal how can organisations effectively compensate their staff?

Financial Rewards

There is a connection between job satisfaction and financial rewards in some industries, but possibly not in the service industry where wages are low. Financial rewards did not feature on the surveys in the hotel industry (Deery & Shaw, 1999) or the fitness industry (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010) nor were they significant in job satisfaction ratings in the Dutch hospitality industry (Blomme *et al.*, 2010). If the financial rewards are not recognised as important by employees in this sector, then employers may need to focus on the relational rewards that Gibbons (2006) argues are more important than the financial rewards.

Opportunities/ Non-Financial Rewards

Opportunities for development and personal challenge contribute to job satisfaction. O'Neal (1998) calls these relational rewards, but they are in fact more than that because they are opportunities for employees to develop personally and to grow within the company. Increasing investment in learning and development opportunities not only increases the job satisfaction of the employees, but also the productivity and profitability of the organisation (Egan *et*

al., 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 2003). By investing in development the employer will get a short-term reward of increased productivity and profitability, but also a long-term reward as the knowledgeable employee is more likely to stay. Furthermore, recognising employees who stay creates a feeling of pride and connection to the organisation (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010; Deery, 1999), which in turn will increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention. How do employers see investments in their staff, is the lack of investment a cause of high turnover, or high turnover a cause of low investment?

Employees also look for personal challenges and get greater job satisfaction from more interesting work (Blomme *et al.*, 2010). Senge (1997) supports the notion that employees want challenges and should have a wider vision of what they do in the organisation. Providing both opportunities for personal development and challenges to employees can affect both short-term and long-term return on investment. In the short-term the employee is able to do more for the organisation, and in the long-term the employee's job satisfaction may remain high enough to reduce their turnover intention.

Employees must be challenged in order to be satisfied in work (Lee-Kelley *et al.*, 2007), but they must be prepared for the work, through training (Cooke, 2001), and they must be supported, and then rewarded when successful (Blomme *et al.*, 2010). Leadership is now crucial, as employers must be able to develop the skills, set the challenges, and reward the outcomes to keep employees engaged. Leadership directly affects performance (Marsick & Watkins, 2003), which makes their strategies of setting challenges doubly crucial. Immediate performance is affected by the employee's ability to complete a challenge, and long-term performance is affected by their experience in completing the challenge. In both cases the job satisfaction of the employee is in the balance. The literature provides some insight into what other industries may be able to offer their employees, but the difficulty in this industry is that jobs are low skilled and task-based, and not full of challenges.

2.4.3 LEARNING EXPERIENCES

All employees will unconsciously learn on the job, but the learning opportunities and support provided will determine the value of learning in the

organisation and affect the job satisfaction of the employee. Learning can be a means to improve performance; it can be formal, informal, or a combination of the two.

Formal training is valuable as learning is often unnoticed by individuals who perceive learning and skill development to only come from formal training. Formal training can include selective mentoring systems, which allow for on-going learning (Hagemann & Stroope, 2013) and can result in tangible increases in productivity and efficiency (Clutterbuck, 2010). However, teaching is only effective if the teacher is able to communicate in a way that the student can understand (Armstrong and Mahmud, 2008). A poor match in learning styles means skills, values and knowledge may not get passed on (Hale, 2000) and neither participant will derive satisfaction from the task (Egan *et al.*, 2004), which is why employers look for personality matches as well as technical matches. As Evans (1998) identifies, the willingness and ability to learn is just as important as the training scheme itself. Both participants will only be satisfied if they are willing to learn and have been able to learn.

Organisations may also choose to provide specialist training (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). The benefit with this training scheme is that the learner may become the trainer and double loop learning will occur (Chaston *et al.*, 1999). Although Ayas (1996) would argue that double loop learning is not always as beneficial for some organisations as it is for others, it does allow employees to use and demonstrate their knowledge, therefore increasing job satisfaction (Egan *et al.*, 2004; Blomme *et al.*, 2010). Evans (1998) and Örtenblad (2002) rebut the universal use of formal training, as it is only successful when there is a culture for learning and learning is integrated in the daily working lives of the employees.

Individuals will learn on the job and this informal learning method is equally, if not more valuable than formal learning schemes (Örtenblad, 2002), especially in SMEs (Birdthistle, 2006). Knowledge acquisition is the first stage of learning and is achieved through experiential learning, vicarious learning and information acquisition (Huber, 1991). Experiential learning is inclusive and integrated (Garengo *et al.*, 2005); it develops tacit and explicit knowledge

(Örtenblad, 2007 & Kim, 1993) through experience (Kim, 1993), practice, and trial and error (Pedler *et al.*, 1997). Birdthistle (2008) argues that informal learning through doing is preferable for organisations that have limited resources however, Blomme *et al.* (2010) critiques the use of such informal learning experiences as there is no clarity in the tasks and there can be only a limited sense of achievement when goals have not been established.

Vicarious learning is gaining second hand knowledge through mimicry (Huber, 1991) and the sit-by-Nellie approach (Mumford, 1992). Wain (cited in Gold *et al.*, 2010) critiques this approach, as bad habits are as likely to be picked up as good ones, making this an undesirable learning intervention. In order to increase job satisfaction the employee must learn, and be rewarded for that learning (Pedler *et al.*, 1997). If the employee does as they are taught and is not recognised or rewarded because they were poorly taught, and while the employee may feel personal satisfaction, they will not receive recognition. This research is interested in how employers enable and invest in learning and training opportunities for their staff.

2.5 CULTURE

2.5.1 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

What is organisational culture and how does it impact employee job satisfaction? Culture, according to Cameron and Freeman (1985) is an organisational structure that is based on dominant attributes, leadership style, bonding and strategic emphasis. Garengo *et al.* (2005) add that it is dependent on the personality of the owner, the industry, and the speed at which they respond to change. The further categorisation of culture into hierarchies, markets, adhocracies, and clans leaves no room for the fire-fighting culture of SMEs (De Gues, 1988 & Hudson *et al.*, 2001 & Birdthistle, 2006), the turnover culture that is prevalent in the hotel industry (Deery & Shaw, 1999), or the learning cultures that Egan *et al.*, (2004) claim will reduce turnover intention. This project is primarily concerned with determining whether organisations are adopting learning cultures and how they are creating and taking advantage of them.

2.5.2 LEARNING AND CULTURE

Sharing information is important for increasing job satisfaction, but in order for information to be distributed the organisation must support learning (Pedler *et al.*, 1997) at the individual, group, and organisational level (Dixon, 1992) before organisational learning can occur (Örtenblad, 2002). As Birdthistle (2006) argues, organisational culture is important because it can help employees recognise their own knowledge and the need for that knowledge to be shared. When employees have that opportunity to share information, then they are contributing to the organisation, which in itself develops a sense of pride and an achievement (Deery & Shaw, 1999) that drives satisfaction at work. This study will look at employee contribution and retention in the food sector.

The evidence of learning suggests that the learning culture of an organisation helps retention, which improves efficiency and productivity, which increases tacit knowledge, which helps flexibility, adaptability, customer satisfaction and survival (Evans, 1998; Egan *et al.*, 2004). As Egan *et al.*, (2004) posit the benefits of a learning culture are two-fold, but do organisations in the food industry require and benefit from the same investments as the knowledge industry?

2.6 LEARNING ORGANISATION

The learning organisation has many different definitions, but many authors see the learning organisation as fundamental to the survival of the firm (Örtenblad, 2002). Some of the authors define the learning organisation by its capability, as it; increases job satisfaction (Lee-Kelley *et al.*, 2007) through learning (Kim, 1993), reduces turnover intention (Egan *et al.*, 2004), and increases tacit knowledge as it is handed down (Cook and Brown, 1999). The visionaries include Senge's (1997) image of an organisation that uses generative learning to create the future, and Mumford's (1992) and Örtenblad's (2002) image of the learning organisation that moves learning from the individual to the collective and to the organisation itself. The learning organisation is crucial to survival because it improves performance directly (Pedler *et al.*, 1997) and indirectly through increasing job satisfaction to reduce turnover intention, therefore increasing competitive advantage and performance in the long-term.

How does an organisation become a learning organisation? Garavan (2007), Evans (1998), and Örtenblad (2007) all argue that management support and drive creates the learning organisation. However, Garvin *et al.* (2008) contends that you need more than management backing to ensure that learning is fully adopted. The organisation must empower workers (Egan *et al.*, 2004) to be able to take initiative for their own learning (Evans, 1998; Pedler & Aspinwall, 1998). Employees must also be motivated to transfer learning to other employees, and this culture will increase job satisfaction (Egan *et al.*, 2004). Company culture must indoctrinate leaning into the individual and the organisation's culture so that the work becomes interpersonal, even if it is task-based. Creating a culture that values relationships will help increase retention of the high performers (Sheridan, 1992).

Despite the fact that so many authors write about the benefits of learning and learning organisations there is considerable evidence to show that SMEs will not invest in becoming a learning organisation (Chaston *et al.*, 1999) and that family SMEs in Ireland are not learning organisations (Birdthistle & Flemming, 2005). It has been deduced that limited resources prevent investment in training (Birdthistle, 2006). However, these studies, while providing valuable backgrounds do not reflect the challenges that current businesses in Dublin face. Interviewing managers and owners of family and non-family firms may give more in-depth results as to why developing a learning culture that can ensure the survival of the firm is not capitalised upon when informal learning and culture development is not costly.

2.7 CONCLUSIONS AND A CALL FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Turnover intention is important because of its impact on turnover rates, which directly affects performance. Previous studies have demonstrated this correlation, but have not investigated the causes in the food sector. Job satisfaction and culture are contributors to turnover intention, and this study intends to find out what contributes to job satisfaction and how learning cultures are developing in this sector.

Birdthistle (2008) called for more research to be done around the area of retention on family and non-family firms in Ireland. Studies of job satisfaction

have been primarily done in the knowledge workers sector, and as the demographic differs significantly research in the food sector would contribute to the literature. Although some research has looked at the hospitality sector (Deery & Shaw, 1999; Hughes & Rogue, 2008; Blomme *et al.*, 2010) and the fitness industry (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010) these studies have all taken a deductive survey based approach to find out specific relationships, but there is no discussion of why management have made any of their staffing decisions or how they have managed the consequences of high turnover. Additionally some crucial questions were missing from surveys, as indicated with the studies on gyms and hotels, there were no questions asked about financial rewards. A qualitative study could contribute to the research as to what really causes turnover intention and to find out how managers and small business owners in this sector in Dublin manage their business when their employees do not intend to stay.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research objective for this study was to do a qualitative holistic study of how organisations specifically in Dublin's food service business approach the issue of turnover and to discuss the techniques that they use to retain the staff they hire. The reason for selecting the food service industry was because of a lack interview based research done on the industry itself and because demographics impact each industry differently (Egan *et al.*, 2004; Medina, 2012).

The first sub-objective is to find out whether turnover is a concern in this industry and what its consequences are. Turnover is a concern in the knowledge industry as leaving employees are both costly in terms of money and knowledge (Lee-Kelly *et al.*, 2007), but are the costs as great in the food sector, or have businesses adjusted their expectations to keep up with a constantly changing roster? Job satisfaction affects turnover intention, and previous studies have used quantitative analysis to form conclusions on its causes. There is little analysis on why managers think employees are dissatisfied, or on how they have taken steps to change this.

