

**An exploration of the trust relationship and the
its impact on employee engagement within an
Irish private organisation.**

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Abstract

The trust relationships that exist in an organisation and their impact on employee engagement have been explored during this research that was conducted in an Irish private organisation. The researcher used qualitative research methods in the form of semi structured interviews to gain an in depth and personal perspective of this complex and intimate topic.

To achieve this objective, the researcher must first express the various facets of trust, employee engagement and organisational culture and commitment. The researcher concluded that whilst levels of trust with management can be low employees had high levels of trust with their colleagues and were proud of the company and the work they achieve. Half of the participants expressed that they felt engaged with the remainder expressing the opposite, the factors that lead to these various engagement levels are discussed throughout the research.

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1 Introduction

“a relationship without trust is like a car without gas ... you can stay in it all you want, but it won't go anywhere.” (Michael J. Hebert)

Within this chapter the researcher will introduce trust and employee engagement and how they are intertwined. It will also include the rationale behind the study, outlining the aims and objectives of the research. The research will demonstrate the importance of trust and its role in job satisfaction and employment.

1.1 Overview

The area of trust is not new and has been in the spotlight for some time. From an organisational perspective, trust has become a form of collateral. Trust underpins human interactions and is a necessary ingredient in personal and corporate relations.

Regarding the importance of company branding, Willmott (2003) and Xingyuan, Li and Wei (2010) demonstrate that being a “trusted” organisation can be viewed as a sign of economic stability and respect. Initiatives organised by the “Great Place to Work” (GPTW) Institute annually rank engaged organisations through their “Best Workplace” awards. Trust is a key feature of the ranking and award criteria, as noted by Levering (2017) and Kusuma and Madasu (2015). Other rankings such as Forbes’ “World’s Most Reputable Companies” (Strauss, 2016) help to solidify the importance of trust and branding. By adding this commercial value, organisational trust ensures that an organisation retains its value to all stakeholders.

Organisations are moving away from having a compliant workforce to an engaged workforce who bring their passion and zeal to the workplace. The value this adds to the organisation is recognised by both academics and corporations alike (Anitha, 2014; Bakker, 2011; Truss, 2012). No longer is "work" a building you spend your time in, it is something that you do, with some using it as an identifier. The needs and expectations of the employer and employee also change. There are

several models put forward regarding engaging employees and the various levels of engagement that employees can be categorized in and during this research. For this study, 2 different models will be discussed. The researcher will also explain possible key contributing factors that affect engagement, such as recognising uniqueness, talent with effective communication and development (Hall-Ellis, 2014; Doherty, 2010).

The levels of organisational commitment are assessed through employee engagement and organisational trust levels. This is the commitment that employees have to the organisation through a sense of belonging, the feeling that they hold a key position and their departure would leave a skills gap or the lack of another viable employment offer. Employees who feel part of the fabric of the organisation will traditionally have higher engagement rates and higher trust levels.

The relationship between trust, engagement, organisational culture and commitment stem from the same location and all are all intertwined and each has a knock-on effect on the other; together, they can help make up the fabric of the organisation. Through semi-structured interviews, the research aims to gain an insight into the trust levels of an Irish private organisation and its impact on employee engagement.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to gain an understanding and insight into the trust relationships that exist within a private organisation. Malinen, Wright, and Cammock (2013) investigated how employees' trust and justice perceptions affect employee engagement in a public organisation. The researcher wished to take elements of the study and conduct the research in an Irish private organisation. Similar research was conducted by Hough, Green, & Plumlee (2015). The researcher wishes to investigate if the same outcomes in this study were found by academics and if the findings between the public sector and the private sector are comparable.

The primary aim of this research is to explore the trust relationship within an Irish private organisation and its impact on employee engagement. The researcher has broken down this into 3 objectives, each with 2 sub-objectives:

Objective 1: To identify the various trust relationships employees encounter during their employment in a private organisation.

- What are the various types of trust relationships that employees can have?
- Do employees feel that they are being treated fairly and equally by management?

Objective 2: To gain an understanding of employee engagement

- To understand what is meant by employee engagement.
- Gain an understanding of the relationship between employee engagement and organisational commitment

Objective 3: To explore the relationship between employee engagement and trust

- Do low levels of trust impact on employee engagement?
- Does an organisation's reputation affect the employees' institutional trust levels?

The research was conducted in a successful service sector private Irish organisation, with offices nationwide. The organisation partakes in the GPTW program. Qualitative analysis, in line with Putthiwanit (2015), will be conducted. Semi structured interviews were completed in the Dublin head office and were recorded on a dictaphone.

The researcher aims to add to the body of knowledge that exists linking of trust and engagement and organisational culture, which is undergoing a revival now, with most studies arising in the past 10-15 years.

An assumption is being made by the researcher that all interactions between the research subjects are voluntary and the relationship is not one arranged under an obligation of legal compliance or a purely corporative nature.

In line with the literature, as expressed in the next chapter, the researcher hypothesises that employees with high trust levels in their management team will have higher levels of employee engagement and organisational commitment. A by-product of this high trust relationship is an environment of equality and fairness. The researcher also predicts that elevated levels of trust in the organisation will translate to elevated levels of trust in management.

2 Literature Review

This chapter will outline and review the relevant literature and associated areas of study. The literature review will begin by outlining the origins of trust including an overview of the various definitions of the term. This will be followed by literature analysis of employee engagement and conclude with an analysis of organisational culture. The areas being researched by the author overlap between human resources, social studies, human behaviour, psychology, and philosophy and business studies. The topic can and is viewed through many different lenses.

2.1 Trust

Within this section, the author aims to outline the importance and impact that trust levels have on individuals and employers alike. For this research, the author will look at trust through three different lenses; organisational, interpersonal, and institutional trust and express how these aspects of trust play a part in organisational culture and employee engagement.

Trust spans a wide variety of disciplines including sociology, psychology, economics, information technology, and most recently internet services (Thomas Brashear & Marco Tulio, 2013). "Trust is hard to gain and easy to lose" (anon) is a common saying that best demonstrates the fragile nature of the trust relationship. As trust is unique to an individual, it can be difficult to define, as everyone understands trust in their own personal way. However, the loss of trust may have severe and long-lasting ramifications. A frequently used definition is "*Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another*" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer, 1998, p.395). Adopting this definition invites an element of risk, as there is a potential of loss which inevitably brings an element of vulnerability as the trustor must give control to the trustee, allowing an element of risk and doubt to be generated. Regardless of the risks involved, it is in our nature to trust (Putterman, 2009). This interaction is sought out by people as part of their social interaction. Trust is the mechanism to bring the risk into equilibrium, as a way for the relationship to progress and continue. The risk taking in the

relationship is a contributing factor to the success or failure of the relationship, as outlined by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995).

2.1.1 *The Model of Trust*

The first trust model was introduced by Mayer et al. (1995) and was titled “The Model of Trust”. This model outlines organisational trust, which combines aspects of both interpersonal and institutional trust and places it in the world of employment. The basis of the model outlines the inner workings of any trust relationship and the factors that affect trust. The model outlines the two parties; the trustee and the trustor. Both parties must exist for there to be a trust relationship. Two parties may work in cooperation but may not trust each other, as stated by the proverb “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”. Cooperation can overwrite trust and parties can work together without trust.

Within the Model of Trust, the traits of the trustor are analysed. The trustor must be inclined to trust or have a propensity to trust. This must not arise or be in reaction to their past experiences with the trustee, but naturally and without any external factors such as confidence or predictability in the outcome due to previous encounters. The extent to which an individual will have a propensity to trust is unique to the individual; this is a combination of their past experiences, culture and background (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sander, 1990). The trustee’s level of trustworthiness is often considered by the trustor. Trustworthiness can be described as the level of willingness of the trustee to lie and or deceive the trustor. In the model, the trustworthiness is a combination of ability (often called competence in other literature), benevolence, and integrity.

Ability describes the natural skills and competencies that the person holds and can be specific to the matter being considered (e.g. technical skill etc.). Benevolence is the perceived faith in adhering to doing good; the third requirement is integrity. As the relationship progresses, risk enters the relationship and is critical to the trust relationship, as it is naturally occurring and a constant to the relationship regardless of the size and likelihood of the outcomes.

This model sets the scene of the various relationship of trust as the trustee and the trustor exist in all relationships. Both parties suffer from negative repercussions when trust is low.

2.1.2 Organisational Trust

Organisational trust is *“global evaluation of an organisational trustworthiness as perceived by the employee. It is the employee’s confidence that the organisation will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to him or her”* (Tan & Tan, 2000, p.243).

Tan & Tan (2000) express that organisational justice has a critical role to play in the levels of organisational trust within an organisation. Organisational justice can be expressed as the employee’s view of fairness in the organisation (Wan, 2011; Tziner, Felea & Vasiliu, 2017). Organisational justice comprises 4 categories: procedural, distributive, information, and interactional (Tan & Tan, 2000). Procedural justice outlines fairness in the process of dispute resolution. Distributive justice relates to how employees perceive the fairness of an award, praise or benefit being granted or awarded to one employee over another. Information justice deals with how information is communicated to people, with reasoning behind why procedures and processes occur the way they do. Interactional justice refers to the interpersonal treatment people receive when an action is implemented.

These four categories play a role in the trust relationship to some degree, however, procedural and distributive justice play a more prominent role. If an employee feels that the organisation is acting fairly, they will have a positive view on procedural justice and if the organisation is treating employees fairly; hence, they have a positive view on distributive justice. Overall, this will result in an increase in organisational support. Organisational support has a positive effect on the employee, which in turn leads to a positive effect on the organisation. When an employee is being treated well, the employee will look favourably upon the organisation and treat it fairly in return.

The trust from the employees to management is interpersonal trust, not organisational trust. The trust relationship with management can affect organisational trust but it is different and must be treated separately. The trust that employees feel from management can affect their trust in the organisation, as they view their supervisor or manager as representing the organisation (Becker, 1992). There are synergies between organisational commitment and trust (Bastug et al., 2016; Su-Yueh et al., 2015).

