



AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE
SOCIALISATION PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT
ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEVELS IN AN
IRISH GLOBAL PHARMACEUTICAL
COMPANY



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ASHLEAH MCGEE

MA in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

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Abstract

Purpose: Employee engagement has implications for all areas of HRD practice: organization development, training and organizational learning, career development, performance management, and strategic change processes (Wollard & Shuck 2011 p. 439). The main purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A survey method was used to collect the data. The study was conducted among 62 employees, from an Irish global pharmaceutical company. The researcher will use Gallup Q12 Survey, to assess employee's engagement levels in their workplace (Harter et al., 2012). The research will use the National Socialisation Survey to measure the employee's experience of their socialisation process (Haueter et al., 2003). Cronbach alpha reliability of the questionnaires was 0.90 for Gallup Q12 Survey and 0.96 for the National Socialisation Survey.

Findings: Results showed a significant correlation between positive employee socialisation and high levels of employee engagement. There is a strong positive association between higher levels of socialisation and increased employee engagement levels. As expected, all three socialisation dimensions were positively related to employee engagement. Partial correlation analysis was performed in order to test the unique association of these socialization dimensions with employee engagement. Both the role ($p < 0.04$) and the company ($p < 0.04$) dimensions are uniquely correlated with employee engagement when controlling for other aspects of socialisation. There is a non-significant difference between office based and non-office based employee's engagement and socialisation levels. There is a non-significant ($U=418.5, p=0.64$) difference between less than a year and over a year employee's engagement and socialisation levels.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Date: 29th August 2015

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Contents

Abstract	i
Submission of Thesis and Dissertation.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Contents	iv
List of Appendices	vii
Introduction	1
Literature Review	5
Introduction:	5
Organisational Socialisation	6
Historical Development of Organisational Socialisation Research	7
Organisation Fit.....	9
Role Clarity	10
The Learning Process.....	10
Employee engagement and commitment	11
One size fits all approach	11
Stages of New Employee socialisation.....	12
Outcomes associated with the Socialisation Process	14
Socialisation Learning Process	15
Managements Role	16
Considerations highlighted by previous research.....	16
Socialisation Process Conclusion.....	18
Employee Engagement	19

Types of Employee Engagement.....	20
Theories and Models of Engagement	21
Link between employee engagement and socialisation process	23
Literature Review Conclusion	24
Research Question	25
Methodology.....	28
Research Design	28
Research instrument	30
Advantages of using a Survey	31
Disadvantages of using a Survey	31
Research Method	32
Operational Variables	33
Sample.....	34
Procedure	34
Measures.....	35
Gallup Q12 Survey.....	36
Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire (NSQ)	36
Reliability and Validity.....	37
The Role of the Researcher	38
Ethical Considerations.....	38
Analysis.....	39
Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research	40
Results	41

Descriptive statistics	41
Inferential Statistics	46
Discussion.....	51
Socialisation Process dimensions.....	52
The relationship between length of service and socialisation outcomes	53
Type of positions in the organisation:	54
Potential Limitation.....	55
Future Research Directions	56
Implications for Practice	58
Conclusion	59
References list.....	60
Bibliography	67

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Request for approval

Appendix B: Participants Information Sheet

Appendix C: Sample Survey

Appendix D: Personal Learning

Appendix E: Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library Form

Introduction

Today's working environment is extremely turbulent, with tight markets and increasing competition, the survival and success of an organisation depends on their ability to be fluid and to anticipate change. In many organisations, employees are considered as an important intangible asset (Ongori, 2007). Organisations invest a lot of time and resources into developing and improving their workforce. The difficult organisations face is retaining employees and maintaining a low percentage of labour turnover (Verlander & Evans, 2007). The negative effects associated with high labour turnover include: financial and social costs, low staff morale and reduced productivity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). The financial costs include recruitment and training costs and the loss of services expenses. The social costs include the burden that is put on other staff members to take ownership and complete extra responsibilities (Knight, 2013). Additionally, high levels of labour turnover have a negative impact on employee morale and performance (Verlander & Evans, 2007).

The costs associated with high labour turnover demonstrate the importance of developing and implementing staff retention strategies (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Organisations can implement strategies in the following areas to minimise labour turnover: the recruitment and selection process, policies and procedures and job design (Ongori, 2007). Strategies implemented appropriately will significantly improve 'the psychological well-being, loyalty and long-term satisfaction' of employees (Verlander & Evans, 2007 p 1). Verlander and Evans (2007) advised that strategies should be implemented at the most critical stage when an employee first joins the organisation (Verlander & Evans, 2007). The first three to six months of employment is critical because this period is considered to be most at risk to an employee to leaving an organisation (Smith et al., 2012). Smith et al., (2012 p. 2), stated that 'up to half of staff turnover occurs within the first six months of employment'. Similarly, previous findings from Bhatnagar (2007) research states that disengaged employees are more likely to leave in the first three months of employment. 'Aberdeen research found that 90% of organisations believe that employees make the decision to stay [in the

organisation] within the first year' (Aberdeen, 2013 p.7). For that reason, the research will focus on the socialisation process and whether organisations can use this process to try address and reduce levels of employee turnover.

Noe et al., (2006) stated that the implementation of a designed socialisation process can reduce an organisation's labour turnover by over fifty per cent. The socialisation process captures the new employee's eagerness to learn during their first phase of employment. Employees during the socialisation process are extremely engaged and influenced. During the socialisation process, new employees are establishing their perceptions and behaviours regarding the organisation's work ethic and the environment. It is difficult for organisations to duplicate the feelings employees feel during the socialisation process and for that reason it is extremely important that organisations focus on delivering an effective socialisation process. An effective socialisation process should make a new employee feel part of the team and proud to be selected for the position. The new employee should feel comfortable in their working environment and around their co-workers. Finally, new employees should feel attached to the organisation (Noe et al., 2006).

Pearce (2007, p. 358) has suggested that the socialisation process 'has received very little attention in the academic circles and the practitioner world'. The literature review will discuss the different socialisation definitions and explain the socialisation process. According to Saks & Ashford (1997) there are five major topics associated with organisational socialisation, 'socialization training; proactive socialization; socialization learning and content; group socialization; and moderators, mediators, and individual differences' (Saks & Ashforth, 1997 p.234). The literature review will state the different socialisation approaches and how an organisation's approach to the socialisation process can affect the integration of new employees. The research will focus on the effect the socialisation process can have on new employee's engagement levels. Recently, employee engagement has been given a great deal of attention and it has been suggested that an organisations success depends on their employee's levels

of engagement (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Employee engagement has also received a lot of attention in academic literature but a lot of confusion surrounding the definition of employee engagement has been expressed (Welch, 2011).

The literature review will explore the academic definitions of employee engagement and describe several employee engagement models. The research will examine how the concept of employee engagement has evolved, helping to provide a greater understanding and insight in the topic. The subject of employee engagement has been criticised due to the overlapping constraints (Gruman & Saks, 2011) and the fact that there are so many other constructs that can affect employees' engagement, for example, organisational commitment and employee motivation (Welch, 2011). Exploring previous research will provide developed frameworks and strategies, which will offer a foundation for the research.

After the literature review, the author will state the research aim and objectives. The research question will define the clear purpose of the research. There has been very little research aimed at exploring current human resource practices such as the socialisation process and if it can impact employee engagement (Lewis et al., 2012). The research aim is to critically investigate the socialisation process and the effect it may have on employee engagement levels. The research paper does not intend to explore further socialisation outcomes, rather its purpose is to establish whether the practice of employee socialisation can affect employee engagement. The present study seeks to explore the relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement. It is important to discover if the socialisation process can affect engagement levels among new employees (Saks & Gruman, 2011). The study aims to fill an important void in the literature by gaining insightful information on the socialisation process and determine whether it can impact engagement levels by completing quantitative analysis.

The methodology section will explain why a quantitative method was chosen. It will also describe the research procedure and sample. The socialisation process is measured through the 'Newcomers Socialization Scale (NSQ)' of Haueter et al. (1999). The survey is divided into three organisational socialisation dimensions: organisation socialisation, department socialisation and task socialisation. Employee engagement levels will be measured through Gallup 12Q of engagement. Both surveys are reliable and have been previously published in academic studies. The ethical considerations and precautions that were taken to ensure the study is ethically appropriate are stated in the methodology section. Finally, the methodology section will explain how the data was collected and interpreted.

The results will be illustrated and presented in the results sections. The results derived from the research will be discussed in the discussion section. In the discussion section, it discusses whether the socialisation process interacts with engagement and whether the interaction can enhance the employee's engagement levels in the future. The study aims to blend both the theoretical and practical world, to try address problems present in the current work environment. From this analysis, it aims to provide further information on the organisational socialisation process and identify practical recommendations organisations can implement. The present study seeks to guide organisations on where to allocate organisational resources for the socialisation process. The research will conclude by stating the limitations of the study and provide directions for future research in the area.

In summarise, the purpose of the study is to assess how the socialisation process affects employee's levels of engagement. More specifically, to investigate firstly how the socialisation process affects employees levels of engagement, secondly whether a positive socialisation process results in higher levels of employee engagement and finally how the socialisation process affects engagement levels among employees with different job types (office and non-office based staff) and employment durations (less than a year and greater than a year)

Literature Review

Introduction:

This chapter represents a comprehensive review of the literature on organisational socialisation and employee engagement. This chapter is organised under two main sections. The first section will cover the socialisation process and the second section will cover employee engagement. Previous literature has defined the process of a new employees entering and adapting to a new organisation and role, as orientation, the on boarding process or the socialisation process. The term orientation refers to the new employee's introduction to the company's missions, goals and values. In comparison, the term on boarding represents a longer period of time and embodies the entire integration process (Fleck, 2007). Lewis et al, (2012 p.45) defined socialisation as 'encouraging an employee to move from a social outsider to an integrated member of the organisational society'. Fleck (2007) stated that often organisations use the term on boarding and orientation interchangeably. Just from these definitions there is a clear difference between the terms orientation, on boarding and socialisation. The purpose of this research is not to argue about the different definitions and meanings of the terms. For the purpose of this study, the process of a new employee entering and adapting to a new organisation is referred to as the socialisation process.

Firstly, the socialisation process will be defined and the development of organisation socialisation will be explained by referring to the following literature: Schein (1979), Van Maanen and Schien (1979), Jones (1986), Saks & Ashforth, (1997), Copper-Thomas et al., (2012;2011) and Perrot et al., (2014). The author will then define and explain how an employee becomes integrated into an organisation by analysing the socialisation process under the following headings; Organisation Fit, Role Clarity, Learning Experience, Employee Commitment and Engagement and the One Size Fits all approach. The positives and negatives associated with the institutionalised and individualised approach to organisational socialisation will be mentioned under each of the headings mentioned above. The author will then define and explain how an

employee becomes integrated into an organisation by referring to the following theoretical perspectives: Amiot et al., (2007) four stage model of 'Social Identify Development and Integration', and Bauer and Green (1994) 'Socialisation Model'.

Secondly, the research will focus on the term employee engagement. Employee engagement is an important aspect of the organisation because it consists of both behavioural and psychological aspects (Gruman & Saks, 2011). The author will highlight the theories of Kahan (1990), Penna (2007), Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and Forbringer (2002).

Finally, the individual and organisational factors affecting the socialisation process will be discussed. Additionally, the author will describe the link between the socialisation process and employee engagement. The author will state the reasons why it is important for organisations to integrate employee engagement practices during the socialisation process. The literature review will conclude by highlighting the key issues derived from the academic research and the gaps discovered, thus setting a clear rationale for the project by stating the aims of the research.

Organisational Socialisation

The definition of organisational socialisation is how a new employee adjusts to their new environment and how they 'learn the behaviours, attitudes and skills necessary to fulfil their new role and participate effectively' as a member of the organisation (Saks et al., 2007 p. 414). Amiot et al., (2007 p. 374) described the socialisation process as a 'development task', used to help the new employee deal with the changing environment and inform them of the organisations characteristics. Therefore, enabling new employees to be aware of the different norms and values associated with the new organisation. Wong's (2004) develops this point by adding that the socialisation process is a structured process organised by companies 'to train, support and retain' new employees (Wong, 2004 p. 42). Van Maanen and Schien (1979) defines

organisation socialisation as a process by which a new employees acquire the social skills and knowledge to adapt to an organisation role.

