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Absenteeism:

Management Control
and True Causes

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ABSTRACT

Absenteeism is a serious problem which affects the profitability, competitiveness and productivity of industry. Costings of absenteeism in the U.K. are estimated at 11 billion pounds per annum. (Seacombe, 1995:26). Irish business loses hundreds of millions of pounds each year as a result of employee absenteeism. In 1992 the direct cost to industry in Ireland was £575 million. (I.B.E.C., 1993:1)

These significant costs represent direct costs only and take no account of indirect costs, such as the cost of lost sales, replacement human resources and overtime to cover the absentees. Industry can no longer afford unnecessary absenteeism. Absences from the workplace pose practical problems not only for industry but for the economy as a whole. This requires examination and diagnosis.

Unless an organisation is overstaffed, the absence of an employee will result either in a loss of production or else impose an additional strain on those present.

Therefore, the control of absenteeism within an organisation is vital in order to ensure that the organisation remains profitable, competitive and reaches its maximum productivity potential.

A survey of literature indicates that absenteeism levels will decline if attendance control strategies are in place. (Edwards and Whitson, 1995:5)

This study proposes to test the hypothesis that effective management of attendance at work will reduce or eliminate unnecessary absenteeism.

Furthermore recent research in the topic area has purported to contain the causes for absenteeism in the workplace. In reality these causes are those as perceived by management and in actual fact may not be indicative of the real reasons for absenteeism. (IBEC, 1993:21).

This study proposes to address this anomaly by surveying the workers themselves and establishing the 'true' causes for absenteeism.

Dedication

**To my husband Norbert and my
daughters Hannah & Heather.
With all my love.**

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INTRODUCTION

This researcher's interest in this area stems from:

- * a dissertation on the subject of the Development of an Absenteeism Control Programme for Iarnród Éireann which she submitted in 1994 to the National Council for Educational Awards in partial fulfilment of the B.A. Degree Course in Industrial Relations and Personnel Management.
- * as a result of this previous unpublished research, the researcher has a keen interest to test the hypothesis that management control of absenteeism in the workplace will curb or reduce same.
- * furthermore as a result of the previous unpublished research the researcher identified that much research in the area of causes or factors contributing to absenteeism was dated and that on opportunity existed for further research in this area.

This study evolved as a consequence.

This research is twofold. In the first instance the study is concerned with the management of attendance in the workplace. The hypothesis to be tested is management of attendance in the workplace will curb or reduce absenteeism. For this purpose a case study of the implementation of a management strategy of absenteeism control in an organisation will be undertaken. The case study will be conducted in Iarnród Éireann in the Catering Department - Network Catering.

Secondly a survey of personnel will be undertaken within the same sample group to assess the employees attitude to management's

control of attendance and determine how effective the control is in terms of employee participation levels and to determine the true causes and contributing factors to absenteeism levels in that organisation.

A purpose designed research instrument was intended to uncover attitudes and identify behaviours amongst Iarnród Éireann employees.

Ideas from other researchers in the field of absenteeism and from previous unpublished research by the author would guide the choice of questions to be asked.

Chapter 1 : Absenteeism

Absenteeism - Definitional Problems.

One of the greatest difficulties encountered by a researcher in the area of absenteeism is the lack of a common definition.

There is no national definition for absenteeism (O. Kelly, 1988: 14 - 17). The measurement of the extent of the absence problem in Ireland is severely hampered by the lack of an agreeable definition of absence and absenteeism (IBEC, 1993:15).

The lack of a common definition makes it almost impossible to assess or compare absenteeism levels. Therefore, the first step must be to agree on a definition of what is meant by the term "absenteeism".

In the popular understanding, the term "absenteeism" is more or less synonymous with the notion of malingering, implying that the employee's absence is deliberate and unjustified. This pejorative sense is made explicit in many formal definitions of absenteeism. For example, the British Institute of Management defines "absenteeism" as:

That kind of absence which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances of the employee concerned, may regard as avoidable (British Institute of Management, 1955:17). Other similar definitions include: "habitual unjustified absence from work" (Oxford English Dictionary) and "the practise of workers failing to report to work on some slight excuse or none at all" (Moore, 1977:504).

While it cannot be denied that some absences may be unjustifiable (or "voluntary" in psychological terms), the aforementioned definitions of absenteeism are too narrow for this study's purposes. In this study, the author is concerned with absenteeism in the broader sense of staff being unavailable for work when they are scheduled to be present. In this context, the definition of absenteeism put forward by the Federated Union of Employers (F.U.E.) - "all absence from work other than planned holidays" - is more useful (F.U.E., 1980:8). However, even this is not entirely satisfactory, since it excludes only one form of planned absence, viz. holidays; all other types of planned, authorised absence are defined (at least implicitly) as "absenteeism".

IBEC put forward that "absenteeism is unscheduled disruption of the work process due to days lost as a result of sickness or any other cause". Again, this definition has drawbacks as it excludes approved absences such as maternity leave, study leave, jury service and compassionate leave (IBEC, 1993:16). These forms of absence are either statutory (e.g. maternity leave) or subject to management approval and, as such, do not fit easily into the concept of absenteeism.

From an American perspective, Dilts, Deutsch and Paul (1985) offer the following definition:

"an individual's unavailability for work when work is available for the individual"

This definition is very broad and it is recognised as such by further classification by cause:

1. Casual absences from work that are not authorised by the organisation's personnel policy or labour agreement;
2. Authorised absences from work specifically authorised by organisations personnel policy or labour agreement and regarded by workers as rights granted to the work force.