Hough et al. (2015) express the importance of trust on the employee engagement relationship and how during this relationship negativity can breed negativity. The roles that communication, organisational ethics, and fairness play in employee-employer relationships cannot be undermined. From an organisational point of view, it is commonly accepted that low trust will have a negative impact on an organisation (Wilmot and Galford, 2007; Kujala Lehtimäki and Pučėtaitė, 2016; Bachmann et al., 2015).

2.1.3 Interpersonal Trust

Interpersonal trust describes the trust that exists between people or groups. Interpersonal trust exists between all employees and stakeholders within an organisation, as discussed by McAllister (1995). It is noted that trust can be viewed from several various aspects: sociological, philosophical, economic or psychological. From this, a definition is put forward, *“trust reduces the cost of transactions between parties and facilitates the cooperation”* (Dobrowolski, 2014, p. 342). As outlined in the Model of Trust, by Mayer et al. (1995), cooperation may and can be a by-product of trust, as cooperation does not always put the relationship holder at risk. There is no surrendering of trust from one party to another. Without this aspect, the relationship would not exist in its current form and the dynamic would become a corporation relationship, where the element of trust is removed. Distrust can be viewed as the opposite of trust, and situations of distrust can arise from the breaking down of shared values (Connelly, Zweig, Webster and Trougakos, 2012).

Interpersonal trust can be divided into two: vertical trust and horizontal trust. Vertical trust refers to the trust that employees have in management, while horizontal trust refers to the trust that employees have in their colleagues and peers.

The relationship between management and employee plays a key role in the trust relationship. The trust between management and employees can be referred to as “vertical trust”. This type of trust is not an even balance due to the power and seniority difference between management and employees. The power that grants management permission to make decisions on employees ensures that the balance will never be equal; however, both sides can help build or destroy the trust relationship. Regardless of the power balance, Krot and Lewicka (2012) express how risk lies both with management and employees e.g. the risk of management changing the work assigned to employees and the risk of the employees not completing the work. When there is a breach of psychological contract, this is in essence a breach of the trust relationship; as a result, the trust is lost and broken (Shimei & Yaodong, 2013).

Utilising the Trust Theory (Mayer et al., 1995), the levels of trust are composed of two factors, how trusting the employee is, and how trustworthy the employer is in the eyes of the employee. As these factors vary from person to person, it can be impossible to benchmark them. When trust is high, the employee will experience satisfaction with management, an increase in motivation, and an increase in innovation seeking to develop themselves and the organisation (Tan & Tan, 2000). Greg, Jungho & Peter (2013) and Colquitt & Rodell (2011) demonstrate the importance the role of communication of information plays within the levels of trust and how it can dramatically affect motivation levels when employees perceive they are being left in the dark and not informed and consulted.

Jain (2016) and Kim and Mauborgne (1998) concluded that during times of high levels of vertical trust, the organisation has an increase in commitment by the employees and an increase in motivators, such as commitment and loyalty to the organisation; as a result, the employee will have a higher level of satisfaction. A

positive effect of engagement is one beneficial outcome of a positive trusting manager-employee relationship.

Horizontal trust refers to the trust between employees. The interpersonal relations have effects within teams; for this research, this interpersonal relationship will not be investigated. An assumption is made that horizontal trust is at a satisfactory - high level within the organisation. Arnold, Barling and Kelloway (2001) express how working in teams can have strong values and norms, resulting in increased efficiencies and higher levels of performance, compared to employees working in a bureaucratic hierarchical work environment. With the implementation of team building exercises and days, organisations are understanding the importance of horizontal trust and the benefits that it bestows on the organisation (Anon, 2017; Spector & Jones, 2004). This is an investment for the organisation, as there is a decrease in the time that management should spend resolving disputes and the gains of increased levels of pride and camaraderie, resulting in higher levels of commitment, engagement, and organisational commitment.

2.1.4 Institutional Trust

Institutional trust is the assumed trust given to an organisation based on their reputation and field of operation (Zaheer, McEvily and Perrone, 1998). It can be described as the trust that the public and employees perceive regarding an organisation, from its business acumen, CSR function, branding and overall reputation (Zaheer et al., 1998; Virutamasen, Wongpreedee & Kumnungwut, 2015; Hardin, 2006; Glsang and Jagd, 2015). In recent years, the question of institutional trust had made headlines on numerous occasions. During the economic crisis and recession, the banking industry methods and dealings were under scrutiny and witnessed a loss in trust and confidence (Earle, 2009; Hurley, Gong & Waqar, 2014). In 2015, Console Charity came under scrutiny during June and July for its questionable financial dealings, resulting in an HSE Audit and an RTE investigation appropriately called "Broken Trust", which resulted in the charity being dissolved (RTE, 2015). Records compiled by Populus (2016)

demonstrate a decline in institutional trust. Bachmann et al. (2015) express the difficulties of regaining trust in today's environment. When an organisation breaches the public trust, there is a demand for root cause. The organisation must be held accountable for its actions, only then can the trust relationship start to rebuild (Driedger, Mazur & Mistry, 2014).

Working within this framework when trust is high, it is perceived that the organisation is performing well; in contrast, when trust is low, the organisation is not performing. Direct links are made between trust and performance (Askvik and Jamil, 2013). An example of this is the trust the public place in the police force, Charities, Hospitals, and Care Facilities. The loss of institutional trust can be detrimental to an organisation (Bachmann et al., 2015).

Branding is now playing a significant role in the development of trust and the identity of the organisation (Das, 2016). Working for a company with high institutional trust often brings elevated levels of organisational trust, as these are often interrelated (Kaplan, 2017). When an organisation has elevated levels of institutional trust, it can bring with it high levels of organisational trust and interpersonal trust, as a trusted brand can translate into trusted company, trusted employees and management.

When customers and clients lose faith in an organisation, this, not only reflects negatively on the organisation, but can also reflect poorly on the employees. When an organisation comes under fire, the roots of all aspect of trust are shook to the core. The employee's faith in the organisation wanes and decreases, which causes a loss of organisational trust. This also has a negative effect on employees, as it represents a loss in reputation and can possibly have a negative effect on their career (Davies and Olmedo-Cifuentes, 2016).

2.2 Employee Engagement

Within this section, the author will outline the various definitions of employee engagement, the models of employee engagement, the factors that influence

engagement, and the impact that the levels of employee engagement have on an organisation.

The concept of employee engagement first occurred in the 1990's and began to take root in organisations in the 2000's. Now, it is a prominent feature within organisations. As employee engagement has numerous definitions, a few examples of these definitions are "*the extent to which an individual is moved to invest additional effort and energy in the tasks at hand*" (Guaspari, 2015, p.243) or "*an individual employee's cognitive, emotional and behavioural state directed towards desired organizational outcomes*" (Schuk and Wollard, cited in Gupta and Sharma, 2016). Another concise definition is "*harnessing discretionary effort*" (Cook, 2015, p. 33). Alternatively, Anitha (2014, p.208) describes engagement as "*as the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organisation and its values*". From a corporate perspective, the CIPD (2015) definition is "*being positively present during the performance of work by willingly contributing intellectual effort, experiencing positive emotions and meaningful connections to other*". The synergies shared between these definitions are, the voluntary nature of employee engagement and how it is personal to each employee. It is commonly agreed that engaged employees are more productive and overall it creates a better working environment, the applied concept of "positivity breeding productivity". Adopting this win-win approach has proven to have positive effects on both the employee and the organisation (Ilies, Liu, Liu and Zheng, 2017; Phillips, Phillips and Ray, 2016). The majority of organisations are now moving towards an inclusive organisation and promoting levels of employee engagement, which is also putting it on the corporate agenda (Vorhasuer-Smith, 2013; Truss, 2012; Hernandez and Kleiner, 2015).

Employees can be divided into three diverse levels of engagement: engaged, not-engaged, and actively disengaged (Anitha, 2014). Having an "engaged" or "positively engaged" workforce has benefits for the organisation and the individual. Higher levels of employee motivation, empowerment, innovation, customer satisfaction, and brand development are also by-products of this environment (Kumar and Pansari, 2016; Dent and Holton, 2009; Bakker, 2011;

Kunerth and Mosley, 2011). When employees are disengaged, it can dampen or hinder the organisation, both in reputation, productivity and financially, as per Phillips, Phillips and Ray (2016) and Arthur (2008). Companies with disengaged staff are likely to have higher turnover rates, lower collaboration and innovation and lower levels of tacit knowledge exchange (Rama Devi, 2009; Cao, Xu, Liang and Chaudhry, 2012).

Engaged employees will voice their opinion and feedback, creating an environment that they will want to continue to be a member of, whilst making the organisation successful and creating an environment where the employees will also be successful, fulfilling the win-win ethos, as outlined by Stephanie and Gustomo (2015) and Bedarkar and Pandita (2014). Employee engagement is a contributing factor to the trust levels and behaviours of employees within an organisation and how the individuals within the organisation interact with the culture of the organisation.

2.2.1 Models of Employee Engagement

Like the employee engagement definition, there are numerous models and theories. All theories and frameworks have the same objective - to increase the levels of engagement, with the effect of increasing growth and development of the employees and organisation whilst decreasing conflict and employee turnover. Within this section, the researcher will review 2 models of employee engagement:

1. Cook's WIFI Model
2. BlessingWhites X Model

One approach of employee engagement was put forward by Cook (2008), which was termed the "WIFI Model". Within this model, Cook (2008) outlined four strands that are interlinked and, when working in harmony, are beneficial to the organisation, as per Kalaiyasan and Gayatri (2013). These four strands are Well-Being, Information, Fairness, and Involvement.