The second sub-objective was to find out why people stay. Limited surveys have linked job satisfaction to retention (Medina, 2012; Egan *et al.*, 2004). These surveys have used deductive reasoning to suggest possible contributors to job satisfaction (Deery & Shaw, 1999), but these have been limited depending on the study's objectives (Blomme *et al.*, 2010; MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010). While the studies were able to rank causes of turnover, they did not find out how organisations managed the causes of turnover intention, or whether they were worth managing.

The third sub-objective of this proposal is to find out how employees in this industry learn and why the techniques used should be replicated or avoided. Although family firms are invested in their employees (Schwass *et al.*, 2010), they do not typically invest in training, which is becoming a more serious concern in today's global economy (Birdthistle, 2006). Employees find it hard to

recognise their own development or knowledge through informal learning techniques unless there is an active learning culture in the organisation (Tseng, 2010), so formal training is a more obvious recognition of investment. However, as SMEs generally have fewer resources than larger firms they are more unlikely to invest in formal training (Hudson *et al.*, 2001) as it is considered a long-term investment that is not worthwhile.

Studies done by Egan *et al.* (2004) and Blomme *et al.* (2010) show that turnover intention is lower when there are learning and training opportunities. How do organisations in the food industry reconcile the costs and the benefits of training, and are any organisations changing how they approach learning and investment in their employees in this economy? What training initiatives are used, and how are they justified?

The final sub objective is to understand how firms identify their culture and whether any of them are trying to promote a learning culture. The learning culture helps increase retention (Marsick & Watkins, 2003) and the employer must lead by example in setting this working environment (Garavan, 2007; Garvin *et al.*, 2008). This study aims to find out how organisations define their culture and why employers will or will not invest in establishing a learning culture.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 ORIGINAL RESEARCH OBJECTIVES-ORGANISATION 1

The initial intention of this project was to complete a single case study on a specific large family organisation in the food industry. The objective of the research was to find out how this organisation approached learning and development from a management perspective. The objectives were to find out why some costly investments were made in training and development in some areas and why no training or development was provided in others. Staff turnover is quite high in this organisation, and the research would uncover how management decides when and where to invest money given high turnover at all levels, and how the organisation is so successful despite its lack of training in crucial areas.

4.2 REASONS FOR THE CASE STUDY

Case studies are good to use when you want to analyse a variety of different resources and to combine them all into a single report on the company (Yin, 2009). The qualitative nature of a case study allows for empirical research to be done so that the researcher can become intensely knowledgeable about the case and its implications (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Case studies also focus on the 'how' and the 'why' which is what this project is interested in (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The case study is the strongest approach, as it will help determine why the organisation invests in formal training, and not in informal training and how they are so successful despite these inconsistencies and high turnover rates. Furthermore, as the company is so successful it could provide a model for other organisations.

4.3 CRITICISMS FOR THE CASE STUDY

No research method is perfect, but there are specific criticisms of case studies given by Yin (2009) and Baxter & Jack (2008), which the researcher must acknowledge before drawing conclusions.

1. Honesty: Due to the fact that a number of people are being investigated from the same organisation there may be a bias towards the company.

2. Reflexivity: Be aware of how questions are formed and how they are answered, as with any study the questions need to be neutral and allow the respondent to answer independently. Respondents may talk about the interview amongst themselves and later interviewees may already have an idea of the answers they should provide.
3. Sample: As this research will start with a member of headquarters and snowball from there the responses may not accurately indicate all perspectives of 'how' and 'why' the organisation acts the way it does.
4. Time constraints: According to Stake (2013) the case study requires the equivalent of a part-time job for at least half a year. As this time was not available, the depth of the study was going to be limited.

4.4 NON-COMPLETION

This case study was not completed because an important contact in the organisation left the business in the spring along with the connection to the employers at headquarters. Phone calls, messages, and emails to senior management all went unanswered. Not wanting to participate in a study about retention and their investment in their staff is an interesting finding in itself. As a case study was the most effective way of looking at retention plans and performance another organisation was contacted.

4.5 NEW RESEARCH OBJECTIVES-ORGANISATION 2

The objectives for this organisation were broader as no preconceptions of this organisation had been formed at a personal level (Yin, 2009). According to another business owner this SME had a very unique approach to training staff in the food industry, so this research was going to be more exploratory and inductive. The first interview completed at the end of June, the follow up questions would be for his operations director and his manager. Despite agreements to conduct further interviews, in mid-July he decided that he actually did not want any of his staff interviewed. Once again this was an interesting finding, that business owners and senior managers do not want their companies studied.

4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN-QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The research carried out was done using qualitative analysis in the form of interviewing. This type of research is interested in “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences,” (Merriam, 2014, p. 5). As Fournier *et al.* (1998) suggest qualitative research may be better than quantitative research when the research is looking for new answers to why something happens and to uncover how organisations can change and adapt. The primary advantage of the face-to-face interview is in the colour and the spontaneity of the responses, which cannot be achieved through questionnaires (Oppenheim, 1966). Qualitative research such as interviews are insightful and focus on explanations of “why” and “how,” (Becker, 1998) allowing for a fluid stream of inquiries (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) that permit the interviewer to be flexible in their questioning (Oppenheim, 1966).

This research has attempted a constructivist approach, assuming that reality is socially constructed (Yin, 2009), which is similar to interpretive research where the researcher will construct knowledge from a collection of experiences (Merriam, 2014). Social reality is constructed from experience and findings will be the results of individual experiences in their own social setting. This view of phenomenology, as a branch of constructivism really emphasises that knowledge comes from experiences, but the researcher must assign meaning to them in order to understand them (Merriam, 2014). Interviews will allow the researcher to gather experiences and interpret their meaning.

4.7 RESEARCH SETTING

The new research for this thesis was done over the course of a month, as stated previously denied access to other proposals caused a substantial delay. The respondents interviewed were not given much advance notice of the meetings. Although employers had less time to think about how they might portray their business, some respondents appeared flustered starting their interviews.

4.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data are pieces of information that the researcher has interest in, and in qualitative research the data are words (Merriam, 2014). Data will be collected

from interviews, and it will be the collection of words, feelings, and observations, as it is about watching as much as listening. Interviews are the primary sources, but two documents were also provided as visual aids. The documents were not requested, but they are still a form of data that has been collected and used as supporting documentation for their corresponding interviews.

4.9 SELECTING A SAMPLE

The sample was selected through non-probability sampling. Elite interviewing was chosen as the method of selection and so purposive and snowball sampling was used (Merriam, 2014). The first interview was done through snowball sampling, as it was initially difficult to find an organisation that was interesting enough to do a case study on. I then further selected organisations based on connections to owners or managers. In a sense convenience sampling was also used, as the organisations were not of any particular type. There is a good overall representation of food businesses in Dublin, but this is not a sample of comparable organisations.

4.10 INTERVIEWING

Interviewing was chosen as it would find out why turnover is so important and how employers manage it in this industry. Dexter (2006) supports interviewing as the best tactic if it will gather more information and better information at the lowest cost to the researcher. Dexter (2006) also specifies that elite interviewing can provide better information and provide better outcomes for the researcher, as the higher up a respondent sits they become real contributors and not just informants. He additionally argues that standard interviewing looks for answers to questions within a pre-supposed framework. Arguably then a survey could be used instead, and the interview is then no longer the best tactic. Dexter (2006, p. 19) defines elite interviewing,

The interviewer is willing, and often eager to let the interviewee teach him what the problem, the question, the situation is—to the limits, of course, of the interviewer's ability to perceive relationships to his basic problems, whatever those may be.

Interviewing the elite is desirable in this study as the objectives are to uncover whether there are perceived people problems in their businesses and to see how business strategies have uncovered problems and gone on to resolve them. Although the scope of this study is largely focused on training and learning opportunities, the objectives of the research were for the respondent to identify the challenges in their business and their current situation in regards to training and retention. Interviews will be recorded and then transcribed.

4.11 INTERPRETATION

The reason that a researcher may chose to interview over a quantitative approach is because of the opportunity to interpret the data in the way that they have understood it (Merriam, 2013). Interview interpretation is full of dangers as the interview itself can be influenced by environment and the nature of the respondent (Dexter, 2006), and because of the tendency of the researcher to make false assumptions that appear perfectly rational (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Respondents have chosen their interview location and time and the questions are semi-structured to help ensure that data is collected equally.

Once the interviews are transcribed open coding will be used to sort the data thematically into conceptual units, which will then be grouped together into broader categories (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Coding allows for comparison between interviews and provides a way of making equal comparisons across qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). Analysis and interpretation will be done individually for each research question, and triangulation with additional sources of information will be included where possible.

Triangulation will be also used when the two additional documents add meaning to the study (Stake, 2013) and reinforce or contradict the validity of the data that has been collected (Merriam, 2013). Notes from the two additional documents will be used to validate results.

4.12 CODING

Coding helps the researcher to analyse the data and to make comparisons (Mayring, 2004). Open coding is used, not so much to search for similarities, but to be able to categorise data into units that can be deciphered and interpreted

(Mayring, 2004). The first step of coding is referred to as open coding, which requires that the researcher go through the transcripts line by line and select important points from the data. Mayring (2004) suggests that basic questions of who, what, when, how, and why are asked in order for the researcher to avoid the dangers of summarising and to help them critically think about the answers that have been provided. These categories can be numerous during the first stages of coding, and the more that is coded the more obvious it will be that some categories stand up and others do not, Merriam (2013) even goes so far as to suggest that by the end of the analysis the researcher begins to take a deductive approach, searching for evidence to support their developing theories. In this study the answers to questions have been coded in Microsoft Excel so that the final results could be clearly seen. Coding is critiqued as a process that is very open to the investigator's interpretation and it is highly inductive (Merriam, 2013), and is also demanding on their creativity in their creation of codes and categories.

4.13 CODING FAMILIES

Further categorisation can be used to group codes together, these are called coding families and the process is sometimes referred to as axial coding (Mayring, 2004). Grounded theory can assist the researcher in drawing conclusions, but as Saunders *et al.* (2009) warn, the researcher must be careful not to jump to false conclusions. This process will be used to help draw conclusions if necessary.

4.14 HYPOTHESIS CREATION

No hypotheses were set at the outset of this project and as the research intended to be fully inductive the conclusions must be drawn from the results of coding. As Merriam (2013) suggests data analysis should be done during the research, not just after it, as data is collected and coded conclusions can start to be drawn. As soon as there is so much data that a deductive approach is taken, that is when the researcher has achieved saturation (Merriam, 2013). This project was not extensive enough for data saturation, but conclusions were drawn from the data created by the codes. These conclusions are taken from an inductive study and so are subject to critique.

4.15 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The method of which the researcher conducts the study will determine the validity of the study to the reader (Merriam, 2013). The reliability of the study is categorised by how trustworthy the study is. A reliable study acknowledges the biases of the researcher (Merriam, 2013). As a researcher and a sports coach, concluding that training and learning in an organisation improves retention, job satisfaction, and overall business performance is desirable. The results may want to see validate training as an HR activity, and may be subconsciously searched for in the transcripts. The validity and reliability of the results should be used with qualitative data, but their use in terms of qualitative studies is debateable as the research is done from the perspective of the researcher and their experience as the researcher is valid (Bush, 2002). Instead, qualitative research should ask about the authenticity of the research, in line with the constructivist and phenomenology approach, conclusions drawn should come from authentic research and should reflect the authentic experience of the researcher.

