



**An Investigation into the High Turnover of Employees within the
Irish Hospitality Sector, Identifying What Methods of Retention
Should Be Adopted.**

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the MA in Human Resource Management



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Abstract

This research project seeks to determine the causative factors behind the exceptionally high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry. For a long time now, the Irish hospitality industry has been characterised by high numbers of employees opting to abandon their jobs. This translates negatively on the various companies in this crucial industry as they constantly have to spend significant amounts of resources on hiring new employees to replace the ones who have left. This is a costly procedure that is consuming potential profits for these companies. This project will identify the main reasons as to why more employees are quitting their job. To do this, the research will focus on getting vital insights from past hotel employees in the Irish hospitality industry. The decision to settle on this target population was based on the need to promote honesty in the responses provided.

The research project will also incorporate a comprehensive review of past literature on this topic. This will introduce the perceptions and opinions of other past researchers into the study. Moreover, these past researchers will contribute towards the topic through their literature. The quantitative research method will be utilised in this project to help further comprehend the research question. An ontology approach will also be adopted since human nature plays a major role in influencing the behaviour of employees in the Irish hospitality sector. In the end, three factors were determined to cause the high employee turnover rates in this sector. They include; low levels of employee motivation, inadequate wages and finally, work-life balance. These three factors have to be adequately addressed to boost the employee retention rates in the Irish hospitality industry. The research project has outlined a variety of recommendations that these companies should consider to make this happen, including, regular periodic training, better wages, employee recognition and much more.

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Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

In this continuously changing environment that is not only affecting the organisation but also the employees working in it, Human Resources Management has a vital role to play in managing the organisation resources and how employees are treated in the organisation (Hassan, Hassan, Khan and Naseem, 2011). Employees are an important asset to every company, business and organisation. In fact, the success of every company or business is entirely dependent on the effectiveness of its workforce (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). A business may invest a lot of resources into its core operations and activities, but without a highly effective human resource, success in the long run cannot be achieved (Ton and Huckman, 2008).

There are several ways through which a company or business may improve the effectiveness of their employees. This can be through periodic training programs, constant motivation in the workplace, employee empowerment, promotion and bonus programs, etc. (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). These strategies and activities often require a company to spend a significantly large amount of resources, to ensure that its employees are content with their jobs and work optimally to achieve the set organisational goals and objectives (Glebbeck and Bax, 2004). However, even with the above mentioned efforts, companies and businesses still face the constant threat of high employee turnover rates and thus low employee retention rates. These two factors greatly inhibit the success of companies and businesses as they rob them of their most prized assets, the employees (Ongori, 2007).

Employee turnover, basically means the percentage of employees who within a particular period of time opt to leave the company or business for other companies. This forces the company to replace them with new employees at an additional cost (Tracey and Hinkin, 2008). (Price 1977, p.15) also defines turnover as “The ratio of the employees of an organisation who left in a particular period of time with the average number of employees in that organisation during the same period of time”.

This is a great loss for the company, given the fact that it has spent a lot of resources to perfect the skills of these employees, only to have them leave the company and render their services to

competitors. A company with a high rate of employee turnover faces greater risks of failed performances in the long run (Tracey and Hinkin, 2008).

Conversely, employee's retention is a vital issue and challenge to all organisation currently, it remains a crucial issues for the organisation because of the costs associated with recruiting, selecting and training new employees (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman, 2010). Employee retention is the "effort by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet the business objectives" by keeping the right people on the right jobs (Frank, Finnegan and Taylor 2004: Hassan *et al.*, 2011). A successful company often has a high employee retention rate.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyse two important factors in the Irish Hospitality Sector. The first one is the high turnover rate of employees within this sector. This will be primarily done through focusing on past hotel employees in the Ireland and seeking vital insights on the employee retention rates within the industry. Emphasis will be on determining the underlying factors that lead to this presumed high turnover rate of employees in this crucial industry. These past employees will shed light on the trends in the hospitality sector in Ireland when it comes to the issue of employee turnover. They will provide a knowledgeable insight on what needs to be done to improve the employee retention rates.

The second factor that this study will focus on will be the determination of the various methods of employee retention that should be adopted to boost and sustain the high turnover rate of employees within the hospitality sector. As mentioned earlier, companies and organisations should strive to maintain high employee retention rates. This is extremely important in the hospitality industry, given the fact that people and companies often prefer to receive services from particular individuals with whom they have become accustomed to, over time (Nishii and Mayer, 2009). This study will therefore provide vital recommendations on the various methods which companies and organisations in the Irish hospitality sector can implement to boost their employee retention rates.

This study is highly important given the fact that most companies in the Irish hospitality industry are expending a significant amount of resources on the acquisition of new employees. In addition

to this, employees suffer greatly from the constant changes in their working environments. Finally, there is very limited information on this area of study. Most researchers have satisfactorily identified the existing problem of high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry, but very few of them determine the underlying reasons or offer vital insights on how this issue can be resolved (Ongori, 2007).

1.2 Background of the Irish hospitality industry

Ireland's strong economic growth from the onset of the 21st century was rudely interrupted by the global economic crisis in 2008, which impacted on all sectors of the economy, but particularly on the hospitality industry. According to a report by Ernst and Young, (2013) the hospitality industry in Ireland generated a turnover of approximately 7.8 billion Euros, which was a significant drop from the high of 9.7 billion Euros in 2008. The sharp fall was attributed to falling domestic demand due to growing unemployment, higher taxes, and lower disposable incomes as well as a fall in tourism numbers.

The hospitality industry is an industry that comprises of businesses that attend to guests away from home (Chon and Maier, 2009, p. 5). It includes a wide range of businesses, including hotels, bars, inns, lodgings and clubs, amongst others, each of which is dedicated to serving people away from home. Ireland has a well embedded pub culture, with bars, accounting for 34% of the industry in 2010, the largest sub-sector within the hospitality industry (Ernst and Young, 2013).

Hotels comprised of 27 percent of the industry within the same period, although this sub-sector suffered the largest decline in market share between 2008 and 2010. Restaurants made up 30 percent of the overall hospitality industry turnover for 2010, and this was the sub-sector that was affected the least by the recession (Ernst and Young, 2013).

1.3 The Significance of the Study

This research is of great significance as it will identify the various reasons why there are high employee turnover rates within the Irish Hospitality Sector. This research would be of interest to Management, Human Resource Managers of hotels in Ireland and in particular the Human Resource Managers in the hospitality industry. The organisations in this sector will be able to

identify the areas they should work on to reduce high employee turnover rate, thereby saving the resources spent in the constant replacement and training of employees. Employees will also benefit as organisations will focus more on developing a retention strategy to encourage employees to stay in the company through various incentives like motivation, empowerment, bonus programs, training and development and so on. The findings will be added to the existing literature in the area of employee's turnover and retention in the hospitality industry.

1.4 Structure of the research project

This research project will adopt the following structure, Chapter Two, the literature review will outline previous literature on employee's turnover and retention in the hospitality industry. It will discuss factors that contributes to high employee's turnover in the hospitality industry and retention strategy that can be adopted. Chapter Three will discuss the methodology used in collecting data and justify why this method is chosen. Chapter Four, analysis and findings, will analysed the data collected from the questionnaires administered and discuss the findings of the survey. Chapter Five will summarise the result of the survey and finishes with recommendations and suggestions for further study.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.0 Literature Review

This chapter will explore literature in the area of employee turnover and retention. It will review academic literature relating to the research question, factors that contributes to high turnover in the hospitality industry and outline different methods of retention available to employers. The first section reviews literature in the area of employee turnover in the hospitality industry and factors

that contributes to high turnover rate in the industry. The second section reviews past literature in the area of retention and outlines factors that can be employed by the organisation to retain staff. The hospitality industry is an industry that comprises of businesses that attend to guests away from home (Chon and Maier, 2009, p. 5). It includes a wide range of businesses, including hotels, bars, inns, lodgings and clubs, among others, each of which is dedicated to serving people away from home. Employee's turnover has been a crucial problem in the hospitality industry, some of the reasons cited for high turnover includes low compensation, inadequate benefits, poor working conditions, work life conflict and employee stress (Pouslston 2009, O'Neill and Davis 2011 and Hinkin and Tracey 2000). The hospitality industry is characterised by high mobility and abnormal working hours as well as frequent interactions with clients, which require top-notch customer relations and emotional labour by the employees. These industry characteristics have been cited as part of the reason the industry posts a relatively high rate of turnover compared to other industries (Mohanty and Mohanty, 2014; Shani, Uriely, Reichel, and Ginsburg, 2014). The high turnover, low retention and acute shortage of competent employees in the hospitality sector have significantly impacted the industry (Silva 2006).

2.1 Employee Turnover

The main research question investigates: Why there is a high turnover of employees in the hospitality industry and the measures that can be adopted to ensure employee retention.

“Employee turnover refers to the proportion of employees who leave an organisation over a set period (often on a year-on-year basis), expressed as a percentage of total workforce numbers” (CIPD, 2014). Armstrong (2012) defines employees turnover as the rate of people leaving an organisation he assert that turnover can be disruptive and costly to the organisation. (Griffeth and Hom 2001) however define turnover across three dimensions Voluntary, Involuntary and Dysfunction turnover. Voluntary turnover is initiated by employee while involuntary is initiated by the organisation due to an employee's poor performance or organisation restructuring. Dysfunction turnover on the other hand can be harmful to the organisation, when high performance or employees who are hard to replace leave the organisation.

A low rate of employee turnover is inevitable even when service conditions are almost perfect because some employees have to retire, move onto another organisation, or leave for other reasons

such as ill health, death, and personal reasons amongst others (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman 2010). This level of turnover is, however, not adverse to the organisation. A high turnover rate, on the other hand, impacts negatively on both the employees and the employers. For instance, high turnover of employees can cause the pool of entry-level employees to shrink, force the use of temporary employees, impact negatively on productivity and competitiveness, and impede skills development (Long, Perumal, and Ajagbe, 2012). Branham (2005) suggested that there are seven main reasons why employees leave a company:

- “Employees feel the job or workplace is not what they expected.
- There is a mismatch between the job and person.
- There is too little coaching and feedback.
- There are too few growth and advancement opportunities.
- Employees feel devalued and unrecognised.
- Employees feel stress from overwork and have a work/life imbalance.
- There is a loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders”.

Employee turnover can certainly be problematic and in some cases devastating for organisations however, developing and implementing effective evidence base guidelines for managing turnover requires that the parties involved e.g., the Human Resources Manager need to understand the impact of turnover on the organisation and how to manage employee turnover (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman 2010). Even when voluntary turnover rate drops due to unfavourable labour markets it would be short-sighted to ignore retention management for example there is evidence that high unemployment rates have little or no impact on the turnover of highly skilled employees or those in a demand skill set (Trevor 2001). When employees leaves the organisation its costs the organisation time and money to replace them, the total cost of which sometimes range from the 90%-200% of the annual salary for the position advertised (Mitchell, Holtom, and Lee, 2001). In addition to the obvious direct costs, there are a wide range of other direct and indirect costs associated with turnover, and organisations must attempt to avoid these costs at all times (Allen, Bryant and Vardaman 2010).