The first strand is “Well-Being”, which is made up of two aspects, the way the organisation treats the employee (external factors), and the how the employee feels about the organisation (internal factors). The external factors are comprised of 4 sub factors: the market, the workplace, the community in which they operate, and the environment around them. The internal factors are personal to the employee as an individual such as work life balance and the additional support that is unique to the employee. Findings made by Robertson and Cooper (2010) and Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes and Delbridge (2013) support the findings, that engaged employees have a positive work-life balance which is supported and promoted by the organisation.

Information is the second aspect of the WIFI model and it centres on the levels of communication that employees receive from the organisation, in relation to what the company’s goals are and what is expected of the employees. It can also expand to feedback and appraisal, as per Min, Bei, Xu and Yucai (2015) and Nair and Salleh (2015).

Fairness is the third and one of the most important and personal factors to solidify a strong level of employee engagement. Fairness must start from the recruitment and on-boarding stage and continue and be constant at every step in the employee’s time with the organisation. The recruitment process must be fair and transparent (Julia and Rog, 2008). There should be no element of bias from management in their dealings with employees and the feedback; appraisal and performance review progress must at all times be fair, otherwise employees will not have faith or belief in the system (Saratun, 2016). The appraisal itself is a way of improving employee engagement, as per Deepa, Palaniswamy and Kuppusamy (2014). Feedback and communication are also tools to promote and encourage fairness and openness, which underpins the psychological contract (Gardner, Guo-Hua, Xiongying, Pierce & Lee, 2015).

Involvement is the final and fourth strand in the WIFI model. This element denotes that the organisation and management must involve all employees in all aspects of the organisation. A fundamental aspect of involvement is communication, both

from the organisation to employees and from employees back to the organisation. Employees respond positively if they feel not only that they have a voice but that their voice is being heard (Constantin and Baias, 2015). These steps create a community environment where people feel like they will belong and come to identify themselves as part of the community and the community itself will have a shared identity.

The WIFI method is just one approach to employee engagement. Other popular approaches are the “X model” and the AON model whilst the Zinger model is popular in corporate spheres (Zinger,2010).

The X Model put forward by BlessingWhite (2008) explores the various degrees of employee engagement that an employee can transition between. Two contributing factors to this theory are contributions that employees give for the company to be a success and the personal satisfaction that the employees receive from completing their job. At the core of this model, is the alignment of the organisation’s goals and the employee’s objectives. When these two entities are aligned and integrated, the employees will know what is expected of them and the role they play in achieving the company’s objectives, which results in job satisfaction and increased levels of contribution from employees. Employees can be divided into five categories, depending on their varying levels of engagement, from fully engaged (provide elevated levels of contribution and elevated levels of job satisfaction) to disengaged (low contribution and low satisfaction) (BlessingWhite, 2008).

These models express how engagement is a spectrum that is made up of several components and cannot be explained by a simple equation; there are infinite exceptions and clauses. However, when it is stripped bare, all theories have similar common denominators; all are based around respect, communication and fairness and motivation to work towards the common goal upon a shared path whilst underpinning commitment to the organisation.

2.2.2 Factors of Employee Engagement

The areas surrounding respect are wide and all encompassing. Pandita and Singhal (2017), Wasay (2013), and Kaliannan, Perumal & Dorasamy (2016) recognise the importance of an employee's work-life balance and in respecting the boundaries of what is asked of from an employee. Zimenoff (2015) and Ogidan & Lao (2015) demonstrate the importance of viewing the employee as a unique individual, with their own skills and competencies, and how to maximise this to both the organisations and the employee's advantage. Fairness is not explicitly expressed in academic research but it is a theme that underpins the relationship of employee engagement; only if the relationship is fair and free from bias will both parties have faith and entertain the proposal or engagement (Doherty, 2010; Sattar, Ahmad and Hassan, 2015). Feedback and appraisals, in addition to pay and reward, must be comparable and fair for them to hold any weight and gain the traction required to achieve their objective of developing the employee. Career development plans, KPI's, and goals must be achievable and realistic. Anon (2008) and Hall-Ellis (2014) demonstrate the synergies between recruitment, selection and onboarding new recruits and employee engagement. Starting on the right footing is laying the foundations of the relationship to come and managing the expectations of the employee and the management team.

Motivation can come from any individual within the organisation. It can be passed down by leadership and management. It can be transferred through an employee's peers and by a sense of camaraderie, where individuals can be self-motivators. Plester and Hutchison (2016) demonstrate how camaraderie can drive motivation and create a positive work environment, increasing employee engagement. This is consistent with organisational branding creating a sense of community, as per McAlexander, Kim and Roberts (2003) and also by Andrew and Sofian (2012).

Constantin and Baias (2015), Polito (2013), and Jacobs Yu and Chavez (2016) demonstrate the critical role that communication plays in employee engagement. It can be the organisation keeping employees up to date with progress status,

listening to the employees, managing difficult conversations, providing feedback, and allowing time and structure for the feedback to be facilitated in a non-judgemental manner. The author will discuss communication in greater detail when discussing the relationships between employees and management.

Engagement is another aspect of the employee-organisation relationship; both parties must be reciprocal in the engagement process. It requires effort and commitment from the organisation to invest in its employees and provide them with an opportunity to become invested and benefit from the positive effects of that investment.

Butler, Armstrong, Ellinger & Franke (2016) initiative the GPTW program to increase engagement and motivation by fostering an environment of camaraderie, pride and trust. This program has been successful around the globe, as it, appeals to corporate aspect of the organisation, is readily identifiable, and has positive effects on marketing and company branding

The management style adopted by the individual manager is a contributing factor to the relationship with employees and it influences engagement levels. This effectively sets the environment of the relationship. McGregor (1987) put forward the Theory X / Theory Y management approach which divides management style into two. The autocratic management in Theory X creates a world of micromanagement whilst Theory Y creates a world of greater employee engagement. The organisational environment can solidify and embed the management style.

2.2.3 Employee Engagement in the Private Sector

PWC (2014) notes that the engagement levels are lower in public sector than in the private sector. There are a vast number of differences in the HR practices between public and private sector organisations (Boyne Jenkins and Pools, 1999) and it is noted that the private sector can respond to change more quickly than the public sector; due to this, it may be behind regarding HR practices and policy change and implementation. Imamoğlu and Beydoğan (2011) note that the

private sector overall will be more forward in their approach to wellbeing and engagement. The response time of a private sector organisation is quicker and often sets the trend for the public sector, as they are often viewed as proactive (Rawal, 2015); however, regardless of the HR incentives, the level of camaraderie plays an important and critical role and can even level the playing field between the two sectors if the team and employees have a common bond. Similar findings were made by Bolton and Houlihan (2009).

2.2.4 Employee Engagement in Ireland

During the recession and fiscal crisis in Ireland, engagement found itself on the corporate agenda again, as organisations had to maximise the limited resources they had at hand, one of which was staffing (Dooley, 2012). Headcount decreased overall during the recession and employees expressed concern over their own job security and future, as per a report by Willis Tower Watson (2010). As expressed, employees who are engaged have higher levels of motivation than disengaged employees. According to the IBEC report, during this period of recession employee engagement was high, at 8 out of 10 employees having faith in the organisation's goals, with many employees willing to go the extra mile to achieve success for the organisation (Towers Watson, 2011). From the organisation's view, 81% were satisfied with the level of engagement employees have. Employee engagement from the organisation's perspective is viewed as a preventive measure in an already precious time, with an emphasis on moving towards employee wellbeing (Towers Watson, 2011).

As the country is moving out of recession and into a mode of recovery, there is still an emphasis on employee engagement but the scope of this has broadened, as the moratorium have been lifted and there has been movement again following periods of wage reductions and pay freezes. Organisations are keeping employee engagement on the agenda (Morgan, 2017) and there is an increased focus on branding, as organisations are carving out an identity for themselves as the demand for talent is on the increase (PWC, 2017; Kinsella, 2016). The GPTW programme celebrated its 15th year in Ireland in 2017. Since its inception, there

are now 79 companies ranked within three categories – Small, Medium, and Large organisations.

2.3 Organisational Culture

Within this section, the author will outline what is meant by organisational culture whilst analysing three different theories of organisational culture. This section will conclude with a review of organisational commitment and its role in engagement and the impact it has on both the employee and the organisation.

The term “Organisational culture” first appeared in the late 1970’s and in the 1990’s it became synonymous as one of the most crucial elements in organisational success, as per Hofstede et al. (1990). Organisational culture is a common term that is used in both academic and corporate spheres. Although the term has become commonplace, there is not one definitive definition but a wide variety of definitions, as expressed by Plakhotnik & Rocco (2011).

Hofstede et al. (1990) credit Pettigrew (1979) as being the first to define organisational culture as “the source of a family of concepts” (Pettigrew, 1979, p.754). Adopting this definition, it demonstrates how a shared knowledge and familial outlook can set the culture, as well as a defined ethos and approach, within an organisation. From this, Van Den Berg and Wilderom (2004) describe organisational culture as the “glue” that holds the employees to the organisation’s goal and objectives. Turker & Altuntas (2015), and Ravasi and Schultz (2006) and Schein (1992) express how the shared experiences, beliefs and norms that employees have, shape the culture of the organisation. The relationship between all aspects within an organisation has ties and links to organisational culture and it is a sum of all the organisation parts.

Hibbard (1998) and Díaz-Cabrera, Hernández-Fernaud & Isla-Díaz (2004), as a means of defining organisational culture, have expressed an emphasis on values. The culture is driven by collective values, which drives practices. Singh (2007) examines the link between how the management of the culture can be changed

by management's approach and how this can help solidify and increase the levels of commitment amongst staff to the values of the organisation.

Alternatively, Hofstede (1991) expressed how values are inherent and unique to an individual so that the emphasis is not specifically on values but on their practices, which could contribute to leading to the term and explanation of "how things are done around here". From practices and practical applications, values are created which drive culture. From the organisational practices, stems the values of the organisation. Employees within organisations, with a strongly embedded culture, share the organisation's sense of values and beliefs, as expressed by Turker & Altuntas (2015) and Ravasi and Schultz (2006). Regardless of the driving force (whether practices or values) Hibbard (1998) and Hofstede et al. (1990) express how changing these norms can be difficult.