A comprehensive socialisation process promotes career learning and professional development by providing a plan for new employee's growth and development (Fleck, 2007). A well designed socialisation process allows for a smooth and positive transition for both parties. The socialisation process should aid the new employee to reach their full potential as quick as possible (Stimpson, 2009). An effective socialisation process can lead to lasting positive effects on the new employee by 'enhancing person – job fit, person – organisation fit, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intentions to stay, and [their] performance' (Haueter et al., 2003 p.21).

A recent survey by Impact Instruction Group stated that nearly two thirds of the respondents considered the socialisation process a major priority (2013, p. 3). Aberdeen research found that the top objective for organisations initiating a socialisation programme is getting employees productive more quickly (68%) (Aberdeen Group, 2013 p. 5). The second highest driver for an organisation to initiate a socialisation process is to improve employee engagement (67%). The socialisation process is critical, as it is the first encounter the new employee has with the organisation (Haueter et al., 2003).

Historical Development of Organisational Socialisation Research

The six theoretical perspectives mentioned in the introduction have guided the research in organisational socialisation. At the beginning, Schein (1971) research focused on the effect an organisation has on an individual, investigating the socialisation process from the organisation's perspective. Schien (1971) suggested there are two kinds of variables to consider when describing the link between organisation and employee socialisation. The first is the influence of the organisation on the individual which is defined as the socialisation process. Secondly, the influence

of the individual on the organisation, interpreted as the process of innovation. Schein (1971) research indicated that both processes coexist in any given organisation.

Van Maanen and Schien (1979) then offered a descriptive conceptual scheme to help guide the study of organisational socialisation. The socialisation literature progressed when Van Maanen & Schein, (1979) developed six bipolar tactics believed to aid the adjustment of new employees in their new organisation and role. A socialisation tactic is defined as 'the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organisation' (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979 p. 230). Van Maanen and Schien's (1979) theoretical explanation was made up of six bipolar tactics; collective versus individual, formal versus informal, sequential versus non-sequential, serial versus disjunctive, investiture versus divestiture and fixed versus variable.

Collective (vs. individual) refers to all new employees being grouped together and receiving a common set of experiences compared to the individual approach, where each new employee is isolated and receives a unique experience. Formal (vs. informal) socialisation is the practice where one segregates the new employee from the organisation until they complete the socialisation process opposed to integrating the new employee into the organisation where they are treated the exact same as a more experienced member of staff from day one. Sequential (vs non-sequential) socialisation refers to a specific set of steps a new employee must experience before adapting to the role compared to non-sequential which is an unstructured, unknown and continuously changing sequence of events/experiences. Fixed (vs. variable) is a set time frame it will take for a new employee to perform their role compared to variable where the information is not available, as there is no defined set time. Serial (vs. disjunctive) tactics is when the new employee is socialised by an experienced member of the team who serves as a mentor or role model compared to a process without a role model or mentor. Finally, investiture (vs. divestiture) promotes new employees to present their identity and personal characteristics compared to denying or stripping

them away (Saks et al, 2007). These tactics are used by organisations to shape and structure the new employee's adjustment to their new role and organisation (Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

Later, Jones (1986) simplified Van Maanen and Schien's (1979) theoretical explanation by reducing the six bipolar tactics to two main approaches, institutionalised versus individualised socialisation tactics. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) bi polar socialisations tactics are classified as either institutionalised or individualised. The institutionalised tactics include the collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial and investiture, which ultimately encourage new employees to adapt to the organisation's status quo. The institutional approach to socialisation is delivered through formal and structured tactics (Perrot et al., 2014). At the opposite end of the socialisation continuum is the individualised tactics, the individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture. The individualised socialisation process is delivered through informal tactics where the new employee is responsible for their own integration into the organisation and questions the organisations status quo (Saks et al., 2007). An organisation can use either a structured approach also known as institutionalised or a relatively unplanned or an informal approach known as individualised approach to achieve successful organisation socialisation (Copper-Thomas et al. 2012;2011). The researcher will analysis each approach under the following sections; Organisation Fit, role clarity, learning experience, employee commitment and engagement and the one size fits all approach.

Organisation Fit

One of the aims of the socialisation process is to facilitate a new employee's adjustment to their new role and environment (Saks & Gruman, 2011). Kahn (1990), expressed the importance of new employees feeling they belong to and fit into the organisation. Copper-Thomas et al. (2013) findings stated that institutionalisation tactics give guidance to new employees on acceptable organisational strategies, enabling them to fit better into the organisation. Similarly, Cable & Patersons (2001), suggested that organisations using the institutionalised approach will have a greater

chance of new employees adjusting their own values in line with those of the organisation. Additionally, Kim et al (2005) results predicated a positive linkage between institutionalised socialisation tactics and P-O (person/organisation) fit.

The institutionalised approach to the socialisation process is better suited to organisations that require a specific set of values or attitudes that new employees must develop and demonstrate, for example a catholic priest or cadet in the army (Van Maanen and Schien, 1979). In contrast, an individualised approach provides a relaxed approach towards the socialisation of new employees. This approach is achieved by new employees learning their roles through trial and error. The disadvantage of the informal approach to the socialisation process is an organisation is trusting another member of the team to teach and transfer knowledge to the new employees.

Role Clarity

The institutionalised approach tends to reduce uncertainty and stress through greater role clarity (Saks et al 2007). Kim et al (2005) states the main reason organisations use institutionalised tactics to remove some of the uncertainty new employees feel when entering a new environment is that it allows them to pass on information to help the employee adjust their behaviours. Cable (2013), also recognises the need for certain aspects of the traditional socialisation process and acknowledges the importance of organisations communicating their needs and the new employees' roles and responsibilities. That said, Cable (2013) believes that instead of listing new employees roles and responsibilities, organisations should allow new employees to reflect and formulate ways in which they can use their strengths in their new job. This approach allows new employees to frame their new job as an opportunity to present their best self and bring their own purpose and motivation to the job.

The Learning Process

It has been suggested that the institutionalised approach supports the aspects of learning because the process is formal and specific, resulting in greater clarity and reducing levels of ambiguity among new employees (Perrot et al., 2014). Similarly,

Ashforth et al., (2007) agrees that the institutionalised socialisation approach is positively associated with learning. Haueter et al., (2003) expanded on this point further stating that specific tasks such as using mentors (serial) and providing a specific orientation programme (formal) helps new employees learn about their task, group and organisation.

At the same time, the institutionalised socialisation approach discourages innovative behaviours. For organisations to facilitate opportunities to allow new employees to present their best self, an implementation of individualised tactics allows new employees to express their strengths when being introduced to their colleagues and during network events (Copper-Thomas et al., 2012:2011).

Employee engagement and commitment

Institutionalised tactics are related to higher levels of engagement among new employees because it provides 'new employees with the information, guidance, direction, and social support' (Saks & Gruman, 2011 p. 387). This approach is required to fulfil the three psychological conditions implied in Kahan (1990) research, meaningfulness, safety and availability. Greenberg & Baron (1993) agreed with Saks & Gruman (2011), stating that institutionalised socialisation tactics lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment among new employees, whereas individualised tactics had a negative effect on commitment levels (Greenberg & Baron, 1993).

One size fits all approach

Each study has defined the socialisation process slightly differently, highlighting that no socialisation process is exactly the same as each process is unique to the organisation's culture and vision (Wong, 2004). For that reason, the institutional socialisation tactics may be inefficient in the context of the one size fits all approach. If organisations acknowledge the frequency and number of roles new employees are required to fill, an efficient socialisation process will need to adjust and adapt according to the role or context (Copper-Thomas et al, 2012:2011). The institutional

approach is associated with a large number of new employees starting an organisation compared to the individualised approach being associated with smaller numbers of new employees and higher levels of role complexity (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

The socialisation process needs to be flexible and tailored effectively to cater for the individuality of each new employee (Stimpson, 2009). For example, the difference between the younger and older generation work force. The younger generation place a greater importance on fun and the term work life balance, organisations should fulfil this by offering and arranging extracurricular programs allowing them to interact with other employees and promoting a good work/life balance (Knight, 2012). Shaping the socialisation process around the individual identity rather than the company helps the new employee identify with their authentic strengths making it easier to adapt to the organisation (Cable et al., 2013).

Stages of New Employee socialisation

The aim of the socialisation process is to 'give new employees the opportunity to clearly contextualize their role within the organization, and for the organization to promote its values and short and longer-term goals.' (Smith et al., 2012 p 6/7). It is difficult to identify a new employee's psychological process because each employee identifies with different dimensions and aspects of an organisation (Smith et al., 2012). Feldman's (1976) research proposed a three stage socialisation process model consisting of anticipatory socialisation, the accommodation stage and role management phase. The socialisation process models after Feldman (1976) include: Bauer & Green (1994) who's model consists of pre entry, accommodation and outcomes and Amiot et al., (2007) who's model consists of the 'anticipation categorization, categorization, compartmentalization and integration' stages (Amiot et al., 2007 pp. 365).

Bauer & Green's first phase of the socialisation process is named "the pre entry stage". This stage represents the new employee's experience before entering the

organisation. The pre entry stage is related to the new employee learning, evaluating and understanding the organisations expectations. Amiot et al., (2007) models first stage 'the anticipation categorization stage' describes the feelings of the new employee, stating new employees will still identify with their previous working organisation but are beginning to identify with their new working environment. Bauer & Green (1994), stated that variables present during the first stage are an important part of the socialisation process and early encounters tend to affect the next stage of the socialisation process.

Organisations can utilise current advancements in technology by allowing new employees access to the organisations intranet before their start date. Pre socialisation can provide new hirers with access to medical forms, tax forms, company's policies and procedures which are key to getting new employees up to speed and integrated as quickly as possible. The benefits associated with pre socialisation is that it allows the new employees to become productive sooner and increases the likelihood of retaining the new employee for years to come (Fleck, 2007). Another aspect associated with the pre entry stage is the experience of the new employee and the relevance of their experience in relation to their new role. The more relevant experience attained by the individual the easier they will find it to fit into the organisation and complete their tasks competently. It is important for organisations to know the new employees experience before entering the organisation and to tailor the socialisation process to suit their needs (Bauer & Green, 1994). This point is important in relation to argument surrounding the socialisation approach an organisation should implement, the individualised or institutionalised approach.

The second stage of the socialisation process is called the accommodations stage in Bauer & Green's research on the categorization stage in Amiot et al., (2007). The categorization stage allows for the new employee to form new identities by considering the differences between the dynamics of their previous organisations compared with the values and norms of their new organisation. At this stage the

employees are not yet convinced that they belong to the new organisation. This highlights how important it is for organisations to provide new employees with an accurate picture of the organisation prior to their start date, which results in an improved socialisation process (Amiot et al., 2007). The third stage in Amiot et al., (2007) framework is the compartmentalization stage. The compartmentalization stage accounts for the new employees becoming more aware of the differences between their old and new organisations (Amiot et al., 2007). At the compartmentalization and accommodation stage the new employee learns what the organisation expects from them and how they will integrate into the team (Bauer & Green, 1994). At this stage the employee will still identify with both their previous and new organisation but their feelings are likely to be distinct and unrelated (Amiot et al., 2007).

Outcomes associated with the Socialisation Process

The final phase of Amiot et al (2007) socialisation framework is called the “Outcome Stage” and Bauer & Green’s (1994) final stage is called the “Integration Stage”.

Another aspect of the socialisation literature is investigating the impacts socialisation tactics can have on a new employee (Greenberg & Baron, 1993). Initially, Feldman (1976) identified four possible outcomes of the socialisation process, general satisfaction, mutual influence, internal work motivation and job involvement. Socialisation tactics will relate and effectively influence a new employees; role orientation, ambiguity and conflict, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and their intention to quit (Saks et al., 2007). Similarly, Ashforth et al., (2007 p. 459), found that the ‘process of socialization was directly associated with performance, job satisfaction, and organizational identification’.

The research began to distinguish between the outcomes mentioned above, by labelling them as either ‘proximal’ or ‘distal’ outcomes (Saks & Ashford, 1997). Saks & Ashford (1997) socialisation research identified that distal outcomes such as job satisfaction or organisational commitment are derived from the proximal outcomes (role clarity and organisation fit). Saks et al., (2007) built on this point by exactly defining the proximal outcomes as role conflict, role ambiguity and perceived fit. The

distal outcomes are designed as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, intentions to quit and role orientation.