While this definition embraces all areas of absenteeism, it is very long. The definition of absenteeism used by the Irish Management Institute (I.M.I.) in it's ongoing review of absenteeism rates in Irish Industry overcomes this difficulty. The I.M.I. defines absenteeism as:

"time lost attributable to sickness or any other cause not excused through statutory entitlements or conditions of employment"

(Redmond, G., 1986:17).

This definition clearly implies that statutory leave or annual leave would not be regarded as absenteeism, but sickness, long-term sickness or intermittent absences would. According to Kevin O Kelly (1988) this is the correct way in which to define and measure absenteeism.

"the only thing that you can count is what you can control - everything covered by legislative and national agreement shouldn't be included; maternity leave, jury service, trade union meetings and training"

(O Kelly, K., 1988:15).

This definition is the definition most commonly used in the research of absenteeism today. 'Absenteeism' is referred to as a failure of

employees to report for work when they are scheduled to work. Employees who are away from work on recognised holidays, vacations, approved leaves of absence or leaves of absence allowed for under the collective agreement provisions would not be included.⁹ (<http://benefits.org/interface/cost/absent.htm>)

Measurement Of Absenteeism

Having agreed on a definition for absenteeism, the next step is to decide how to measure the level of absenteeism. The measurement of absenteeism is a further problem area as there is no agreed national system of measurement and hence no means of quantifying the problem (O Kelly, K., 1988:17).

Absenteeism rates can be calculated in a variety of ways. Figures can be established on a subgroup basis according to divisions, departments, shifts, locations, type of employee, union/non-union status, job family, etc. Absenteeism may be particularly critical on some jobs and shifts when substitute workers have to be employed to replace the "no-shows." Also, calculations can be made on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, seasonal, semi-annual or annual basis. Seasonal patterns of absenteeism frequently exist. Daily patterns may also exist, such as frequent absences on Monday ("Blue Mondays").

Additional insight into the absenteeism problem can be gained by separating data according to long-term absences and short-term absences. Different problems are presented by an employee who is absent five times for three days each than by an employee who is

absent fifteen times for one day each. Computing the numbers of absences by their duration's can be useful in developing absenteeism policies and controls.

(<http://www.shrm.org/docs/whitepapers/absenteeism.html>)

However, from the literature available three frequently used measures emerge. These can be applied individually and collectively.

1. The Severity Rate

This is also referred to as the 'total absence rate' or 'lost time percentage'. It is calculated as follows:

No. of days of absenteeism, period under review x 100

Total no. of employees x total no. work days available

(IBEC, 1993:17)

The number of days lost/absent refers to the number of days lost as per the company's definition of absenteeism, i.e. unauthorised absences. The total number of days scheduled to be worked refers to the total number of workdays, less authorised absences, i.e. annual leave, jury service etc. - multiplied by the total number of employees. The severity rate measure can be applied to the individual or to the company in total.

2. Frequency Measure

This measurement technique shows the average number of times each person was absent. The calculation of this measure is conducted as follows:

Total number of spells of absence

Total number of people employed

The frequency with which employees take time off is important from the point of view of control (IBEC, 1993:18). The results of the calculation of this measure does not indicate that all employees regularly absent themselves from their workplace but rather it is an average for all employees and this includes those with perfect records of attendance together with those with high levels of absence. This measure has benefits in that it provides an indication of the extent of the problem of absenteeism in an organisation.

3. Duration Measure

This measure shows the average length of each absence spell per employee. It is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Total number of days lost}}{\text{Total number of spells of absence}}$$

It must be remembered that some organisations have a small number of employees who have been absent for very long spells, often up to a year. These long term absences serve to add to the calculation of the length of spells of absence for all other employees (IBEC, 1993:18).

The aforementioned methods of measuring absenteeism are the most commonly used methods, applied individually and also collectively. If an organisation is serious about investigating the level of absenteeism, then these measures are the minimum measures that can be applied as they will indicate the seriousness of the problem; how often the absences occur and whether they are of long or short duration. These results will then indicate if the problem requires further investigation. If that is the case, it will be necessary to identify who the persistent offenders are, in order that a solution may be found.

The F.U.E. (1980) recommends that an investigation of individual records be conducted by collecting this type of information on file for each employee, on the basis of this, a pattern may emerge whereby

absences are seen to occur on certain days of the working week or at certain times of the year. In this way the employer will be in possession of all the relevant details and patterns of occurrence when the time comes to summon the alleged offender and question him/her about instances of absenteeism.

Furthermore, the practise of keeping attendance records and the fact that attendance records are actually kept has the initial impact of giving attendance a certain priority in the workplace. In an organisation where absence is recorded, there is less likelihood of employees being absent, simply because the belief is that it may go unnoticed. (IBEC, 1993:41).

Absentee records (or time cards) can be used to:

- keep track of individual employee absences
- render totals for the business
- pinpoint absence fluctuations over different time periods or different times of the year
- calculate the cost to the business for unscheduled absences

(http://www.toolkit.cch.com/guidebook/text/P05_5305.htm)

It is recommended that absence data be collected not only on an individual basis but also on a collective basis. Absence rates will be shown for:

1. Category of worker manual; skilled; clerical; administration; management and professional.

2. Shift workers as against day workers.

By analysing this type of data, the F.U.E. believes that only then can realistic targets be set to contain or reduce the problem of absenteeism.