The question of what is driving organisational culture, the organisational practices, or values. Utilising these approaches, there are several ways to examine and analyse organisational culture. Two theories are put forward for review by the author for further analysis.

Whether an organisation has a culture by design or one that occurs naturally, the existence of an organisational culture is common to every work environment (Line, 1999). The roots and origins of trust stem from organisational culture and organisational design (Perry, 2013). Bigby, Knox, Beadle-Brown, Clement & Mansell (2012) demonstrate how culture, when broken down, can change at local level from corporate level, taking into account influencers at local level.

2.3.1 Theories of Organisational Culture

Within this section, the author will review two theories of organisational culture. There are several ways to analyse organisational culture. The methods that will be discussed are:

1. Handy's Power Culture
2. Schein's categories of culture

Handy's Power Culture

Handy (2000) outlined four categories of culture that are present in an organisation. These are Power, Role, Task, and Person. Handy (2000) details how "Power Culture" exists where power is held by a small number of key personnel making swift decisions. This power does not cascade down through lower levels of the organisation.

"Role culture" traditionally exists in bureaucratic systems, where processes are the source of power and the individual's position grants them the power not the individual themselves. "Task culture" is solution driven, where people work in highly skilled small teams where the individuals may feel more power than the organisation, which may cause the organisation to suffer, as the individual is not aligned with the organisation. "Person culture" exists when a person or individual feels superior or greater than the organisation. Like task culture, person centered culture can create problems for the organisation, if not handled successfully.

Schein's categories of culture

This model breaks down culture into different levels: Artifacts, beliefs and values and finally underlying assumptions. Schein's focus is on how values drive and change the organisational culture and how some values are readily identifiable. Some values have a reciprocal relationship, where employees value moulding the organisation; some are intangible and not possible to measure but play a role at an unconscious level.

As culture is embedded within an organisation, any changes within the organisation will have an impact on its culture and the norms that employees experience (Guidroz, Luce and Denison, 2010; Wilmot and Galford, 2007). With employers positioning themselves to become the employer of choice, potential candidates can align themselves with the culture of an organisation, solidifying the culture, whereby the brand and culture and are one in the same (Hogler, Henle and Gross, 2013).

2.3.2 Organisational Commitment

Organisational Commitment is the bond between employees and the organisation where they work. It is the connection that the employee feels to the organisation, traditionally resulting in increased productivity of the employee, determination, and increase in proactive and positive behaviour to the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Organisations with prominent levels of commitment have a definitive identity, enabling the employee to align themselves with the organisation's identity. Having a mission statement enables the organisation to have a clear outline and understanding of its goals and objectives, vision and purpose and what it deems will be successful in the future (Babnik, Brerznik, Dermol and Nada, 2014).

Meyer & Allen (1991) outline three types of organisational commitment: Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and, finally, Normative Commitment. Affective commitment outlines the employee's willingness to stay with an organisation as their values and goals are in alignment with the organisation. Employees who fall under this category traditionally feel like a valued asset to the organisation (Fernandez-Lores, Gavilan, Avello, & Blasco, 2016).

Employees who fall under the continuance commitment category feel that they should stay with the organisation for whatever personal reason or economic reason, such as lack of other suitable employment or are not willing to forfeit their position, rights or benefits they have with the organisation. The final category "Normative commitment" expresses that an employee will remain with an organisation out of their own personal and moral standards. They choose to stay as they feel an obligation to the organisation would have a feeling of guilt for departing. (Ross & Ali, 2017). The impact of this self-guilt can lead to the employee suffering from burnout and can cause mental health issues. Both normative and continuance commitment can have a negative effect on an organisation and the employee (Vandenberghe, Mignonac, & Manville, 2015; Boichuk and Menguc, 2013).

There is a direct correlation between the way employees are managed and their levels of commitment to the organisation, with a move away from autocratic management to transformative leadership; management sees an increase in commitment levels of the employees, as the employee feels like a valued asset (McLaggan, Bezuidenhout & Botha, 2013; Khaled, Ramudu, & Brian, 2015).

Metcalfe & Dick (2001) detail the importance of employees being able to engage in the decision-making process, in providing feedback, and in communicating more and how this can lead to greater employee commitment to their job and performance.

2.4 Summary and Conclusion

The objective of the literature review was to highlight several types of trust and their role in employee engagement. For the scene to be set, an understanding of the organisational culture must first be achieved.

The first section analysed the various trust relationships during people's interactions with their organisation, potential employers, manager, and their colleagues and how all these micro interactions of being the trustee and the trustor affect an individual's perceptions. The importance of the trust relationship underpins most human interactions and can affect people's perceptions at every level. The higher levels of trust between an individual and their colleagues, management and organisation, creates a positive relationship, improves innovation, and increases commitment and engagement levels of the employee to the organisations.

The second section focused on employee engagement, and the drivers and mutual benefits received from engaged employees. Employee engagement in Ireland and in the private sector was also discussed. As employee engagement levels increase, so will the commitment of staff to the organisation and vice-versa. When organisations invest in engaged employees, it generates a positive work environment.

The concluding section reviewed the various definitions and an overview of two different theories, expressing their commonalities and how change can impact an organisation and employees. How employees can be committed to the organisation is directly linked to organisational culture. Thus, an understanding of organisational culture is important to understanding the role that trust plays within the employee-employer relationship. Based on this, it may be deduced that trust levels within an organisation are a product of the organisational culture (Kujala et al., 2016).

In summation, academics and corporate industries alike agree that having high trust levels is a critical part of any successful relationship in an organisation. Trust is a commodity that cannot be bought or sold. It is intangible but effects the organisation from “the way things are done around here” to the values and ethos of the organisation and it can affect the level of passion and zeal that employees bring with them to work every day.

3 Research Methodology

The study proposes to provide an exploratory analysis on how trust levels of employees influence the levels of engagement and trust in a service sector organisation in Ireland.

McBurney (1998), Graziano (1997), and Creswell (2014) express the importance of choosing the most appropriate research method. A best-fit approach must be used to maximise the quality of data obtained, to ensure it is aligned with the researcher's objectives. The purpose of this chapter is to critically analyse the various approaches of academic research and design to ascertain the best fit to the research question. For the author to determine the most appropriate research method, all methods must be considered before the research can commence. The methodology chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. Research Philosophy and approach, which outlines the author's philosophical rationale behind choosing the qualitative research approach adopted for this research.
2. Research strategy outlines the diverse options available to the author and discusses how the author chose to conduct interviews.
3. Participants section provides a background of the participants who were interviewed by the author.
4. Data collection discusses how the data was gathered, coded, and analysed.
5. Ethical considerations review the precautions and necessary compliance requirements taken to ensure ethical standards were maintained and upheld.

3.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

Within this section, the author will outline the philosophical views of research and why the qualitative approach was chosen. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) describe that there is no one set or correct way to approach and conduct research. Thus, a best-fit approach must be adopted.

As expressed by Saunders et al. (2016), there are two main philosophies that a researcher can adopt: Ontology and Epistemology. The focus of ontology is on the “nature of reality” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016, p.127). The two main aspects of Ontology are subjectivism and objectivism. Subjectivism focuses on the process, whilst objectivism seeks to understand the how. The second philosophical aspect is epistemology, which is defined as “assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others” (Burrell and Morgan as cited by Saunders et al., 2016, p.154). Epistemology can be broken down into two aspects: Positivism and Interpretivism. An interpretivist seeks to understand the world around them and seeks “to walk in the shoes” of the people they surround. Adopting a positivism approach, the researcher will draw on data gained from experiences.

Within these research approaches, the research data can be approached in an inductive or deductive way. An inductive approach is viewing the data from a top down perspective, whereas a deductive approach unearths findings as the research progresses. Saunders et al. (2016) express how the quantitative method is deductive and the qualitative approach is inductive. As everybody is unique so too is the lens in which they view situations and the world around them.

The researcher has adopted an interpretivist approach. The main drivers of the objective are to understand the relationship between trust, effect, and impact on engagement. The author must obtain a personal and in depth understanding of the participant’s viewpoint and standing. The feelings inferred and expressed are both unique to each participant but collectively will aim to paint a picture of the environment.

Adopting the “best fit” approach, the researcher chose to use qualitative analysis for the research to facilitate the interpretivist philosophy.

3.2 Research Strategy

Before any of the data could be gathered, the author considered all methods, searching for the most appropriate method. The rationale behind the chosen adopted research method and strategy will be expressed by the author.

It is understood by Graziano (1997) and McBurney (1998) that there are two distinct research strategies that are commonly used - Quantitative and Qualitative. A third approach, as outlined by Creswell (2014), is the mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the collecting, collating, and analysis of data.

The method chosen by the author was qualitative, face-to-face semi-structured interviews. To gain insight into the topic in question, the author sought to understand the individual's perspective and view the topic through the participants' eyes. The author sought to gain a deeper more personal understanding of the participants' feelings and views on the matter.

3.2.1 Quantitative Research Method

The quantitative deductive approach involves statistics. Waters (1998) and Oakshott (2012) detail the benefits, as the data is collected easily and impartially usually using surveys and questionnaires. Utilising quantitative methods, the researcher must adopt an analytical approach, removing oneself from the data and looking at it purely through an analytical and deductive lens.

The researcher considered this method, as it would afford a larger sampling size, which can assist in obtaining a broader picture of the organisation where the research was being conducted. The Denison organisational culture survey DOCS survey, as used by Oleh and Tomas (2016) and Iljins, Skvarciany & Gaile-Sarkane (2015), was considered by the author; however, as the survey focuses on engagement and not trust, it did not meet all the criteria required by the researcher. The DOCS would only investigate one aspect of the researcher's objective, which would prove non-viable, as the objective would not be met.