4.16 ETHICS

There are few ethical considerations for this study. Confidentiality must be respected, as organisations are being asked about how they do business and may not want that information shared. All respondents signed a confidentiality agreement before the interview, permitting me to use a Dictaphone and transcribe the information for academic purposes only, and to code all personal information. Finally, as the interviewee is providing valuable information to academic literature, copies of the results and the project were offered to organisations.

4.17 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study are great. As respondents represent various types of organisations within the food business, results can be drawn from a holistic perspective, but comparisons between types of firms cannot be made. There are also limitations in the research itself as a combination of management and owners were interviewed. As all of these respondents had quite varying roles and investments in the business, the responses may not be entirely accurate reflections.

4.18 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is still a need to do case study research on how an organisation has developed and implemented its retention strategy. There is only so much information that can be given by management about their people strategies in the organisation, but as turnover intention is what is important, the managers, supervisors, and employees themselves need to be interviewed about their own turnover intention and their views on why they are still in the organisation and what the organisation can provide that will keep them there. As both attempts at completing this study failed a researcher might need to take a different approach in accessing business owners in order to carry out their research. The denial of access has in itself demonstrated that business owners may not want their employees asked about why they are still working in the business and thinking about what the organisation has or has not offered them.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 DATA COLLECTION

This chapter frames how the following three chapters will be outlined. Each research objective and theme will comprise a separate chapter and the results, analysis, and conclusions will be drawn for each theme, instead of showing all the results, and then doing all of the analysis. This set up will help with the clarity of the analysis of each theme.

Data was collected using seven semi-structured interviews. The relevant research questions used in the interviews will be provided in each chapter. Two business owners provided documents that supported their training plans. Due to the time constraints of the project only seven respondents were interviewed. The charts below best show the variety of organisations studied. The steps for data collection are outlined below.

1. Data Collection: I recorded seven 45-60 minutes interviews using a Dictaphone. In two instances respondents showed me supporting documents.
2. Transcribing: I transcribed all interviews on Microsoft Word, totalling over a 20,000-word count.
3. Revision and Division: I re-read the interviews to find common themes, then grouped responses to the same theme together.
4. Open Coding: I entered the words, phrases, and points that struck me into individual cells in Microsoft Excel, added memos, and started coding.
5. Analysis and Conclusions: I analysed the data using visual representations of the data and then compared my findings to the current literature.

5.2 ISSUES DURING ANALYSIS

The findings are impacted by the fact that the first interview was for a case study, not a holistic study. Although the interview was still able to provide adequate information for the revised project the question design is not ideal. Further interview questions were based on this first set of questions, but they adapted as the interviews progressed.

The interviews are grouped by respondent type, the first three respondents are managers, and the final four are business owners. Because of the variety of respondents, their business types, sizes and ownership no comparison studies can be done. Analysis has been carried out holistically, looking at overall trends and visual data has been produced to show the organisation's individual perspective on each theme. While this reduces the contribution to the literature the study does provide an insight into the changes that business owners are making when it comes to staffing.

Each chapter shall follow the same structure of five sections.

1. Introduction: Research question and concerns based on literature.
2. Questions: Interview questions asked in relation to the research question.
3. Coding and Analysis: Visual data and analysis of the data.
4. Discussion: Implications of the analysis and hypothesis creation.
5. Conclusions: Why this is important and what the next chapter will highlight.

Following these chapters a final conclusion will summarise the results of this study.

CHAPTER 6: TURNOVER -RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Turnover intention is important because it affects turnover rates and therefore affects retention. The first part of this research investigates how employers view staff turnover and why its consequences, if there are any are worth further investigation. A study done in the Dutch hospitality sector argues that turnover of educated staff causes the following problems: knowledge loss, financial costs as the person must be replaced, and personal costs as trust is lost (Blomme *et al.*, 2004). This study is done on the food industry in Ireland and is not restricted to the turnover of qualified (in service related degrees) staff, but is concerned about turnover of all staff.

This section of the study investigates the consequences of turnover. This section of the analysis will highlight whether turnover is important in this industry and why the consequences of high turnover should encourage business owners to change their strategies. The following chapter will further explore the underlying reasons why employees leave these organisations.

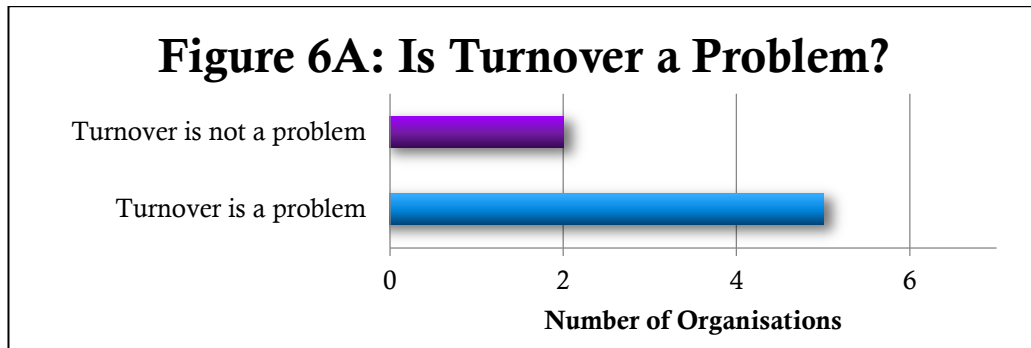
6.2 QUESTIONS ASKED

Q1a. Tell me about turnover in your organisation. (Managers)

Q1b. Tell me about turnover in your organisation and how you approach it.
(Owners)

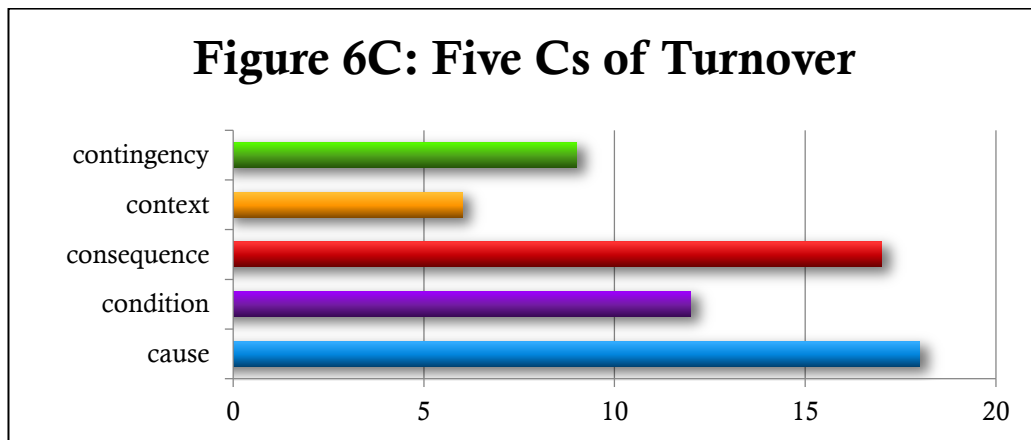
6.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

6.3.1 WHO IS CONCERNED WITH TURNOVER?



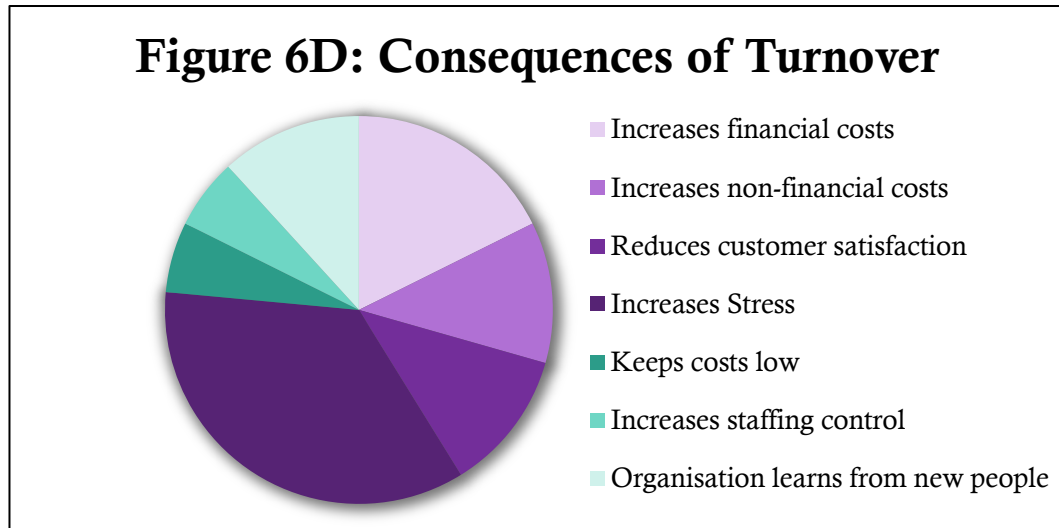
Five of seven respondents believed that turnover was a concern for their business, while two responded that it has not been a problem.

6.3.2 CODING



Initially open coding was used to categorise the responses, but there were so many responses that it was hard to separate the desired information. Grounded Theory and coding families were used, as Mayring (2004) suggests, to locate the consequences of turnover amongst the responses. This coding was done after open coding, but based on the statements themselves. Although this study is also interested in the causes, consequences will be looked at first because for this study to be able to contribute anything to the literature staff turnover needs to be considered a problem worth investigation.

Seventeen statements were originally categorised as either “problems” or “benefits,” however they are all consequences of turnover and should be viewed together allowing for a fuller analysis.



- Total: 17 statements about consequences of turnover
- Purple: 4 negative consequences
- Green: 3 positive consequences

6.3.3 CONSEQUENCES OF TURNOVER

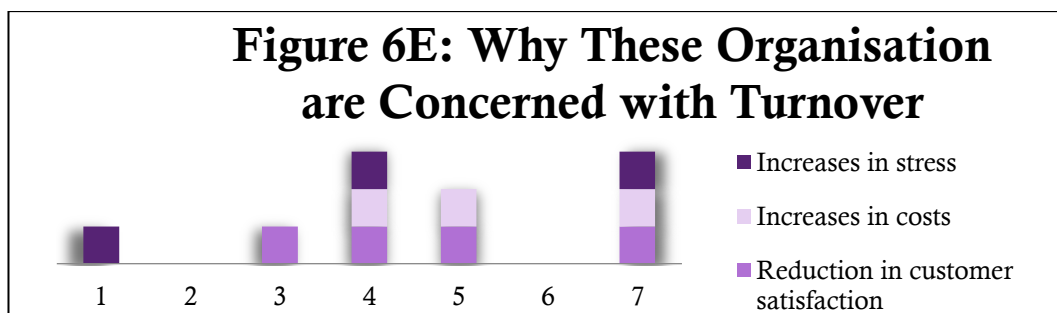
Positive Consequences

Respondents 2 and 6 cited positive consequences or benefits of turnover in their business. Costs stay low, as short-term staff does not get raises, and management have a lot of control over the quality of their staff through the use of temporary contracts for all employees (Respondent 2). If the organisation likes the employee they will ask them to come back, but staff always have to work hard to get another contract. Additionally high staff turnover in a creative industry means that the business is constantly learning new things from new staff as well as from staff who may have gone travelling and want to come back (Respondent 6). Sheridan’s (1992) study of hotels actually suggests that a high turnover culture might be better for this industry, but that it has to be controlled to only turnover weak performers, but to retain high performers. The concept of increased staffing control is supported by theory, but not by practice, as Sheridan (1992) does not provide a practical way to ensure that only high performers stay. Probation periods and short contracts are practical solutions that one organisation

uses successfully. This study is the first of its kind to show that turnover has the positive benefits of increased staffing control, and organisational learning opportunities.