Absenteeism - What does it cost?

The primary reason for undertaking a study in absenteeism is to reduce the huge costs incurred as a result of absenteeism.

Few personnel managers surveyed can answer the question of how much does absenteeism cost an organisation each year? (Previous unpublished research conducted by the author in 1994)

It is imperative that in addition to measuring absenteeism, management must furthermore put a cost on absenteeism. This area is frequently neglected, yet it is the factor which is most likely to get management to realise the true extent of the problem and consequently act upon it.

A survey of literature indicates that many organisations purport to measure their absenteeism levels, yet few organisations establish a cost for their absenteeism level. (Huczynski and Fitzpatrick, 1989:15)

While the direct costs of absenteeism are easily calculated for an organisation, a problem arises in the calculation of indirect costs.

Huczynski and Fitzpatrick propose a calculation model for calculating

the true cost of absence within an organisation, including a means of calculating indirect costs.

1. Direct Cost of Absence (Annual)

- 1.1 Sick Pay;
- 1.2 Continued payment of fringe benefits during absence;
- 1.3 Overtime payments for those filling in for absentees;
- 1.4 Overtime payments for employees further down the line which arise as a result of the absence;
- 1.5 Excess cost of temporary staff employed (i.e. employment agency premium);
- 1.6 Overstaffing to cover for absence.

Weekly wage plus employment cost x number of extra staff x 52.

Added to the annual direct cost of absence is the annual indirect cost of absence.

2. Indirect Cost of Absence (Annual)

- 2.1 Cost of recruiting and training extra staff per person x number of persons;
- 2.2 Cost of management/supervisory time devoted to dealing with absence - related issues e.g. revising schedules, disciplining,

record keeping and counselling.

Hours devoted per week x hourly rate x 52;

- 2.3 Reduced productivity from work being done by less experienced/fatigued employees.

Excess hours per annum required to achieve standard output x hourly pay rate or:

Lost output per annum x profit contributions per unit of output;

- 2.4 Lower product quality of work due to replacement of staff, cost of rejects, i.e. materials and labour costs to put things right and the cost of extra premiums to maintain saleable volume (e.g. extra overtime to make up the volume);

- 2.5 Costs of disruption/section shut-down due to absenteeism. Estimate of profit foregone by lost production or financial penalty incurred due to late delivery, cost of feeding other parts of the company.;

- 2.6 Extra costs incurred to meet slipped deadlines (e.g. freighting by air instead of by sea);

- 2.7 Loss of customers due to failure to meet deadline or to inferior product quality (last financial year). Profit lost from customers that did not re-order as expected when this can be related to absence;

- 2.8 Low morale amongst other employees caused by lax attendance

of certain employees (lateness, turnover, failure to work at measured standard of performance);

2.9 Imagine that your company did not have an absenteeism problem, e.g. less than 1%. What equipment would no longer be necessary?, how many absence monitoring staff could be dispensed with / redeployed?, Estimate the cost savings involved in equipment purchase or hire, wages and employment costs for staff, i.e. what are the excess costs incurred against the best attainable?

2.10 Insert any other calculations relevant to your organisation or section. Annual costs of absence - Grand total is derived from adding direct and indirect costs of absence for the year.

Huczynski and Fitzpatrick acknowledge that this framework is a starting point and may be altered to suit an individual organisation's particular characteristics.

Furthermore, this calculation framework has drawbacks, as its calculation methods are particular to the manufacturing industry and it makes no allowance for calculation of absence costs for the service industry.

Other literature surveyed suggests alternative methods for the calculation of absenteeism costs, such as cost per man hour lost due to absence or the calculation of the amount by which a Company's net profit, from a certain period, would have increased if there was no absence during that period (British Institute of Management, 1961; British Institute of Personnel Management, 1984).

In 1980, the F.U.E. proposed a model of factors which have to be taken into account to calculate the total cost of absenteeism. These include:

1. Sick pay and fringe benefits;
2. Overtime payments for those who substitute for absentees;
3. Overstaffing required to cope with problems caused by absenteeism;
4. Management and supervisory time used in replacing those absent;
5. Lower product quality and/or increased supervision necessary, if replacements are not of the same competence levels as those who are absent;
6. Disruption in flows of production and even shut downs of certain sections;
7. Deadlines not being met;
8. Loss of customers through failure to meet deadlines or through inferior service;
9. Cost of recruitment, selection and training of replacement;
10. Dissatisfaction of and adverse effects on the performance of employees when they see unwarranted absence;
11. Extra administration required in tracking absenteeism.

While this model is useful, it does not provide such information as the total number of hours of absence, the direct costs of absenteeism, or the cost of an hour of absenteeism.

Furthermore, as this study will concentrate on the service sector in the case study, factors such as costs of deadlines not being met, costs of

disruption of flows of production and shut-downs cannot be quantified.

Therefore, the model chosen for the calculation of costs for the purpose of this study, will be the model put forward by the former F.U.E. now IBEC in 1980.

The formula for calculating the direct costs of absenteeism is as follows:

- A. = Number of hours paid during the year to absent personnel;
 - B. = Number of hours of absence during the year taken by workers without pay;
 - C. = Cost of sick pay in the year;
 - D. = Total premiums paid for overtime to compensate for absenteeism in the year;
 - E. = To calculate the total number of hours of absence, $A + B$;
 - F. = To calculate annual direct costs of absenteeism, $C + D$;
 - G. = To calculate the cost of an hour of absenteeism, $F \div E$.
- (F.U.E., 1980:13).