There are very few studies that have gone beyond the research mentioned above with the exception of certain research measuring employee adjustment outcomes (Saks et al, 2006). Cable and Parson (2001) reported that social tactics were found to positively relate to organisation fit perceptions. Salavati et al., (2011) researched the effects organisational socialisation has on organisational citizenship behaviour. Haueter et al., (2003) indicated that new employee's knowledge of their organisation, group and task was associated with organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Allen (2006), stated that social tactics were most strongly related to employees leaving the organisation. There has been an inconsistent approach in the measurement of the socialisation process and this will be discussed further under the methodology section.

Socialisation Learning Process

The new employee goes through a process of learning throughout the organisational socialisation process (Perrot et al., 2014). Researchers have stated the primary outcome of the socialisation process is learning. (Ashforth et al., 2007: Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2007). Perrot et al., (2014) model defined three key learning dimensions for new employees, they consist of the job, the organisation and the work group.

Another way that organisations can promote learning is to include both general and job specific orientation during the socialisation process. General orientation is related to the company's mission, vision, goals and values. Two key features of general orientation is excellent communication skills and addressing the culture of the organisation. Communication is key during the socialisation process, the organisations mission, visions and goals should be clearly communicated to the new employees. Poor communication can result in the new employees making inaccurate assumptions or obtaining information from unreliable sources. The culture and the required standards must be clearly explained, something that might seem obvious to the organisation itself but it might be alien to a new starter. Employees that adapt to the organisation's culture, learn and progress quicker compared to their counterparts. Unfortunately the

majority of organisations do not address culture during the socialisation process and just assume the new employee will eventually become acculturated as time progresses (Knight, 2012). Job specific orientation is related to the individual's duties and responsibilities, their department goals and their role within the department (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010). The process should identify types of administration assistants and introduce staff members that can provide support and assistant to new employees (Wong 2004).

Managements Role

The manager's role during the socialisation process is key. Successful managers know that by regulating formal training and work experience enhances the new employees socialisation experience (Saks et al., 2007). The manager ultimately drives the new employee's socialisation process which can have positive or negative effects on their engagement levels (Lewis et al., 2012). Managers are responsible for encouraging open dialogue between themselves and their new employees and setting and managing the new employee's expectations (Fleck, 2007). The role of supervisors is vital as they own the implementation of the socialisation process. It is their responsibility to ensure that information is delivered and relationships are built during the socialisation process. One way this can be achieved by introducing the new employees to cross functional activities or teams, giving them an overall picture of how the department works and the part they play in making the organisation successful. Supervisors need to acknowledge that their attitude and opinions can impact the success of a new employee and their acceptance can be a deciding factor as to whether they will stay in the organisation (Knight, 2013)

Considerations highlighted by previous research

Across organisations the standard of the socialisation process is considered low and poorly executed, even though the socialisation process is considered to be one of the most common HRD activities (Knight, 2013). The majority of organisations see the

socialisation process as an opportunity for new employees to sign the relevant documentation and assign a staff member from HR to provide a tour of the company while making unplanned introductions to fellow employees (Knight, 2013).

A common mistake companies make is not assigning enough time for the socialisation process. Fleck (2007) believes the time period of the socialisation process should be at least six months. This allows the new employee to feel less frustrated with issues or problems that may arise during the first month of employment (Fleck, 2007). However, Wallace (2009), said there is no desired duration of the socialisation process. Wallace (2009) expresses that the socialisation process is not a one day event but over time it will begin to diminish as a result of the new employee acquiring a greater knowledge and experience regarding their role and the organisation (Knight, 2013).

In recent years, an argument presented was whether the socialisation process should be web or class room based. Today's workers want to read about their new company on the computer rather than reading through pages and pages of an employee handbook (Fleck, 2007). The advantages of an online socialisation process is that employees or companies in multiple locations can provide the same socialisation process to all new employees through an efficient method. The limitations of a web based socialisation programme stated by previous research is that new employees feel less satisfied with web based programmes delivering training on the organisations politics, goals and values than those new employees who attended a group sessions (Fleck, 2007). The socialisation process is about building and developing relationships which is critical for retention (Fleck, 2007). Wesson and Gogus (2005) found that computer based orientations were as effective as face to face orientations from an information base but less effective in the social context area. This point will not be expanded further as it is not relevant to this study because the company in question has two locations only in Ireland. Future research could examine the role technology plays in the socialisation process.

Socialisation Process Conclusion

The socialisation design will depend on both organisational and new employee's factors. The organisational factors include the size, complexity, industry and location. The new employee factors include diversity factors and whether the new employee is experienced or at graduate entry level (Copper-Thomas, 2012;2011). A key gap in the literature is how an organisation benefits from the approach they have selected without the new employee experiencing the negative impacts associated with that approach. How can the organisation that selected the institutionalised approach still encourage innovative behaviours among new employees? Alternatively, if an organisation selects the individualised socialisation approach, how can they be sure that the new employee's knowledge of their role is clear and ensure the feeling of uncertainty is limited? (Perrot et al., 2014)

Cable (2013) believes that organisations need to re think their approach to socialisation. Traditionally the socialisation process would focus on the company's culture and practices but Cables (2013) has suggested this is the wrong approach. Cable et al. (2013) proposed an alternative view of organisational socialisation called 'Personal Identity Approach'. Organisations that use this approach, promote new employees to 'identify their unique perspectives and strengths and reflect on how they can use these strengths to contribute to the corporate culture' (Cable, 2013 p. 335). Organisations encourage new employees to promote themselves and bring their perspectives and values to their role and the organisation.

By using the Personal Identity Socialisation approach for the socialisation process benefits both the new employee and the company. Cable et al., (2013) conducted two studies to test the 'Personal Identity Approach' for organisation socialisation. The second study, an experimental study found that after six months of employment the Personal Identity socialisation approach led to greater customer service and employee retention compared to the organisational identity approach. The Personal Identity organisational socialisation approach also led to higher levels of employee

engagement and productivity compared to an organisational identity approach (Cable et al., 2013). The new employees participating in the Personal Identity approach gains more satisfaction and meaning from their work making them feel positive and motivated. The new employee's positive feelings contribute to their work by motivating them to be innovative and creative. The work environment is also positive and less stressful and encourages effective teamwork by inspiring and energising others (Cable, 2013). This is achieved by breaking out of the traditional employment trap, helping new employees identify with their strengths, facilitating introductions with other colleagues and encouraging new employees to reflect on strengths and how they can be productive on the job.

Based on the research from Cable (2013) it is suggested that organisations replace the traditional approach to socialisation with a new approach called Personal Identity socialisation. Organisation will not require more financial resources to introduce this approach but it will require a change of mind-set. The difficulties associated with this approach is the practicality for organisations to gain feedback from the new hirers previous colleagues and peers. Additionally, would the new employee feel comfortable with their new organisation contacting their previous colleagues and peers to ask them personal questions about them (Cable, 2013). Further research by other academics examining the theory of 'Personal Identity approach' on organisational socialisation would lead to superior theoretical confidence in the evidence presented by Cable (2013).

Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement is relatively new for HRM (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010). Over the last few years the term has become extremely popular but still remains 'inconsistently defined and conceptualized' (Shuck & Wollard, 2010 p. 89). The difficulties and challenges arise with the concept of employee engagement because there is no clear definition (Gruman & Saks, 2011) (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Kahan (1990 p. 700) mentioned employee engagement first and defined it as 'the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task

behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performance'. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) research, described employee engagement as the opposite state of job burnout. Thus, employee engagement is associated with a positive feelings characterised by high levels of activation and pleasure (Maslach et al., 2001). Saks (2006) defined employee engagement as 'a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components associated with individual role performance' (pp. 602). The definition incorporated and bridged the previous research from Kahn (1990), Maslach et al., (2001) and Harter et al., (2012). Shuck & Wollard (2010 p. 103) research provided a new definition after their literature review, 'an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organisational outcomes'. Confusion around the previous definition is 'where the decision to become engaged develops' (Shuck & Wollard, 2010 p. 102). Does the decision personally start from the employee themselves or is it controlled at the organisation level? Another point of inconsistency is the different types of engagement.

There is confusion around the concept of engagement, is it a behaviour, an attitude or an outcome (Macleod and Clarke, 2009). Macleod and Clarke (2009 p. 9) states 'there is a difference between attitude, behaviour and outcomes in terms of engagement'. An employee's attitude is their feeling of pride or loyalty and behaviours are the employees' willingness to go beyond their tasks to finish a piece of work. Examples of outcomes include higher productivity, reduced sickness and absence rates (Macleod and Clarke, 2009). The concept needs a consistent definition and a clear interpretation providing clarity and understanding across academic circles and business organisations (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Even though there is confusion around the term employee engagement there are three things that is known 'it is measurable; it can be correlated with performance; and it varies from poor to great' (Macleod and Clarke, 2009 p.10).

Types of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement evolved from two behavioural concepts, commitment and organisational citizen behaviour. Employee engagement has similarities to

commitment and organisational citizen behaviour but differs in regards to the two way nature present in engagement. Whereas, commitment and organisational citizen behaviour concept does not contain the two way process between the employee and employer (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010).

There are two types of engagement; emotional and cognitive. Emotional engagement refers to the connections and relationships you have with your peers. MacLeod and Clarke (2009) encourages cognitive engagement as they believing that the employee's awareness of how they fit into an organisation is a key enabler of employee engagement. Cognitive engagement refers to employees being aware of the mission and goals of the organisation and the impact their performance will have on achieving those goals (Bhatnagar, 2007). Craig and Silverstone (2010) argues that an employee seeing and knowing the link is not enough but meaningful contribution to an organisations missions is required. Kahn (1990) research states one can be engaged in one of the dimensions but desired levels of engagement would be for employees to have high levels of engagement in both dimensions. To summarise the above, it is important for an employee to be able to identify with the company's goals and objectives but 'it is more important for an employee to actually believe they make a contribution and have a greater meaning in their work' (Lewis et al., 2012 pp.36).

Theories and Models of Engagement

Kahn (1990) argued that three psychological engagement conditions are necessary for an employee to be engaged in their position. These determinants are: meaningfulness (work elements), safety (social elements, including management style, process and organisational norms) and availability (individual distractions). Consultants, Hewitt Associates LLC (cited in Welch, 2011 p. 334) identified with Kahn's (1990) three dimensions of employee engagement but identified them as, emotional engagement, "being very involved emotionally with one's work"; cognitive engagement, "focusing very hard while at work"; and physical engagement "being willing to go the extra mile for your employer".

Previous literature has developed theories and models to provide systems to help organisations improve employee engagement. Kahn (1990) and Maslach et al (2001) provided the earliest theoretical frameworks for understanding employee engagement (Saks, 2006). Kahn (1990) engagement framework was defined by meaningfulness, safety and availability. Kahn defined the term meaningfulness as the 'sense of return on investments of self in role performance' (Kahn, 1990 p.705). Safety was the ability to illustrate your true self 'without fear or negative consequences to self-image, status, or career' (Kahn, 1990 p.705). The term availability was having the necessary resources to perform your role efficiently (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

Bakker & Demerouti (2007), uses the Job-Demands (JD-R) model to enhance employee engagement. The model focuses on two key dimensions: job demands and job resources. Job demands refers to the sustained physical and mental aspects required from the employee and job resources which are the aspects available for employees that helps eliminate or decrease the impact job demands can have on an employee. Job demands have been related to job dissatisfaction and burnout, whereas job resources have be associated with increased levels of engagement and motivation among employees. Job resources can be both intrinsic and extrinsic; intrinsic through facilitating growth and development or extrinsic through providing support to help employees achieve work goals.

Penna (2007) (cited in Kompas & Sridevi, 2010) introduced a new model of engagement called 'Hierarch of engagement' that resembles Maslow Hierarchy of needs. This model has three layers; the first layer represents engagement through pay and benefits, the second layer represents the opportunity to develop and grow within the organisation and the final represents the feeling associated with being a part of the of the organisation and a sense of meaning at work. Both theorists view employee engagement dimensions differently, but they provide organisation with examples of elements that may improve employee engagement.

Similar to Penna (2007)'Hierarch of engagement' model, Forbringer (2002) engagement model consists of four levels of engagement; "What do I get?", "What do I give?", "Do I belong here?" and "How can we all grow?". Level one "What do I get?", is associated with satisfying employee's basic needs. The second level "What do I give?", represents the contribution employees feel they make to the Company. The third level "Do I belong here?", describes whether the employee is committed to their work and believes their work is important and finally the fourth level "How will I grow?" represents an employee's opportunity to grow and develop.