3.2.2 Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research methods are more specific to the individual than to the masses. There is a lower degree of emphasis on statistics and a greater emphasis on the person and individual in their own environment and in gaining an understanding on how they infer and interact with the world around them (Silverman, 2013; Harwell, 2011).

There are several methods of gathering the data within qualitative research. These include focus groups, case studies, action research, participant observation, interviewing and language based analysis to name but a few. With the aim of the research objectives set, the two potential viable options for the researcher were focus group and interviews.

Focus groups facilitate a group discussion surrounding a topic. The aim of the focus group is to create a free-flowing open dialogue regarding a defined topic, as outlined by McQuarrie (1994) and Miller (2017). The advantage of focus groups is not only time saving but also that the conversation is driven by the participants, as per Eaton (2017). The disadvantages of focus groups are “group think” and participants with dominant or more confident personalities leading the conversations and not allowing all members to voice their opinion in an equal manner. A focus group was considered and would have been a suitable method of gathering data for this topic, as it would have sparked conversation amongst participants. Unfortunately, a focus group could not be facilitated, as the participants involved in the research did not all have the same working hours and days, so not all participants would be available at the same time to partake in the focus group; 33% of the participants work shift hours and often weekends. Thus, the number available at any given time were too small to form an effective focus group

Interviews are more personal meeting of a small number of people in a more formalized manner. For research, interviews are traditionally one to one, allowing the researcher to ask probing in-depth questions to understand the participants’ viewpoint and standing. Interviews can be structured whereby the interviewer has

a set defined list of questions; there is no scope to work outside of these questions. During semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has an open set of questions that can be asked and can follow up with additional and potentially more probing questions. During unstructured interviews, the interview allows the answers to lead the interview whilst adhering to the clear plan and path of the interviewer (Holstein and Gabbrium, 1995). Like all research methods, there are advantages and disadvantages to interviews. The disadvantage, as per Creswell (2014), is not only the lengthy time that it takes to conduct and analyse but also some participants may not be as forthcoming and articulate with information as others. However, the advantage of interviews is that it provides an open forum for the participant to voice their opinion and view in private whilst the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the topic, with all their attention on the one participant.

The researcher for this study chose to conduct interviews for their data collection. This was the chosen method, as it enabled the researcher to interact with each participant on an individual level and build a level of rapport and allow the participants to talk freely whilst observing their body language. The researcher decided to hold semi structured interviews so that open-ended questions could be asked, with follow up and more probing questions posed, if required.

3.2.3 Mixed Method Research

The mixed methods research approach combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Traditionally, a quantitative survey is completed, along with some form of quantitative research method (periodically focus group or interviews). Creswell (2007) expresses how the sequence of the research methods is dependent on the researcher and their objectives.

The author initially sought to conduct the research using the mixed methods approach, specifically the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach. The research initially proposed to conduct a quantitative survey, followed by qualitative focus groups. However, this approach, upon further investigation, proved problematic. The organisation in question partakes in the GPTW programme which involves an in-depth survey being completed every December.

The organisation has been actively and positively promoting this program for the past three consecutive years. As all employees were requested to participate in the GPTW survey, the author decided not to ask the employees to complete a second survey in a very tight time frame, as it may have a negative impact on the engagement levels within the organisation; they may view the invitation to the survey as repetitive. The researcher chose to adopt a fully qualitative method.

3.3 Participants

The participants were selected at random from within the sales and service sector division. The parent company of the organisation in question has offices nationwide. Participants invited to partake in the research were from the sales and service department of the Dublin office, which represents one spoke of the organisation. 15 participants were invited to take part in the research. A total of 9 participants were interviewed in July 2017, onsite in the organisation's head office. The duration of employment of the participants varied, however, all participants were not members of the senior management team.

The participants were a mix of front office and back office staff. 64% of the participants were back office support staff and 36% were front office sales personnel. The gender mix was 9 females and 2 males, which mirrors the percentage of the office; approximately 83% female to 17% male employees of non-management grade.

3.4 Sample

The author used a sample of 9 participants from one section of a private organisation. The participants were all employees of the organisation and were selected at random, with the assistance of the Human Resource Team. None of the employees that partook in the research were members of the senior management team. The author accepts and understands that this is only a small sample of all the employees within the organisation; as none of the participants include members of the management team, these 9 participants do not necessarily reflect the opinions and feelings of the whole organisation. There is a

narrow age demographic within the organisation and most of the employees within the selected organisation are within the 27-47 age bracket (including senior management). All participants that engaged in the research match this age demographic.

3.5 Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were collected and analysed by the author. The primary data was collected through qualitative research methods, in the form of semi-structured interviews. Secondary data was collected primarily through academic journals. The topics covered by the secondary data were determined by the outcomes of analysis and recurring themes of the primary data.

3.5.1 Primary data collection

Face to face semi-structured interviews were used as the primary source of data. All interviews were confidential. The interviews were voice recorded to enable the researcher to listen to the interviews later and analyse the conversation in sections and in full. By recording the interview, it enabled the researcher to pay a greater level of attention to the participant's body language and to keep the participant engaged during the interview. The data from each interview was recorded using a dictaphone on the researcher's smartphone and after each interview were transferred to the researcher's password protected laptop. The dictaphone cannot be backed up and is unable to connect to other devices. The use of two recording devices was to act as a failsafe should any technical issues arise during the interviews.

3.5.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data from academic literature was used to solidify and contextualize the themes obtained and unearthed during the interviews. The main area of literature the researcher based their research was around trust and the role that the trust relationship played between employees and the management team and how this affects employee engagement. The primary data determined the

direction which the secondary data collection took; more defined themes emerged once the interviews were analysed.

3.6 Access and Ethical Considerations

Asking participants for their views and feelings can be perceived as intrusive, as feelings and opinions expressed are unique to each individual and are sensitive, personal, and often private. In line with Silverman (2013), Creswell (2007), and Saunders et al. (2016), the research must not pressure or coerce the participants in any form. The role of the researcher is to facilitate the flow of information and data. The researcher must always remain open, impartial, and free from bias. During the interviews, the researcher aimed to encourage and promote a safe, open and trusting environment during the interview, ensuring that the participant feels at ease and happy to participate.

Before any interviews could be planned or conducted, the researcher had to be granted and approved access to the participants, which were employees of the private service sector organisation. Access for interviews was approved by the Human Resource Director upon review of the objectives and interview questions. Once access and organisation consent was obtained, the researcher worked with the Human Resource department, providing all invited participants with an outline of the objective of the interview, which is displayed in Appendix A, and a consent form, displayed in Appendix B. Appendix C outlines the interview questions. The researcher's contact information was given to all invited participants should they wish to obtain additional information or clarification prior to the interview date. The HR department scheduled all the interviews, which took place in a private interview room in the company's head office in Dublin. During the interviews, should a participant not wish to divulge information, the researcher moved onto the next question. The length of each interview varied from 17 minutes to 41 minutes.

Before the interview commenced, the researcher verbally received consent from all participants and reiterated the scope and purpose of the research and how the data obtained would be used to drive the research. All participants were asked to

sign a consent form, which will be kept in hard copy by the researcher until the researcher has been awarded their final grade for the submission.

Confidentiality was a concern expressed by a few of the participants to the researcher, prior to the commencement of the interviews. The researcher advised all participants at the invitation to interview stage that all data collected over the course of the interview could only be accessed by the researcher, and if required the researcher's supervisor and external examiner. All interviews were recorded to facilitate the researcher to analyse the answers. All participants agreed to be recorded. The interviews were recorded using a Sony ICD-BX140 Dictaphone and on a smartphone. The recordings from the smartphone were used to facilitate the transcription of the interviews. The files on the Dictaphone cannot be transferred to another device and the files are to be kept on the Dictaphone until the final grade has been awarded to the researcher. Once the final grade has been awarded, all files will be deleted and destroyed. All interviews are anonymised and the participant's employer does not have access to the recorded interviews. All participants were advised of this prior to the interviews. During the interviews, many participants disclosed information about their job and their job title that would potentially be an identifier, so all transcripts have been omitted as appendices. Transcripts and audio files are available to the examiner upon request.

All participants involved in this research were adults working in full time employment. No children or persons with disabilities participated in the research.

3.7 Limitations of Research Method

Every research has limitations, as outlined by Saunders et al. (2009). Using only one research method put a limitation on the research. Creswell (2014) expresses utilising the mixed methods approach can maximise the scope of the data being gathered. The researcher initially planned to utilise an explanatory sequential mixed method approach, whereby a survey would be completed first followed by a focus group. The discussion points being raised during the focus group would be driven by the outcome of the survey. The aim of the focus group was to be an open

forum for discussion and for participants to voice and express their opinion to each other and for the researcher to view the topic through a wide variety of lens.

A disadvantage of face-to-face interviews is the sample size achieved by the researcher. 15 participants were invited to partake in the research, however, only 9 attended interviews. By utilising interviews, it afforded the researcher time to delve deeper into discussion with the participants. It must be noted that the feeling reflected by these 9 participants may not necessarily reflect the opinions and feelings felt by all individuals within the organisation. The sampling size is specific to one section of a much larger organisation, where each section has their own management structure and business objectives.

4 Research Findings

The objective of the research was to gain an understanding of the trust levels of employees and if they influence the levels of engagement and trust in a service sector organisation in Ireland. Within this section, the researcher will consolidate the information and data obtained during the face-to-face interviews. The sections of this chapter break down the findings of the research into five distinct sections. These are;

1. Employee Background and Work Environment
2. Relationship and Trust with Management
3. Relationship and Trust with Colleagues
4. Organisational Commitment
5. Culture and Engagement

The researcher focused on one Irish private organisation operating in the sales and service sector industry. The objective of the research was to gain honest and open information from the participants, using their own words. The research focuses on one branch of staff based in their Dublin head office. The researcher gained access to the participants through the organisation's central HR team and all interviews were conducted in the company's Dublin office. Using semi-structured, face-to-face individual interviews permitted the researcher to add on additional questions to gain clarification and gain a better understanding of the participant's viewpoint and standing. These ad-hoc add-on interview questions were on the spot additions, designed to help the flow of the interview and allow the participant to expand the discussion and express their opinion. Should the participant express signs of discomfort in answering a question, they had an option to pass, stop, or not elaborate on their answer. The researcher paid attention to body language and did not ask to follow up or add on questions during times when the researcher perceived participants feeling discomfort or showing an unwillingness to answer.