Having examined the costs of absenteeism in the context of the organisation, it is furthermore necessary to explore the costs of absenteeism in the broader context and address these costs in relation to the costs of the individual, the cost to the Exchequer and the cost to the economy.

COSTS OF ABSENTEEISM - FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

Cost to the Individual:

At the level of the individual, absenteeism whether voluntary or involuntary, will result in costs incurred in the loss of income from being absent from work.

The disability benefit paid by the State to qualified insured workers and the sick pay provided by a considerable proportion of employers are designed to minimise the loss of income which occurs during sickness.

However, the great majority of workers suffer a drop in income when they are out sick. This was not always the case. Prior to March 10th, 1993, employees were not taxed on sickness and occupational benefit. As a result of this, many employees who were absent from work actually had higher earnings for that period than if they were in work.

From 1993, the payment made to an absent employee is calculable as earnings. Thus the tax-free allowance is taken away from the payment made to the absent employee and he/she is taxed on the remaining disability benefit, with the result that the earnings while receiving disability benefit will be equal to or less than the normal weekly wage.

The situation at present however means that many workers suffer a drop in income when they are absent from work, in particular if they are absent for long periods of time.

While no research has been carried out in Ireland into financial circumstances during the course of illness, some indication of what may happen can be gleaned from a relevant British study. The study conducted assessed the financial circumstances of a sample of insured workers who had been ill for one month, three months, six months and one year in 1972/73. Martin and Morgan (1975) found:

1. that the longer term ill were worse off financially than those who had been ill for three months or one month.
2. nearly two-thirds of the longer term ill and half the shorter term ill had experienced difficulty in coping financially.
3. half the respondents had incurred additional expenses due to their illness and these expenses were found to increase with the duration of the illness.

The Cost to the Exchequer:

Hughes found that a consequence of sickness absence was that public expenditure on income maintenance during sickness was very high. The direct exchequer cost of sickness benefit in Ireland was £184 million in 1984.

(Hughes, G., 1983:46)

In 1993 this cost to the exchequer had risen to £575 million which covered certified illness as well as excused and unauthorised absence.

(Irish Times, 20.10.93)

Mr. Quinn, the then Minister for Enterprise and Employment in reporting the 1993 exchequer costs put the primary responsibility for reducing the number of days lost with management.

Mr. Quinn further stated that enterprises with absence control policies had been most successful in reducing the number of days lost through absenteeism - a further reason why an absenteeism control programme should be prioritised by management.

The Overall Cost to the Economy

The overall cost to the economy is difficult to calculate in monetary terms. One of the primary concerns of the economy is our competitiveness in overseas markets.

With high absenteeism rates prevalent in Ireland - foreign investors may be less likely to choose Ireland as the place for investment. Another long-term effect not possible to be assessed in monetary terms is the adverse effect on customer goodwill or failure to meet orders due to absenteeism.

This could be extremely serious and sales losses as a result of absence may be more important for this reason than the actual figures suggest.

Also, the effect of absenteeism on the morale of workers is another effect to be considered. A low staff morale will result in less effective production. In such conditions, a low morale can have a snowball effect. If a bad attitude to work exists, there is bound to be a long-term

adverse effect on production and consequently to the economy as a whole.

The costs of absenteeism have been shown to be substantial in all cases. Action is required by the social partners to set about a means of tackling these repairable costs.

Causes of Absenteeism

Employees make daily decisions about whether to participate in the activities of their organisations. They decide whether to go to work each day and judging from the absenteeism figures reported by many organisations, many people decide not to go. Of course, not all people absent from work on a given day are voluntarily absent - medical reasons and other factors may force them to remain at home. However, this is not the situation in all cases of absenteeism. Many people for reasons best known to themselves make a conscious decision not to go to work.

Much of the information available with regard to the findings from previous research regarding causes of absenteeism is dated. However, the research data had to be reviewed in pursuit of the complete picture.

There are many variables that contribute to an individual's decision to attend work. Conceptual models have been developed to identify the major sets of variables (Steers & Rhodes, 1981 (Appendix B))

The models suggest two primary forces for or against attendance,

namely: attendance motivation and perceived ability to attend. Attendance motivation in turn is thought to be a function of several factors, including:

1. Satisfaction with the work situation;
2. Economic and market conditions;
3. Incentive and reward systems within the organisation;
4. Work group norms concerning desirable attendance levels;
5. One's personal work ethic;
6. One's commitment to the organisation and its goals.

Ability to attend on the other-hand was thought to be influenced by:

1. Illness and accidents;
2. Degree of family responsibility;
3. Transportation problems.

Further studies in the area of causes of absenteeism have identified other factors which have an effect on the employees' attendance in the workplace. These are:

1. Work related attitude;
2. Economic and market factors;
3. Organisational control systems;
4. Absence culture and work group norms;
5. Personal factors;
6. Perceived ability to attend.

Another classification for causes of absenteeism, is:

1. Employee related factors.
2. Work related factors.

(O'Kelly, 1990:7)

This classification system is too broad for this study's purpose. The fact that there is little data to hand on causes of absenteeism is acknowledged by many authors.