2.2 Causes of High Employee Turnover in Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry has one of the highest employee turnover rates of any industry, making the issue a serious challenge for organisations in this sector. In Ireland, a study by Ernst and Young

(2013) showed that employment in the hospitality industry hit its peak in 2008 at 162,000 employees, but by 2010 had dropped by around 11 percent, employing 145,000 individuals directly. The industry, in total contributed around 230,000 jobs to Irish employment in 2010, which comprised 13 percent of the total workforce in the country (Ernst and Young, 2013).

The high rate of employee turnover in the industry has been linked to the low-skill requirement in most of the entry-level positions in the industry (Taylor and Finley, 2010). The low-skill requirement implies that the employees in the entry jobs receive poor wages and are also easy to replace. Wages in the Irish hospitality sector are, however, relatively high compared to other countries in Europe, with the report by Ernst and Young (2013) ranking the country's minimum wage second highest in the continent. However, while the high wages might be expected to contribute towards employee retention, they actually reduce the "flexibility of labour options for employers," whereby any drop in demand in the industry is met by laying off of some employees (Ernst and Young, 2013).

Work-life conflict has also been associated with the high employee turnover rate in the hospitality industry. In any industry, basically, work-life balance is an important factor that usually determines the satisfaction of employees with their work (O'Leary and Deegan, 2005). The hospitality industry however, is more associated with poor work-life balance (WLB) than other industries. Bloome, Rheede, and Tromp (2010) reported that work-life conflict contributed significantly to turnover intentions for employees within the hospitality industry. Their study cited lack of organisational support and dissatisfaction with the flexibility at the workplace as the main causes of the work-life conflict.

The same trend has been reported in all parts of the world. In India, for instance, a study of the Indian hotel industry linked the abnormal and ever changing working hours, quality of health, and the pressure culminating from multiple roles as the main factors that contribute to poor WLB in the hotel industry (Mohanty and Mohanty, 2014). Other studies have also cited WLB as an influential factor in the decision of employees within the hospitality industry to change career (McGinley, O'Neill, Damaske, and Mattila, 2014; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005).

While it is assumed that female employees are the most affected by this factor due to their responsibility of bringing up children, particularly following birth, a study by Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, and Grady (2012) implied that work-life balance is a concern for all kinds of employees at different stages of their careers and not a preserve of those with young children.

The hospitality industry is also characterised by high flexibility in work demands, which has also been linked to poor job satisfaction (Chiang, Birtch, and Cal, 2014). This is because employees are likely to be made redundant without much notice when the demand for services drops. Dissatisfaction with the progression of their careers is another important factor that contributes to the high employee turnover rate in the industry (McGinley *et al.* 2014). This occurs as employees usually consider work opportunities in this industry only as stepping stones to better opportunities in other industries and, as a result, they rarely get into the industry with the intention of remaining and building a career (McGinley *et al.* 2014).

The characteristics of the hospitality industry including the abnormal working hours, poor wages, and variability of demand also mean that the motivation of employee is likely to be poor. A study of hospitality workplaces by Poulston (2009) reported that the motivation of employees in the hospitality industry to work was more likely to be affected negatively by dissatisfaction with remuneration, their supervisors, and the general working conditions. The result of poor motivation influenced the decision to seek an alternative place of work.

The hospitality industry has also been cited for poor implementation of best human resources practices. Connolly and McGing (2007) conducted a study to investigate the level of implementation of high performance work practices in the Irish hospitality industry with particular focus on employee empowerment and the participation of employees in such practices. They reported that while the industry, particularly hotels, exhibited some of the HR practices linked with high performing work practices, the level of participation by employees was very low. This is a matter of concern as most of the literature in this field concludes that participation of employees is a key part of high performance practices.

Employee stress is also a common occurrence in the hospitality industry. Overloads, such as failure of technologies and interpersonal tensions in the workplace have been cited as the main causes of stress in the workplace and they can cause the employees to contemplate leaving their job (O'Neill and Davis, 2011). Additionally, the hospitality industry is also characterised by temporary employment, which is associated with negative outcomes, such as stress, work-life conflict, and limited control over working schedule (McNamara, Bohle, and Quinlan, 2011).

2.3 Factors Affecting Employees Retention

Employee retention is the “effort by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet the business objectives” by keeping the right people on the right jobs (Frank, Finnegan and Taylor 2004: Hassan *et al.* 2011). CIPD (2014) define “retention as the extent to which an employer retains its employees and may be measured as the proportion of employees with a specified length of service (typically one year or more) expressed as a percentage of overall workforce numbers” Retention is important for an organisation as it ensures that the organisation keeps hold of its best employees, thereby ensuring high productivity.

(Gberevbie, 2010) argued that if appropriate employee retention strategies are adopted and implemented by organisations, employees will surely remain and work for the successful achievement of organisational goals.

According to Olowu and Adamolekun cited in Das and Baruah (2013) “it is becoming more essential to secure and manage competent human resource as the most valuable resource of any organisation, because of the need for effective and efficient delivery of goods and services by organisations”. Thus, for an organisation to realise its goals, appropriate strategies for employee recruitment and retention are essential for enhanced performance (Das and Baruah 2013).

Walker (2001) “identified seven factors that can enhance employee retention: compensation and appreciation of the performed work, provision of challenging work, chances to be promoted and to learn, invitational atmosphere within the organisation, positive relations with colleagues, a healthy balance between the professional and personal life, and good communications”. Das and Baruah (2013) suggested that if these factors exist in an organisation the tendency of employee leaving the organisation is reduced. “Work environment, training and development, leadership and employee retention, promotion and opportunity for growth, compensation and rewards,

participation in decision making, work life balance and Job satisfaction. Kehr (2004) suggested that together all this might be taken as inviting employee engagement. If the above factors are present in an organisation it will not only help to attract new employees into the organisation but will also lead to the retention of existing employees in the organisation (Das and Baruah 2013).

2.3.1 Work Environment

Work environment refers to the working conditions in which employees have to perform their duties. These conditions include work schedules, reporting times, nature of supervisors, nature of work, and work flexibility among others (Lee, Back and Chan 2015).

Wells and Thelen cited by Das and Baruah (2013) “stated that organisations which have generous human resource policies, have a very good chance to satisfy and retain employees by providing them an appropriate level of privacy and sound control on work environment which enhances the motivation levels to commit with the organisation for the long term”.

Challenging work conditions can cause increased levels of burnout and job stress amongst employees, which can cause them to depart the organisation or industry (Kokt and Ramarumo, 2015).

On the other hand, employees’ satisfaction with their work environment is likely to influence them positively and cause them to stay with the organisation. The employees are also likely to be more motivated and productive when they are happy with their work conditions. Considering the abnormal working hours and fluctuations in demand associated with the hospitality industry, an ideal work environment for employees can include an environment that empowers the employees and “allows them to meld personal and work relationships and accommodate special needs” (Timothy and Teye, 2009, p. 33).

2.3.2 Training and Development

Training and development affects jobs satisfaction and organisation commitment which in turn affect staff retention, an organisation that provides inadequate training increases staff turnover and threatened quality standards and profits (Pouslston 2008). Previous research by Govaerts, Kyndt,

Herman and Baert (2011) has shown that learning and development is an important retention strategy establishing and supporting learning and working organisation is beneficial to the organisation. Training of new employees ensures that they are comfortable in their new work environment and reduces the chances of the employees getting frustrated in their new position (Lashley, and Best 2002). Research by Costen and Salazar (2011) shows that employees who feel they have the chance to develop new skills through training and development in the workplace are more satisfied with their jobs and are, as a result, more likely to remain loyal to an organisation. Garg and Rastongi (2006) on the other hand, suggested that in today's competitive environment feedback from employees is very important for the organisation and the more knowledgeable an employee becomes the better for them to perform to meet the global challenges of the market place. Dhār (2015), stated that training of employees also improves the output of the employees leading to higher quality services which improves the value of the employees to the organisation thereby improving the desire of the organisation to keep hold of them in the long term. (Handy cited in Das and Baruah 2013) mentioned that "proper innovation and assimilation of knowledge is essential for the survival in any work environment thus knowledge is the most expensive asset of any organisation".

2.3.3 Superior and Subordinate Relationship

The superior-subordinate relationship is, from an employee's perspective, the most important relationship in an organisation (Taylor, 2002). To a very large extent, this relationship, according to Taylor (2002) determines how happy and satisfied the employees are with their jobs and work environment, how good their prospects of career development are within the organisation, and the quality of their day-to-day experiences in the workplace. Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2002) argued that supervision from the immediate manager increases the level of job satisfaction in the public sector employees. Paille, Grima, and Bernardeau, (2013), suggested that trust in a superior and perceived support from superiors increases the probability of employees to stay within an organisation whereas, a poor or non-existent relationship, increases the chances of voluntary resignation by the employees. Leadership style can affect organisational commitment and work satisfaction positively and work satisfaction can affect organisational commitment and work performance positively. (Hanaysha *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.4 Career Development

“Career development involves creating opportunity for promotion within an organisation by providing opportunity for training and skills development that allows employees to improve their employability in the market” (Meyer and Smith, cited in Das and Baruahm, 2013).

Career development ensures that an employee is successful in their career resulting in career satisfaction. The performance of employees is likely to be better when they perceive the opportunities for career development within their organisation or industry is high (Das and Baruahm, 2013). Additionally, organisational support for career development has been associated with a reduction in voluntary exit by employees as they are likely to perceive career development opportunities within the organisation as high (Kraimer, Seibert, Wayne, Liden and Bravo 2011). Talented employees are required to maintain a competitive advantages and employees want career growth to develop and rise on the career ladder. Such methods include advancement plans, internal promotion and accurate career previews at the time of hiring (Prince, 2005).

2.3.5 Communication

There are various aspects of communication that can impact on the employees’ desire to stay or leave. These include; regular staff briefings, easy access to communicate with the manager, and intercommunication among all employees (Jones, 2002). Regular staff briefings or communication through newsletters have been shown to have the biggest impact on employee retention (Jones, 2008). At a reasonable level of communication, employees, according to Das and Baruah (2013) feel involved in organisational decisions and are clear about the organisation’s strategic direction. Noah (2008) suggested that employee’s involvement in decision making helps in creating a sense of belonging amongst employees which in returns creates a good working environment and contributes towards building a good employee- employers relationship. Lack of communication leaves employee feeling disconnected from the organisation.

2.3.6 Work-life balance

Work-life balance has become a major issue for both employee and employer, lack of balance between work and non-work activities is related to reduced psychological and physical wellbeing

an example of this is working during the weekends which has been linked to stress and emotional exhaustion for employees (Hughes and Bozionelos 2007).

Work life balance has been viewed to pertain to individuals especially woman who are in corporate employment and have family obligations (Parasuraman and Simmers, 2001; Hardy and Adnett, 2002). However, work life balance is also a key issue for men due to the problems caused by inability to balance work and non-work life which may cause dissatisfaction, job turnover and absenteeism in their job (Hughes and Bozionelos 2007).

It is not only family issues that constitute work life balance any type of activities for example, hobbies that one desire to pursue outside ones work obligation pertain to work life balance (Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, and Grady 2012).

Flexibility in work can be achieved by moving employees between certain departments and nurturing interdepartmental cooperation, depending on work demand (Jones and Lockwood, 2002). This can ensure that employees are retained even when demand in their current departments drops.