Link between employee engagement and socialisation process

Knight, (2013) and Cable et al (2013), research cited a link between new employee's socialisation process and engagement during their early stage of employment. Previous research emphasises the importance of introducing engagement activities at the earliest opportunity during the socialisation phase allowing organisations to start the engagement process immediately (Bhatnagar, 2007). Organisations have a window of opportunity during the socialisation process to build a relationship with the new employee (Knight, 2012). Research illustrates that new employee's beliefs and attitudes are formed about an organisation from very early on and generally remain stable, highlighting the importance of instilling positive attitudes and experiences during the early stages of employment. (Bauer & Green 1994; Wanous 1976). Socialisation process should be part of the organisation engagement and retention strategies (Knight, 2012). Employee engagement is particular important at the earlier stage of employment, Wanous (1979 p. 660-661) stated that the 'length of a newcomer's tenure in an organization is a function of the result of two simultaneous processes: (a) the decision by the organization to retain the individual, and (b) the decision by the individual to stay. Job performance is the primary determinant of the former decision; whereas, job attitudes influence the latter'. If an organisation performs poorly during the socialisation process, the organisation increases the risk of job dissatisfaction and will miss an opportunity to build loyalty and encourage employment engagement among new employees (Fyock, 2012).

Literature Review Conclusion

An effective socialisation processes ensure all aspects of the recruitment, selection and socialisation process are streamlined and present the same message throughout the process (Fleck, 2007). Organisations that 'value its staff, and the investment it takes to hire them, view the socialisation period as critical' (Knight, 2013 p.159). Organisations should embrace and promote a successful socialisation process as it involves one of the most important and underutilised assets, their staff. The socialisation process is a source of fresh ideas and new perceptions that can promote innovative and creativity in an organisation improving their competitiveness. In this chapter, the literature regarding organisational socialisation and employee engagement was reviewed.

Based on the Knight (2013) and Cable et al (2013) research mentioned in the literature review there is a relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement. As the related literature indicated, several studies have carried out investigations on the impacts of socialisation and this study aims to explore whether a relationship exists between the socialisation process and employee engagement. In theory there is a possibility that both aspects are linked together.

Research Question

The purpose of this research is to investigate whether the socialisation process affects employee engagement levels. Does the socialisation process influence workplace attitudes and stimulate employee engagement (Welch, 2011)? The research will use the National Socialisation survey and Gallup's Q12 questionnaire to answer the stated research question and test the hypothesis.

This area is important to study given the socialisation process is the 'most critical time period for getting new hires onboard and engaged' (Saks and Gruman, 2011 p. 398). An effective socialisation encourages employees to be their best self. In return this will improve their 'relationship with colleagues, [which will lead] to greater satisfaction, lower stress, less emotional burnout, stronger job performance and greater employee retention' (Cable, 2013 p. 335). If organisations fail to socialise their new employees, the organisation has to start from the beginning again. The recruiting process can be time-consuming and costly, emphasising how important a successful socialisation is for an organisation (Cable, 2013).

This study attempts to analyse the following research question:

Does an organisational socialisation process influence employee's engagement levels? The research will compare the results received from the employee socialisation survey and employee engagement survey and investigate if a correlation is present.

Previous research has established that employee engagement levels contribute to employee satisfaction and commitment (Perrot et al., 2014). Saks (2006) and Shuck (2011) have indicated that high levels of employee engagement results in a significant reduction of employee turnover. Empirical evidence suggest that the presence of high levels of engagement enhance job performance, commitment, productivity and citizenship behaviour (Christian et al., 2011; Rich, LePine, & Crawford 2010). Finally, high levels of engagement have been associated with higher levels of profit and organisation growth (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009).

From the research mentioned above, it is clear that employee engagement has an impact on organisations activities, this research aims to discover whether the socialisation process can improve or hinder employee's levels of engagement. Lewis et al., (2012) states that there is a clear link between employee engagement and the socialisation process; ' Engagement requires an employee to openly seek meaningful relationships with others, and socialisation encourages the process to build those relationships and attempts to support the integration of that employee into the company's culture' (p. 41).

The researcher will test the hypothesis;

There is a positive relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement levels.

As mentioned above previous research has stated a direct link between the socialisation process and employee engagement. If an employee experiences a good socialisation process will this lead to higher levels of employee engagement and vice versa if an employee experiences an inadequate socialisation process this will result in low levels of employee engagement. Originally the new employee was responsible for their own socialisation process, it has now moved towards being the responsibility of the organisation itself, co-workers and managers (Korte, 2009). As mentioned in the literature review the aspect of individual and organisational antecedents of employee engagement will affect to what extent the socialisation process has on employee engagement levels. Are the antecedents applied and driven by the organisation, for example, the socialisation process? Or does the individual antecedents of employee engagement have a greater effect on engagement levels (Wollard & Shuck, 2011).

Finally, the research will explore the company's socialisation process and its effectiveness on engagement levels through different job functions: office based and non-office based employees. Harter et al. (2002) examined employee engagement at a business level. Harter et al. (2002) assumed that organisation either had or didn't have engaged employees. The research revealed that this was not the case, the results discovered that levels of employee engagement differed in separate business units.

Additionally, the research will assess whether employees with different length of service duration achieve the same levels of engagement based on their socialisation experience.

In summary, the purpose of this study is to examine and investigate the relationship that exists between the socialisation process and employee engagement. Numerous research studies have been carried out on organisational socialisation but a limited amount of research has focused on the entire process. Kramer (2010, p. 10) stated 'much of the research is descriptive, consisting of typologies and explanations, but lacking any coherent theoretical perspective to explain the overall process'. Allen (2006, p. 251) recommended that future research was conducted to analysis 'the work group, department, facility, or organisation' and assess they effects they can have on socialisations outcomes. The outcome of these critical questions will help investigate the socialisation process and what effect it can have on employee engagement. The research will contribute not only to an improved theoretical account of the socialisation processes of integrating a new employee into the organisation but provide practical solutions that employers can use to ease the transition phase for both the organisation and employees.

Methodology

This section will describe each part of the research framework enabling the reader to understand how the research question is answered and the hypothesis tested. An exploratory study was carried out to establish if there is causal relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement. Statistical tests such as correlation will be conducted in order to present a clear view of the relationship. This section will state the measurement tool chosen for the research and the reasons for choosing that type of measurement. The author will outline the procedure of the study, outlining how the sample was selected and stating what was required from the participants. The role of the researcher will be defined and the author will explain the measures put in place to ensure the research was credible and conducted ethically. Finally, a description of how the data was collected and analysed will be presented.

Research Design

The research will use the regulatory perspective that is considered to be less judgemental and critical. The regulatory perspective is concerned with understanding why an organisational problem is occurring and suggests recommendations under the current structure of an organisation. The research will discover whether there is a problem with employees engagement levels and offer practical solutions within the current structure of organisations socialisation process (Saunders et al., 2009). The approach will work within the organisations existing state of affairs and the study will offer suggestions of how to improve within the current framework of the organisation (Saunders et al., 2009). The challenge associated with this approach is the assumption that 'organisations are rational entities, in which rational explanations offer solutions to rational problems'(Saunders et al., 2009 p.120).

The research will use a deductive approach as it is 'concerned with the context in which such events were taking place' (Saunders et al., 2009 p.144). An important aspect of the deduction approach is the concepts need to be operationalised. As discussed in the literature review, employee engagement constitutes of 'an individual

employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organisational outcomes' (Shuck & Wollard 2010 pp. 103). The definition of organizational socialisation as expressed in the literature review as, how a new employee adjusts to their new environment and how they 'learn the behaviours, attitudes and skills necessary to fulfil their new roles and function effectively as a member of the organisation' (Saks et al., 2006 p.414). It is important to choose the appropriate research approach as it impacts, how the data is collected, and the application of controls used to ensure data validity and the selection criteria for the research sample. The deductive approach tends to construct a rigid methodology. (Saunders et al., 2009). The author will use a quantitative approach to measure whether the respondent's experience of the socialisation process is associated with employee engagement levels. 'The survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach' (Saunders et al., 2009 p. 144). The reason for choosing a quantitative approach of a survey will be described and justified later in this section.

The data will be collected and analysed using a formal, systematic process to test the following hypothesis: an employee that experiences a positive socialisation process is linked with higher levels of employee engagement. The statistics on the socialisation process and employee engagement are studied to look for associations between the variables. The dependent variable is engagement and the independent variable is the employee's experience of the socialisation process. Also, a cross-tabulation analysis will be completed to assess whether employees with different job functions achieve the same levels of engagement based on their socialisation experience (Fisher, 2007). In this case, the dependent variable is engagement and the independent variable is office based staff and non-office based staff and the employee's socialisation experience. Additionally, a cross-tabulation analysis will be completed to assess whether employees with different length of service duration achieve the same levels of engagement based on their socialisation experience (Fisher, 2007). In this case, the dependent variable is engagement and the independent variable is employees employed less than a year and greater than a year, and the employee's socialisation experience.

Research instrument

The survey strategy tends to be used for exploratory and descriptive research and is used to answer the 'who, what, where, how much and how many questions' (Saunders et al., 2009 p. 144). Additionally, surveys can be used for explanatory or analytical research which 'enable you to examine and explain relationships between variables, in particular cause and-effect relationships' (Saunders et al., 2009 p.362). Different types of questionnaires include; self-administered, interview administered and structured interview. The type chosen for this research is a self-administered questionnaire, where the questionnaire is administered electronically and the respondent answers the questions themselves. The justification for choosing this type of questionnaire is the relationship between the researcher and the respondents. The researcher knows and works with the respondents and feels that this type can reduce the answers being contaminated or distorted. The choice of questionnaire was also affected by the resources available, there was limited time to complete the data collection phase and the ease of automation data entry was appealing.

An unstructured interview research method was not suitable for this research because the purpose of this research was to answer whether there is a link between the socialisation process and employee engagement. An unstructured interview can explore the general area of the socialisation process and employee engagement but there is no predetermined list of questions, making it difficult to answer specific questions about the topic (Saunders et al., 2009). A different type of interview may have been suitable for this research for example a structured interview, with identical set of questions enabling a collection of quantifiable data (Saunders et al., 2009). Due to the time constraints of the study and the researcher wanting to receive data from a large proportion of the research population, the survey method was selected. Listed below are the advantages and disadvantages associated with using a survey to collect data.

Advantages of using a Survey

The advantages of using surveys is that it allows the collection of a large amount of data, in a small duration of time in an economically way (Saunders et al., 2009). The data collected can be gathered in a systematic manner, ensuring the data gathered reliable and valid. Company X will use the survey as a starting point to assess and benchmark employee levels of engagement within the organisation (Macey et al., 2009).

Disadvantages of using a Survey

The disadvantage of using a survey is the researcher is depended on receiving information from others which can delay the progress of the research (Saunders et al., 2009). The limitations of using employee engagement surveys are that the researcher relies on the participants to self-evaluate their engagement levels and socialisation experience. Past research has indicated that employees can be self-bias when evaluating their behaviours, especially about absenteeism and performance. Finally, measuring the organisations engagement levels as a whole is associated with problems because no single approach implemented will improve all employees' engagement levels. For example, improved supervisor support may not be sufficient to employees that require job security to improve engagement levels (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Also, you are asking participants for their opinions but you are not asking the reason participants hold these opinions (Saunders, 2009).The researcher introduced strategies to try reduce the disadvantages associated with the survey approach. In the case of relying on others to complete the survey and increasing the like hood of time delay, the researcher ensured plenty of time for the participants to complete the survey and collection of the data. The researcher is aware that a survey is a snapshot of employee engagement levels and acknowledges there is fluctuation and movement in engagement levels over time (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). For that reason, the research survey will be a starting point for the organisation and will measure engagement levels throughout the employment lifecycle. Additionally, the company should use a different research approach such as a focus group to discover the reasons employees hold these opinions. After the researcher analysed different quantitative approaches available

and implementing strategies to reduce the effects associated with using a survey, the researcher is confident that the appropriate research method was chosen for the research.