Negative Consequences

The four negative consequences (in purple) include the reduction in customer satisfaction, increased stress levels, increased financial costs, and increased non-financial costs. O’Neal (1998) and Blomme *et al.*, (2010) support the findings that there are huge financial and non-financial costs to a business if turnover is high. The consequences of high turnover cause reductions in performance and in competitive advantage, and given that some businesses have highlighted costs as a concern, trying to reduce them is worth the investigation.



The data from respondents who believed turnover to be a problem was recoded into three main groups. Respondents have broadly identified three negative consequences of turnover: reduction of customer satisfaction, increased stress for current staff and management, and increased costs. In fact all of these issues affect each other and affect the business’s bottom line. Each organisation listed a different combination of concerns; these are displayed in the chart above.

Three Major Consequences

Increased stress is not something that often comes up in studies about turnover, but in fact it is a very relevant concern in this industry when quite often the same person does all the hiring, firing, training, and managing. High turnover can cause a lot of extra work and therefore extra stress. Pollitt (2006) found in his study of management training that managers were able to ensure a more productive and efficient workforce if they could reduce their own levels of stress. The three respondents who cited stress as a consequence do all the recruitment work, and a lot of the training work on top of any business

management duties. Staffing is considered a “nightmare” and the “worst part of this business” (Respondent 7), if this is true then what are the solutions to staffing? Stress has affected three respondents personally and they have all found that it has had negative affects on their performance. Some employers have fewer responsibilities when it comes to managing recruitment and new hires because of the size of their organisation (Respondent 3) and their organisational set up, which places the responsibility on someone else’s shoulders (Respondent 5).

However both of these respondents cited concern with reduced customer satisfaction. “It isn’t good to be changing faces all the time,” (Respondent 3), you start having “difficulties with customers, pissed off customers” (Respondent 5) and “I had to go around constantly checking that customers were OK” (Respondent 7). In an industry that is customer facing and where customers are loyal to staff as much as the product (Respondent 4) customer satisfaction is a huge concern and it is remarkable that only four organisations mentioned it. The literature has only linked job dissatisfaction to customer satisfaction (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010), but this finding suggests a direct link between staff turnover and poor customer service.

Businesses are also concerned about costs to their organisation, “there is an incalculable figure there” according to Respondent 5, and training new people is costly in terms of time, productivity, and in terms of mistakes that are made (Respondents 4 and 7). Blomme *et al.* (2010) support this finding, suggesting that the costs of replacing a co-worker are equal to 70% of an annual salary in the hospitality industry (degree qualified employees). There are obvious costs associated with high turnover, and but are the costs of reducing it enough to outweigh the consequences?

6.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES

Five of the seven organisations interviewed saw turnover as a concern. This research has not only validated the need for research to be done on turnover in the sector, but it has already provided new information. High staff turnover can in practice be achieved to increase staff quality, and high turnover can also be a silver lining for businesses who use new knowledge as their competitive

advantage. Additionally, turnover directly impacts customer satisfaction and increases stress.

Theory 1: There are positive consequences to high turnover for businesses that value the opportunity to learn and acknowledge that high turnover means high knowledge turnover and that means growth.

Theory 2: Turnover in the food sector not only increases both financial and non-financial costs to the business, but also reduces customer satisfaction, and increases stress.

6.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of these organisations view turnover as a critical problem in the industry that has impacted on their business performance and hindered their development and growth because the costs are so high. The results have found one additional positive consequence and two negative consequences of turnover in this sector. The next chapters will look at why people leave the organisation, why people stay, and solutions that some business owners have come up with to keep the staff they value.

CHAPTER 7: TURNOVER INTENTION- RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Turnover Intention is one of the main causes of turnover, and in the food sector this is no different. The previous chapter highlighted the consequences of high turnover rates for businesses in this sector. The literature suggests that employees leave because of low job satisfaction (Medina, 2012), but what does that mean in this industry? Job satisfaction is contributed to by financial and non-financial rewards (O’Neal, 1998), but in Ireland this sector is not expected to provide either. This chapter is interested in why employees leave when they are aware of the terms of the job before even applying.

7.2 QUESTIONS ASKED

Respondents discussed why they believe employees have left the business. The term “turnover intention” introduces bias, as the word, “intention” may influence employers to start thinking that their employees always had an intention to leave, when maybe they did not.

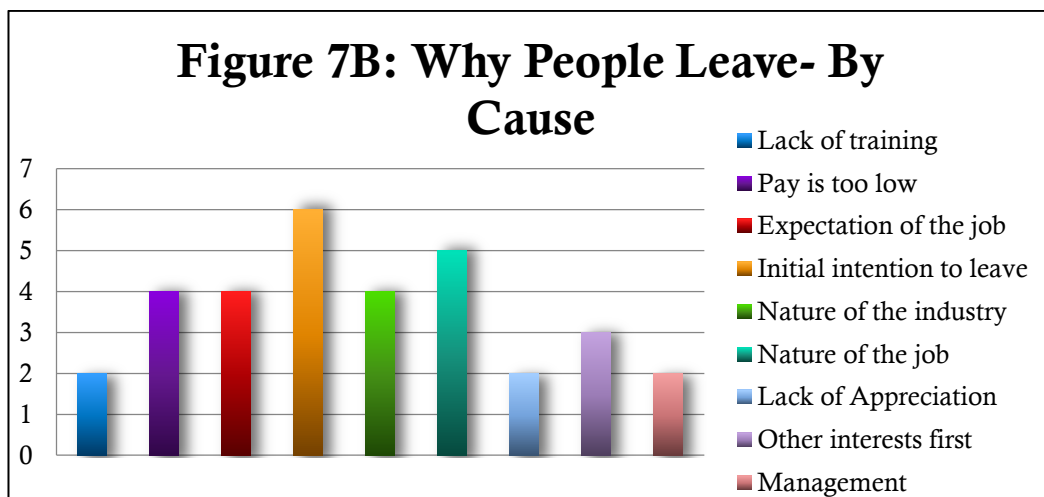
Q1. Why do people leave?

Respondents additionally answered this question when they talked about turnover and their own experiences in this industry. Respondents 1 and 7, in particular discussed their own experiences in the industry and both explained how they had started because it was a “means to an end.” Respondents were also asked to elaborate with their personal experiences, meaning that the responses may say more about the industry as a whole, rather than about the business itself.

7.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS



Although most responses came from answers to the primary question, some responses were located throughout the transcripts. The spontaneity of the answers, as Oppenheim (1966) suggests brings life to this study that cannot be achieved through questionnaires. Adding memos to codes helped to give meaning to the respondent's experience and categories have been created independently of the literature.



This chart is more helpful for analysis as it shows how many organisations cited each cause of turnover, and which causes should be looked at more closely.

Graphic representation of the reasons that each organisation provided for causes of turnover



Nature of the Industry

Respondents commented that the nature of the industry is one “where people are happy to move” (Respondent 4), where people “don’t see careers in the catering industry” (Respondent 5), and that staff come for a “quick bit of experience and that’s it” (Respondent 3). Working as a student is about “saving money” (Respondent 1) and not about the job or a career. This indicates that there is a clear preconception of the industry that managers and owners will have to fight against if they want to retain their staff. This is a significantly different issue that businesses in the knowledge sector do not have to fight against.

Initial Intention to Leave

Initial intention to leave was correlated with the concept that staff put other interests first. Most employees are inevitable leavers, as many employees have other priorities in their lives (Respondents 2, 3, 6, and 7). Three organisations found that a lot of their part-time staff are also artists, the ‘creative types,’ who want part-time work so they can pursue other interests. People put life first, and one business fully acknowledges that “life is the bigger picture, of course it is” and “your employee’s well-being and happiness is your responsibility,” (Respondent 6). This organisation is sorry to lose their staff, when they go, but they are also happy to see them move on. Passionate people will bring something new to the team, and their loss is made up for because someone else will come in with a different passion and the organisation will

continue to learn. Finding the silver lining is one way to manage the reality of staff turnover.

Students work in the business to pay their way through college, it is a “means to an end,” (Respondents 1 and 7) which unless the next stage is owning your own place or hospitality management, “who wants to be a waitress for life?” (Respondent 7) Students might be a necessary part of the business, because they cost less and work the necessary hours, but they inevitably leave, causing constant additional stress and costs to the business.

Respondent 5 provided a solution; students are necessary, but instead of losing the students that have already been trained, the organisation should provide them with opportunities to progress in a business ready to expand. This organisation has a long-term strategy, where employees are trained and ready for promotion when the organisation gets bigger. Therefore it is in the employee’s interest to help make the business grow because opportunities will present themselves. “Entry level is really tough,” but if you can keep those staff past entry level might just stay for a potential promotion, especially in today’s market where graduate jobs in the knowledge industry are scarce. No previous research has found that a significant contributor to staff turnover is the employee’s intention to leave the business from the moment they step in the door.

Nature of the Job

The nature of the job, or the type of job is not for everyone. Four respondents commented on the stressful and fast-paced nature of the business, which some employees cannot cope with. Hughes and Rogue (2008) argue that the nature of the job affects recruitment, but as Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) suggest the psychological contract is stronger and retention is increased when employees know what they are getting themselves into. Employers must make the nature of the jobs clear before employing people, helping to reduce the number of unsuitable candidates, and ensuring that the job does not fail to meet expectations.

Management

In the case of two companies the owners admitted that they were in part responsible for high turnover as chaos creates uncertainty about the job, and

people like “structure” (Respondent 7). Moreover, management are also taking responsibility for the health and happiness of their employees (Respondent 6), therefore allowing themselves to be direct causes of turnover intention. Good management is very important and is a concern that was not addressed in studies in the hospitality industry (Deery, 2008; Blomme *et al.*, 2010) the knowledge industry (Lee-Kelley *et al.*, 2007), or the fitness industry (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010). The importance of management in determining turnover intention is an important consideration for employers in this industry if they want to increase their staff retention.

Expectations of the Job

Some respondents also commented that employees seemed dissatisfied with the outcomes of their jobs. Three respondents commented that staff did not feel appreciated enough and were not financially awarded enough, given their duties, to continue the jobs. Two respondents also commented that employees were probably not trained well enough to do their jobs, which caused dissatisfaction and caused them to leave. Although MacIntosh and Doherty (2010) find that staff competency has little impact on job satisfaction or intention to leave, Lee-Kelley (2007) finds that challenge and comfort are important and if the challenge outweighs the comfort then job satisfaction is impacted. Expectations must be managed and employees need rewards, and need to be trained to be competent at their jobs in order for them to stay.

Lack of Training

Although lack of training was cited as a direct cause of turnover, it actually directly reduced job satisfaction, which then caused staff to leave. Respondent 1 said, “Staff struggled after a month or so when they realised they had not been properly trained.” During her own promotion so little was explained that she “hated it” because she felt so incompetent at her job. Both of these feelings lead to dissatisfaction with the job and caused intention to leave, and in some cases turnover. Lee-Kelley *et al.* (2007) supports this evidence with studies in the knowledge industry that although challenge in work is important this has to be accompanied by comfort in the job, which includes competency and manageable stress levels. However, the finding that only two organisations

out of seven believe a lack of training causes turnover contradicts findings in the literature, which highlight its importance.