Job flexibility would allow organisations to cope with the high fluctuations in demand, which is a characteristic of the hospitality industry (Jones and Lockwood, 1989) thus retaining employees in the organisation.

2.3.7 Benefits and Rewards

“Reward system consists of explicit policies practices and procedures which are organised and managed as a whole” (Armstrong 2008, p.133) rewarding employees makes them feel appreciated and wanted, which enhances their bond with the organisation. Rewards, therefore, play a role in retention of employees by making them feel wanted and motivated which in return leads to job satisfaction and a higher probability of staying within an organisation. (Jehanzeb, Rasheed, Rasheed, and Aamir, 2012). Organisations needs to understand the factors that determines the degree to which rewards satisfy people as this contributes to their motivation and engagement. (Armstrong 2008, p.134) rewards haves an enduring impression on employees which in turn gives the employees an impression that they are valued in the organisation (Silbert, cited in Das and Baruah 2013).

Conversely, the importance of employee benefits have grown over the decades, employees benefits are the membership based and non-financial rewards offered to attract and keep employees (Decenzo and Robbins cited in HungTsai, Don Yu and Yi Fu 2005).

Organisation benefits can be seen a means to meet organisation objectives, retain and attract good employees however, the operation of a benefits program can affect employees attitude and performance. (McCaffrey cited HungTsai, Don Yu and Yi Fu 2005) research conducted by HungTsai, Don Yu and Yi Fu (2005) suggested that employee benefits contribute to the firm productivity, thus enhancing labour efficiency the effect of benefits on organisation productivity is quite big and is significant.

2.4 Job Satisfaction

A study by Kara, Uysal, and Magnini (2012) outlines four main factors that determine the level of job satisfaction for employees within the hospitality industry. These are working conditions or environment, personal fulfilment, management conditions, and using ability in the job. Hanaysha *et al.*, (2012) on the other hand suggested that job satisfaction of employees often includes elements such as: the job itself, the relationship with the supervisor and co-workers, management beliefs, future opportunity, work environment, and compensation.

Good relations with co-workers and ideal working conditions are the most positive work aspects associated with job satisfaction, while unfair payment is the most negative aspect (Pelit, Ozturk, and Arslanturk, 2011). A positive correlation has also been found between organisational commitment and job satisfaction, while work-life balance has also been cited as an important influence on job satisfaction (Silva, 2006: Zhao, Qu, and Ghiselli, 2011). According to Zhou, Qu, and Ghiselli (2011) when work interferes with family or family interferes with work, the result is the same, which is less job satisfaction. In general, employees with limited work-life conflict tend to transfer positive aspects from their personal life to the workplace (Qu and Zhao, 2012).

Job characteristics and level of interaction also impact on job satisfaction (Ozturk, Hancer, and Im, 2014) as do a higher family dependence on the wages from the job and working part-time, which increase job satisfaction (Santa Cruz, Lopez-Guzman, and Canizares, 2014). Perceived

injustices at the workplace, low salaries, and poor working conditions also cause dissatisfaction with one's job (AlBattat and Som, 2013).

2.5 Improving Retention within the Hospitality Industry

While the causes of the high turnover rate in the hospitality industry have been investigated by numerous studies, there is limited literature on the efforts or methods that can be applied to reverse the trend and ensure the industry can hold onto its employees for longer periods. Judging from the literature on other industries, implementation of the retention factors discussed earlier can improve retention in the hospitality industry. Das and Baruah, (2013) proposes the use of employee rewards as a means of motivating them and getting the most from employee. Fair treatment of employees, including the use of reasonable work schedules and shifts can also enhance the motivation and loyalty of the employees. Future employee retention can also be enhanced by mentoring students on internships. Planning of internship programmes and industry involvement have been shown to be influential in the decisions of students on internship to stay within the hospitality industry following their graduation (Chen and Shen, 2012). Poor training has been linked with problems in the workplace, enhancing training and allowing employees to learn more and engage more in what they are good at can motivate them to stay within an organisation (Poulston, 2008: Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, and Baert, 2011). The addition of discretion to job content, training, and improvement of rewards have also been associated with positive moderations of the high variability in work demands associated with the industry, which, in turn, enhances the employees' job satisfaction (Chiang *et al.*, 2014). Finally, it is important for superiors to create a good work environment for employees where, amongst others, they recognise the skills and contributions of the employees. This enhances the trust of subordinates in their superiors and motivates them to stay within the organisation (Poulston, 2008).

2.6 Conclusion

The hospitality industry has one of the highest rates of employee turnover in most territories some characteristics unique to the industry, such as long and abnormal working hours, low-skill requirements in entry level jobs, high variability in work demand, and high potential for work-life conflict all contribute towards the high rate of labour turnover in the industry. The high rate is not

ideal for either employees or the employers. In the case of the employers, a high rate of employee turnover leads to additional costs required for recruiting and training new employees, as well as possible interruptions in service delivery. Employees, on the other hand, are likely to have poor morale due to job insecurities, particularly as most of the entry level jobs in this industry are tied to work demand. The job satisfaction of employees in this industry can be enhanced through the implementation of several employee retention factors which include; job flexibility, good relations between superiors and subordinates, facilitation of career development, training of employees, creation of a good working environment, recognition of the skills and good contributions from the employees, and good communication among co-workers and across the various levels in the workplace.

Chapter 3 Research Aims and Objectives

3.1 Research Objectives

This study will focus on three main research objectives. These will satisfactorily provide vital and conclusive information to paint a clear picture of the employee turnover and retention rates in the Irish Hospitality Industry.

Research Objective 1

The first research objective will seek to unveil the various factors that contribute towards the high employee turnover rates within the Irish hospitality sector. This will be done through a thorough study of past employees of hotels in the industry to determine what factors lead to the low retention

rates. Emphasis will be on establishing the various incentives that companies in this industry offer to their employees to encourage them to stay with the organisation (Nishii and Mayer, 2009).

Research Objective 2

The second research objective will be to relate the findings from the survey to the hospitality sector in general. This will provide a clear picture of the employee turnover and retention rates in the Irish hospitality sector. Emphasis will be on studying the various factors that generally affect the employee retention rates in the entire industry (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009).

Research Objective 3

The final research objective will be to identify some of the effective methods of retention that can be adopted by companies in the Irish hospitality industry to significantly reduce their employee turnover rates (Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen and Moeyaert, 2009).

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.0 Introduction

As stated in the first two chapters, this research project will entirely focus on conducting a thorough investigation on the high rates of employee turnover in the Irish Hospitality Industry. In addition to this, the research project will offer resourceful insight into what actions companies in the hospitality industry should take to improve their employee retention rate. To achieve these objectives, the appropriate and most suitable method of collecting data must be adopted. This way, the researcher will have accurate and reliable data to use in the analysis. In the end, accurate results will be collected and analysed to improve the low employee retention rates in the Irish hospitality industry (Ton and Huckman, 2008).

Research methodology involved a process through which information and vital data are collected for the sole purpose of deducing informed results during a piece of research. This process enables a researcher to access all information they need in a research to answer his or her research question (Kumar and Phrommathed, 2005). A lot of considerations need to be reviewed before settling on either a quantitative or a qualitative approach. To determine the best and most viable option, a complete review of the research question must be completed to determine exactly what the research requires. The type of information required also plays a crucial role in making this decision, the primary focus of this chapter will be to outline the research methodology that will be used in this research project. This will include the data collection methods, the research design and finally, the underlying reasons of why the discussed research methodology was adopted.

4.1 Research Philosophy

‘Research philosophy refers to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge’ (Saunders, Lewin, and Thronhill, 2009, p107). Research philosophy is generally a notion or belief held by a researcher over how data relevant to a particular research should be collected, analysed and put into use to deduce informed results in the long run.

There are three philosophical approaches that a researcher can adopt, i.e. *epistemology*, *ontology* and *finally axiology* (Crossan, 2003: Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p 110).

The epistemology branch of philosophy requires a researcher to critically investigate and determine the nature, origin and the underlying reasons behind the knowledge that human beings possess. It seeks to create a clear distinction between the underlying truth or false aspects of human knowledge (Williams, 2001). Epistemology involved two aspects positivism and realism. (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p112).

Ontology on the other hand focused more on establishing the nature of human beings and their relations with other aspects of the universe. Ontology has two aspects objectivism and subjectivism. “Objectivism represent the position that social entities exists in reality to social actor” while subjectivism represent the view that “phenomena are created from perception and consequent actions of social actors” (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p111) It seeks to comprehend how things come into existence and the forces behind this existence. (Buitelaar, Cimiano and Magnini,

2005). Finally, axiology studies “judgements and value” (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p116) seeks to understand the value of something. The emphasis is on establishing the value of a particular element in life, e.g. the value of a human being in the ecosystem (Rescher, 2004).

The researcher begin the research project with an open mind, focusing on the acquisition of the most accurate and reliable data, from which conclusions will be drawn. The researcher will adopt an ontology approach, this will therefore necessitate the adoption of the positivist notion based on the fact that the actions of these past employees are primarily determined by their human nature as well as the external influence they experience (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p111) Therefore a positive approach is most suited to guarantee the collection of the most relevant data. A positivist researcher basically believes in focusing on the quantitative research method. This means that the main goal is to analyse statistical data pertaining to the research subjects being observed. This includes factors such as the size, number etc. that are all measured to gather the final results. questionings and in-depth descriptions will also be required to fully comprehend why there are very low employee retention rates among companies in the Irish hospitality sector. All of these factors will play a crucial role in this research project (Crossan, 2003).

This research strategy adopted for this project is survey, “survey strategy is usually associated with the deductive approach, it is mostly used as they allow the collection of large amount of data from a sizable population in a highly economical way” (Saunders *et al* 2009, p 144). Survey is often used by administering a questionnaire and it is perceived by people as easy to explain and understand (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p 144).

4.2 Data Collection Method

Data collection method can either be quantitative and qualitative data, quantitative is used as a “synonym for any data collection techniques (such as a questionnaire or data analysis procedure such as graphs and statics) that generates or uses numerical data “ (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p 151) in contrast qualitative is used as a synonym for any data collection techniques such as an interview or data analysis procedure such as data that generated or use non numerical data” (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p 151).

To get the most accurate and reliable results, the researcher embarked on a variety of data collection methods from both primary and secondary source. The secondary source for this research includes literature review and previous research results. The benefits of using secondary data is that it's time effective as someone else has completed the survey and it is free. However, the primary source was through a questionnaire, this was used to gather vital information from the participants of this research project. The questionnaire used was tailor made for all targeted audiences to ensure that it delivered the correct questions whose answers the researcher would rely on, to make a solid and factual conclusion.

To access a wider audience, an online questionnaire was deemed appropriate as a data collection method. This was available to participants who had previously worked in hotels in Ireland. The major benefit of using questionnaires to collect information is the fact that the researcher gets feedback on the exact questions that was set in the questionnaire. The information is precise and to the point, thereby improving its efficiency in the research process. In addition to this, it is an inexpensive way of gathering information compared to other methods like interviews, where a lot of expenses may have to be incurred (Johnson and Turner, 2003). Also the researcher found questionnaires to be appropriate in reaching the target audience for this research as the respondents worked in hotels across Ireland and reside in different towns across Ireland. Although the researcher planned on conducting interviews, due to the limited time available none of the participants were willing to participate within the time frame. Therefore, this data collection method was not used. An interview is also quite effective in the gathering of data. It gives the researcher an opportunity to interact with the participants, thereby deriving all information required for the research. There is also immediate feedback and clarifications can be sought when needed. (Ton and Huckman, 2008).