Authors have stated that it is extremely difficult to produce an effective questionnaire that collects the precise data required to answer your research question (Bell, 2005; Oppenheim, 2000). For that reason, the researcher will measure both the employee's engagement levels and their socialisation process experience by using published questionnaires. The researcher will use Gallup Q12 Survey, to assess employee's engagement levels in their workplace (Harter et al., 2012). The research will use the National Socialisation Survey to measure the employee's experience of their socialisation process (Haueter et al., 2003).

Research Method

The research method is a replication of the Gallup Q12 and the National Socialisation Survey. Gallup Work Place Audit consists of 12 items that are considered to represent the journey of employee engagement, taking the employee from the moment an employee enters a role to the moment the employee is fully engaged in a role (Bhatnagar, 2007). Based on the advice expressed in Saks and Gruman (2011) research, the study will provide a complete test of Kahan (1990) engagement model by using Gallup 12 questions questionnaire. The research will use all of the 12 items present in Gallup Q12 questionnaire. The NSQ consists of 16 items for the organisation, 16 items for group and 11 items for task socialisation. All the items in the scale focus solely on the knowledge and understanding of the task, trying to ensure that the constructs of task socialisation and job performance are not interlinked (Haueter et al., 2003). Responses are made using a 5 point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) (Colin Fisher, 2007). Both surveys can be reproduced for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission. Please see Appendix C for a copy of the research survey used which consists of all the items from the Gallup Q12 Survey and the National Socialisation Questionnaire.

Operational Variables

The theoretical framework will guide the study's results and conclusions and for that reason it is essential to choose an appropriate theoretical framework. The operational definition of employee engagement will be measured by the score received on the Gallup Survey. The proposed study will use both Kahn (1990) and Forbringer (2002) theoretical frameworks to discuss and examine the different variables and stages of engagement. Luthans and Peterson (2002) study suggests there is a conceptual fit between Gallup Workplace Audit and Kahn's (1990) theoretical framework. Each item relates to one of Kahn (1990) physiological conditions of meaningfulness, psychological safety and availability that promotes engagement. Similarly, each item is associated with Forbringer (2002) four stages of engagement, "What do I get?", "What do I give?", "Do I belong here?" and "How can we all grow? Using those frameworks, the research will try determine whether the socialisation process compliments those elements and stages presented by Kahn (1990) and Forbringer (2002).

The socialisation process has been broken into two dimensions the organisation and the individual. The organisation describes the information and knowledge one gains about the norms and values of the organisation. Whereas the role is described as the responsibilities the newcomer is granted and the learning associated with knowing the organisations members and their expectations. Haueter et al., (2003) National Socialisation Survey was designed to assess the socialisation process. The literature has identified task/job, organisation, workgroup and role as important features of the socialisation process. Task socialisation refers to the acquiring the knowledge about your job and understanding the tasks associated with your role. Haueter et al., (2003) advocates that newcomers should have an understanding of their role and this should be assessed during the socialisation process. The examples items include 'I understand how to perform the tasks that make up my role'.

Sample

The objective of this research is to examine levels of engagement and socialisation experience among employees employed by a global pharmaceutical company located in Ireland. Company X requested for the research to be carried out, in discover whether new employees levels of engagement improve based on their socialisation process. Company X employees over 300 employees. The study aims to obtain a representative sample of Company X population. This will be achieved by asking only the employees of Company X to participate in the study. No casual or contractor employees of Company X were asked to participate in the research. To be able to participate in the research, employees must be employed by the company for over three months but less than two years.

In the case of this research it was possible to 'collect and analyse data from every possible case or group member; this is termed a census' (Saunders et al., 2009 p.210). Data can be collected from the entire population because the entire population is a manageable size. There is no budget or time constraints preventing the researcher to survey the entire population. A survey will be sent to all eight two employees who have entered Company X during the period of 2013-2015. There is no consensus regarding the precise length of service, it is important to select a time frame that enables respondents to recall there socialisation experience. Due to the small sample size available the sample had to include employees who had been employed by the Company for two years (Allen, 2006).

The median averages for the sample were as follows; 30.95 years of age for females and 35.70 years of age for males. The sample was 65 per cent men and 35 per cent female. New employees entered predominantly across the staff level of the organisations three level hierarch. The sample was 64 per cent office based employees and 46 percent non office based employees.

Procedure

Physical access to the organisation was granted by the HR director. Please see appendix A, for a copy of the email sent to company's X Human Resource Director. Strategies used to gain access to the participants included, the researcher was familiar

with and understood the organisation and used existing contacts in the organisation. The researcher provided a clear account of the purpose of the study by an explanatory email and briefly discussing the study with participants at their induction day (Saunders et al., 2009). The author distributed 82 questionnaires across two sites. Out of 82 questionnaires distributed in 2 locations, we received 62 surveys and 61 surveys containing complete data, yielding a response rate of 74%. All employees were emailed and asked to visit a website where they would find an online survey. The survey contained six demographic questions, the 35 NSQ questionnaire (Harter et al., 2003), and Gallup's 12 questions questionnaire (Harter et al., 2012). Participants were given three weeks to complete the survey. Follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents two weeks after the initial email was sent.

An exploratory email accompanied the email sent to each participant, please see appendix A. The exploratory email described what the study is about and gave some information about the research and the value of taking part in the study. The consent from the participants was granted through them deciding to answer the survey; this was highlighted in the exploratory email that all participants received (Fisher, 2007; Saunders et al., 2009) 'Completion of the questionnaire will be viewed as consent to participate in the study'. Anonymity and confidentiality was to be granted to each participant. Confidentiality and anonymity was to be granted through distributing the survey by using Lime Survey ensuring no names being collected.

Measures

The employee's socialisation process experience was measured using a 43 items scale developed by Harter et al., (2003). Employee engagement was measured using the 12 items scale developed by Gallup (Harter et al., 2012). Participants provided responses on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores on the scales represented higher levels of engagement and positive socialisation experiences and lower scores represented low levels of engagement and negative socialisation experience.

Gallup Q12 Survey

The Gallup Q12 Survey is a well-established and a suitable instrument to measure levels of employee engagement. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) defined a fully engaged employee as one who could answer yes to all 12 questions on Gallup's workplace survey. The Gallup Q12 has been proven to be a reliable and a valid measurement instrument of employee engagement (Harter et al., 2012) and the following studies have used the Gallup Q12 survey; J. Bhatnagar (2007), Luthans & Peterson (2002), and Kompaso & Sridevi (2010).

Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire (NSQ)

Haueter et al., (2003), developed the Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire (NSQ) based on previous literature. The measure is based on the socialisation theories of Schein (1968) and Feldman (1981). The components of the survey are 'organisational socialisation, group socialisation, and task socialisation' (Haueter et al., 2003 p.23). The aim of the survey is to gain knowledge regarding the appropriate behaviours associated with each of the dimensions. Haueter et al., (2003) assess the socialisation factors within three different levels, the whole organisation, the team/department and the role. The research acknowledges the importance of assessing socialisation at each level because it is essential that new employees to learn the history, value, goals and language of both their organisation and department. The previous research that measured the primary outcomes of socialisation lacked standardisation and a valid scale (Haueter et al., 2003 p.21). One of the shortcomings associated with previous research on the socialisation process is the continuous use of Jones (1986) scale (Saks et al., 2006). This is a concern for the following reasons, the relatively low attention paid to the psychometrics of the scales and the reliability of the scales has been low and varied (Saks et al., 2006). Also, many studies have previously used a shorten version of Jones (1986) scales, for example Cable & Parson (2001). Those studies that used a shorten version of Jones (1986) presented the poorest reliability (Ashford &

Saks, 1996). Haueter et al., (2003) research highlighted three specific concerns associated with previous studies; the inconsistency of measuring different levels of analysis, the majority of the focus on knowledge with limited coverage of the role and 'lack of differentiation between task socialisation and job performance' (Haueter et al., 2003 p.22). The research is addressing those concerns by using the NSQ developed by Haueter et al., 2003. Haueter et al., (2003) provided research evidence indicating that the scale is psychometrically stable and sound. The scale used two psychometric studies to assess the construct validity of the new measures (Haueter et al., 2003). To ensure content coverage and validity they used three subject matter expert groups and 'conducted two studies to examine the psychometric properties of the new measure (Haueter et al., 2003 p.24).

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the research is credible there was an emphasis on the research reliability and validity. 'Reliability refers to the extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings (Saunders et al., 2009 p.156)' Robson (2002) states four possible threats to reliability. The first is the subject or participant error, this can be controlled by ensuring your participants complete the research during neutral time. In the case of this study this was controlled by allowing the participants to choose the time they complete the survey and having a long time to complete the survey (3 weeks). The second threat may be subject or participant bias, this threat has been reduced by ensuring the anonymity of the respondents to the questionnaires. The third threat is there may have been an observer error, a highly structured survey has reduced this threat to reliability. Finally, the threat of observer bias, the way in which the researcher interprets the data (Saunders et al., 2009).

Validity of the study is concerned with whether there is a relationship between the two variables, employee engagement and the socialisation process. Cronbach's test

will be carried out to ensure the internal consistency and the results reach the satisfactory level of greater than 0.70 (Fisher, 2007).

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher was involved in the organisation and participants involved in the research have been told they are being studied. In this type of research, the role of the researcher is called a judge. The role of the researcher is that of the practitioner researcher, as the researcher is currently working in the organisation. The advantage of a practitioner researcher role is that they know the complexity of the organisation. Fisher (2007) highlights that the participants being studied can give their honest and open point of view to the researcher. On the other side, some of the people may feel uncomfortable and uneasy telling the researcher exactly how they feel and, therefore, modify their answers (Fisher, 2007). It can also be a disadvantage as you can have assumptions and preconceptions about the organisation. 'This can prevent you from exploring issues that would enrich the research (Saunders et al., 2009 p.151)'. Another disadvantage is due to the researcher's familiarity of the organisation, they are unlikely to ask basic questions that they feel they already have the answers too. There is no easy fix for the above problems stated but the researcher is aware of these threats and will keep them in consideration when collecting and analysing the data (Saunders et al., 2009). As a researcher in the organisation, there may be a temptation to apply pressure to others cooperate. The participants will not be pressured to complete the survey and the researcher understands their right to privacy and will respect any participant who refuses to participate in the research (Cooper & Schindler, 2008).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher submitted an ethical review application form to the National College of Ireland research ethic committee before starting the research. The researcher read and followed the ethical guidelines and procedures set by the National College of Ireland. Approval was granted after the literature review and the research

instruments were drafted (Fisher, 2007). The researcher sent an email to all participants with a link to complete the survey. The survey was accompanied by an explanatory email and contact details to ask further questions if required. All participants were debriefed briefly during their induction process. The information gained from the research will be confidential and anonymous.

Analysis

The data collected was analysed 'quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics' (Saunders et al., 2009 p. 144). Data was collected from all departments and levels of seniority. The study will analysis the data by using descriptive statics to provide a summary of the sample population by measuring and illustrating the results of the simple graphic analysis.

The data collected was analysed to discover whether there is a relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement. SPSS will be used to produce the P-values to test the probability that the null hypothesis is true. The null hypothesis reflects a state of affairs where there is no relationship between a positive employee experience of the socialisation process and levels of engagement. Small P-values (lower than 0.05) indicate that the null hypothesis is probably wrong. Thus, the alternative hypothesis may be correct. To reduce the chances of the P-level been lower than 0.05 and rejecting the hypothesis of a relationship existing between the socialisation process and levels of engagement. The type of errors that can occur when making inferences from samples include Type 1 and Type 11 errors. Type 1 error refers to saying that there is a relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement and that was not the case. Type 11 error is the opposite stating that no relationship exists between two variable when it does. To reduce the chances of making a Type 1 error the study will set the significance level to 0.01 rather than 0.05 (Fisher, 2007).

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

As with all research studies, the study has limitations. First is the modest sample size of sixty two. Replicating the results in a larger sample would increase confidence in the results (Perrot et al., 2014). The sample is a representative of the population of Company X. All respondents came from a single Company representing one industry. A limitation of the study is the sample does not represent the whole population and further data collection is required from different industries to allow for the sample to represent the whole population (Saunders et al, 2009). For future research an analysis of different samples would produce a theory that is generalisable to all populations. To test the robustness of the conclusion I would recommend a follow up study.