All participants were advised in writing prior to the interview that the data obtained during the research was for a master's dissertation and that all the information was private and confidential and would not be discussed or circulated

to their management team and employer. Verbal and written consent was received before the interview commenced.

4.1 Employee Background and Work Environment

The first five questions of the interview were based on the employee's job role, title, and length of service. This set the scene of the working environment of the participants. The organisation is one part of a larger company, which was referred to throughout the research as the "parent company". The individual organisation where the participants are based is then divided up into smaller departments, in one large open planned office. It is evident that the organisation does not function according to the traditional corporate business hours, as 3 of the participants work shift hours 5 out of the 7 days a week, which includes weekends.

"[...] Monday to Friday 9 to 5." (Interviewee 0710072017)

"So my working hours are 7.15 hours daily done but it's done kinda over a roster which can be anytime from starting at 7 and finishing at 9.30pm but generally its 10-6 for me, 1.30-9.30 or 11-7" (Interviewee 0308072017)

"Predominately Monday to Friday 7 to 3 but then we are all on a rotation for bank holiday & weekends. it's not your traditional Monday to Friday, everyone does their fair share but I'm mainly Monday to Friday 7-3." (Interviewee 0106072017)

"[...] I am on a line Tuesday to Saturday. A few people have left so we have all been put on rotation to cover Sundays and the weekend completely. Our hours change so they could be from 7 – 3, 8-4 all the way up to 1.30-9.30. Its 5 days a week but they it's the rotation. It never goes over 6 days a week." (Interviewee 0208072017)

The job roles that were interviewed ranged from front office reception, recruitment, placement, and compliance. All participants were part of smaller departments, as well as collectively being part of the same organisation.

The length of service was asked in question 3. The length of service ranged from 16 months to 15 years. 3 participants have worked with the organisation more than 8 years, whilst 6 participants, the majority, have worked with the

organisation for 3 years or less. The average duration of the employee length of service is 5 years.

The next two questions were designed to set the scene of the working environment and the inner working of the department and how they interlink with each other. The department team size varies from 3 people to 15 people but will an overall 40 within this section of the organisation. The numbers of employees of the parent company is approximately 400 nationwide.

4.2 Relationship and Trust with Management

Questions were asked to gain an understanding of the relationship that the participants have with their management team and to gain an insight into the trust levels. All participants are at non-managerial level within the organisation. All participants expressed a sense of autonomy and independence in their work; the levels of micro-management were low. The driving force behind this was primarily a focus of the job at hand and the understanding and knowledge of the roles objectives and a push to achieve the objectives. Several participants expressed, how when you move away from the core duties, expectations are less structured and managed.

"[...] I'm not micromanaged, I think at this stage working in the department for that period of time the expectation is that I know what I'm doing and if I have any queries or questions I can contact any of the management staff so I'm kinda left to my own devises." (Interviewee 0710072017)

"[...] we have been trained and its very visual on the computer systems to see what you have to do so we meet our own expectations workload wise, we know where the work is and what to do with it. We don't really have to consult mgmt. for anything like that unless there is a compliant which is rare. That the only time I have to consult with management so work expectation wise and work load wise its fine." (Interviewee 030800702017)

"Within the addon, ad-hoc duties to my role that can be a little bit less defined, I think the expectations of management on that side can be a bit blurred where I could be doing work but it for me to be doing or is it just because like I don't want to say I'm the dogsbody but that I would end up doing it." (Interviewee 0610072017)

“Generally, they (management) know what they want and say what they want whether it is feasible is the question. When you ask a question and you’re told just get it done, but that’s not an answer. You’re told to do something without any kind of guidance basically.” (Interviewee 0810072017)

“I would say the objectives are not as stringent, thankfully, because management do definitely they are logical they know that you have been working hard and not meet a target that if you have been working hard towards it that’s fair enough but I think in some ways they are logical about objectives but like say our targets always include quite a big stretch on them so they are often out of reach, mainly financial based.” (Interviewee 05100702017)

Communication was mentioned by most of the participants. The volume of communication and method of communication utilised and received varied from participant to participant. All expressed the importance of communication. There was a mixture amongst the participants about the communication that they received from management. This differed between the participants who worked on different teams.

“We have a call every week where they set out the agenda for the month and that call is followed up every week, just so that everybody is doing what they said they were doing and so on...” (Interviewee 0910072017)

“[...] sometimes rather than communication comes from them it trickles down and you hear it from third / 4th / 5th parties. They say it to someone but not everyone. That happens regularly enough really ...It’s the tone. That depending on what department you come from will depend if you are spoken to in a respectful manner. I can be snapped at and it can be quite aggressive and dismissive, like this mentality that you are summoned over to desk in front of everyone where you have to stand, keeping in mind it’s an open planned office so your standing there like a bold schoolchild really your being asked questions, there is no seat for you to sit down on and it’s quite humiliating and embarrassing when your colleagues and other departments can hear and see this going on.” (Interviewee 0106072017)

“We supposed to have monthly meetings and what can be done better etc, how are we all. But these meetings can stretch every 3-4 months. We’re starting to get back to every month ... but the questions we ask are not being answered.” (Interviewee 0208072017)

Another common theme amongst nearly all participants was the desire for more individual communication and feedback. Participants acknowledged that even though management were approachable it was the participants that were driving the communication; appraisals and feedback only occurred when the participants pushed the topic.

"[...] 1:1 meeting appraisal meeting but they have not happened in the 2 years I have been there with anyone. I don't know if its annually or bi-annually but they are supposed to do through your progress, give you guidelines, give you points on where to improve and ask you if there is anything that we would like to change, what we want, any training etc but that has not happened" (Interviewee 0308072017)

"I would prefer more communication from management about what's going on in the company. We are at times told very briefly and when we ask we are fobbed off. I would prefer more meetings." (Interviewee 02080702017)

"[...] more 1:1, yes management are approachable but it shouldn't be a situation where as an employee you have to call management into a meeting to ask how am I getting on, what do I need to do to get this, what is next for me.... More structure is needed." (Interviewee 0510072017)

Equality and fairness were direct questions asked to the participants by the researcher. There was a definite mix of the answers received from these questions, almost a split amongst the participants. Whilst a number of participants felt that there was no bias on the side of management towards how they and their colleagues were treated, other participants expressed a different perspective.

"Yeah I think we are all treated the same, , Male, Female, we are all treated, we are treated as equals.... I would think we are treated fairly on a regular basis there are times maybe when we are spoken to in a tone that can be inappropriate or can be very demoting or can be in a put down controlling tone that can be frustrating but in general they are fine." (Interviewee 0710072017)

"Some are favoured more, could be down to personality or how they present the work or themselves often those who do the most are often overlooked by management. Fairly would be no, if I make a mistake and you make a mistake are we going to be treated the same, are we are on

par. No we are not. So there are common mistakes that happen in this job like all jobs, due to work load due to support given to you, due to the disproportionate work load given to you may in our job you forget to cancel someone, you are going so quickly that you forget to ring the shift, ring the client. ..how I am reprimanded could be very different as to how I am reprimanded and it's been observed, I could be given out to basically, sent an angry email or I could be basically told don't do that again or we will keep a record of it and you could do it and it has happened that nothing was said to you, not even an email there would nothing said, its overlooked. Fairly as in some people's mistakes are overlooked and others are overtly highlighted" (Interviewee 0308072017)

"There are a few on the team that are treated very well. There are a few who receive extra work, promotions. I know some of my team members have been told no. We are not all treated fairly and it seems like favouritism within the team....they lecture you and tell you go just do it yourself." (Interviewee 0208072017)

"I think they rely on one person more than others which is not fair but we are all treated equally, well I think so." (Interviewee 0810072017)

Although there was a mixed response to recognition, a small number of participants did feel that they received recognition from management but the majority felt the opposite.

"On the odd occasion, they say well done but regards recognition financial recognition no, on month to month basis... there is any feedback, or recognition to me when I go beyond the call of duty." (Interviewee 07100072017)

"[...] if there has been something significant done, it will be put out there for my direct team." (Interviewee 0910072017)

"For the most part no, not just me the whole team, were kinda glossed over an awful lot of the time. It's my team. It's not other teams." (Interviewee 0106072017)

"It's never really noticed if you do something well, its overlooked." (Interviewee 0810072017)

4.3 Relationship and Trust with Colleagues

Themes of pride, recognition, value, and camaraderie overlapped during the interviews.

Most participants spoke warmly about their colleagues and peers. All expressed pride in the work that they do. Many expressed how the sense of pride was achieved through teamwork, collaboration, and receiving recognition from their fellow team members.

All participants expressed how they feel valued amongst their team and colleagues. The work that they do on a day-to-day level gives them a sense of value and satisfaction and a sense of achievement. Recognition was for the most the part driven by team and received at team level, with a consensus that there was little recognition received from management.