4.3 Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire is a set of carefully selected questions, often with multiple choices, given to participants of a study or survey, to derive their feedback on a particular topic (Brace, 2008). There are several merits and demerits of using a questionnaire to gather data;

Advantages of questionnaire

First and foremost, a questionnaire is definitely cost effective. It can also be used to gather a significantly large amount of data from a big sample size in a relatively short period. This makes it highly effective in a large-scale research project. A questionnaire also often has minimal effect on the validity and reliability of the research process, given the fact that the participants only have to select their choices from a given set. Positivists have provided concrete proof ascertaining that questionnaires are the most preferred data collection methods when testing a hypothesis or creating new theories (Brace, 2008).

Disadvantages

One major disadvantage of questionnaires is that there is no way to determine whether the answers provided by the participants are true or not. In addition to this, questionnaires are mostly not taken seriously by participants due to their increased use in research projects (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009).

The researcher designed a questionnaire using an online software package, (surveymonkey.com) the questionnaire incorporated all of the necessary questions required to satisfactorily gather information relevant to the research question. It comprised of 10 questions. The first and the second question gather the demography information of the participant . This is an important aspect of the research process as there will often occur distinctions between the results deduced from the male gender compared to those of the female gender. Here, the participant was required to indicate either male or female. The second question sought to identify the age of the participant. It included five variables from which the participant were asked to choose from, i.e. 18-23, 24-29, 30-35, 36-40 and finally 41+.

The third question inquired more about the participant's previous job. Here, there were seven work-related statements and the participant were required to respond to them using five point Likert scale i.e. strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and finally strongly disagree. The fourth question used the same five variables from question 3 but focused on the remuneration and benefits packages offered by the company. There were four statements and the participant was required to respond to them using the five point Likert scale mentioned in question three. The fifth question also used the five point Likert scale but focused more on gathering information pertaining to the company. Here, the participant was required to respond to five statements.

Question six also made use of five point Likert scale and sought information about the participant's supervisor or team leader. There were seven statements that participant needed to respond to (Brace, 2008).

Question seven, eight and nine contain open end question. Question seven sought the opinion of the participant about his or her working experience. It asked the participant to list down what he or she liked most about working with his or her previous company. Question eight required the participant to state the reason which compelled him or her to work for his or her previous company. Question nine focused on negative perceptions held by the participant towards having worked with the previous company. It asked the participant to state what he or she least liked about working with his or her previous company. The tenth and final question gave the participant a list of motivational tools that would encourage him or her to continue working in a company and required him or her to state what tools he or she would prefer. A total of seven tools were provided ranging from increased pay, career advancement, improved training and development activities and much more. An 'others' section was also provided to allow the participant to include other motivational tools that would encourage him or her to continue working with a company in the Irish hospitality industry (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the [Appendix](#).

4.4 Questionnaire Administration

The questionnaires used in this research project were self-administered and completed by participants online. The researcher contacted friends and anyone who they knew had worked in hotels in Ireland and asked if they are willing to take part in the survey and asked them to send the link to their friends or colleagues who had worked in hotels through private emails or any means they deemed appropriate. Also, there was a link available on social network site (Facebook) asking for anyone who had worked in hotels in Ireland to participate in the survey. The selection of these methods was primarily based on the need for more diverse information pertaining to the issue of high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

For every research project, it is of great importance for the researcher to clearly manifest validity and reliability. Reliability refers to the "extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis

procedures will yield consistent findings” (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p158). Validity on the other hand is “concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about”. (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p158).

This is primarily because most research projects are used by students, other researchers and any other interested parties in the future to make sound conclusions pertaining to the topic of discussion. In this particular research project, the information derived from the study of past hotel employees in the Irish hospitality sector will be used by other students and key industry stakeholders in the future when studying past trends. Investors may also use the information contained in this research project to make informed business decisions. This clearly demonstrates the necessity of validity and reliability throughout the entire research project (Golafshani, 2003).

Reliability basically means that the results can be duplicated in the future if the same study is conducted under the prevailing conditions and parameters (Golafshani, 2003). The researcher must prove that these results adequately address the research question and that even if another study was to be conducted, the same results would be deduced. Validity on the other hand, pertains to the integrity of the results and conclusions drawn by the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). They must be ethical and display high moral standards, The questionnaire used in this research project was derived from formally tested questionnaires used by (Kirwan, 2014) when conducting a similar research. It was developed based on (Das and Baruah 2013) findings. Finally, all conclusions made were drawn on factual data derived from the data collected through the methods described earlier without any bias whatsoever (Hom, Mitchell, Lee and Griffeth, 2012).

4.6 Population of the Study

Population can be defined as the total number of a specific group of species or organisms which inhabit a specific geographic location. For example, the human population of a city defines the total number people living within the city. The species in this example is the human species and the specified geographic location is the city (Preston, Heuveline and Guillot, 2000). The target population for this research project was past employees of hotels in the Irish hospitality industry that were willing to participate. The main reason for this is because it is very easy for these employees to be honest about their opinions as there was no fear of retribution or other

consequences when responding to the questionnaire. This was the best approach given the fact that truthfulness and honesty will provide accurate results that relate to the Irish hospitality industry. These past employees were requested to fill the questionnaires to the best of their knowledge. This way, they provided vital data pertaining to the research project. The online questionnaire did an excellent job in reaching out to past employees through the internet. This encouraged more participation (Meier and Hicklin, 2008).

4.6.1 Sample

A sample is a pre-determined portion of the population used by researchers to provide vital data in a research. It is basically a statistical population consisting of research respondents and participants (Kotrlík and Higgins, 2001). As identified in the section above, the sample for this research project will be past hotel employees in the Irish hospitality industry.

4.6.2 Sample Size

Invites for participation were sent to all past employees who were voluntarily requested to render useful information to facilitate in the successful completion of the research project. In the end, 39 willing respondents provided the researcher with the relevant information needed to deduce conclusive results on the high employee turnover rates in the industry. Out of the 39 respondents, 42% of them were male, while the other 58% were female (Tuckett, 2004).

4.6.3 Sample Technique

Sampling techniques are probability and non-probability sampling. The sampling technique employed for this research project is non-probabilistic. Non-probability sampling provides a range of alternative techniques to select samples based on subjective judgement” (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pp. 233). This meant that the probability of attaining the sample used in this research was non-existent. It was purely voluntary. The researcher used several different techniques to obtain a sample this includes self-selection sample, purposive sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pp. 237). The researcher wanted to make the participation as voluntary as possible. This is was the reason why self-selection sampling was preferred. Self-selection sampling occurs when you allow individual the desire to take part in the

research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pp. 241). The past hotel employees in the Irish hospitality industry were presented with the opportunity to participate voluntarily in the research project.

This way, no coercion was used to get participants to participate. As a result, honesty was promoted when the past employees were filling out the questionnaires. Another sampling technique adopted by the researcher was convenience sampling this was adopted due to difficulty in access and limited time available for the research. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009, pp. 242) “Convenience sampling involves selecting those that are easiest to obtain for your sample”.

This sampling technique was adopted because it guaranteed voluntary participation as coercion often leads to the presentation of false data.. This boosted the validity and reliability of the results obtained throughout the data collection phase. (Bryman and Bell 2011).

Another technique used is Snowball sampling, this can be used for easy data collection if you are trying to recruit people who have to meet certain criteria to participate. (Bryman and Bell 2011) but the problem of bias is huge as respondents are more likely to identify other respondents who are similar to them. However, when sampling is difficult to identify snowball sampling may be adopted and used effectively (Saunders *et al.* 2009, pp. 240). The researcher employed this method using their initial contacts and asking them to recommend other people who had worked in the hotel sector. Through the snowball sample, the selection process was free of any coercion and participation was entirely voluntary. The researcher was able to obtain sufficient and reliable data.

4.6.4 Pilot Testing

Before conducting the survey a pilot testing was carried out. The primary aim of this pilot testing procedure was to ensure that data collection was accurate and that the data retrieved was reliable. This is important in promoting reliability and viability. The pilot test was conducted via an online survey available from the website www.surveymonkey.com with respondent from the Irish hospitality industry. The responded ascertained that the data collection methods were indeed viable and the data retrieved could be used to make solid and reliable results (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

4.7 Ethical Consideration

This research project put in place all measures to promote ethical behaviour throughout all activities. First and foremost, the researcher ensured that there was no bias at all during the selection procedure of the participants. This way, the results were unpredictable and highly reliable. Secondly, the participants were thoroughly protected. Their privacy was upheld throughout the entire process. The questionnaire did not require the participants to disclose any personal information. The responses were kept securely and all information will only be kept for the duration of the research and will be destroyed after, questionnaires were anonymous, the research was only for fulfilment of my Masters in Human Resources Management. All of these measures were taken to ensure that all ethical issues were considered (Gregory, 2003).

4.8 Bias

As with any research it is important to eliminate instance of bias, the researcher went into the research project with an open mind, however some of the questions asked and the interpretation of the data might constitute some bias. The researcher tried to eliminate instance of bias throughout all stages of the research.. Anonymity was upheld at all times (Sica, 2006).

4.9 Limitation of the Research

As expected, there are some limitations of this research project. One is the fact that it is centred on past hotel employees in the Irish hospitality industry. This limits the application of the results on the national scale as well as on the present times. The second limitation is that the sample size is definitely small given the fact that this study is set to identify the factors leading to high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry. If more past employees had participated in the research, more vital data would have been collected. However, even with a small sample, the results are still accurate and reflect the situation as it is in the industry (Reiter, 2010).

Chapter 5: Results and Findings

Presentation of Findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will focus on critically analysing the results obtained in this research. It will present the results in a systematic manner, making it easier for the researcher to gather conclusive and informed conclusions pertaining to the issue of high employee turnover rates within the Irish hospitality sector. Vital primary data were collected from the 39 participants who volunteered to participate in the research. The questionnaires did an excellent job in sourcing this data from the participants and thus enabling the researcher to use it to determine the underlying factors behind the low employee retention rates within hotels in Ireland. Below is a comprehensive presentation of the results obtained from each question after the participants offered their insights through the questionnaires. There was a total of 39 respondents in the research all of whom were previous employees within the hotel industry.