Pay is too low

Low pay is also a predominant cause of turnover intention. Although Hughes and Rogue (2008) mention the point that emotional attachment to the job is more important than pay benefits of the job, and Blomme *et al.* (2010) add that affective commitment and intention to leave are highly correlated, O’Neal (1998) would maintain that without financial rewards affective commitment/emotional attachment are meaningless. Low pay is characteristic of this industry (Hughes and Rogue, 2008) and as Respondent 5 says, “we can’t pay the salaries of the bigger organisations,” but you can pay a premium and you can provide opportunities that reduce one of the causes of turnover.

7.3.1 AXIAL CODING: GROUPING CAUSES TOGETHER

1. Preconceptions of the industry: the nature of the industry causes an initial intention to leave and allows employees to put other interests first.
2. Conditions of the job: The nature of the job did not meet expectations (maybe because of management).
3. Outcomes of the job: The employee does not feel appreciated, pay is too low, and the employee is ill prepared to carry out the job.

7.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES

One of the objectives of this project was to determine the causes of job satisfaction. However, it is important to first look at the reasons why people are not satisfied as those are just as important as the reasons that people are.

Theory 3: Employees leave organisations in the food industry because they have never intended to stay, this is further compounded by poor job conditions and minimal outcomes.

Theory 4: Employers therefore have the additional challenge of changing the industry in order to reduce the intention of their employees to leave.

Theory 5: High staff turnover can be beneficial and employers can manage turnover by embracing it and finding opportunities to learn from their staff

Theory 6: Management is largely responsible for the workplace and directly contribute to job satisfaction and turnover intention of their employees.

7.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Employees leave jobs in this industry for three main reason: their preconceptions of the industry, the conditions of the job, and the outcomes of the job. The results showed that management can personally affect turnover retention, which has not been found in other industries, however further research is needed to validate this finding. The important finding here is that despite job satisfaction employees may have intended to leave the moment they stepped in the door because jobs are easy to get, easy to leave, and the opportunities elsewhere are bigger, better, and more rewarding. Given these disadvantages, why do employees stay?

CHAPTER 8: JOB SATISFACTION- RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The first sub-objective of this study was to find out why employees stay in these organisations. What do leaders believe contributes to job satisfaction? What do organisational leaders in the food industry believe keeps their employees working for them? This chapter will investigate three areas.

1. Retention and why employees stay.
2. Why employers offer rewards.
3. Why financial rewards and opportunities are worth the investment.

Job Satisfaction is inversely correlated with turnover intention (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010). Turnover intention is important because it affects turnover rates (Deery & Shaw, 1999) and therefore retention. Retention is important because it affects the organisation's performance (Sheridan, 1992; Egan *et al.*, 2004) and therefore its competitive advantage in the industry. Today's organisations must find a competitive advantage in order to be successful (Deshpandé *et al.*, 1993). This study asks how employers view their staff and whether they are valuable enough to invest in. How employers are keeping their employees engaged.

Job satisfaction is when the employee believes that the job has met their expectations (Egan *et al.*, 2004). Lee-Kelley *et al.* (2007), however found that job satisfaction is specifically contributed to by comfort, challenge, reward, and relationships with co-workers in the knowledge industry. This study has taken an inductive approach to find out what employers in this industry believe are contributing factors to job satisfaction.

This chapter will further investigate the rewards that are used in this industry as these findings were surprising. Finally the study will briefly look at how investments in staff have affected performance.

8.2 QUESTIONS ASKED

Managers were asked questions around the same topics, but their questions varied from person to person depending on their experiences.

Managers were asked to talk about the following topics:

1. Why people stay in the organisation.
2. Rewards offered.
3. Their own experiences in learning and hiring in the organisation.

Business owners were asked similar questions.

1. How do you make sure that people stay?
2. Do you reward your staff? And how would you do it?
3. How is this investment (in employees) valuable in a business sense?

8.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

8.3.1 RETENTION

The chart below is based on the number of responses to the question, “How do you retain staff in your organisation?”

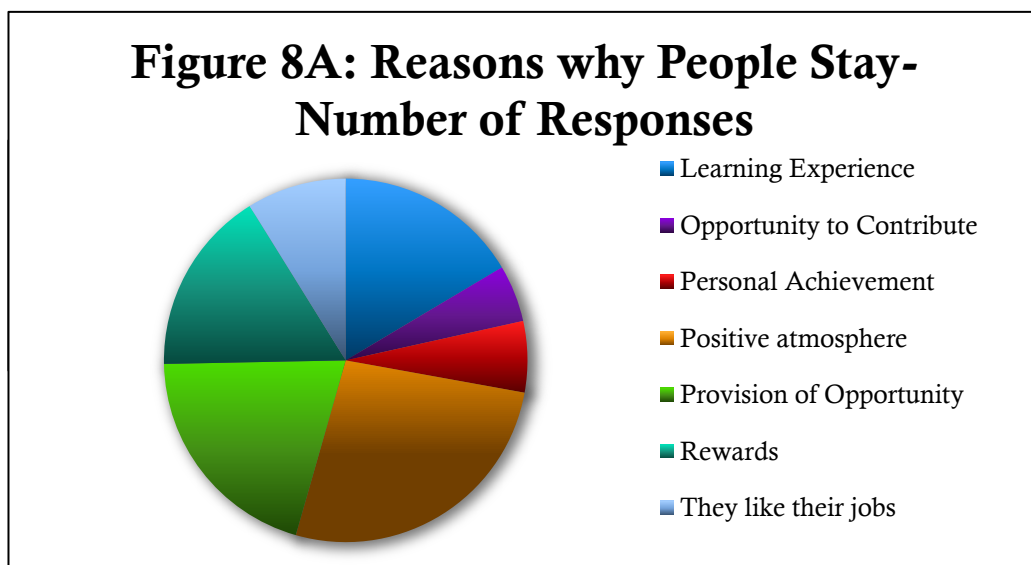
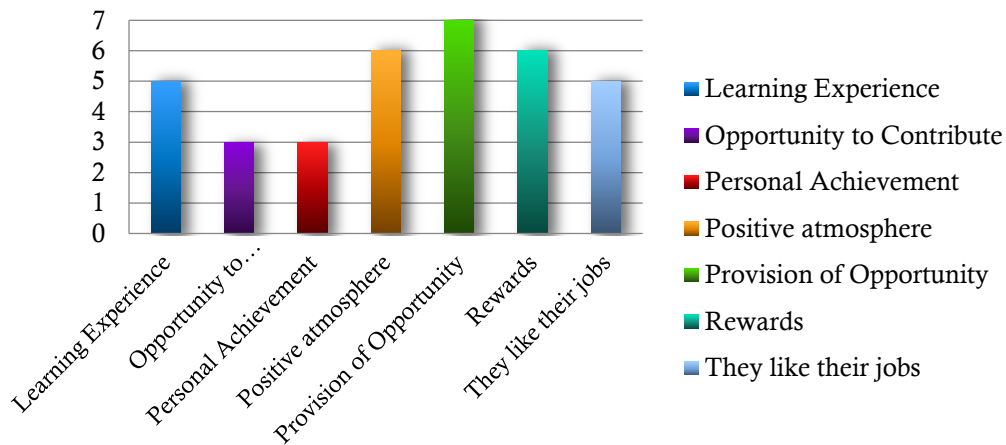
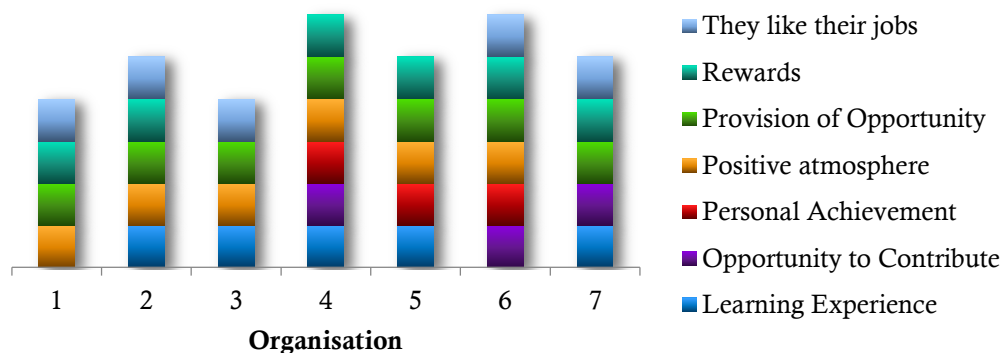


Figure 8B: Reasons Why People Stay-By Category



The chart above indicates how many organisations believed that these factors were contributors to why people stayed in the organisation.

Figure 8C: Reasons Why People Stay-By Organisation

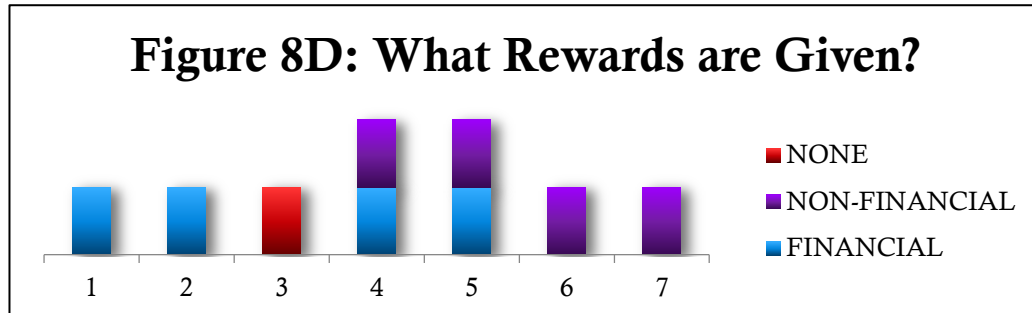


Provision of Opportunity

All organisations believed that the provision of opportunity was important. Respondent 5 presented a diagram of his organisation’s structure, which “allows everyone in the company to see how the business can expand all the time... you have to show people that this is a stepping stone and that you can progress.” This map includes a progression structure of positions that will develop as the business grows. When people can see the promotional

opportunities they are more likely to work hard for them. This finding contradicts some of the literature (knowledge industry), which emphasises that although rewards are important, promotion is not (Lee-Kelley *et al.*, 2007). Promotion is important in this sector, as there are few other benefits.

Rewards



Five out of seven organisations responded positively to the question, “Do you offer any rewards?” The answers were surprising, two organisations (1 and 5) started offering financial bonuses when they restructured. The bonuses are performance related, and are given frequently. Organisations (2 and 4) also offer financial bonuses, but they have always done this in relation to performance. While organisations 1 and 2 only give out individual bonuses to employees who have performed exceptionally well, organisations 4 and 5 distribute bonuses to all employees who have worked on the busy shift, or who have been working when a good review comes out. Although financial bonuses can motivate hourly paid staff (Deery, 2008), performance related pay schemes that reward individuals can hinder honest discussions about how the organisation can improve (Evans, 2001). While the bonuses may help with retention, they may not help with organisational learning or growth, and if the organisation is not growing then the opportunities within the organisation are limited, which affects turnover intention.

Only owners mentioned non-financial rewards such as flexibility, freedom, and learning opportunities. Providing staff freedom to manage their own areas (Respondent 7), to voice their ideas (Respondents 6), and to be able to take time off to pursue other interests whenever they need it (Respondent 6) has really helped not only retain staff, but has made them a “lot happier and a lot

more productive” in work (Respondent 6). Birdthistle (2006) found that SMEs in particular struggled with resources to reward staff, but today’s SMEs are finding ways to shift their resources to reward staff.