*“We all help each other very well and speak highly of each other.”
(Interviewee 0208072017)*

“I am proud of the people I work with, I am proud of their work ethics, their morals, I enjoy working there, their friendship. I am engaged with my team, actively engaged. We work closely together and as a team.” (Interviewee 03080702017)

“I’m proud of the work I do. It’s a wonderful team and we all work really hard ... Good relationship with clients and team members.” (Interviewee 0106072017)

“I get great feedback and compliments from my team and colleagues within in my department and I do feel that they really acknowledge and appreciate the work that I do.” (Interviewee 0610072017)

“We get to nominate each other and recognise each other and the feeling that we are worthy of your job.” (Interviewee 0208072017)

“My manager has said it to me that the nature of the job, people are coming and going in our team all time and it hinders any reflection on their part. if people are coming and going all the time, it costs so much time and money. Why would they not meet the team and find out what they want and work with the team they have already but they are flippant about

people coming and going. They have communicated to me if you are here to do a job get it done, they won't be any extra benefits." (Interviewee 0308072017)

4.4 Organisational Commitment

Most of the participants expressed feeling that working for a prestigious company was beneficial to them and, as it was an Irish company, it gave them a sense of value. Many acknowledged how the organisation is striving to improve engagement. The organisation's market standing gave them pride in their organisational even if this did not transfer to their relationship with management. The wider organisation was doing well and they felt part of it. A sense of commitment was also expressed; they felt that their job was helping others and that, even though at times it may be a thankless job, it was still important and necessary.

"I am proud of the company, it's a great company. I am very proud of the company it's just the management style is difficult at times." (Interviewee 0208072017)

"I am proud as the company is a recognised company in Ireland. I represent the company well, I speak very highly of regards the company's professionalism, our attention to detail, our standards of compliance." (Interviewee 0710072017)

"It's a good company, it's an Irish company I am proud of that. I am proud of the work I do there too." (Interviewee 0308072017)

"I think as a company goes, we have a good name and we do good work." (Interviewee 0510072017)

"I am, yeah proud to work here, it's a good company." (Interviewee 0106072017)

4.5 Culture and Engagement

There was a near equal feeling between the participants concerning feeling engaged and not feeling engaged. Only 1 participant expressed how they felt actively disengaged. Participants working shift hours had a stronger sense of camaraderie amongst their team, so the levels of engagement at local and team

levels were high. These participants expressed a feeling of distance to the overall organisation due to their working hours being outside of the company norm.

Schemes like the GPTW and diversity and inclusion programs have been recently launched and the participants have benefited from these schemes. Individual programmes of mindfulness and mental health issues are being delivered but participants expressed that, unless the fundamentals at ground level improve, employees will not be able or be able to reap the benefits of these schemes.

Participants expressed how the organisation is seeking to improve engagement and morale. Participants felt a positive impact; however, there is still work required from management to engage with all employees regardless of their role and working hours. Some notable incentives were the introduction of casual Friday to the organisation, in line with the parent company policy. Participants expressed how “pay day breakfasts” were rolled out and a peer-to-peer recognition scheme was introduced. Small incremental steps are being made to improve and increase the engagement levels and this is being noted by participants but there was still a long way to go, with commitment needed by management in order to change the culture and improve engagement.

“Not engaged. We are not being much information, we are asking questions and they are being fobbed off. I don’t feel part of it.” (Interviewee 0208072017)

“Actively Disengaged but steps are being taking to change this as people have voiced that to change the way. In fairness to work they have been taking steps to change it but it’s the nature of what we do, shift work and doing Long days, it’s not your Monday to Friday 9-5 so it’s hard to engage from the point of view. Work are definitely taking the steps to change it. (Interviewee 0106072017)

“We do get invitations but because of the rota it is very hard to become included ... everyone else works business hours and can engage more actively, we can’t.” (Interviewee 0308072017)

“Engaged the majority of time, the company is a huge company and I would have an idea on what is going on around the company but more importantly in own our section, the various teams. I would have a very good

working relationship with them on a day to day basis.” (Interviewee 0710072017)

“Not engaged, before probably more engaged, it’s probably disintegrated over time. nothing really changes so much.” (Interviewee 0810072017)

“If you’re doing well and don’t say anything to do you but no one really wants to find out if your happy or not happy, management don’t want to have to deal with it so they don’t ask the questions, but if you don’t ask the question how are things going to change and they can’t fix it so the person is not engaged and its harder to change it so management needs to be more plugged in to what they want from the employees but also what employees want from the job and there is not a structure for it there are the moment.” (Interviewee 05100702017)

“They do try but I don’t know if they always try the right thing. They try something but after a couple of months it fades away and they forget about it for a while. It all seems temporary things. In another couple of months, they will do something else, it’s a cycle. When they see it starting to work they don’t think they need to do it anymore so it goes back to way it was.” (Interviewee 0810072017)

“[...] (management) are looking very much short term and they can neglect to take a step back and look at the bigger picture who is happy, who is not happy, who has been saying to us I need this, I need that, I think that side of it looking at employee’s morale hasn’t been given the focus that it needs to be.” (Interviewee 0610072017)

5 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher will outline, in detail, the findings unveiled in the previous chapter. The limitations of the research will be analysed, along with proposals for further research. Recommendations will be made by the researcher of how the organisation can improve trust and engagement levels, including the estimated costs of these recommendations. Before concluding, the researcher, will outline their personal learnings during this research.

5.1 Discussion of Key Findings

This section links the researching findings to existing literature, identifying synergies and conflicts.

5.1.1 Employee Background and Work Environment

The first five questions posed by the researcher were to gain an understanding on the participant's position in the organisation. As outlined in 4.1, these questions were based around the employee's job role, length of service, and working hours. These questions were not critical to the study but the researcher wanted to gain an understanding of the organisation and where the employees worked, as the organisation operates 7 days a week. It was also a way to build rapport with the participants (Saunders et al., 2016; Miller, 2017).

5.1.2 Relationship and Trust with Management

Within the area regarding relationship and trust levels with management, the researcher acknowledges that the participants expressed various and often conflicting views but also had a vast number of commonalities between them. The evidence gained from the participants led the researcher to deduce that the management style in the organisation is task orientated. Cowsill & Grint (2008) note that task focus leadership relies less on relationships and can often be perceived as less trustworthy.

Communication was mentioned by all participants in some form, the focus by the participants was the frequency and manner that management communicated

with them. A few participants expressed dissatisfaction with the way they, or their colleagues, have been spoken to. A breach of trust was perceived by participants when in planned meetings, appraisals did not occur and when participants expressed how they were spoken to in an unbecoming tone and reprimanded in front of their peers. Colquitt & Rodell (2011) and Greg et al. (2013) expressed similar findings on communication levels and vertical trust.

When asked about fairness and equality, the participants expressed how management was not always fair and equal in their dealings with employees, either to them directly or to a colleague. This uncertainty and feeling of ambiguity decreases the trust vertical trust levels, as outlined by Krot and Lewicka (2012). A few participants expressed a stronger sense of inequality and a deeper feeling of distrust; the deeper this feeling of distrust is felt, the larger the impact was on the relationship and trust levels, which in line with findings made by Shimei & Yaodong (2013) and in the Trust Model by Mayer et al. (1995).

5.1.3 Relationship and Trust with Colleagues

All participants expressed camaraderie, pride, and teamwork when discussing their colleagues. The researcher found that the sense of pride and value was driven by the strong levels of camaraderie through the various individual teams. The team covering shift work have a very high level of teamwork and camaraderie, as they spoke more freely, favourably, and openly about their colleagues. The recognition appears to be driven at local team level. All participants expressed a dedicated team bond and culture amongst their colleagues; this mirrors findings made by Schein (1992).

Horizontal trust is expressed by the participants and the levels of this trust appear to be very high. With the participants, all working in teams and working alongside each other in a busy open plan office, there is constant interactions between them. Arnold et al. (2001) express that, with high levels of trust, comes high levels of camaraderie, where people have shared values and norms. This is also confirmed by Tan and Lim (2009), as employees with shared experiences have increased trust levels. The researcher's findings coincide with findings made by

Butler et al. (2016) that an increase in camaraderie, increases the levels of engagement at team levels, resulting in pride and can be reflected in the team creating a positive feeling all round.

5.1.4 Organisational Commitment

Within this section, the areas of institutional and organisational trust come into play alongside organisational commitment. All participants expressed pride in working for the organisation, with a few mentioning it was outwardly perceived that the company was a “good company”, therefore identifying a very high level of institutional trust. These findings are consistent with literature (Zaheer et al., 1998; Virutamasen et al., 2015; Hardin, 2006; Glsang and Jagd, 2015).

In all four areas, 4 categories outlined by Tan & Tan (2000): procedural, distributive, information and interactional the participants expressed there was need for improvement and acknowledged how the organisation was putting steps in place for improvement. Due to the positive response of the organisation from participants, it was evident that participants easily identified the difference between interpersonal trust with management and organisational trust.

The positive response when discussing the organisation reflects a positive and high level of organisational commitment. There is a discrepancy with findings made by McLaggan et al. (2013) and Khaled et al. (2015) as the management style is task focused and potentially autocratic, which would traditionally reflect lower levels of organisational commitment. However, the levels of camaraderie and shared values are high between the individual team members and the wider organisation; this seems to have decreased the effect that the management style had on participants.

5.1.5 Culture and Engagement

Culture of engagement can be a productive way of enhancing organisational commitment and improving engagement levels, as per Sirisetti (2012) and Ilies et al. (2017). When employees are engaged, they bring their passion and zeal to the workplace. The culture that was exhibited by the participants as a “Power Culture”

was in line with Handy (2000). The majority of the workforce have little say in how the job and roles are structured and executed.

There was a mix of nearly 50% of engaged and not engaged employees. The participants that expressed being disengaged noted poor communication, fairness, equality, and a lack of formal feedback from management during the interviews, which Doherty (2010) and Sattar et al. (2015) outline are key drivers of engagement. The participants who expressed positive engagement also expressed a sense of pride with the organisation, which is line with the BlessingWhite X model.

Participants recognised that the organisation is working to improve the engagement levels and modify the culture; schemes like the GPTW, diversity and inclusion programs have been launched across the organisation recently and participants responded positively. Programmes of mindfulness and mental health are being delivered which participants expressed were beneficial; however, unless the fundamentals at ground level improve, employees will not be able to reap the benefits of these initiatives which would help transition them from a non-engaged to an engaged state.