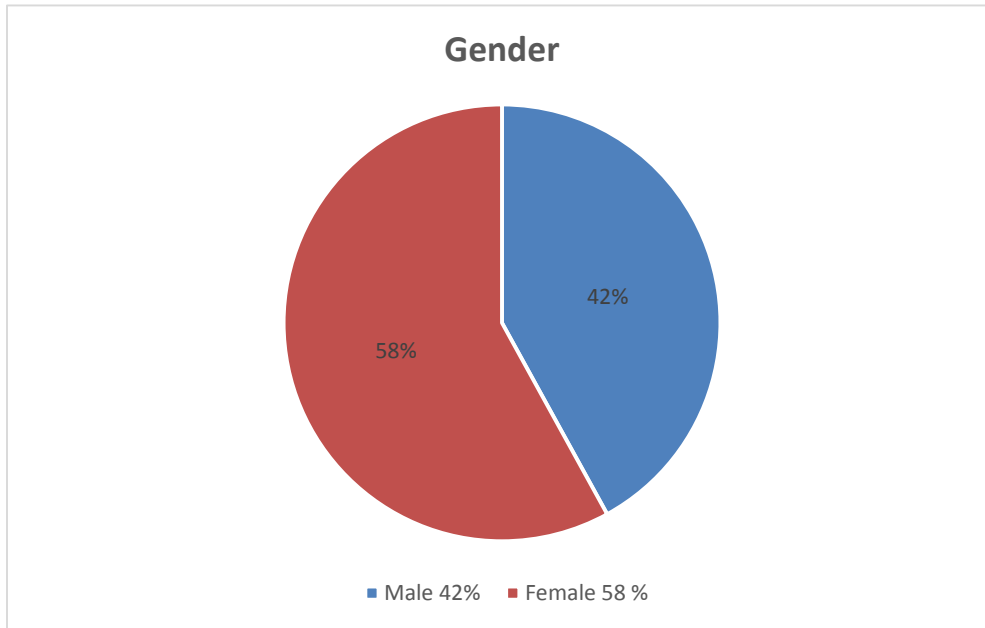


Figure 1: Graph showing gender percentages of respondents

The first question sought to identify the gender of the participant. This was deemed necessary to gain a fair understanding of the gender composition of the participants. A research study should clearly demonstrate a relative balance of both genders i.e. male and female. Data obtained from both male and female participants in a research is more accurate and applicable to the general population, compared to that gathered only from one gender. In this research project, 58% of the participants were female, while the remaining 42% were male.

This was definitely a fair representation of both genders. Although there were more female participants than males, the views and opinions of each distinct gender were availed in the research. This made the research highly applicable to the general population.

5.1.2 Question 2: Age

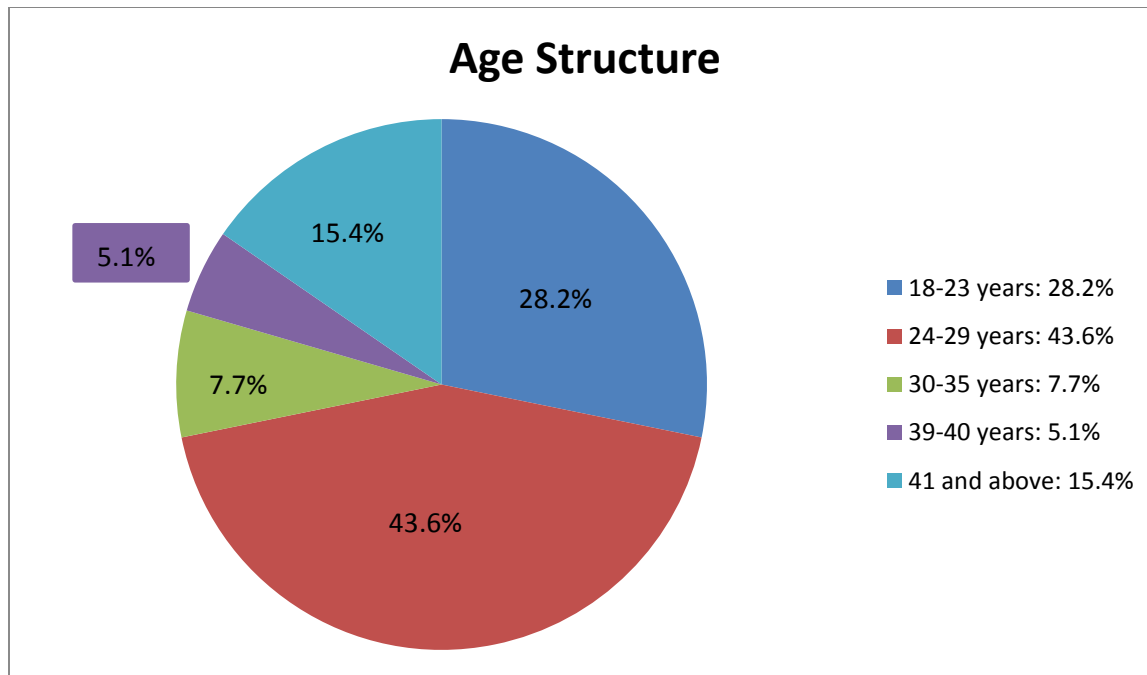


Figure 2: Pie Graph showing percentage breakdown of age of respondents

The second question in the questionnaire sought to identify the age bracket of the participants. It is highly important for the researcher to know the age group of the participants. People are often self-conscious about their ages and therefore, age rangers were provided and the participants were required to select which range was most appropriate. The following is a breakdown of the age representation of the 39 respondents used in this research project;

Age 18-23	-	11 Respondents
Age 24-29	-	17 Respondents
Age 30-35	-	3 Respondents
Age 39-40	-	2 Respondents
Age 41 and above	-	6 Respondents

From the above data, it is clear that most of the participants in this research project were young people of ages between 18 and 29 years old. Those of age 24-29 represented 43.6% of the participants, followed by those of age 18-23 at 28.2%. Ages 41 and above represented 15.4% of the participants. Ages 30-35 represented 7.7% of the participants. Finally, only 5.1% of the participants were of ages 39-40.

5.2 Question 3: The Job Itself

In this question, the participants were presented with a choice of five Likert Scale to use when responding to the questions. The primary goal was to seek their perception of the job they performed, while working in the hotel. The graph below presents the results provided by the 39 respondents.

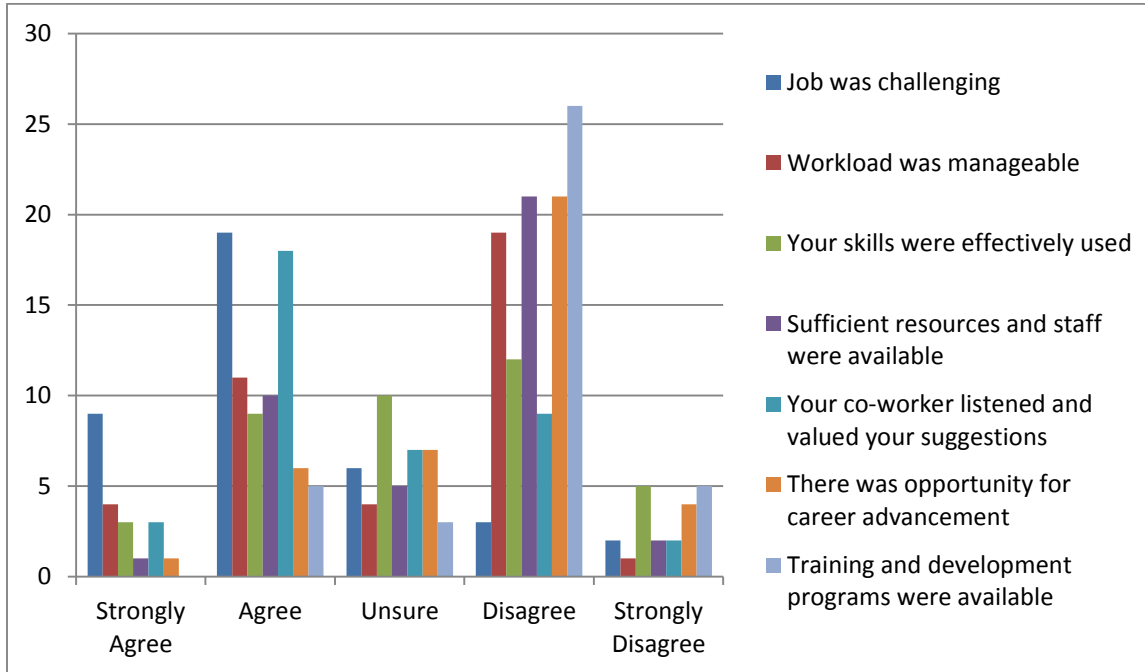


Figure 3: Histogram representing responses using a Likert Scale

Graphical Representation

From the above graph it is clear that there were very many issues that challenged these past hotel employees. To begin with, 48.7% agreed that their job was challenging.

As expected, many of them disagreed that their workload was manageable owing to the challenges they faced. A total of 48.7% of the participants disagreed that their workload was manageable, though challenging. When it came to whether their skills were effectively used in their previous jobs, there was uncertainty. A total of 25.6% of them were unsure while 30.8% disagreed with this statement. There were 53.8% of the participants who actually believed that there were

insufficient resources and staff available at their previous places of work. Only 25.6% thought of the contrary.

A total of 46.2% of the participants agreed that their co-workers listened and valued their suggestions while working but 23.1% disagreed with this statement. However, the tables turned when the participants were asked whether there was opportunity for career advancement at their previous places of employment. An incredible 53.8% of the participants disagreed with this statement implying that there were absolutely no opportunities for career development. Finally, when asked about the existence of training and development programs, 66.7% of the respondents disagreed. It is clear that in most of their organisation there was no opportunity for training and development programs at their previous places of employment.

5.3 Question 4: Remuneration and Benefits

This question sought to identify whether the participants were comfortable with the remuneration Packages and benefits offered to them at their previous places of work. The following graph represents the findings from the 39 participants.

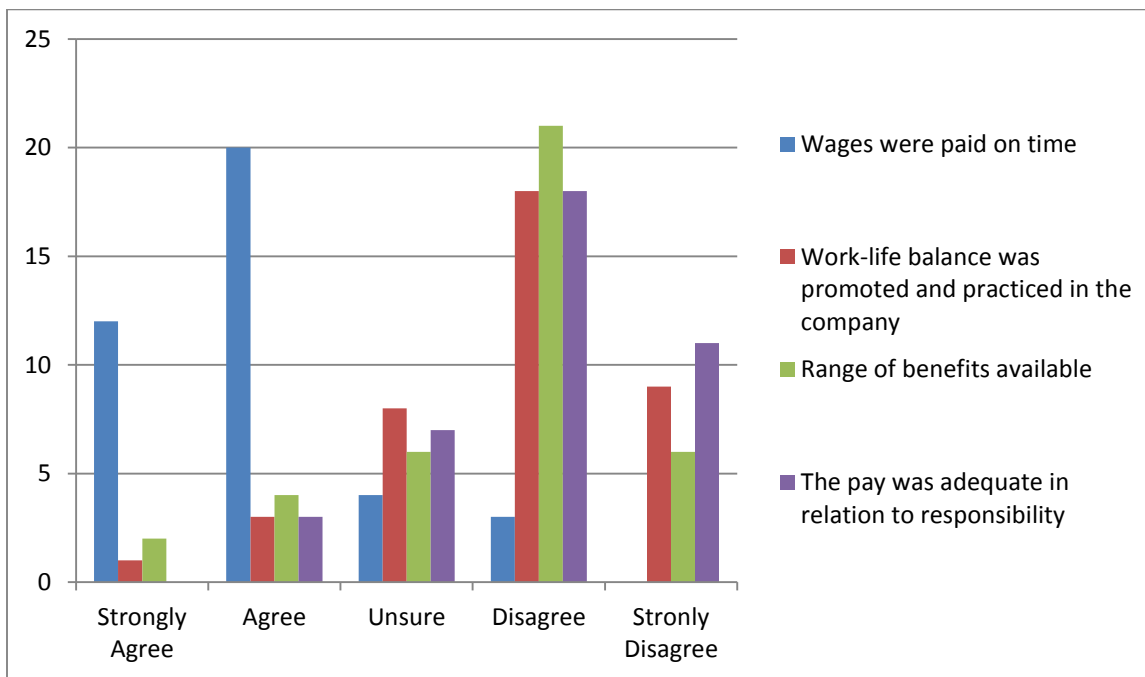


Figure 4: Histogram representing responses using a Likert Scale

Graphical Representation

From the graph, it is clear that the respondents had a lot of issues with the remuneration packages and benefits extended to them by the companies they worked for. When asked whether their wages were paid on time, 51.3% of the respondents agreed. In addition to this, 30.8% of them strongly agreed. This is a clear indication that the companies promptly paid the employee's wages. The second statement asked whether a work life balance was promoted and practiced in the company. Again, 46.2% of the respondents disagreed with this and 23.1% strongly disagreed. The next statement sought to identify whether there was range of benefits offered to the respondents. A total of 53.8% disagreed on the existence of such benefits.