"There is little information available on the causes of absenteeism in Ireland" (O'Kelly, K., 1988:16)

O Kelly classifies causes for absenteeism into five categories.

1. Job Satisfaction

Under this heading he refers to Blennerhasset and Gormans report on the public service. He cites the fact that in their research, they found that in all the studies, the same categories of employees consistently emerge as more absence prone than others. They are the lower staff grades, married women with children, employees working non-standard working hours, and staff working in large work units.

2. Outside Interests/Commitments

Lower level staff have less control over the use of their time. The lower the job status, the more obvious the distinction between working time and personal time. Managerial staff have more flexibility and thereby manage their time better, this results in lower absenteeism levels for that category of employee.

3. Management Attitudes

O Kelly believes that if management does not set acceptable levels of absence in conjunction with a positive approach to attendance control, then the workforce will find its own level.

4. Financial Influences

The difference between net take-home pay and social welfare disability benefits for workers in the lower income bracket is minimal, it has the effect of encouraging them to absent themselves from work.

5. Health

O Kelly cites that Occupational Health Experts have estimated the average level of sickness in the workforce is between 2% and 5% and that it will fluctuate within this range, depending on the time of year and the type of job.

While O Kelly's classification of causes of absence is useful, it has shortcomings in neglecting to include areas such as work ethic, job security and a company's culture as contributory factors to absenteeism.

Furthermore, O Kelly cites personal factors within the category of absenteeism which have little or no bearing on actual job satisfaction but rather encompasses the broader sphere of personal characteristics - e.g. a married woman with children may have high job satisfaction, but due to family commitments may be more absence prone.

It is very difficult to ascertain the true reasons for absenteeism as most absences (78%) are covered by medical certificates (IBEC,1993:21).

Much of what is written is based on assumptions, informal guesses etc. A major reason for the relative lack of scientific knowledge of the true causes of absenteeism is the difficulty of conducting valid research into areas of socially or privately sensitive behaviour e.g. drug dependency, fraud etc. Illness related explanations are generally the only reasons accepted as legitimate for unplanned absences from work (Blennerhasset and Gorman, 1986:35).

However, it is important to find out from those who are absent, what in reality prevents them from coming to work (IBEC,1993:22)

This study proposes to conduct research with a population of employees to address the area of the true causes of absenteeism and further exploration of this topic will be conducted in this research.

Chapter 2. Absenteeism Control

The Management of Absenteeism

In considering strategies to control absenteeism, it is useful to have some conceptual model of the process involved. Although it is not stated explicitly, the following four stage model appears to underline most of the published literature on absenteeism control, both in the popular management journals and in the academic literature (Byrne, C.: 1993)

The four stage model involves:

1. Recording
2. Analysis
3. Feedback
4. Action

A survey of literature indicates that all researchers in the area of absenteeism agree that absenteeism within an organisation has to be managed in order for it to be controlled.

Absenteeism - Control and Prevention

There are many methods of absenteeism control and prevention proposed by various researchers in this field.

One such method is to devise an attendance management programme.

An attendance management program can be split into three basic parts:

1. Development of information/communication systems
2. Information Testing
3. Taking appropriate group action

1. Information Communication Systems

The first step of an effective attendance management program is to identify specific areas which are affecting attendance. The best way to find which specific areas are affecting absenteeism in a specific work environment is to develop open communication between managers, supervisors and employees. The reason for this is that it is not really the physical realities of the work place that influence employees willingness to work but rather their perceptions of these realities. For example, workload is only a problem if it is thought to be one. It is important that employees are encouraged to voice their concerns so their perceptions of the work place are clear and can be dealt with. This type of communication is especially important in unionised environments as employees often tend to communicate only with their union representatives. The result is that vital feed back necessary for

effective management is lost. Co-operation with union representatives can be very helpful in attendance management and should be encouraged if possible.

Formal communications networks such as regularly scheduled department meetings are an excellent way not only to hear employee perceptions and concerns but also to communicate organisational goals. When employees are encouraged to make a difference they are less likely to withdraw their participation through absenteeism. Employees must not only be heard, they must be answered in such ways as to assure them their input is worthwhile. Staff development meetings are important in moulding company ideals with employee needs. They are also important in developing a sense of team spirit among co-workers. Full participation in such meetings is to be encouraged if they are to be effective.

Informal communications are also very effective in identifying and dealing with employee needs and perceptions. Informal communication involves all levels of managers and supervisors. Supervisors are especially important because of their hands-on approach and contact with employees. An employee's relationship with their supervisor can greatly influence their feelings about their work, their co-workers and thus their attendance at work.

Insight, intuition, creative thinking and listening are all powerful ways of finding areas which affect attendance. Ideas and information should be encouraged from all sources. The establishment of varied communication channels is useful in gathering information and to an extent, in confirming it. Effective communication in itself can

effectively reduce absenteeism.

2. Information Testing

Once communication networks are established, information on perceived problems from employees will be bountiful. Before taking action on any issue, no matter what the source of information, it should be confirmed.

A simple and effective way to check whether a specific issue truly affects absenteeism is by finding correlations through using attendance records. If it is suggested, for instance, that absenteeism is increasing due to employee dissatisfaction with their workload, all one need do is match the attendance records during a period of "high" workload to a period of "normal" workload. If absenteeism is found to be significantly higher during increased workload periods, then it has been confirmed that actual workload "is related to" absenteeism levels. If no correlation exists it may be that employee perception of workload affects absenteeism. In this case the importance of the employee perception could be confirmed through staff development meetings. In any case two different problems have been distinguished which require different types of attention.