Learning Experiences

Finally, some employees stay because the organisation provides learning experiences. This includes the opportunity to learn skills, such as barista training or cooking experiences, but younger staff also stay because they want working experience with customers. Learning experiences will be further explored in Chapter 9.

Positive Atmosphere

Six out of seven organisations believe that a positive atmosphere increased retention and all respondents believe that their work environments are positive. “Positive atmosphere” contributes the largest number of responses on this chart, and this is because many things contribute to a positive atmosphere. One respondent became visibly happier when she talked about her relationships in work (Respondent 1), and another laughed to herself when she talked about the value of “banter” (Respondent 2). Responses were initially coded into groups: relationships, fun, happiness in work, and inclusiveness as reasons that employees stay. Categories were further grouped into positive atmosphere, as these are all of the aspects of a job that promote affective commitment and therefore increase job satisfaction. The importance of a positive atmosphere is supported by findings in the knowledge industry (Lee-Kelley *et al.*, 2007). The atmosphere in work is a contributor to culture, and a positive culture is reflected by the organisation’s provision of a climate that encourages fun and relationships.

Pride

Only business owners believe that the opportunity to contribute to the business and personal achievement are factors that affect retention. Although this study has not done enough research to come to any definitive conclusions, it is interesting that owners believe that a sense of pride affects the worker’s staying rate, while managers on the floor have not mentioned it. The literature supports the importance of pride in contributing to job satisfaction (Hughes &

Rogue, 2008; Medina, 2012), but maybe it is insignificant in this sector, as owners in particular are likely to be biased about their own business.

They Like their Jobs

Some respondents qualified the reasons that employees stayed because some employees genuinely just like their jobs. The manager of Organisation 2 says that she stayed because she “preferred” this job to her weekday job, she has stayed for other reasons, but she wants to own her own business and enjoys working in the industry. The baristas are also very passionate about their jobs as careers, they are just “passionate about coffee” (Respondent 7) and are happy because they are doing what they want to do. Respondent 6 only hires people who are really passionate about food, and people love being in work because they love cooking. Additionally the employees in Organisation 6 are given the freedom to pursue other interests and come back, as many are artists. While some organisations have been lucky enough to find a few people who are really passionate about their jobs as careers most employees are not and organisation struggle to make their jobs attractive in the structures they have.

8.3.2 PERFORMANCE

All respondents were asked to talk about performance in their organisation. Three organisations believe that business performance has improved since they have made changes to their business structures. Respondent 1 has dramatically changed the way employees are trained and rewarded and believes that “performance is much higher than it was for me [her]” when she was trained. Respondent 5 commented that the “new system has reduced staff turnover” as he can ensure

An environment that they can feel enthusiastic about coming to work, that they can feel comfortable in work and that they can feel a sense of accomplishment every time they make something really bloody good.

Both respondents explained that providing rewards for hard work and progression opportunities contribute to being enthusiastic about work.

Respondent 7 admitted that a large part of improving performance has been finding her own feet in running the company. Although initially suffering from a lack of structure, she now has three people who are in charge of different

sections of the café, allowing her time to really focus on prices and the bottom line. This provision of responsibility increases trust and loyalty, forming affective commitment to the organisation (Blomme *et al.*, 2010).

Respondents have changed their business structures, but only when staff turnover rates were so high that they were affecting the business. Organisations need to be more proactive in prevention and this study's search for solutions may help new businesses to get it right from the start. Providing opportunities, rewards, and trusting employees to do the job without you has all helped increase retention in these businesses and therefore performance. Investing in employees is worth it because it allows owners to focus on growth.

8.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES

Employees may stay for opportunities that the organisation offers, or they may stay because of how they feel about the organisation.

Theory 7: Organisations in the food sector are providing rewards and promotional opportunities and employees are staying longer.

The greater implications of this section must be related back to why employees leave. Employees leave because of preconceptions of the industry, which allows employees to come and go as they please. Employers must combat or control this expectation by providing more than what the employee expects.

Theory 8: Expectations of the job must not only be met, but they must be exceeded, by providing greater rewards, opportunities, and enjoyable work in order to retain employees.

Sometimes nothing can make employees stay, they might come back because the organisation is very flexible (Respondents 2 and 6), but the organisation is there simply to provide a means of living while the employee pursues other interests. These two organisations promote those other interests and so see their staff coming back. The following theory builds on Theory 3, that employees have never intended to stay in the organisation.

Theory 9: Employees never intended to stay in organisations in the food sector and only do so because they need to; these organisations simply provide a “means to an end.”

8.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Increasing employee satisfaction helps to increase performance. By providing staff with reasons to stay, the organisation can lower turnover intention. This industry is providing rewards, contradicting current literature on SMEs and family businesses in Ireland. Organisations are also trying to value their employees by investing in their happiness. However for most employees this is a means to an end and organisations are still unable to change that fact.

As all respondents have chosen to stay in the business, some reasons may be more autobiographical than a true representation of employee feelings. Using employees as respondents in future case study research may more accurately contribute to finding out why employees are staying in a particular job.

CHAPTER 9: LEARNING EXPERIENCE- RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the findings from previous literature is that learning experiences and learning opportunities are both important contributors to turnover intention. Learning and development opportunities can be a direct driver of retention (Armstrong, 2006; Towers Perrin, 2005) or can be considered as a contributor to job satisfaction (Egan *et al.*, 2004) and therefore an indirect contributor to turnover intention. However as most organisations in Ireland, SMEs and or family businesses generally lack resources to invest in formal training (Birdthistle, 2006) how are employees learning in this industry?

In Chapter 7 we found that a lack of training contributed to some turnover intention, and in Chapter 8 results established that employees may stay for learning and development opportunities. This section of the paper is going to look at how employees and employers learn, and why some of these techniques help improve retention.

9.2 QUESTIONS ASKED

Q1. Tell me about your learning experience, how did you learn to do the job you do now? (Asked of managers only, as all of them have been promoted)

Q2. How does your staff learn and how do they receive training?

Q3. Tell me about hiring and initiating new staff.

These were the guiding questions during the interviews, but the actual questions varied slightly depending on the flow of the conversation. Asking respondents to simply talk about their experiences helps to reduce bias (Yin, 2009).

9.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

9.3.1 TYPES OF TRAINING USED

Figure 9A: Types of Training Used by All Organisations

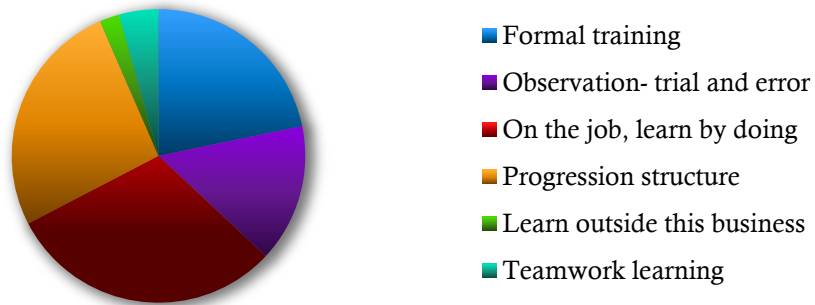
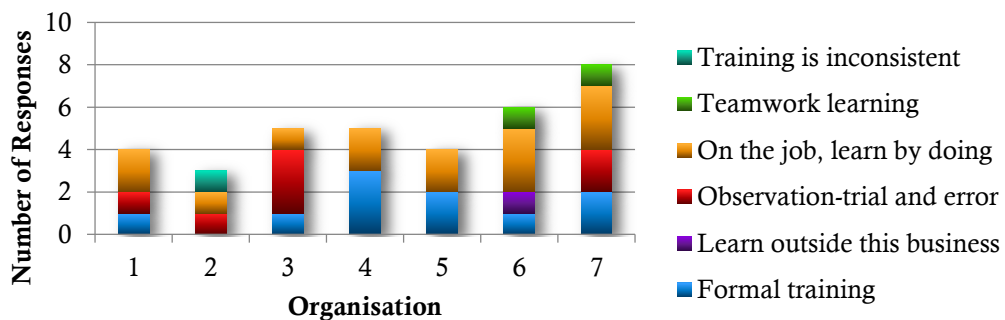


Figure 9B: Training Techniques by Organisation



Learning techniques were categorised into six groups using open coding: formal training, observation-trial and error, on the job, learn by doing, progression structure, learn outside this business, and teamwork learning.

Organisations 1-3: manager interview

Organisations 4-7: owner interviews

Progression structure has been included because these organisations have started to develop continuous training plans, which include both formal and informal training. These progression structures only allow employees to learn new skills once they have mastered the first ones. Levels do not indicate

formality, as some of the levels may be experience, but they demonstrate a shift in how training is understood and carried out by employers.

9.3.2 MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Despite the haphazard way that some of these managers have been trained to do their jobs, only one manager has really made strategic steps to provide a better experience for employees. One respondent learnt by taking “initiative” on the job and approaching the new position through trial and error while “the other bosses would sort of nit-pick and give advice” (Respondent 1). Although she has criticised and adapted her own method of teaching, she still uses on-the-job training and an observation, trial-by error approach. The “let them get on with it” (Respondent 1) approach is a style learnt from her bosses and one, unfortunately replicated with her own staff. The two other managers also continue to use the “keeping an eye out” (Respondents 2 and 3) approach despite admitting that it is a flawed system. Wain (cited in Gold *et al*, 2010) in particular critiques this approach as it can lead to the formation of as many bad habits as good ones.

Respondents have all slightly adapted their teaching techniques to include more on-the-job learning where tasks are explained thoroughly and more systematically. There is still a strong preference for learning while doing, which as Birdthistle (2008) points might be more preferable in some organisations and industries than others. Having said that there is a trend for organisations to be training and teaching their staff better than they have been taught themselves.

9.3.3 OWNER’S RESPONSES

Formal Training

Some organisations use formal training techniques. These range from a six-hour training course before business opens (Respondent 5) to two days of product knowledge training (Respondent 4) to providing external HACCP training (Respondent 7). The formal training techniques are heavy duty, as employees are expected to know their product inside out before serving customers. One organisation (4) uses in-depth guide manual that provides so much information about the company its products that further contribution seems impossible. Although formal training can be good for allowing employees to learn important information without distractions (Respondent 5), Evans (1998)

argues that the formality and tight control of this structure will hinder other learning opportunities. Respondent 6 supports this argument as they have an open structured organisation where having the right opportunities and attitude is more important than formal training.