Finally, the questionnaire required the respondents to state whether the pay they received was adequate or proportional to the responsibilities they held in their respective companies. Here, there was a lot of negative feedback from the participants with 46.2% disagreeing.

5.4 Question 5: The Company

The primary focus of this question was to inquire more about the companies in which the participants worked in. This includes the resources and equipment present to assist employees in the successful execution of their core duties and responsibilities. The graph below outlines the results collected from the participant in this question; No of participants (39).

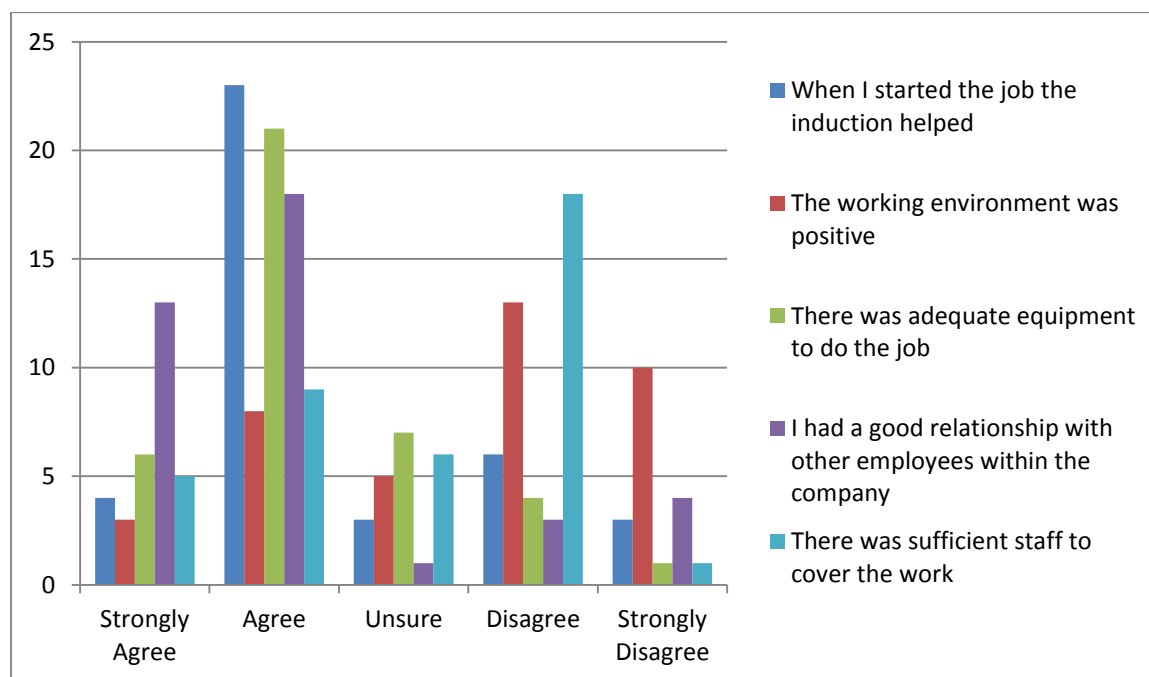


Figure 5: Histogram representing responses using a Likert Scale

Graphical Representation

The first statement required the participants to state whether the induction offered to them at the start of their job helped them. There were 59.0% of them the participants who agreed with this statement commending the induction program at their previous places of work. When requested to state whether the working environment was positive, 33.3% of the responded agreed that it was positive. The working environment was not perfect or inspiring, according to the results. The questionnaire, then sought to identify whether there were adequate equipment to do the job. Here, 53.8% agreed with the statement confirming the existence of adequate equipment to perform their duties. The next statement sought to seek whether good relationships existed between employees in the companies. There were 46.2% of participants who agreed with this statement and an incredible 33.3% strongly agreeing with the statement.

The next statement asked the participants to state whether there were sufficient staff members to cover the workload in their previous places of work. Of the respondents 46.2% agreed with this statement. These results point out to the existence of a relatively hostile work environment. However, there was adequate equipment to get the job done but it appear that inadequate staffing was a key issue at the participants places of work.

5.5 Question 6: Supervisor/ Team leader

Supervisors or team leaders can either motivate a work force or de-motivate them towards achieving the set organisational goals. This question focused on identifying the influence of the supervisor or team leader on the participants. The following graph display the results derived through this question.

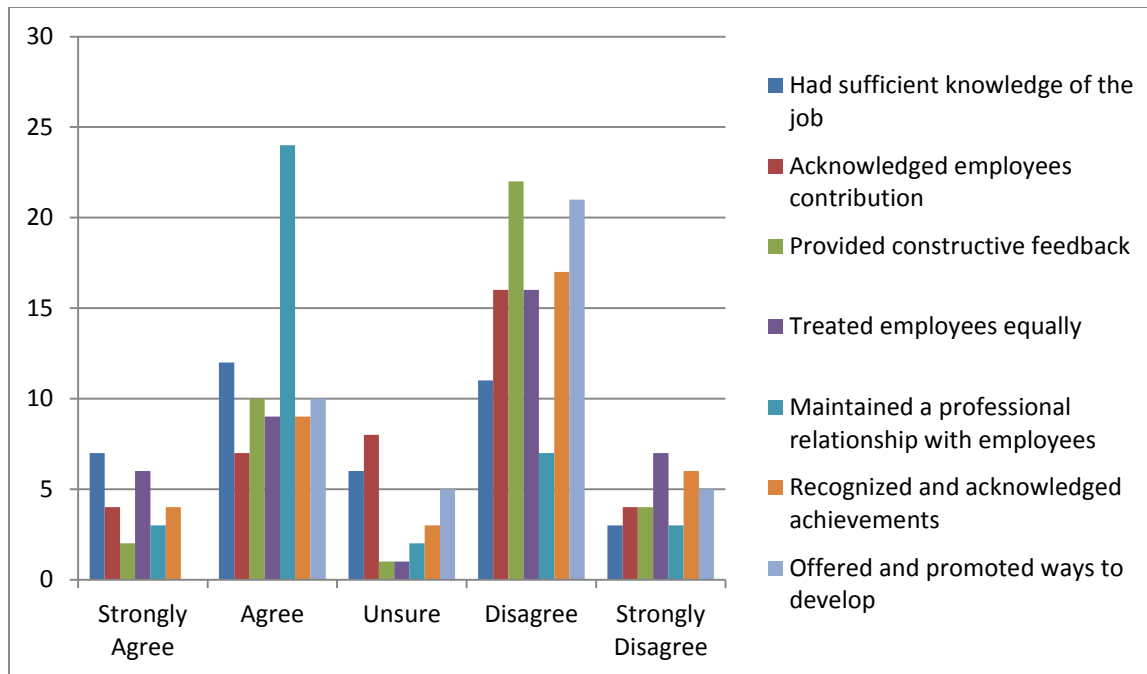


Figure 6: Histogram representing responses using a Likert Scale

Graphical Representation

When the participants were asked whether their supervisor or team leader had sufficient knowledge of the job, 30.8% agreed. However, 28.2% disagreed with this statement stating that their supervisors lacked the knowledge of the job they were supervising or leading. The second statement sought to clarify whether the supervisors or team leaders acknowledged the employees' contributions. Again, there were uncertainties in the response as 41.0% disagreed and 20.5% of them were unsure. Next, the participants were required to state whether their supervisors provided constructive feedback, 56.4% agreed to this, while 25.6% disagreed. The participants were then asked whether the supervisors or team leaders treated employees equally and 41.0% disagreed. The questionnaire, then requested the participants to state whether the supervisors or team leaders maintained a professional relationship with employees. A total of 61.5% agreed to this statement. When asked whether the supervisors or team leaders recognised and acknowledged achievements, 43.6% of the participants disagreed, with only 23.1% of them agreeing. Finally, 53.8% disagreed with the last statement which asked whether the supervisors or team leaders offered and promoted ways to develop employees. Nevertheless, 25.6% of the participants agreed with this last statement.

5.6 Question 7: What did you like most about working with your previous company

This question was an open question and quite direct, thus received a lot of mixed responses from the participants. They offered varied reasons pertaining to the main reason why they liked working for their previous companies. However, an analysis of these responses gives some startling results. Most of the answers provided were personal in nature. They did not reflect any commitment to the company at all. They included responses like, meeting new people, colleagues were nice, closer to home, subsidised food, convenient from home, good breaks, use of hotel facilities, nice uniform, 3 actually cited working with friends and 2 stated working with family. This clearly demonstrates very low motivation towards working for the respective companies.

However, there were several positive responses that touched on the interests of the companies in which the participants worked in. They included responses like money, the friendly working environment, discount accommodation, company has good reputation, wages paid on time, discounts, the locality and shift work. There were also some negative responses about what the participant's dislike about the companies in which they worked in. They include responses like nothing and don't really like working here. All of these responses will play a key role in the research project as they reflect the true perceptions of these past employees towards their previous jobs.

5.7 Question 8: What was the reason that made you choose to work for the company

Again, an open question, this question was met with mixed responses ranging from job availability, lack of other options and the need for money. Most of the responses basically revolved around these three factors. Participants needed the job because they either wanted money or they had no other option to choose apart from that particular job. Moreover, there were several who worked for their companies because they had good reputations and thus would reflect positively on their CVs. However, several of them said that they chose to work for their respective companies because their friends worked there too. In fact, one responded that he or she worked there because his or her uncle owned the establishment while another said 'reputable chief'. Another reason given was the fact some of the participants were new to Ireland and this was the only available job to take. Other participants responded with 'no reason' and 'nothing' to this question.

5.8 Question 9: What did you like least about working with your previous company

In this question, the 39 respondents expressed various reasons why they least liked the companies they worked for. It was discovered that the biggest reason for this dislike was due to long working hours and low pay. Most of the respondents mentioned these two reasons for their dislike. In addition to this, a lot of them blamed their team leaders, supervisor or boss. There were comments which implied that the boss was not fair, do not get on well with the team leader, lack of respect from supervisor, favouritism, bad manager and too many rules. These responses clearly shows the existence of a strained relationship between these respondents and their supervisors or team leaders. Motivational leadership was lacking.