Attendance records also should be used to monitor attendance trends. Are long term or short term absences more common? What percentage of employees have excessive absences? The answers to these questions trigger attention to individual employees when their absences become

excessive.

Attendance record forms are designed to facilitate the determination of whether or not absenteeism patterns exist.

3. Taking Appropriate Group Action

The best way to handle any given situation is to handle it on its own merits and within the guidelines of the goals one is trying to achieve.

In summary, to run an effective attendance management program it is important to:

1. develop ways for each and every employee to feel free to contribute ideas and suggestions even though these may be outside the scope of their job responsibilities
2. make each employee aware that they are a valued member of the "team", that they play an important role in your organisation and that their attendance is critical
3. hold regular meetings, keep your staff informed and involved
4. know your employees; without prying show an interest in their personal lives
5. be aware of problems that may effect employee attendance or performance
6. familiarise yourself with community programs which you can recommend to an employee if he/she has a need for assistance (i.e. marital or financial counselling)

7. awareness, commitment and involvement by all levels of staff

Positive motivation should be the main body of any attendance management program because it produces the best results. If an employee's experiences in the work place are pleasant, if he/she feels valued and appreciated, if supervision is fair but firm, that employee will be more motivated to attend work regularly.

(<http://benefits.org/interface/cost/absent1.htm>)

While this approach to absenteeism management is very useful its shortfalls are that it neglects to provide the organisation with the means of developing an attendance control programme. Furthermore it does not include any punitive or reward strategies to incorporate in the management of attendance in the workplace.

Another method of control is proposed by Huczynski and Fitzpatrick (1986) who offer a framework which they use in their consultancy work with companies - for reducing absenteeism. It is referred to as ALIEDIM and offers seven stages to solving absenteeism problems.

Stage 1.

Assess the absence problem, what is the extent of the problem?

Stage 2.

Locate the absence problem, where in the organisation are the absence problem groups?

Stage 3.

Identify and prioritise the absence causes, what are the causes of absence amongst each group or category of employee?

Stage 4.

Evaluate the current absence control approaches, are they adequate?, how effective are they at reducing absence?

Stage 5.

Design the absence control programme, look at what is available and adapt it to your organisation.

Stage 6.

Implement the absence control programme, prepare for changes in the organisation.

Stage 7.

Monitor the effectiveness of the absence control programme, is it working as it should?

This framework provides an interesting starting point in developing an absenteeism control strategy. However, it fails to provide the employer with a means of developing an absenteeism control programme. Furthermore, this model assumes that the employer will be aware of the true causes of absence, which as already outlined in chapter 1 is not always the case.

A simple method of absence control is proposed by the Professional Training Associates Inc. They propose a five step strategy to control absence in the workplace.

1. Make sure that everyone knows the sick leave policy -and that you always stick to it.

Employees need to see that the supervisor -that the company- is serious about sick leave. They're more likely to call in sick only when necessary if they know that someone really cares about their attendance.

2. Ask that employees who call in sick talk directly to you.

When you get their calls, ask what the problem is and how long they expect to be away from work. Tell them that they will be missed and that you hope they get well quickly.

If you are sincere, your comments will have a positive effect on attendance. People will miss fewer days because they will return to work sooner. It's also a fact that an employee who has to tell the supervisor he can't come in is more likely to have a good reason for being absent.

3. Keep an eye out for patterns in the absences that do occur.

Is an employee taking sick leave every Friday during hunting season? Is someone else gone one Wednesday afternoon every month? If you do

find a pattern, see if it's related to a recurring job duty. The employee may have a particular responsibility that he doesn't like or is trying to avoid.

4. Stay informed about what is happening in each person's job.

If you do, you'll be better able to arrange to have her duties covered if she gets sick. More important, you won't be caught unaware if some work-related problem is about to cause an absence.

On this point, don't overlook the value of "supervising by walking around." Get on your feet and visit every work area -every employee- every day. It's important to make contact and show that you're interested. People are much more likely to feel responsible for their jobs -and to minimise sick leave- if they know you're genuinely interested in their work and how they feel about it.

5. Make it a point to welcome back each person who's been gone.

Greet him in the morning or at the beginning of the shift. Shake his hand and tell him you are glad to see him back and well. Ask how he is feeling and listen if he wants to tell you about being sick. Listening says you care. (<http://www.io.com/~nbn/pta/>)

This five step approach is useful but assumes that the organisation has a sick leave policy in place. It does not provide the organisation with the framework for devising an absenteeism policy but rather provides guidelines for dealing with employees when the absenteeism control strategy is in place.

Another approach to absenteeism control is to view absenteeism from two perspectives:

- 1) Innocent Absenteeism
- 2) Culpable Absenteeism

1. Innocent Absenteeism

Innocent absenteeism refers to employees who are absent for reasons beyond their control; like sickness and injury. Innocent absenteeism is not culpable which means that it is blameless. In a labour relations context this means that it can not be remedied or treated by disciplinary measures.

2. Culpable Absenteeism

Culpable absenteeism refers to employees who are absent without authorisation for reasons which are within their control. For instance, an employee who is on sick leave even though he/she is not sick, and it can be proven that the employee was not sick, is guilty of culpable absenteeism. To be culpable is to be blameworthy. In a labour relations

context this means that progressive discipline can be applied.