Training for Growth

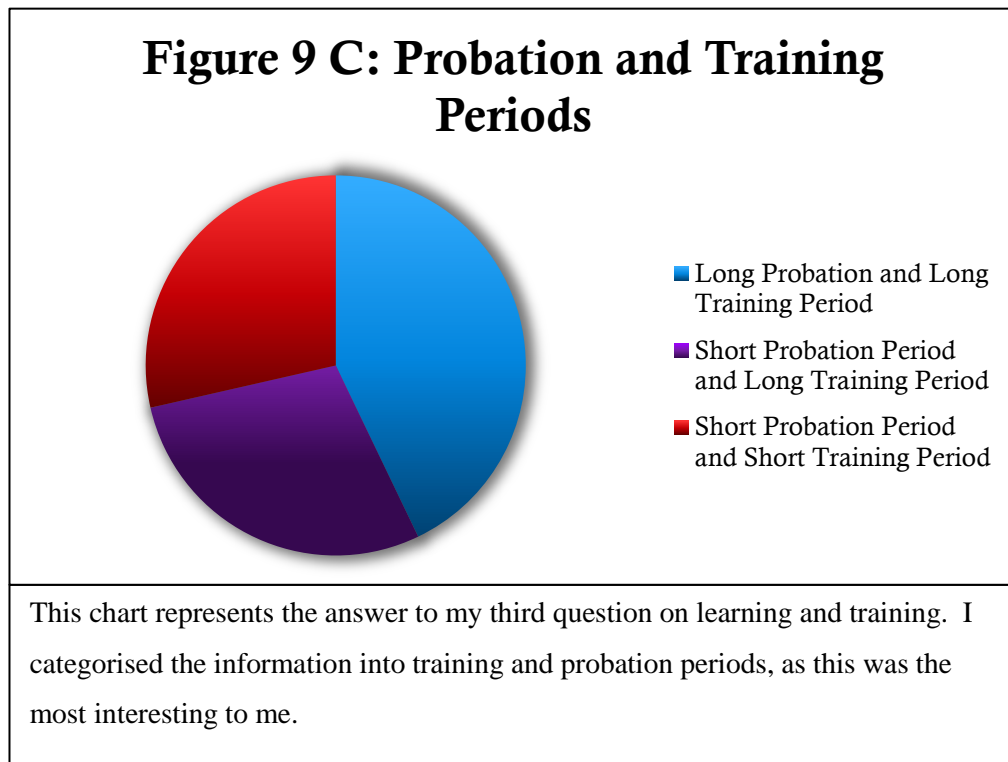
Only one organisation talked about a training structure that was aimed at growth and performance. Respondent 5 uses an organisational blueprint that lays out how the company will look every time it opens a new branch. There is a progression structure and training documents are attached to each position. There are over 100 positions in this chart and although many of the service positions are repeated there are still a substantial number of training documents and position guidelines created for the business. Birdthistle (2006) and Zheng *et al.* (2009) both found that SMEs are fire-fighting organisations that cannot invest in long term planning, this organisation has proved that with the right business model an SME can plan ahead. This investment in the organisation of employee progression through training is quite unique.

Learn out of Passion

The last two organisations were the most passionate about their staff and about the way that they had progressed in the organisation. People learn through travelling, by participating in their other passions, by going away and coming back with fresh ideas and a hunger to share and create them (Respondent 6). These employees are encouraged to learn outside of the business and bring their learning back with them. Employees learn from their co-workers in the kitchen, they learn from people who have a passion for a particular type of food, and while the employees do not consider this training, it is learning. Employees are hired for their passions and personality to help learn and share new knowledge, which increases employee job satisfaction (Hale, 2000; Egan *et al.*, 2004). Employees who are passionate about their work are also more likely to look for learning opportunities. Happy employees in Organisation 7 have been promoted and have “blossomed” under the responsibility. This approach also allows for double loop learning, as the employee is now able to share her knowledge and re-learn it from a new perspective (Chaston *et al.*, 1999). Passionate employees

work harder and provide more to the organisation, which indicates how important hiring is.

9.3.4 NEW STARTERS TRAINING AND INDUCTION



Two respondents have extended their trial periods to probation periods, allowing employees to be properly trained, and to allow both parties to get a sense of what working there would be really like before fully committing. This means that employees get a proper understanding for what the job is like and the expectations of the job are formalised early on, allowing either party to get out. This may be more important in this industry as many employees do not recognise the challenges involved. If the employer and employee are both still happy at the end of the probation period, it may be more likely that the employee will stay longer on average, but further research would need to be done to provide conclusive results.

9.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORY

The training done by these organisations is an interesting reflection on the variety of techniques used in this industry. In these industries most training is done on the job, through observation and trial-and-error. This technique

corresponds with Birdthistle's (2008) view of SMEs in Ireland, but this is arguably not the best way to approach learning as it is reactive instead of proactive (Birdthistle, 2006). Two managers have radically changed their approach to training since being promoted, as they believe that poor training has caused turnover in the past. As employees leave because of poor training, making training effective and valuable should be one priority for employers.

Theory 10: Some SMEs are for the first time looking to plan ahead for growth and expansion instead of fire fighting for survival.

Theory 11: Capable and trained employees are more likely to be happy in work because they can make the work less task-based and more relationship-based.

Theory 12: Hiring passionate employees who are given flexibility in their work and opportunities to share their learning have lower turnover intention.

The literature suggests that retention rates are lower in task-based industries (Sheridan, 1992), and the food industry is one that is characteristically "repetitive and dull" (Respondent 2). In order to take the focus away from the task the task needs to become second nature so that employees can multi-task and so that they can enjoy work and be happy in it. The more employees learn, and are given the capacity to learn the more second nature their job becomes enabling them to develop and build relationships. Both aspects of this scenario will increase productivity and increase retention.

9.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Training and learning is becoming an increasingly important activity for employers in the food sector. From a business perspective there is a lot of competition and so employers have to ensure that not only are their products good, but that their people are good. Employers are starting to plan ahead for the growth of their businesses, capable and trained employees are more likely to be happy in work, and staff who are passionate and given outlets for their passions are also more likely to stay in work.

Employees are learning and managers are learning, but is the organisation learning and improving? The next chapter will discuss the concept of a learning culture and a learning organisation in this industry.

CHAPTER 10: LEARNING CULTURE- RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is interested in how organisations in the food sector identify their culture. This study is particularly interested in whether the culture described is a learning culture. Egan *et al.* (2004) identify that a connection between job satisfaction, organisational learning culture, motivation to transfer learning, and turnover intention. Organisational learning and transfer of knowledge at all levels of the organisation is critical as the model increases job satisfaction, which impacts turnover intention (Lee-Kelley *et al.*, 2007).

10.2 QUESTIONS ASKED

Q1. Tell me about the culture in your organisation.

Respondents had provided plenty of information about their learning environments in previous questions, and all relevant information was used to discuss this theme.

10.3 CODING-RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Remarkably respondents struggled to describe or identify their organisational culture with a concise phrase or word. As culture is reflected by “how we do things around here” (Pedler *et al.*, 1997) and as respondents were not able to concisely define their culture as more universal method was chosen to determine organisational culture.

All the statements that respondents had made about “how we do things around here” were compiled and coded into fourteen categories that described culture. Further grouping resulted in four distinct cultures: Family Culture, Innovation Culture, Fire-fighting Culture, and Learning Culture (Charts can be found in the Appendix). As Saunders *et al.* (2009) warn against making such big leaps during inductive reasoning these findings alone have not been used to draw conclusions. Instead memos and notes from the transcripts have been used to draw conclusions.

10.3.1 LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

SMEs in the past have not invested in learning (Birdthistle & Flemming, 2005), but in today's global economy organisations should be changing their approach to encourage learning at employee, group and organisational levels (Dixon, 1992). This chapter takes a deductive approach to see if any of today's organisations are creating a learning culture or a learning organisation.

1. Employees are empowered to learn (Egan *et al.*, 2004)
2. Employees are pro-active in their learning and sharing of knowledge (Evans, 1998; Pedler & Aspinwall, 1998)
3. Employees aspire to collectively learn together (Senge, 1997)
4. Management support individual and organisational learning (Pedler *et al.*, 1997; Evans, 1998, Garavan, 2007)

Empowered to Learn

The first step to creating a learning organisation is to provide opportunities to learn (Egan *et al.*, 2004). Although one staff member cited that she was “just thrown in there” this was a learning opportunity that she thrived on. However, this same technique caused another girl to quit, and there are probably less dramatic ways to empower staff learning. Formal training courses in HACCP and Product Knowledge Sessions were used in some organisations (3, 4, and 7), while Respondent 5 says that he will even add additional hours to the roster to ensure that staff can get more training. Respondent 6 empowers her employees by taking away the hierarchy of the kitchen, everyone contributes, and everyone is given the opportunity to learn everything. Respondent 7 has also given her employees a platform to learn how to manage by slowly giving them “free reign” in their areas and has watched them “blossom.” Most organisations have been able to provide opportunities for their employees to learn.

Want to Learn and Want to Share

In this sector employees do not take much, if any initiative to learn for themselves, and in very few instances do they recognise and share that learning. Few organisations suggested that their employees took pro-active steps to learn, although the managers all took some initiative to learn on the job, in order to get the promotion, or to survive the promotion (Organisations 1, 2, and 3), however

only one of the managers has pro-actively taken steps to share her learning. Respondent 6 talked about how passionate people “bring in certain things, you know they bring in their passions” and provide knowledge that “we never knew before.” Sharing is now occurring at more than one level, and a learning culture is developing (Dixon, 1992;Evans, 1998). Hiring the right people is important and this organisation only seems to hire people who have a passion for food and for sharing that love of food with others.

Learn Together

“Do not be afraid of hiring people who know more than you do” (Respondent 7). This is something that a small business owner has learnt because her employees have contributed so much to her business. One other business owner was very passionate about how much they can learn from new people who come into the business because “we learn from each other” and try to create a “team thing” to make work more fun and more enjoyable (Respondent 6). She adds that kitchen team meetings, used to collectively brainstorm the next month’s menu and to collectively adapt old dishes, provide staff with a lot of freedom and opportunity. This creative platform builds a culture of collective learning as everyone contributes to a collective passion, making great food. This culture of learning and sharing is what a learning organisation aspires to (Senge, 1997) and Organisation 6 is getting there.

Organisational Learning and support

Organisational learning and management support help create a culture of learning that can persist even when the organisation suffers from staff turnover. In some organisations “staff are not valued” (Respondent 1), no consistent improvements have been made despite the recognition of better practices (Respondent 2), and there is little room for employee contribution to improving the organisation unless the employee is at management level (Respondents 3 and 4). There must be management and organisational support for learning in order for it to change the organisation (Garaven, 2007). However, other business owners have indicated that the organisation has learnt by developing new business structures in response to customer input (Respondent 5), encouraging a work-life balance so that good employees who may have other interests stay or come back if they have left (Respondent 6), and by encouraging staff to

contribute to the development of the business as they may be experts in some areas (Respondent 7). This evidence that supporting a work-life balance is particularly important in the hospitality sector is backed up by Deery (2008). Remarkably, the final respondent talked about how much her organisation has learnt as a group, but did not recognise many of their developments and achievements as learning, if learning is not recognised then the organisation cannot grow (Garavan, 2007). The organisation will learn if there is support for it, and some of these organisations are learning.

10.4 DISCUSSION- THEMES AND THEORIES

Learning culture helps to increase retention and a learning organisation that invests in staff will help increase retention and will improve performance (Egan *et al.*, 2004). Better performance provides the opportunity for growth and therefore for opportunities to employees in the business. The learning organisation is characterised by not only the amount of learning and training schemes that the organisation has, but also by how much the organisation learns as part of their culture.

Theory 13: Learning cultures, not learning schemes and structures impact retention and turnover rates in the food sector.