A lot of responses also related to late shifts, working weekend, late hours and unsocial working hours. Here, it was clear that some of these respondents were overworked. The work environment was also highly criticised through some responses like lack of training, no opportunity for promotion, no health care, rude guests, money, no career opportunity, early shift, wages and low pay. There were also conflicts between the employees as quite a handful of respondents said that they did not get along with their colleagues.

5.9 Question 10: Would any of the following have made you stay with the Company

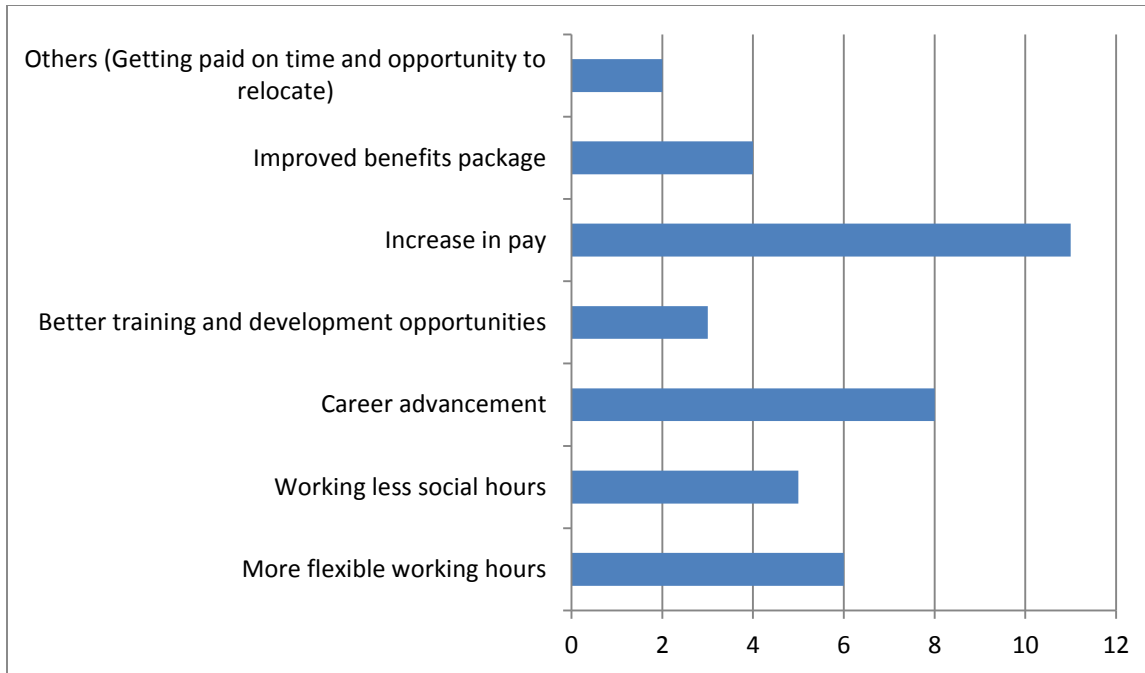


Figure 7: A graphical representation of the responses for Question 10, showing the reason why the participants might have stayed with the company. The graph clearly shows that the main factor is greater pay.

This question sought to identify the main reason as to why the respondents would have continued working with their previous companies. The results collected through this question played a major role in the determination of the major problems behind the high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry. Of the participants, 28.2% stated that an increase in pay would have definitely made them stay longer with their previous companies. This indicated that there were major issues with the level of pay these respondents received. Next, 20.5% stated that career advancement would have made them continue to work for their previous companies. This shows the existence of barriers to career advancement and that this affected the respondents from working with their previous companies for longer. A total of 15.4% said more flexible working hours while 12.8% stated working less social hours. The working hours was also a problem for these respondents.

There were 10.3% of the respondents who stated that improved benefits packages would have made them work longer with their previous companies. There were 7.7% who said better training

and development opportunities. And the remaining 5.1% specified that getting paid on time and the opportunity to relocate would have encouraged them to continue working for their previous companies. These were very useful results that directly impacted on the findings for this research project.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion of Findings

6.0 Introduction

This chapter will focus on highlighting the various findings deduced from the results discussed in the previous chapter. A critical analysis of the results will be conducted with the primary purpose of providing valuable insights on this topic. In the end, the researcher will have a better understanding of the underlying reasons as to why there are high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality sector. The following factors were found in the results;

6.1 Motivation

Employees require to be motivated from time to time to not only improve their skills, but also to foster great work relationship and team work. Motivation is essential in all working environments. In fact, it is one of the major factors that determine employee loyalty to the company (Rainlall, 2004).

The results deduced from the questionnaires outlined the existence of low levels of motivation in their previous workplaces. In some instances, the motivation of employees was non-existent. First and foremost, these former employees were definitely over-worked with 48.7% of them stating that the work they were doing was not manageable at all.

Overworking employees is a great de-motivating factor. Employees feel highly motivated when their knowledge and skills are put to effective use in the workplace. They feel like an important and an integral part of the company (Nohria, Groysberg and Lee, 2008). However, the respondents said that their skills were not used effectively and they always felt neglected. This too represents low levels of motivation. The other factor that clearly demonstrated low levels of motivation in the respondents places of work is the lack of training and development programs. Employees skills can only be perfected and sharpened through training and development. Without this, employees cannot be able to progressively add value to the companies they work in. A total of 66.7% of the

respondents stated that no training and development programs were offered to them at their previous places of work.

This greatly undermined their potential to deliver at their places of work. In addition to this, 53.8% of the respondents expressed that no career advancement opportunities were extended to them. This too affected their efficiency and effectiveness when working for their previous companies. All of these factors facilitated greatly in the existence of high turnover rates in the industry.

6.2 Work-life Balance

The second major aspect that was discovered from the responses provided through the questionnaires is the work-life balance. The respondents expressed that they worked for long and odd hours that inhibited on their social life. It was clear that a lot of conflicts existed between the employees and their supervisors or team leaders when it came to the working hours. It is important for companies and organisations to make allowances for flexible working hours that allow their employees to enjoy their social life.

This includes allowing them to spend some quality time with family and friends (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton, 2003). However, from the questionnaires, most of the employees worked long and unsocial hours and thus missed out on their social lives.

Question 9 in the questionnaire revealed these reactions from the participants as they were asked to state what they liked least about working for their previous companies. Here, there were strong reactions towards the long and odd working hours. In the hospitality industry, services are often provided to clients on a 24 hours basis. This means that employees have to work in shifts to keep the hotel running. However, long shifts may have a negative impact on the employees, especially if the shifts overlap with their family commitments or restricts and social life.

This often has negative effects on the productivity of these employees. This is evidently a major problem in the Irish hospitality industry. If the working hours are revised, the high employee turnover rates experienced in the industry might go down as employees would be more content with their jobs (Tausig and Fenwick, 2001).

6.3 Wages

Wages were also another issue that was highlighted in the responses. To begin with, they responded strongly when asked to state whether the pay they received from their previous jobs was adequate in relation to the responsibilities. Here, 46.2% of them disagreed and said that they were being compensated unfairly.

In addition to this, some said that wages were also not being paid on time. These are highly demotivating factors that ultimately negatively impacted on the performance of these employees. In fact, wages and unfair compensation contribute greatly to low employee retention rates (Dulebohn, Molloy, Pichler and Murray, 2009).

Another interesting factor that emerged from the responses provided by the respondents was that there existed no range of benefits extended to employees at their previous worked. Benefits are great incentives to boost employee morale and thus encourage them to continue working for a company over a long period of time (Beam and McFadden, 2001).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.0 Introduction

This research has pointed out to the existence of several factors that contribute to the high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry. The first evident reason is the lack of motivation. The correspondents confirmed the non-existence of motivational programs and

activities in their previous places of work. The supervisors did not motivate their teams towards achieving the set goals and objectives. They did not value the input of the employees, nor did they reward their efforts through appropriate benefits to boost employee morale. Training programs were also absent to improve the skills of these employees. This encouraged these employees to continue seeking for better places to work. This contributed to low employee retention rates.

Another contributing factor was inadequate pay. These respondents were not receiving the salaries they deserved compared to their input in these companies. For this reason, they felt over-worked and under-appreciated. Finally, the working hours were also quite unfavourable. The employees did not have enough time to carry on with their social life. Most of them worked unsocialable hours making it almost impossible for them to socialise. Work-life balance was not favourable and thus more employees felt discouraged to continue working with their respective companies.

7.1 Past Literature Review

A comprehensive review of past literature on this issue reveals a very interesting aspect. HR practices within a company are entirely responsible for ensuring that the employees' interests satisfactorily are met. If the HR department fails or is ineffective in executing its core functions, then the company is likely to experience high employee turnover rates. As a result, the literature suggests that companies should work hard towards building a highly effective HR team. In doing so, they will avoid the shortcomings associated with under-appreciated and unmotivated employees. It is the only way through which high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry can be significantly reduced (Deery, 2008).

7.2 Statistical Data Relating to High Employee Turnover Rates

The exceptionally high employee turnover rates inhibit negatively on the finances of companies in this sector. According to the CIPD (2004) survey, it takes approximately £4,800 to replace an employee who has left a company, this costs is associated with recruitment, selection, induction and administrative costs other direct cost includes cost of advertising, agencies and running assessment centres (CIPD). At such rates, companies with high employee turnover rates spend a lot of financial resources in hiring new personnel. The same survey also revealed that it takes an

estimate of £7,000 to replace a manager or professional employee in a company. These are startling figures and companies should work towards retaining their workforce. This way, they will avoid incurring these additional costs (Atkinson and Williams, 2003).

7.3 Relevance for Employers and Organisations

Through incorporating the recommendations given in this research project, companies in the Irish hospitality industry will increase their savings. A lot of their resources will be spent on other viable projects, other than the recruitment of new employees to replace the ones who have left. In addition to this, more time will be devoted towards the development of highly efficient employees that will ensure all organisational goals and objectives are achieved. However, these companies must also be aware of the costs associated with employee retention. Just like any other assets, employees are important investments for these companies. Companies in the Irish hospitality industry have spent a lot of resources in perfecting the skills of their employees to boost their productivity (Blake, 2006).

To retain their employees, these companies must invest in training and development programs, offer them attractive salaries and benefits and present them with opportunities for career advancement. All of these activities require significant financial resources. However, properly trained and motivated employees will bring in more returns for a company, making it more profitable (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, 2002).

7.4 Recommendations based on Findings

This segment of the research project will provide a convincing conclusion that sums up the findings deduced throughout the entire project. Emphasis will be on determining whether the research questions set out at the beginning of this research project have been satisfactorily answered.

The findings of the questionnaires used in this research project in the Irish hospitality industry indicated that the following were the main reasons behind the exceptionally high employee turnover rates; Wages, work-life balance and the lack of motivation are the main factors to the high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry (Research Objective 1).

There is a direct relation between the above mentioned factors and the behaviour of employees in the Irish hospitality sector (Research Objective 2).

Employee training, empowerment, competitive wages, rewarding programs and finally career advancement are the most effective methods of promoting high employee retention rates in the Irish hospitality industry (Research Objective 3).