It is difficult to establish validity because of the many overlapping constraints of engagement. As discussed in the literature review, there is no clear definition of employee engagement (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Employee engagement has similarity to employee commitment and organisational citizen behaviours (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010)

The researcher failed to collect data at entry level that would define the early perceptions of newcomers (Bauer & Green, 1994). Similarly, prior learning will increase the newcomer's competency for completing tasks, allowing the new-comers to have a positive socialisation experience (Bauer & Green, 1994). As mentioned in the literature review the aspect of individual antecedents of employee engagement have been given very little attention in the literature. Considering the effect, the individual personality and factors can impact an employee's life inside and outside of the workplace. Future research is required to assess this aspect further and what variables contribute to employee engagement. Wollard & Shuck (2011 p. 437) used the example, 'is it possible to hire people who are predisposed to being engaged?

Results

The aim of this study was to examine whether the socialisation process affects levels of engagement have in the sample population. To date, previous studies have examined the effects levels of engagement in the context of established employees within their organisation. To make a contribution to the literature by examining the role of the socialisation process has on employee engagement.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.901	12

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.964	35

Table 2

'It is generally accepted that a Cronbach Alpha value in excess of 0.70 is a sufficient value to infer internal consistency and reliability between survey items' (Lambert & Darcy, p.41). In this case, our employee engagement scale exhibits an alpha value of 0.901 as shown in Table 1 and our socialisation scale exhibits an alpha level of 0.964 as shown in Table 2. This exceeds the predefined levels, therefore it can safely assumed that the test items measured illustrate significant evidence of internal consistency and reliability.

Descriptive statistics

Firstly, the research will calculate descriptive statistics of the sample, illustrating the average engagement and socialisation levels based on gender, length of service and type of position.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Engagement	62	1.33	4.92	3.8105	0.73817
Socialisation	61	1	4.97	4.0155	0.78251
Valid N (listwise)	61				

Table 3

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for the researcher’s variables, socialisation and engagement. From this it can be seen that the mean engagement levels of the sample was recorded at 3.8 (on a scale of 1 to 5) (78%) with a Standard Deviation of 0.74. To conclude, it is evident that the employees in the organisation were positively engaged and were effectively socialised into the organisation.

The average levels of socialisation was recorded at 4.0 (on a scale of 1 to 5) (80%) with a Standard Deviation of 0.78.

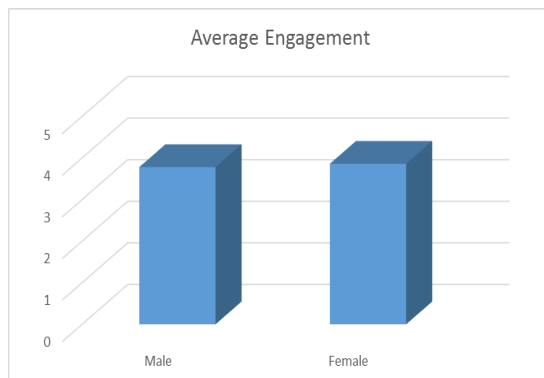


Figure 1

Figure 1 depicts a Bar Chart representing levels of engagement across gender. The average engagement levels for females is 3.86 and for males is 3.78. Thus, there is only a minor difference between male and females in their average levels of engagement. The vertical axis represent the average levels of engagement and the horizontal axis represents the gender.

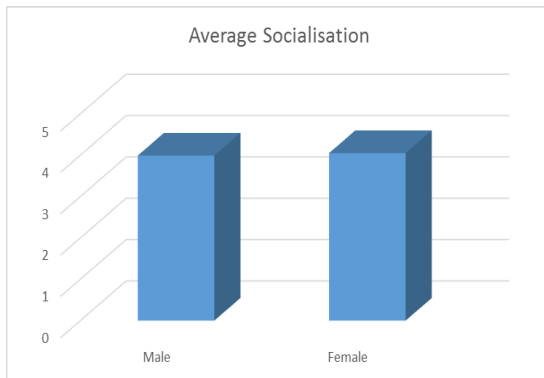


Figure 2

Figure 2 depicts a Bar Chart representing levels of socialisation across gender. The average socialisation levels for female is 4.05 and for male is 3.99. Again males and females do not differ strongly in their average levels of engagement. The vertical axis represent the average levels of engagement and the horizontal axis represents the gender.

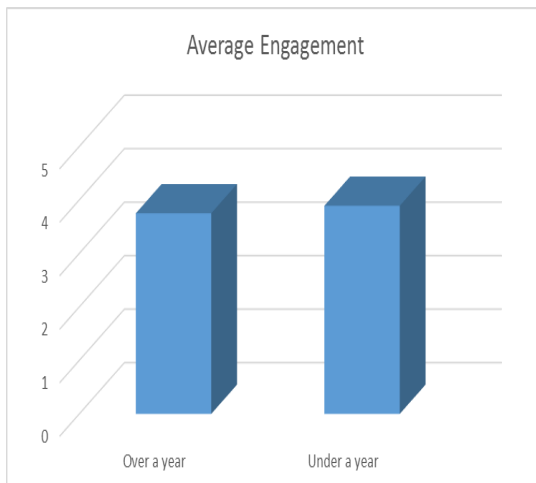


Figure 3

Figure 3 depicts a bar chart representing levels of engagement across different lengths of service. The average engagement levels for employees employed in the company for over a year is 3.75 and for employee employed in the company for less than a year is 3.89. Only a minor difference was noted between the two groups. The vertical axis represent the average levels of engagement and the horizontal axis represents the employee's length of service.

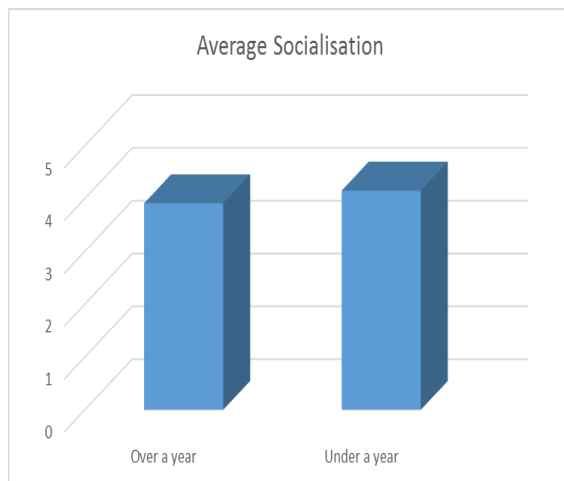


Figure 4

Figure 4 depicts a bar chart representing socialisation levels across different lengths of service. The average levels of socialisation for employees employed in the company for over a year is 3.91 and for employee employed in the company for less than a year is 4.15. The vertical axis represent the average levels of engagement and the horizontal axis represents the employees' length of service.

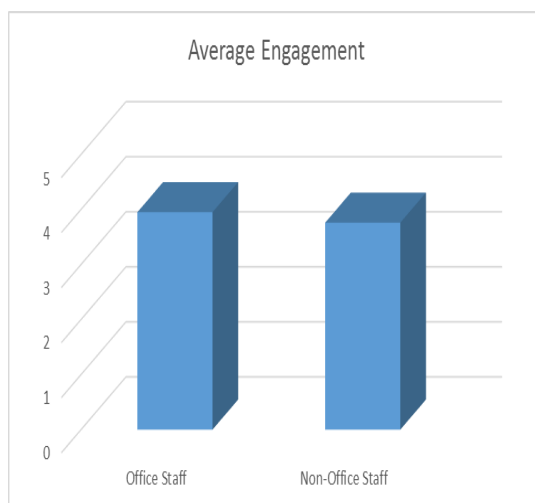


Figure 5

Figure 5 depicts a bar chart representing levels of engagement across employee types (office base and non-office based employees). The average engagement levels for office based employees is 3.95 and for non-office based employees is 3.76. The vertical axis represent the average levels of engagement and the horizontal axis represents the employee's length of service.

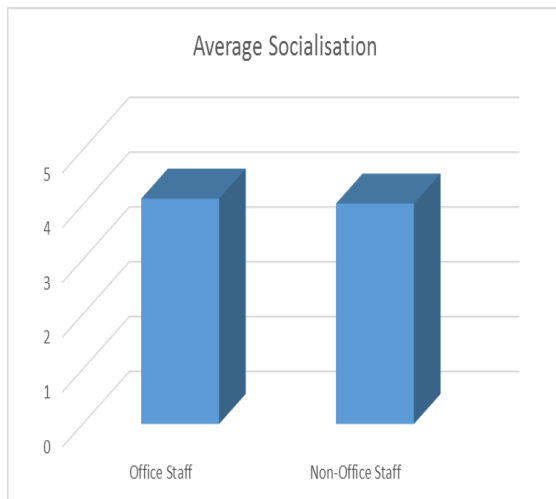


Figure 6

Figure 6 depicts a bar chart representing the employee type (office base and non-office based employees) and their socialisation levels. The average levels of socialisation for office based employees is 4.11 and for non-office based employees is 4.02. There is a very small difference between the two groups in their average levels of engagement. The vertical axis represent the average levels of engagement and the horizontal axis represents the employee's length of service.

Inferential Statistics

		Correlations				
		Engagement	Company Socialisation	Role Socialisation	Department Socialisation	Socialisation
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	0.767**	0.736**	.784**	.686**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	62	61	57	60	61
Company Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.767**	1	0.694**	0.820**	0.764**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	61	61	57	60	61
Role Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.736**	0.694**	1	0.857**	0.919**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	0.000
	N	57	57	57	57	57
Department Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.784**	0.820**	0.857**	1	0.946**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		.000
	N	60	60	57	60	60
Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.686**	0.764**	0.919**	0.946**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	61	61	57	60	61

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

Table 4

Table 4 illustrates correlations among employee engagement and the socialisation process. The level of employee socialisation is significantly positively correlated with levels of employee engagement. Table 4 presents a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.68$) between levels of engagement and levels of socialisation. The higher the levels of socialisation the more engaged employees are. This correlation is statistically significant at a level of $p < 0.01$. If the p-value is less than 0.05 we reject the Null Hypothesis in favour of the Alternative Hypothesis, positive employee perceptions of the socialisation process is associated with higher levels of employee engagement.

In this case we reject the null hypothesis and infer that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there is a strong positive association between higher levels of socialisation and increased employee engagement levels.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.686 ^a	.470	.461	.53529

a. Predictors: (Constant), Socialisation

Table 5

Linear Regression analysis was performed to test whether or not levels of socialisation predict engagement levels. Levels of socialisation significantly predicted levels of engagement ($F= 52.36 p < 0.01$). The R^2 figure displayed in Table 5 reveals the strength of this association and indicates 47% of the variances in employee engagement levels is accounted for by their of levels socialisation. In this case there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there is a strong positive correlation between higher levels of socialisation and increased employee engagement levels.

Correlations

		Engagement	Company Socialisation	Role Socialisation	Department Socialisation	Socialisation
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	0.600**	0.682**	0.693**	0.486**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001	0.000	0.000	0.009
	N	28	28	27	27	28
Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.600**	1	0.593**	0.662**	0.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001		0.001	0.000	0.005
	N	28	28	27	27	28
Role Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.682**	0.593**	1	0.800**	0.878**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.001		0.000	0.000
	N	27	27	27	27	27
Department Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.693**	0.662**	0.800**	1	0.924**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	27	27	27	27	27
Socialisation	Pearson Correlation	0.486**	0.515**	0.878**	0.924**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.009	0.005	0.000	0.000	
	N	28	28	27	27	28

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

Table 7

Correlations

Control Variables			Role Socialisation	Engagement
Department & Company Socialisation	Role	Correlation	1.000	0.273
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	0.044
		df	0	53
Engagement		Correlation	0.273	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.044	.
		df	53	0

Table 8

Correlations

Control Variables			Engagement	Department Socialisation
Company & Role Socialisation	Engagement	Correlation	1.000	0.170
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	0.215
		df	0	53
Department Socialisation		Correlation	0.170	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.215	.
		df	53	0

Table 9

Correlations

Control Variables			Engagement	Company Socialisation
Role & Department Socialisation	Engagement	Correlation	1.000	0.272
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	0.045
		df	0	53
Company Socialisation		Correlation	0.272	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.045	.
		df	53	0

Table 10

As expected, all three socialisation dimensions were positively related to employee engagement. Partial correlation analysis was performed in order to test the unique association of these socialization dimensions with employee engagement. Both the role ($p < 0.04$) and the company ($p < 0.04$) dimensions are uniquely correlated with employee engagement when controlling for other aspects of socialisation. The results illustrate that it is aspects of shared features of the Role, Company and Department socialisation that correlate with engagement. This is reported in tables 8, 9 and 10.