For the large majority of employees, absenteeism is legitimate, innocent absenteeism which occurs infrequently. Procedures for disciplinary action apply only to culpable absenteeism. Many organisations take the view that through the process of individual absentee counselling and treatment, the majority of employees will overcome their problems and return to an acceptable level of regular attendance. When addressing absenteeism from the perspective of innocent and culpable absenteeism the first step to be taken is to identify excessive absenteeism.

Identifying Excessive Absenteeism

Attendance records should be reviewed regularly to be sure that an employee's sick-leave days are excessive compared to other employees. If a supervisor suspects that an employee is excessively absent, this can be confirmed through reviewing the attendance records.

If all indications show that an employee is excessively absent, the next step is to gather as much information as possible in order to get a clearer picture of the situation. The employees files should be reviewed and the employees immediate supervisor should document all available information on the particular employee's history.

The next step is to communicate to individual employees.

Individual Communication

After all available information has been gathered, the administrator or supervisor should individually meet with each employee whom has been identified as having higher than average or questionable (or pattern) absences. This first meeting should be used to bring concerns regarding attendance to the employee's attention. It is also an opportunity to discuss with the employee, in some depth, the causes of his or her attendance problem and possible steps he or she can take to remedy or control the absences. Listen carefully to the employee's responses.

The tone of the meeting should not be adversarial, but a major purpose of the interview is to let the employee know that management treats attendance as a very important component of overall work performance. Keep your comments non-threatening and work-oriented. Stick to the facts (i.e. patterns, profiles, rates etc.). The employee should be given a copy of their attendance report with absences highlighted for discussion.

This interview will give you the opportunity to explore in depth with the employee the reasons for his or her absence. Gather facts - do not make any assumptions. Provide support and counselling and offer guidance as the occasion demands to assist the employee to deal with the specific cause of the absence.

Often, after the initial meeting employees reduce their absenteeism. The meeting shows that you are concerned and that absenteeism is taken seriously. The employee's attendance should be closely monitored until

it has been reduced to acceptable levels. Appropriate counselling should take place as is thought necessary. If a marked improvement has been shown, commend the employee. The meeting should be documented and a copy placed in the employee's file.

Proof of Illness

Sometimes it is helpful in counselling employees with excessive innocent or culpable absenteeism to inquire or verify the nature and reasons of their absence.

The extent to which an employer may inquire into the nature of and reasons for an employee's absence from the workplace is a delicate issue. The concepts of an employee's privacy and an employer's need for information affecting the workplace often come into conflict. Seldom is the conflict more difficult to resolve than where personal medical information is involved.

Unions will often strongly object to any efforts by management to inquire more deeply into the nature of an employee's illness. You will need to consider the restraints of any language in collective agreements in relation to this issue.

Generally speaking, however, the following "rules of thumb" can be derived from the existing jurisprudence:

1. There is a prevailing right to privacy on the part of an employee unless the employer can demonstrate that its legitimate business

interests necessitate some intrusion into the employee's personal affairs.

2. When such intrusion is justified it should be strictly limited to the degree of intrusion necessitated by the employer's interests.
3. An employee has a duty to notify his employer of an intended absence, the cause of the absence and its expected duration. This information is required by the employer to meet its legitimate concerns to have at its disposal facts which will enable it to schedule work and organise its operation.
4. An absent employee has an obligation to provide his employer with information regarding any change to his condition or circumstances relating to it which may affect the employer's needs as described in item #3 above. As such, the interests of the employer in having this information outweighs the individual employee's right to privacy.
5. An employer rule requiring proof for every absence is unreasonable if an absenteeism problem does not exist.
6. A mere assertion by the person claiming to be sick is not satisfactory proof.
7. The obligation to prove sickness, where the employer requires proof, rests with the employee.
8. An employer is entitled upon reasonable and probable grounds to refuse to accept a physician's certificate until it contains sufficient information to satisfy the employer's reservations. (i.e. seen by physician, some indication of return to work, etc.). Non-production of a required medical certificate could result in loss of pay until the certificate is produced.
9. Where a medical certificate is rejected by an employer (as in #8 above) the employer must state the grounds for rejection and

must point out to the employee what it requires to satisfy the onus of proof.

10. An employer may require an employee to prove fitness for work where it has reasonable grounds to do so. In a health care setting the nature of the employer's business gives it a reasonably irresistible interest in this personal information for the purpose of assessing fitness.
11. Where any unusual circumstances raise reasonable suspicion that an employee might have committed an abuse of an income protection program an employer may require an employee to explain such circumstances. For example, an employer may require responses as to whether the illness confined an employee to his/her bed or home; whether an employee engaged in any outside activity and the reasons for the activity.

In summary then, any intrusion into the employee's privacy must be shown to be reasonable, based on the individual circumstances and in relation to the operation of the employer's business. If income protection abuse is suspected the extent to which such intrusion is "reasonable" would be far greater than in the case where it is not. If you are not clear on whether an inquiry is legally justified it is advisable to consult your superior.

After the Initial Interview

If after the initial interview, enough time and counselling efforts, as appropriate, have passed and the employee's absenteeism has not improved, it may be necessary to take further action. Further action must be handled with extreme caution - a mistake in approach, timing or severity can be crippling from both an administration and labour relation's point of view.