This research project produced a lot of vital data that attempts to explain the high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry. The questionnaire gave very useful insights as to why this alarming trend is quite prevalent in this important industry in Ireland. There are several factors responsible for this trend. However, three main factors stand out. The respondents offered very strong reactions to these three factors, i.e. wages, work-life balance, and finally the total lack of motivation within the various companies in the Irish hospitality industry. These three factors are the main agents of the relatively high employee turnover rates in this industry. The following discussion will critically analyse the impact of these factors, amongst others in the hospitality industry as well as the various ways through which companies can address them to boost employee retention rates.

7.4.1 Work-life balance

Work-life balance was a critical issue highlighted by a majority of the 39 respondents in this research project. Human beings are social beings that require time to relax and catch up with friends and family members. When this is inhibited by work-related commitments, stress is inevitable. Employees who work long and unsocial hours tend to develop various social disorders arising from their depression and prolonged exposure to a similar set of activities. As mentioned earlier, the hospitality industry is comprised of companies whose purpose is to provide services to clients on a 24 hour basis. At times, employees bear this burden and instances of overworking arise.

Overworking employees by making them work for longer and unsocial hours, often leads to adverse results to the company, such as higher levels of absenteeism. Employees may become less efficient and the company ends up wasting a lot of resources, including losing clients in the long run (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton, 2003).

There are several ways through which companies in the Irish hospitality industry can deal with this issue. First and foremost, evidence from past research indicates that competitive unsocial hour's payments greatly facilitate in encouraging positive attitude among employees. Companies in the Irish hospitality industry should therefore adopt this approach as it will help its employee embrace working productively, even in unsocial hours. Competitive payment for employee efforts during unsocial hours is a great motivator. Some of the respondents expressed that they had a lot of issues with their payment and benefits packages. The unsocial hour payment package could be included as a benefit for all employees willing to work during these odd hours (McNamara, Bohle and Quinlan, 2011). Companies should also encourage fun in the work place, organise and encourage group outings as fun activities, which can relieve employees of stress specially those working in high stress positions (Branham 2005).

It is also important for the companies in the Irish hospitality industry to constantly educate their employees on the importance of working through unsociable hours i.e. the benefit to guests etc. Most of these companies make a lot of their money during these odd and unsocial hours. An example is a hotel which makes money during unsocial hours, i.e., at night, on public holidays and during summer when people are either travelling or just having a good time with friends and families. These are the peak times for hotels and thus the employees must step up and provide the necessary services for the hotel to make money. If the employees do not fully comprehend this, then they may find it difficult or unfair to be working when their friends are socialising. They must be thoroughly educated on this to improve their perception and attitude when working (Pocock, Skinner and Pisaniello, 2010). Research conducted by Doherty(2004) shows that most woman needed flexibility because of childcare commitments, companies should introduce more flexible working hours, job sharing, more option for part time work for men and women, and more paternity leave all this will reduce high turnover rate in the industry (Farrell, 2015).

7.4.2 Motivation

Motivation was also lacking in the companies in which the respondents had previously worked for. Without the motivation of employees, a company or organisation is doomed for failure.

Employees require constant motivation to improve their performances as well as instil some vital skills that come in handy when executing their core tasks and responsibilities. In fact, in the hospitality industry, motivation of employees is a key determinant to the success of a company. This is primarily because employees provide services to the clients directly. Motivated employees tend to offer great and high quality services to clients, guaranteeing a return purchase and thus customer loyalty. From the responses provided by the respondents it was clearly evident that they felt very low levels of motivation working in their previous companies (Cadwallader, Jarvis, Bitner and Ostrom, 2010).

A substantial percentage of the respondents were not offered training and development opportunities to enhance their skills while working for their previous companies. In addition to this, they were constantly being overworked. The overall feeling amongst the respondents was that their skills and knowledge were not put into effective use in the workplace. They were under-appreciated and under-paid.

All of these are ingredients for disaster and employees are bound to leave a company with such services. This is one of the major reasons why there are high employee turnover rates in this crucial industry (Sahinidis and Bouris, 2008).

There are several techniques and theories which attempt to explain how companies like those in the Irish hospitality industry can motivate their employees when working. For starters, these companies can adopt the various employee motivation techniques available. This includes adopting a totally new job design that looks out for the interests of the employees. Under this new design, job rotation can be incorporated to allow employees to conveniently enjoy their social hours.

Secondly, the companies can introduce awards for hardworking employees. Recognising the efforts and input of employees often motivates them to work even harder.

Thirdly, these companies can encourage more employee participation in some affairs, e.g. through empowerment and delegation. Allowing employees to make important decisions pertaining to the

company motivates them to continually look out for the best interests of the company (Roos and Van Eeden, 2008).

Finally, the companies should create a culture of continuous feedback and coaching, offer training to all supervisors, team leaders and managers to be equipped and perform their responsibilities. Give employees access to job descriptions and competency requirements needed to qualify for other positions in the company will motivate them to stay longer with the company (Branham, 2005).

In addition to this, these companies can adopt the Herzberg's two factor theory to encourage employee motivation at their places of work. This will involve determining the satisfiers and dissatisfiers within the workplace. Satisfiers promote job satisfaction and this includes career advancement opportunities, employee recognition, rewarding achievements and much more. Dissatisfiers on the other hand include any negative aspects in the workplace environment that may inhibit the successful execution of tasks. They include, working conditions, supervisors, salaries and much more. By identifying these two factors in the workplace, these companies can work towards promoting the satisfiers and improving on the dissatisfiers. This way, employees' interests will be promoted and their moral to perform boosted (Dartey-Baah and Amoako, 2011).

7.4.3 Wages

Finally, this research project revealed that the level of wages offered to the employees in the Irish hospitality industry played a major part in their reluctance to work with their respective companies for longer periods of time. The respondents expressed many concerns over the salary they received and the manner in which they received it. They strongly believed that their input in the companies they worked for deserved to be rewarded better.

In addition to this, there were instances of late disbursement of salaries. All of these factors negatively impact on the employee's dedication towards their work. In fact, such factors may compel employees to start looking for other rewarding employment opportunities in other companies leading to high employee turnover rates (Llorens and Stazyk, 2011).

A way to rectify this is to revisit the employee remuneration packages offered to the employees in these hospitality companies. An appropriate level of pay should be awarded to employees in accordance with their input in the company.

Survey employees on fairness and consistency of the pay system and ask them what recognition programs they would consider to be good incentives (Branham 2005). This way, they will feel that their input is appreciated. Moreover, additional benefits packages should be offered to employees for their hard work. Benefits are a great way of boosting employee morale while working. With these benefits and an appropriate salary, employees are bound to work for longer periods of time with their companies. This will in turn reduce the high employee turnover rates in the Irish hospitality industry (Clark, Kristensen and Westergård-Nielsen, 2009).

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research

This research project focused entirely on studying the past hotel employees in the Irish hospitality industry. Although the information retrieved was quite useful, it was based on accounts given by past employees in this industry. Other research projects should be launched aimed at studying the current employees of the Irish hospitality industry to determine their views on what is causing the high employee turnover rates. There could also be further study into the age of hotel staff and whether they, as a generation feel more transient in their career, as opposed to older generations who believed in a job for life. Does the hotel industry attract more youth because typically they move from one organisation to another within the sector? Also, most of the participants were female, was this because it is a reflection of the gender split within the industry or does the unsocialable hours or part time work appeal more to females who might have caring responsibilities. Alternatively, were there more females in the group because they felt they had to leave because of the unsocialable hours. This will work greatly in ascertaining the accuracy of the results deduced through this research project.

Personal Reflective Journal

This process has taught me very important lessons. I had the opportunity to put into practice everything I had learned in class. In particular, I was able to learn how to collect and gather useful data for a research project. This is important in my career as I will get to understand other people's opinions better after this process. In addition to this, I learned the importance of prior planning for everything. This is the only way through which such a project can be completed accurately and on time. However, my planning was inconsistent as I had to change the topic, owing to the fact that I

had difficulty accessing data for the previous topic. This left me with little time to complete the project, but I was able to pull it off in the end.

All activities in this research project were quite educational and interesting at the same time. The development of the questionnaire questions opened my mind on what to look out for when planning for a research project. Moreover, I got to learn how to use such a process to solve some of the problems faced by the society. The most important activity is the collection of data. This is primarily because the end results depend on the validity of the collected data. In this research process, assessing the data was quite a challenge. The participants were past hotel employees across Ireland. The fact that they were off the job meant that they could offer honest responses. If I was doing this research again in future I would consider both qualitative and quantitative approach look into interviewing participant. This would allow more data to be collected on a one on one basis where clarifications can be sought. Another would be to develop a different a different questionnaire for employees and supervisor or mangers to get their input. Also I will consider the length of time each participant worked for their company and what type of hotel they worked for example 3-5 star. It will also be interesting to know if any of the participants remain in the industry or moved into another sector, if so what attracted them to this other sector. Finally I am delighted to have complete this research within the little time and I have enjoyed the whole process.

Chapter 8 Reference List

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9 Appendix

9.1 Appendix 1 Sample Questionnaire

Information Sheet and Consent Form

Thank you for considering to participate in this survey. My name is Victoria Jagun, a Masters student (M. A Human Resource Management) at National College of Ireland. This survey is being conducted in part fulfilment of my Human Resource Management Master's thesis at the National College of Ireland.

The aim of this survey is to investigate high employee turnover and retention in the hospitality industry. Your feedback will help in identifying factors that contribute to high employee turnover in the industry and what methods of retention should be adopted.

Please be aware that your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time and for any reason. If you decide to take part, the questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The information you provide is strictly anonymous and will be treated with full confidentiality.

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact me at xxxxxxxx@xxxx.ncirl.ie or 08xxxxxxx

If you do consent to take part, please click next and complete the questions otherwise you can exit the page.

Thank you for your participation.

Employee turnover and retention survey

1. What is your Gender

Male Female

2. What is your age

18-23 24-29 30-35 36-40 41+

3. The Job

1- Strongly Agree 2- Agree 3-Not Sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree

Job was challenging

Workload was manageable

Your skills were effectively used

Sufficient resources and staff were available

Your co- worker listened and valued your suggestions

There was opportunity for career advancement

Training and development programs were available

4. Remuneration and Benefits

1- Strongly agree 2- Agree 3- Not Sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree

Wages were paid on time

Work life balance was promoted and practiced in the company

Range of benefits were available

The pay was adequate in relation to responsibility

5. The Company

1- Strongly Agree 2- Agree 3- Not Sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly disagree

When I started the job the induction helped

The working environment was positive

There was adequate equipment to do the job

I have a good relationship with other employees within the company

There was sufficient staff to cover the work

6. Supervisor/Team leader

1- Strongly Agree 2- Agree 3- Not Sure 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree

Had sufficient knowledge of the job

Acknowledged employees contribution

Provided constructive feedback

Treated employees equally

Maintained a professional relationship with employees

Recognized and Acknowledged achievements

Offered and promoted ways to develop

7. What did you like most about working with the Company

8. What was the reason that made you choose to work for the company

9. What did you like least about working with the Company

10. Would any of the following made you stay with the Company

- More flexible working hours
- Working less social hours
- Career Advancement
- Better training and development opportunities
- Increase in pay
- Improved benefits package
- Other (please specify)