Tests of Normality^a

	Type	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^b			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Socialisation	Office	0.169	28	0.039	0.776	28	0.000
	non-office	0.128	32	0.199	0.908	32	0.010

a. Soc is constant when Type =. It has been omitted.

b. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 11

Employees in different job types were surveyed as it is likely that they would experience different socialisation processes. To examine this issue with the organisation, the author sought to compare levels of socialisation across different job types. Firstly a test of normality was conducted to investigate if the assumptions for using a t-test was met. The Shapiro-Wilk test in Table 11 indicates that our data is non-normal and therefore the assumption of normality is violated ($p < .05$). For this reason Mann-Whitney U test was conducted with socialisation levels as the dependent variable and the type of job role (office based staff and non-office based staff) as the independent variable. Table 12 illustrates there is a small, non-significant ($U=388$, $p=0.38$) difference between office based and non-office based employee's engagement and socialisation levels. In addition there was no difference between office and non-office based employee's level of socialisation impacting their levels of engagement.

Test Statistics^a

	Soc
Mann-Whitney U	388.500
Wilcoxon W	916.500
Z	-.882
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.378

a. Grouping Variable: Type

Table 12

Tests of Normality

	Duration	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Socialisation	Less than a year	.110	25	.200*	.965	25	.531
	More than a year	.197	36	.001	.805	36	.000

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 13

Employees with different length of service were surveyed as it is likely that they would experience different socialisation processes. To examine this issue with the organisation, the author sought to compare levels of socialisation across length of service. First a test of normality was conducted to investigate if the assumptions for using a t-test was met. The Shapiro-Wilk test in Table 13 indicates that our data is non-normal and therefore the assumption of normality is violated ($p < .05$) the over a year group. For this reason a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted with socialisation levels as a dependent variable and the length of service (less than a year and over a year) as the independent variable. Table 14 illustrates there is a small, non-significant ($U=418.5$, $p=0.64$) difference between less than a year and over a year employee’s engagement and socialisation levels. In addition there was no difference between office and non-office based employees regarding their level of socialisation impacting their levels of engagement.

Test Statistics^a

	AvgSoc
Mann-Whitney U	418.500
Wilcoxon W	1084.500
Z	-.462
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.644

Table 14

Discussion

The present study sought to explore the relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement. This section will discuss and analysis the study's results by referencing them against previous studies results. The researcher will state the studies implications and limitations. Steaming from these analyses, the researcher aims to guide future research on the socialisation process and the impacts it can have on employee engagement. Finally, the study will identify practical recommendations for organisation in regards to improving their socialisation process.

As mentioned in the literature review many studies have indicated that positive employee outcomes are associated with the socialisation process (Greenberg & Baron, 1993; Saks et al., 2007; Saks & Ashford, 1997). For example, new employee adjustments have 'been associated with outcomes such as performance, job attitudes and retention' (Bauer et al., 2007 p. 710). The first study to integrate the areas of newcomer engagement and socialisation was Saks & Gruman (2011), 'Getting newcomers engaged: the role of socialization tactics'. The study tested the relationship between 'socialisation tactics and newcomer engagement' (Saks & Gruman, 2011 p. 395).

This study tested whether new employee's levels of socialisation are associated with the outcome of employee engagement. Both organisational socialisation tactics and HR practices could influence the new employee's level of socialisation and could influence their levels of engagement (Wang et al, 2015). The results from this study do support a positive relationship in which the independent variable (socialisation process) is related to the dependent variable (engagement). In this case we reject the null hypothesis, suggesting there is a strong positive correlation between high levels of socialisation and increased employee engagement levels. The study's results differed from previous research by Saks & Gruman, (2011) that did not find positive associations between the socialisation tactics and newcomer engagement. Lewis et al.,

(2012 p.50) states that the socialisation process can share information with employees that can be linked to employee engagement, 'communication channels and key contacts, development and training opportunities' and what is expected within their role.

After exploring the results of the socialisation and employee engagement surveys, there are several key themes or patterns that have emerged, the dimensions of the socialisation process, the relationship between length of service and socialisation outcomes and the type of position.

Socialisation Process dimensions

The socialisation process is generally broken into dimensions. Haueter et al., (2003) believes the socialisation has been broken into two dimensions, the organisation and the individual. Ashforth et al., (2007) and Cooper-Thomas & Anderson (2007) defines three key dimensions socialisation dimensions, the job or the role, the work group or department and the organisation or company. In this study we used the Newcomer Socialisation Questionnaire (NSQ) which incorporates the three dimensions 'organisational socialisation, group socialisation, and task socialisation' (Haueter et al., 2003 p.23). An example of an item included as part of the organisational socialisation section is 'I know the structure of the organisation (e.g, how departments fit together)'. An example of an item included as part of the task socialisation is 'I understand how to perform the tasks that make up my job'. An example item included as part of the group socialisation section is 'I understand how to behave in a manner that contributes with my work group's values and ideals'. The results revealed that all three socialisation dimensions were positively related to employee engagement.

The results illustrated that the company socialisation was uniquely correlated with engagement when controlling for other dimensions of socialisation. May et al, (2004) supports this finding stating that, if an individual feels they fit into an organisation they

are more likely to associate greater meaning to the job and become more engaged. To build on this point, if new employees experienced positive social interactions with organisational insiders this them to learn and adapt to their new organisations values and settings (Cable & Parsons, 2001). However, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) found that the new employee's knowledge was ranked of least importance on the company domain, which can significantly reduce the importance of the company in the early stages of the socialisation process. Alternatively, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) study said that the new employee's knowledge was ranked of highest importance in the department domain. In the present study we found that department socialisation was not uniquely correlated with employee engagement when controlling for other aspects of socialisation. Previous research has stated the opposite, that department socialisation is extremely relevant and important in the successful socialisation of new employees (Anderson and Thomas, 1996).

Similar to the company socialisation dimension, the role dimension was uniquely correlated with engagement when controlling for aspects of socialisation. The finding supports research by May et al (2004) who stated that role fit is significantly related to employee engagement levels. This was also demonstrated in the Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) results which stated that five months after the new employee joined the organisation their knowledge was ranked of highest importance in the task/role domain.

The relationship between length of service and socialisation outcomes

The length of time it takes a new employee to adjust to their new organisation has been a concern for socialisation researchers (Bauer et al., 2007). The socialisation process is defined as a learning process and therefore it would be expected that an employee would have higher levels of socialisation the longer they have been employed in the organisation (Haueter et al., 2003).

Major et al (1995) found that new employees experienced socialisation outcomes 4 weeks after they entered the company. Similarly, Bauer and Green (1994) suggested

after three weeks of entering the company new employees experience socialisation outcomes. Bauer & Green (1994) indicated that there is little known about the socialisation process after 6 months of entry. Bauer et al., (2007) study included new employees who had been in a new organisation for 1 months or less. Jones (1986) respondents completed their survey five months after joining the organisation and the reason for this chosen time period was to capture the new employees responses after they have experienced their socialisation process. The time frame wasn't defined in this study; the respondents represented employees that joined the company three months ago to two and half years ago.

In the present study the author found no significant difference in socialisation levels between participants who had been employed in the company for over a year and those who had been employed under a year. However, there was a small difference in socialisation levels between this two groups, those who had been at the company longer scoring slightly lower than those who had been there under a year (3.91 v 4.15). It is possible that the author failed to find statistical significance due to the relatively small sample size tested. According to Saks and Ashford (1997) the effects of the socialisation process weakens over time as a result of newcomers adjusting to the organisation, this could explain the results presented from the participants employed in the company for over 1 year compared to employees employed less than a year. Saks et al (2006, pp.430) results presented that 'in all cases, stronger relationships were found for employees on the job less than six months'. Bauer et al, (2007) agrees, noting that correlations have a tendency to decline in magnitude over longer periods of time. Feldman (1976) disagreed and stated that both general satisfaction and mutual influence increases steadily as the new employee goes through the socialisation process.

Type of positions in the organisation:

The author predicted there would be a difference between the effects the socialisation processes would have on employee engagement levels based on their job type. The

study explored the relationship between office based and non-office based employees. The results revealed that there was a small but non-significant difference between office based and non-office based employee's engagement and socialisation levels.

Potential Limitation

As with all research studies this study has limitations. Three potential limitations of the present study were identified; the sample size, the studies procedure and the fact it didn't take into consideration the type of newcomer.

Firstly, the modest sample size of 62 was a limitation. If the study was replicated with a larger sample, it would increase the confidence and reliability of the results. The study captures the employee's perception to their own engagement and socialisation experiences. The researcher attempted to control for bias by guaranteeing respondent anonymity and asking participants to answer the questions honestly. The limitation of measurements relying on self-report is that there is a risk of 'potential bias, inaccuracy and common method variance' (Saks & Ashforth, 1997 p. 259). Bauer and Green (1994 p.22) noted that 'when individual perceptions and attitudes are determining employees' responses to work, self-reports should be valid and a useful source of data'. Additionally, it is important to recognise a selection bias in the study because engaged employees are more likely to do a survey, therefore the results are likely to present employees with high levels of engagement.

Secondly, a potential limitations of this study is that the socialisation process and engagement were measured at the same point of time. It could be suggested that the relationship between the socialisation process and employee engagement might be inflated because respondents answered the survey on the same day (Allen, 2006). The data was collected at a single point of time, which raises the question about the direction of causality. Predications were based on the logic that organisations socialisation process would affect employee's engagement levels. However the author cannot rule out the explanation that high levels of engagement improve employee's organisational socialisation experience. To confirm casual directionality an experimental design or a collection of longitudinal data is necessary (Kim et al, 2005)

Thirdly, the researcher did not take into account the importance new employee's individual differences have on the socialisation process. Although the pre entry stage is not a focus of this research it is important to state that the new employee's experiences can influence the socialisation process and outcomes (Allen, 2006). It is important to acknowledge that not all new employees have the same degree of uncertainty when entering an organisation. Ashforth, (2001) proposed that new employee transitioning from school would have a great degree of uncertainty compared to employee's transitioning from one job to another job. On the other hand, employees who are transitioning from an organisation already have established ways in conducting their tasks and may find it difficult accepting new ways (Bauer et al, 2007). Kahn (1990) stated that new hirers with greater confidence and self-efficacy feel more secure in their role allowing them to be physiologically engaged. Similarly, Jones (1986) suggested that new employee's levels of self-efficacy will directly impact socialisation outcomes. A new employee's previous knowledge and experiences of dealing with the unknown will influence how they deal and respond to their new working environment.

Another individual variable that can affect the socialisation process is the new employees previous work experience. Both Bauer and Green (1994) and Saks (1994) reported that new employees previous work experience provides them with the skills and confidence to perform tasks and to be innovative. The study did not take into consideration the new employees previous work experience.

Future Research Directions

Limitations were expressed regarding the studies sample size and research method. Future research should consider performing of an experimental study, allowing researchers to more rigorously test claims of cause and effect (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Another research method that could be used is a longitude design, in which newcomers respond to several surveys during their socialisation process (Bauer & Green, 1994).

Additionally, the study did not take into account individual variables. The study recommends that future research is carried out in the area of individual variable's before they start the new position. Several variables have been found to affect the effectiveness of socialisation practices. Pre entry variables may strongly affect new employee's response to the socialisation process (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). For example employees level of engagement, work experience and level of qualifications. I recommend that future studies measure these variables before new employees enter the organisation. Future studies should measure the initial levels of engagement, their prior work experience and educational qualifications. Much more empirical work is needed in this area.

In the proposed study I only focused on the affect the socialisation process had on employee's levels of engagement. There are many other types of proximal and distal adjustment outcomes that may be impacted by the socialisation process. From this analysis the research provided that there is a link between the socialisation process and employee engagement. Further research should examine what is the strongest predictor of adjustment by measuring Jones (1986) six bipolar socialisation tactics. They should be measured separately and not as an entire identity which was done of this study Jones (1986) argued that the strongest predicator of adjustment was the social tactic because it represents and facilities the learning process. The second strongest tactic is the content tactics and the third strongest is the context. This research will help guide organisations on where to allocate organisational resources for the socialisation process.

As mentioned in the literature review chapter, socialisation tactics have been classified as either institutionalised or individualised. The researcher recommends that future research examine further the difference affects between institutionalised and individualised tactics have on new employee's engagement levels. As also recommended by Bauer et al., (2014) the researcher suggests that further research should be carried out to discover whether levels of employee engagement are impacted depending on the socialisation approach the organisation uses.