Although learning and training has occurred in all organisations, there is little correlation between learning schemes and a learning culture. While organisations 1, 3, and 4 provide a lot of learning for employees the organisation has no learning culture and no continuous and open support for learning. This finding is supported by Deery's (2008) findings of the hospitality sector that learning schemes do not significantly reduce turnover. Organisation 7 has actually learnt a lot as an organisation, but the respondent was unable to recognise her own learning as learning, and without recognition there can be no progress. Organisations 5 and 6 have created learning cultures, one through a

Theory 14: Organisations in the food sector can manage turnover intention by either combating the preconceptions and impressions of the industry through providing opportunities and rewards, or they can learn how to manage turnover by recruiting the right people and finding the competitive advantage of bringing in new and passionate staff.

progression system that encourages learning, and the other through a passion and enthusiasm to learn and develop. Neither organisation has struggled with retention because they have been able to manage it, one prevents it and another takes advantage of the opportunity to learn new things from new people.

10.5 IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Birdthistle (2005) found that none of the SMEs in her study were learning organisations; this is partly due to the fact that organisations do not have the money to invest in any training to start with. This study found that SMEs are investing in more training as they grow, and one organisation is making long-term investments and showing signs of becoming a learning organisation. More importantly formal training is not correlated to organisational learning or lower turnover rates. Training is not learning and should not be confused with it. This organisation has also stated that they have no concerns with turnover at the minute and that staff are happy and staying in their organisation. The other organisation that might be considered a learning organisation (6) is so passionate about what their employees are passionate about that they have provided a platform to create, to share and to learn from. This organisation is learning, its employees are learning and they are expanding, so business is going well.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSIONS

11.1 SUMMARY

This project set out with the intention to find out how organisations in the food sector in Dublin managed turnover. It focuses on its causes and consequences, learning techniques and learning cultures. The project was completed through a number of semi-structured interviews across a variety of organisations in Dublin's food sector. The results were then coded into categories and annotated with memos, inductive reasoning was then used to help draw conclusions.

A total of 14 new theories were drawn throughout this study. Some theories have served as foundation stones for later theories as the paper developed. This has resulted in seven concluding theories that should be further tested with a larger sample.

1. High staff turnover reduces customer satisfaction and increases employer stress in the food sector in Dublin. Previous research has not suggested that turnover causes either of these things to the detriment of the business, however in this industry where customer satisfactions is extremely important and employers are often overworked, these consequences make finding resolutions a cause for further investigation.
2. There can also be positive consequences associated with high turnover, as it provides a constant inflow of knowledge and experience that can be tapped for the benefit of the organisation.
3. Management is taking responsibility for the job satisfaction of their employees, as they believe that they can directly cause turnover intention in their businesses. Management has not been considered as a cause of turnover intention in other industries, but maybe good management is more important in this business where there are fewer rewards to compensate for poor management.
4. Employees in this industry never intend to stay, and in order to keep staff, employers must change the industry preconceptions by exceeding expectations in terms of total rewards. The lack of intention to stay is not

cited as a contributing factor to turnover in other industries, but was consistent and problematic in the food sector.

5. Capable and trained staff are happier in their work and are more likely to have lower turnover intention. Previous research has not adequately linked training to capabilities and reduced turnover intention, but this finding indicates how important knowledge is.
6. Learning schemes can teach staff, but learning cultures keep them.
7. Finally, organisations have found two ways to manage turnover. They can either start planning ahead, and can create a structure that provides opportunities for progression within the business as it expands. The other option is to improve the company's culture. They can hire passionate staff, and provide them with opportunities to provide input in the business and share their own knowledge. By creating a culture that values the opportunities to learn and share information, high turnover becomes a learning opportunity that the organisation is ready to take advantage of.

This study is largely inconclusive, the sample size is too small to form full conclusions on the theories conjectured in this paper. However, it does provide an overview and insight into where the industry is going and the challenges that some organisations are facing up to.

11.2 FURTHER RESEARCH IS NEEDED

As stated in the methodology section of this project further research should be done on this sector on how employers can manage staff turnover intention. This can be done through a single case study on an organisation with a learning culture over a number of years where business performance and competitive advantage can be measured effectively. This longitudinal study would help to provide answers for the industry on a problem that small business owners in particular really struggle with.

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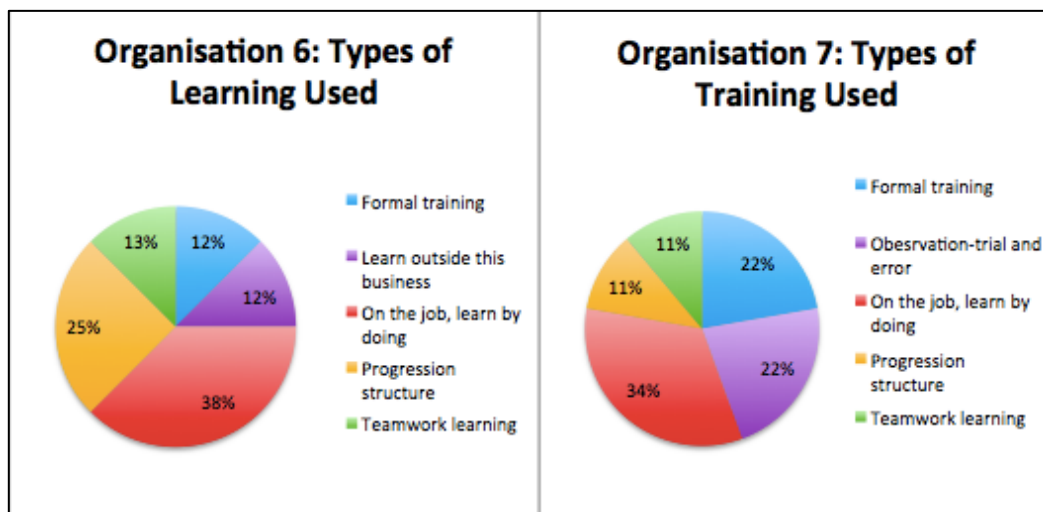
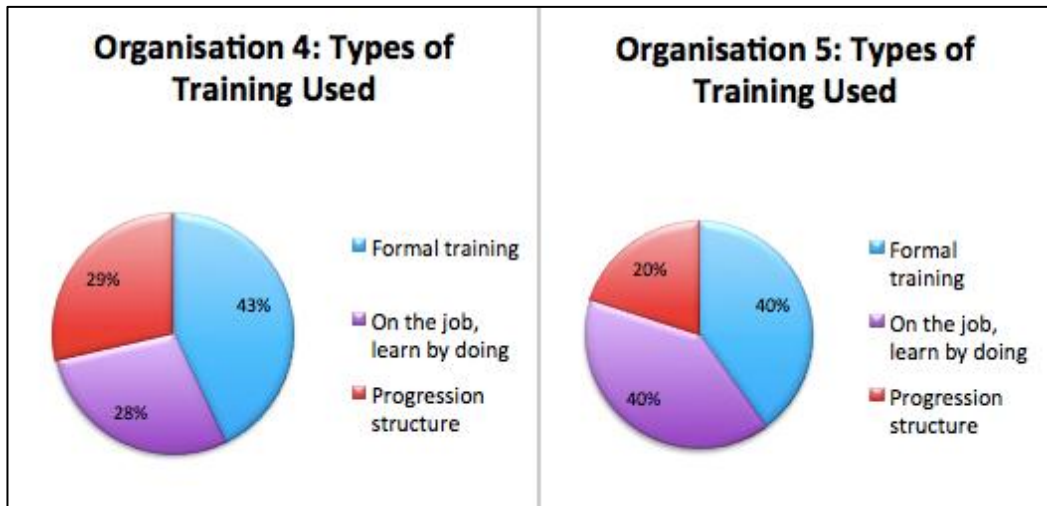
APPENDIX 1

TYPES OF TRAINING USED

CHANGE OF TRAINING USED-BY ORGANISATION: FIGURES A1-A6



OWNER'S APPROACH TO TRAINING: FIGURES A7-A10



APPENDIX 2

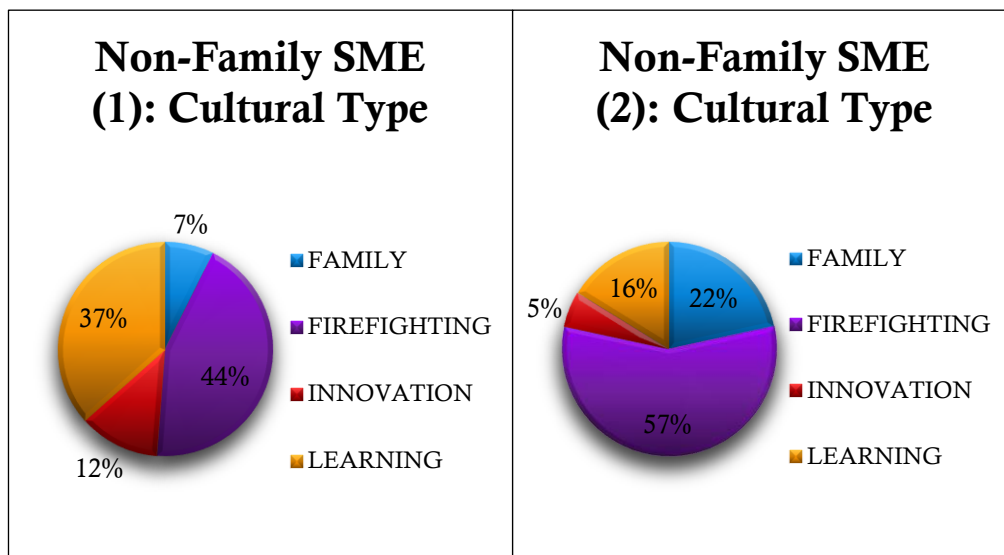
CULTURAL FINDINGS

CULTURE COMBINATIONS: FIGURE A11

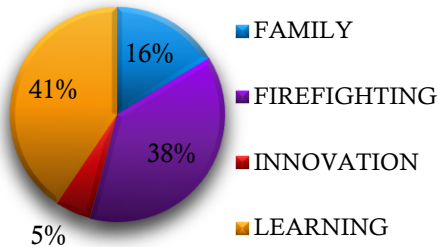


The predominant cultures of each organisation were grouped together. Most organisations had different cultures, but often had two distinguishing cultures.

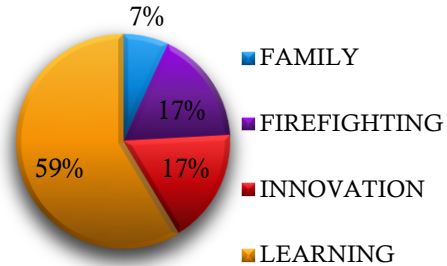
CULTURAL TYPE BY ORGANISATION: FIGURES A12-A18



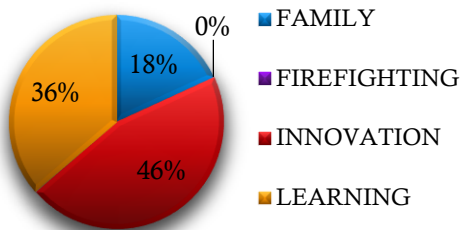
Large Family (3): Cultural Type



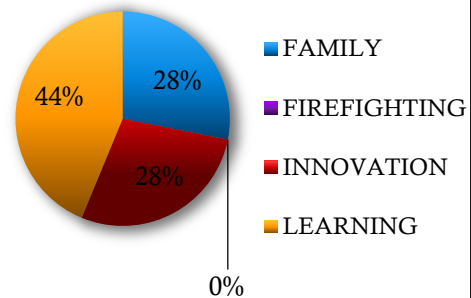
Family SME (4): Cultural Type



Non-family Start-up (5): Cultural Type



Non-Family SME (6): Cultural Type



Family Start-up (7): Cultural Type