The researcher noted how there was a tightly knit subculture amongst the team who worked shift hours and how the participants interviewed shared common values and had the strongest sense of team pride. Ravasi and Schultz (2006) express how these shared values can create a culture. This sub culture does not appear to be fostered by management. These participants shared a sense of identity and uniqueness when they compared themselves to the rest of the organisation. This identity helps to solidify the culture amongst the team; similar findings regarding subcultures were made by Sackmann (1992).

5.2 Limitations of the Research

The researcher identified several limitations to the research study. As expressed in section 3.2, the researcher initially proposed to use a mixed method approach, which would have given an organisational wide view of the perceptions of all

employees and ensured anonymity. The researcher aimed to interview more participants; however, due to other commitments they were unavailable or declined to take part. During the interviews, there were times when the participant responded with yes / no answers and did not expand or elaborate, thus, the researcher's skills at interviewing could be a limitation. The size of the sampling group was one limitation on the research, and from this the researcher cannot comment about the trust levels of other employees and management. Another limitation was that the participants all came from one office of a very large organisation that have multiple offices throughout Ireland. The research only focused on a closed number of participants and this does not reflect the organisation. As the research only viewed one organisation, there is no way for the researcher to note if this is same across other private companies in Ireland.

Another limitation is that there are no ways of benchmarking participants' views, as the feeling of trust is unique to everyone; these feelings can be inferred differently and therefore it is impossible for them to be compared without an element of bias and compromise.

5.3 Opportunities for Further Research

As the researcher conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews, there was potential for other and alternative methods to be used to gain a larger amount of information; mixed methods, with survey and focus groups, are one of many potentials for further research.

As the organisation in question is partaking in the GPTW program, an opportunity for a longitudinal study of the trust levels of within the organisation would not only be possible but it would also be feasible. Utilising a longitudinal study approach, the researcher would be given the opportunity to measure, track and evaluate the changes in trust and engagement from the policy changes and initiatives that the organisation are implementing, and aim to implement, over the next 12 months.

During the interviews, the researcher noted that several of the participants did not work regular office hours. There is an opportunity to research and understand the different key drivers of trust and engagement between this individual cohort of staff and compare it to the key drivers of non-shift worker force.

5.4 Recommendations and Costs of Recommendations

Within this section, the author proposes initiatives and recommendations that will, not only benefit the employee, but also management and the organisation itself; the organisation must see a return on its investment.

Your word is your bond: Creating an environment where expectations are managed.

Trust and engagement levels that the researcher unveiled during the research did not meet the expectations of the employees. Approximately 5 years ago, the organisation launched its core values programme. Values programmes are designed to embody the identity of the organisation, its principles, and beliefs and underpin its outlook, mission, and values. Aligning and imbedding the values throughout the organisation will solidify culture, increase engagement levels, and improve trust. However, the researcher understands that this is a lengthy process but by celebrating change through incremental steps it can be achieved.

1. The first recommendation surrounds team building. During the interviews with participants, the researcher noted the high level of camaraderie and how participants viewed small gestures as important to team morale. The department working shift hours expressed how they could never go to lunch together; a recommendation is to reintroduce a monthly lunch break where all members of the team can attend should they wish, as suggested by one of the participants. The cost of this initiative would be minimal to the organisation; the only request would for their colleagues on another team to take a different lunch break time to accommodate one team leaving for lunch.

2. The second recommendation concerns learning and developing. Several participants expressed the desire for clarity when approaching the role or task at hand; the driving force is to get the job done in a short space of time without objectively looking at the purpose of the task. Staff have asked for training on new systems but this was pending at the time of the interviews. A new system was being introduced at the time of the interviews and some participants expressed the desire for additional training, especially during off peak hours when there was less support from the wider team available. Additional training sessions, staggered with set and defined learning objectives, should be rolled out. The cost per training session (based on the price per day to pay a trainer) would be €400.00 per session. If 5 initial sessions were implemented, at a cost of €2,000, this would improve the team's work performance, enabling them to improve performance and productivity, with sessions specifically designed to assist the team members who work weekends.
3. The final recommendation encompasses feedback, appraisals, and recognition. Training was provided to staff and management for performance reviews to take place and, at present, only seems to be facilitated when requested by the team member. Management need to plan and map out performance appraisals and reviews at least once a year. This is happening on an ad-hoc basis. As a result, the team have no faith or trust in the process. Upon completing these gaps in training, development and succession, planning with follow suit. The return on time investment if managed correctly will provide dividends to management. With the recognition programme in place at present, management need to promote the celebration of achievement of the team and individuals alike. The framework for this has already been supplied, so the only investment required from this is time from both the team members and management. The monthly team meetings that are planned need to take place. If there is no consistency in the meeting scheduling, and management control the schedule, then the meetings are purely to facilitate one-way communication, which turns into a lecture and not a meeting. Meetings

must proceed as planned and all parties (management and non-management alike) should be given a voice.

These recommendations will not have any impact if they are not maintained and if management do not believe in them. The attitudes that management have filter down through the organisation. Thus, the management team also have a leadership hat to wear.

5.5 Personal Learning of the Researcher

I found this thesis and research both awarding and challenging. The area that I chose to research was outside my comfort zone of facts and figures and into the world of interactions and relationship building. What struck me the most when reading literature and from doing my own hands-on interviews was the impact that people's actions (or lack thereof) have on others.

In a busy and fast-paced working environment, people pick up, not only on what was said, but a considerable influence on what is not said and how building relationships can pay dividends in the future. We respond to the trust relationship without even knowing we are being affected by it. It is engrained in us. With instant messages, emails, and social media, people have instant communication all the time (regardless of if you want it or not). However, the need for valued communication has not changed. People don't just want information; they want the engagement that comes along with it, the time investment in the person. As social creatures, we seek out company (both personal and organisational) that seek to match our own internal values and our sense of wanting to belong is embedded by the company to create an identity. The same is true about all aspects of human life; whether it is hobbies or pastimes, we enjoy a sense of familiarity. Completing this Master's thesis is, not only an academic achievement, but a personal one too.

5.6 Conclusion

The author's objective at the onset of this research was to gain a real-life insight into the role that trust plays in a corporate organisation and its impact on the

employees, through the lens of engagement and commitment. The literature outlined the various aspects of interpersonal, institutional, and organisational trust and how these overlap and intertwine to create a complex system and the roles that people automatically play in them unbeknownst to themselves. Employee engagement and commitment is a direct response to this trust. As Newton's third law states, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. This can be applied to the trust relationship and people's responses to it.

Employee engagement and organisational commitment and culture were analysed and it was found that engaged employees were committed to the organisation. Organisations want employees to be engaged and committed; it is not only commercially viable but also beneficial to the employee. It is evident that there are synergies between engagement and commitment and both are firmly rooted in culture and "the way things are done around here".

The qualitative research in the form of interviews conducted by the author identified the various trust relationships and times of collaboration where the trust was broken. The results were a mix of engaged and not engaged participants; however, all expressed feelings of pride, camaraderie, and value whilst expressing the need for communication and recognition. Various trust relationships are at play and each help contribute to the participants' feelings. All were committed to their role and the organisation, even though the drivers were different. The role that management styles play in this relationship was not investigated and could potentially be a key driver. The organisation is implementing initiatives to improve engagement. These changes are not simple and employees will start viewing the organisation in a different way, but only if management are committed to the new changes being implemented. Commitment and follow through is required to move the relationship forward. When interpersonal and organisational trust work in unison and promote features of the organisational culture, this will foster and encourage organisational commitment. The culture goes from being a mission statement and values to being part of the fabric of the organisation. In turn, the organisation becomes a brand; managing the expectations of customers, clients and employees alike.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Invitation to Interview for Participants

Dear Interviewee,

I am currently completing my dissertation for my Masters in Human Resource Management in the National College of Ireland.

The title of my dissertation is “An exploration of the trust relationship and the its impact on employee engagement within an Irish private organisation”.

The main objective of my dissertation is to obtain an understanding of trust in your organisation and to investigate the impact (if any) that the trust relationship has in employee engagement.

All information is completely anonymous, no names will be revealed and the only people with access to the information will be myself and my supervisor in National College of Ireland. Your employer, management or colleagues will not see any of your information. I expect interviews to last approx. 45 minutes and will be held in the office at a time convenient to you.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at XXXXXXXX.

Kind regards,

Sinéad Murphy

Appendix B – Interview Consent Form

Interview Consent Form

Title of Research Project:

An exploration of the trust relationship and the its impact on employee engagement within an Irish private organisation

Name and Position of Researcher: Sinéad Murphy

Masters in Human Resource Management, National College of Ireland

- I confirm that I have read an understood the information sheet for the above study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason
- I give my permission to record my interview through audio recording measures
- I give my permission to the researcher to use direct and indirect quotes in their project
- I agree to take part in this interview for this research project and I understand that it is completely confidential and anonymous

Participant

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Researcher

Name: Sinéad Murphy

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix C – Interview Questions

1. Name
2. Job Role
3. Length of service with the company
4. How many people are your team / department
5. What are your working hours?
6. Does management communicate their expectations clearly?
7. Does management make their objectives obtainable?
8. How does management communicate / engage with you in order for you to achieve your objectives?
9. Are all team members treated equally by management?
10. Do you feel that everyone is treated fairly by management?
11. Are management approachable and easy to talk to?
12. Do you feel supported in your role by management?
13. Do you feel you receive recognition from management for good the work you do?
14. Are you proud to tell people you work here?
15. Are you proud of the work you here?
16. Do you feel valued at work?
17. What category do you think you fall under? – engaged, not engaged, or actively disengaged?
18. What are the main factors that make you feel this way?
19. Do you think your organisation are doing enough to create/maintain a culture of employee engagement within the organisation?
20. If there was one thing you could change / implement to improve employee engagement what would it be and why?