Implications for Practice

Employee turnover is a critical issue for organisations (Allen, 2006). The socialisation process and employee engagement should directly reduce employee turnover. Organisations should think of the socialisation process as a method to improve employee engagement. From a practical standpoint, organisations should incorporate engagement tactics in the socialisation process to ensure their investment in human capital is given a greater chance of being successful. By working to generate levels of engagement early on, organisations can enhance the newcomers learning, in addition to the other positive associations of high levels of engagement (Bauer et al., 2014). Designing a socialisation programme that promotes the engagement of new hirers, will contribute to the well-being of employees, as well as the organisations effectiveness and competitiveness (Saks and Gruam, 2011).

As suggested by Cable & Parsons (2001), organisations should introduce training programmes for first level managers to develop and improve the socialisation process for new employees.

In summary, the study predicted that socialisation process would be positively related to engagement levels of new employees. The research found strong correlational in the results for such an association. Inferential statistics revealed that there was no significant difference in socialisation levels across different job types or durations of employment. Haueter et al (2003) suggested that further research is required to explore other variables that are known to be related to the socialisation process.

Conclusion

An engaged employee is aware of the business context and works with colleagues to improve performance within their job for the benefit of the organisation (Robinson et al., 2004). Given the importance of employee engagement and the fact that levels of disengagement among employees is increasing (Bates, 2004), it is important for companies to promote employee engagement from the start of the employee's journey (Kompaso & Sridevi, 2010). Robinson et al., (2004) defines engagement by the attitude employees have towards their organisations and whether they value their organisation. Employee engagement has become business focused (Robertson and Cooper, 2010).

The overall aim of the research was, to explore whether there is a correlation between the socialisation process and levels of employee engagement. In order to clarify the above, research was undertaken in an Irish pharmaceutical company to explore the socialisation of employees and whether it effected their levels of engagement. The primary and secondary data were analysed and discussed. The following themes emerged from the research:

- Employee engagement can be positively influenced by the socialisation process.
- Our results revealed that new employees were more likely to report high levels of engagement when they experienced high levels of socialisation.
- Finally, the results from the study suggested that type of job role and length of service did not impact their levels of engagement based on their socialisation process.

In conclusion, the present study extended the literature on socialisation outcomes by examining whether the socialisation process affects employees levels of engagement. It is suggested that future research be conducted across different sectors and larger organisations. These settings will procedure results that will agree or disagree with the findings of the study. In addition, future research should reflect on the individual differences of new employees and clarify the effect it could have on their socialisation process and engagement levels. A longitudinal research might shed some light around this topic.

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Bibliography

Appendix A: Request for approval

Email to the Company's HR Director and President.

I am currently studying a MA in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland. I am conducting a research project as part of my studies entitled 'An exploratory analysis of employee experience of the socialisation process and its impact on employee engagement levels in an Irish Global Pharmaceutical Company'. The research project is being overseen by Dr. Colette Darcy, Vice Dean of Postgraduate Studies & Research.

I am emailing you to ask for your permission to invite 70 employees of Takeda Ireland Ltd to participate in my study by completing a questionnaire online. The questionnaire will include questions from Gallup 12 Questions Questionnaire and the Newcomer Socialization Questionnaire. At no point will the name of the Company or any information offered as part of this study be attributed directly to the Company. Please find attached a copy of the survey and an information sheet that I plan to use for my research.

The purpose of the research study is to assess employee's perceptions of the on-boarding process and the potential impact it may have on employee engagement levels. The research will examine whether positive employee perceptions of the on boarding process can be linked to higher levels of employee engagement. In addition, the research will assess whether employees of differing demographic characteristics hold different perceptions of the on- boarding process and whether that affects their levels of engagement.

As a member of the HR Team, by conducting this research I will gain additional knowledge and an awareness of corrective procedures which could be used to enhance the on-boarding process in Takeda Ireland.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my research with you and would be happy to provide any further information you may require in order to make a decision. Thank you for your time and I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards,
Ashleah McGee

Appendix B: Participants Information Sheet

An exploratory analysis of employee perceptions of the socialisation process and its impact on employee engagement levels in an Irish global pharmaceutical Company.

My name is Ashleah McGee and I am conducting a research project on the on-boarding process and whether it affects employee engagement levels. The definition of the on-boarding process is where new employees acquire knowledge about their new organisation and adjust to their new job, roles, work groups, and the culture of the organisation in order to participate successfully as an organisation member. This happens in the organisation during the first six months of employment.

I'd be very grateful if you could take five to ten minutes out of your day to complete this survey. Please see link below. The project is being carried out as part of my studies with the National College of Ireland and is being overseen by Dr. Collette Darcy.

At no point will your name or any information offered as part of this study be attributed directly to you. The data will be securely stored until such time as the research project has been marked and the results released at which time all data associated with the project will be permanently deleted. Completion of the questionnaire will be viewed as consent to participate in the study.

As a participant of the study please note the following;

- All participants must be 18 years of age or older.
- Participants should only complete the questionnaire once.
- The study has been approved by the National College of Ireland Ethics Committee.

If you could let me know when you have completed the survey, I would be extremely grateful. Should you have any questions or require any further information about the research please feel free to contact me at x13103075@student.ncirl.ie

Many thanks,

Ashleah McGee



National College of Ireland

On boarding and Engagement Research Questionnaire

This research seeks to understand the on boarding process and whether it affects employee engagement levels. A number of questions are outlined below, some of which may appear unnecessary but each has been selected for a specific purpose and it is important that you answer each question.

All responses will be treated anonymously and no reference will be made to you in the final analysis undertaken. **The questionnaire itself should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.**

In the following section, please select the appropriate answer to each of the following questions. **All responses will be treated anonymously.**

Section A			
1	Are you male or female?	Male	Female
2	What is your age?	16 – 18	19 – 25
		26-35	35 – 45

		46 – 55	56 – 65
3	How long have you worked for the Company?	Under a year	Over a year
4	What level of education do you hold?	Junior Certificate or equivalent	Leaving Certificate or equivalent
		Certificate	Diploma
		Bachelors Degree	Masters Degree
		Other	
5	What level of position do you hold in the company?	Staff Level	Executive Level
		Manager Level	

Please indicate the extent to which you **agree or disagree** with ***each*** of the following statements in the following sections by **selecting** the appropriate number using the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Moderately Disagree

3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree

4 = Moderately Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Example

**	King crisps are my favourite crisp	1	2	3	4	5
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If you hate King crisps then you would circle the 1. If you love King crisps then you would circle 5. However if you have no real opinion on King crisps you would circle 3 and so on.

Section B		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
1	I know what is expected of me at work.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work	1	2	3	4	5
3	At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day	1	2	3	4	5
4	In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work	1	2	3	4	5
5	My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person	1	2	3	4	5
6	There is someone at work who encourages my development	1	2	3	4	5
7	At work, my opinions seem to count	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
8	The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.	1	2	3	4	5
9	My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work	1	2	3	4	5
10	I have a best friend at work	1	2	3	4	5
11	In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress	1	2	3	4	5
12	This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow?	1	2	3	4	5

Section C		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
13	I know the specific names of the products/services produced/provided by this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I know the history of this organisation (e.g., when and who founded the company, original products/services, how the organisation survived through times).	1	2	3	4	5
15	I know the structure of the organisation (e.g., how the departments fit together).	1	2	3	4	5
16	I understand the operations of this organisation (e.g., who does what, how sites subsidiaries and/or branches contribute).	1	2	3	4	5
17	I understand this organisations objectives and goals	1	2	3	4	5
18	I understand how various departments, subsidiaries, and /or sites contribute to the organisations goals.	1	2	3	4	5

19	I understand how my job contributes to the larger organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
20	I understand how to act to fit in with what the organisation values and believes.	1	2	3	4	5
21	I know this organisations overall policies and/or rules (e.g., compensation, dress code)	1	2	3	4	5
22	I understand the internal politics within this organisation (e.g., chain of command, who is influential, what needs to be done to advance or maintain good standing).	1	2	3	4	5
23	I understand the general management style (e.g., top down, participative) used in this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I understand what is meant when members use language (e.g., acronyms, abbreviations, nicknames) particular to this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5

Section D		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
25	I understand how my particular work group contributes to the organization's goals	1	2	3	4	5
26	I know my work group's objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I understand the relationship between my group and other groups.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I understand the expertise (e.g., skill, knowledge) each member brings to my particular work group.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I understand how each member's output contributes to the group's end product/service.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I understand what the group's supervisor expects from the work group.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I understand the group supervisor's management style (e.g., hands-on, participative).	1	2	3	4	5
32	I know my work group role	1	2	3	4	5

33	When working as a group, I know how to perform tasks according to the group's standards.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I know the policies, rule, and procedures of my work group (e.g., attendance, participation).	1	2	3	4	5
35	I understand how to behave in a manner consistent with my work group's values and ideals.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I understand the politics of the group (e.g., who is influential, what needs to be done to advance or maintain good standing).	1	2	3	4	5

Section E		Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
37	I know the responsibilities, tasks and projects for which I was hired.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I understand how to perform the tasks that make up my job	1	2	3	4	5
39	I understand which job tasks and responsibilities have priority.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I understand the expertise (e.g., skill, knowledge) each member brings to my particular work group.	1	2	3	4	5
41	I understand how to operate the tools I use in my job (e.g., voicemail, software programs).	1	2	3	4	5
42	I know who to ask for support when my job require it.	1	2	3	4	5
43	I know who my customers (internal and external) are	1	2	3	4	5
44	I know how to meet my customer's needs.	1	2	3	4	5
45	I know when to inform my supervisor about work (e.g., daily, weekly, close to deadlines, when a request is made).	1	2	3	4	5
46	I know what constitutes acceptable job performance (i.e., what does my supervisor and/or customers expect from me).	1	2	3	4	5
47	In the course of performing my job, I understand how to complete necessary forms/paperwork (e.g., time sheets, expense reports, order forms).	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

Your contribution is highly valued.

Appendix D: Personal Learning

Reflecting on my dissertation experiences, I appreciate the amount of work and time involved in academic research and writing.

Before starting the MA in Human Resource Management, I had no experience in the sector and was quite nervous regarding my lack of knowledge and limited experience. Over the past year, I have worked with lectures and fellow students to prepare, develop and present various assignments helping me gain awareness and knowledge of the area of Human Resource Management.

My manager asked me to look into the area of employee socialisation in hope to improve the organisations retention levels and minimise the number of new employees leaving the company during their first six months employment. Therefore, my research topic was chosen for me and was directly associated with gaining information about the organisation. In hindsight, my research topic was broad and I could have narrowed my focus to a specific domain of the socialisation process, for example does employee's department socialisation experience affect levels of employee engagement?

The research method chosen for this research was a survey. I had practical experience of managing and administering questionnaires. Although the data collection was a survey, I analysed and gained knowledge about alternative research methods. The reason I chose the survey method was to gather as much information as possible in short space of time. If I had a longer time frame to conduct the research I would of surveyed employees before they started and during their socialisation process at 6 months and then again at 12 months.

Additionally, with the survey method, you are asking participants for their opinions but you are not asking the reason participants hold these opinions. A different research approach such as a focus group, to understand the reasons why employees hold these opinions would offer a further practical solution within the current structure of the organisations socialisation process.

As a result of my involvement in the organisation I already had a view and opinion regarding the results the study would present. This wasn't the case and therefore there was several lessons I learnt: my perception of the organisations socialisation process was not correct. In particular, I believed there would have been a difference between the socialisation and engagement among office and non-office employees.

I believe the knowledge I acquired whilst completing my dissertation will significantly help develop and progress in my career in Human Resource Management. I believe that my current understanding of the issues covered in my dissertation formed a solid foundation and knowledge of organisational socialisation and employee engagement.

Appendix E: Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library Form

Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: Ashleah McGee Student number: 13103075

School: School of Business Course: MA HRM

Degree to be awarded: MA HRM

Title of Thesis: An Exploratory Analysis of the Socialisation Process and its Impact on Employee Engagement Levels in an Irish Global Pharmaceutical Company

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (<http://trap.ncirl.ie/>), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate: _____

For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by _____ Date: _____

This signed form must be appended to all hard bound and electronic copies of your thesis submitted to your school