Determining whether counselling or disciplinary action is appropriate, depends on whether the employee's absences are innocent or culpable. If the employee's absenteeism is made up of both innocent and culpable absences, then each type must be dealt with as a separate issue. In a labour relation's context innocent absenteeism and culpable absenteeism are mutually exclusive. One in no way affects the other.

Counselling Innocent Absenteeism

Innocent absenteeism is not blameworthy and therefore disciplinary action is not justified. It is obviously unfair to punish someone for conduct which is beyond his/her control. Absenteeism, no matter what the cause, imposes losses on the employer who is also not at fault. The damage suffered by the employer must be weighed against the employee's right to be sick. There is a point at which the employer's right to expect the employee to attend regularly and fulfil the employment contract will outweigh the employee's right to be sick. At such a point the termination of the employee may be justified, as will be discussed.

The procedure an employer may take for innocent absenteeism is as follows:

1. Initial counselling(s)
2. Written counselling(s)
3. Reduction(s) of hours and/or job reclassification
4. Discharge

Initial Counselling

Presuming you have communicated attendance expectations generally and have already identified an employee as a problem, you will have met with him or her as part of your attendance program and you should now continue to monitor the effect of these efforts on his or her attendance.

If the absences are intermittent, meet with the employee each time he/she returns to work. If absence is prolonged, keep in touch with the employee regularly and stay updated on the status of his/her condition. (Indicate your willingness to assist.)

You may require the employee to provide you with regular medical assessments. This will enable you to judge whether or not there is any likelihood of the employee providing regular attendance in future. Regular medical assessments will also give you an idea of what steps the employee is taking to seek medical or other assistance. Formal meetings in which verbal warnings are given should be given as

appropriate and documented. If no improvement occurs written warning may be necessary.

Written Counselling

If the absences persist, you should meet with the employee formally and provide him/her with a letter of concern. If the absenteeism still continues to persist then the employee should be given a second letter of concern during another formal meeting. This letter would be stronger worded in that it would warn the employee that unless attendance improves, termination may be necessary.

Reduction(s) of hours and or job reclassification

In between the first and second letters the employee may be given the option to reduce his/her hours to better fit his/her personal circumstances. This option must be voluntarily accepted by the employee and can not be offered as an ultimatum, as a reduction in hours is a reduction in pay and therefore can be looked upon as discipline.

If the nature of the illness or injury is such that the employee is unable to fulfil the requirements of his/her job, but could for example benefit from modified work, counsel the employee to bid on jobs of such type if they become available. (N.B. It is inadvisable to "build" a job around an employee's incapacitates particularly in a unionised environment.

The onus should be on the employee to apply for an existing position within his/her capabilities.)

Discharge

Only when all the previously noted needs and conditions have been met and everything has been done to accommodate the employee can termination be considered. An Arbitrator would consider the following in ruling on an innocent absenteeism dismissal case:

1. Has the employee done everything possible to regain their health and return to work?
2. Has the employer provided every assistance possible? (i.e. counselling, support, time off.)
3. Has the employer informed the employee of the unworkable situation resulting from their sickness?
4. Has the employer attempted to accommodate the employee by offering a more suitable position (if available) or a reduction of hours?
5. Has enough time elapsed to allow for every possible chance of recovery?
6. Has the employer treated the employee prejudicially in any way?

As is evident, a great deal of time and effort must elapse before dismissal can take place.

These points would be used to substantiate or disprove the following

two fold test.

1. The absences must be shown to be clearly excessive.
2. It must be proven that the employee will be unable to attend work on a regular basis in the future.

Corrective Action for Culpable Absenteeism

As already indicated, culpable absenteeism consists of absences where it can be demonstrated that the employee is not actually ill and is able to improve his/her attendance.

Presuming you have communicated attendance expectations generally, have identified the employee as a problem, have met with him/her as part of your attendance program, made your concerns on his specific absenteeism known and have offered counselling as appropriate, with no improvement despite your positive efforts, disciplinary procedures may be appropriate.

The procedures for corrective/progressive discipline for culpable absenteeism are generally the same as for other progressive discipline problems. The discipline should not be prejudicial in any way. The general procedure is as follows: [Utilising counselling memorandum]

1. Initial Warning(s)
2. Written Warning(s)
3. Suspension(s)
4. Discharge

Verbal Warning

Formally meet with the employee and explain that income protection is to be used only when an employee is legitimately ill. Advise the employee that his/her attendance record must improve and be maintained at an improved level or further disciplinary action will result. Offer any counselling or guidance as is appropriate. Give further verbal warnings as required. Review the employee's income protection records at regular intervals. Where a marked improvement has been shown, commend the employee. Where there is no improvement a written warning should be issued.

Written Warning

Interview the employee again. Show him/her the statistics and point out that there has been no noticeable (or sufficient) improvement. Listen to the employee to see if there is a valid reason and offer any assistance you can. If no satisfactory explanation is given, advise the employee that he/she will be given a written warning. Be specific in your discussion with him/her and in the counselling memorandum as to the type of action to be taken and when it will be taken if the record does not improve. As soon as possible after this meeting provide the employee personally with the written warning and place a copy of his/her file. The written warning should identify any noticeable pattern

If the amount and/or pattern continues, the next step in progressive discipline may be a second, stronger written warning. Your decision to

provide a second written warning as an alternative to proceeding to a higher level of discipline (i.e. suspension) will depend on a number of factors. Such factors are, the severity of the problem, the credibility of the employee's explanations, the employee's general work performance, and length of service.

Suspension (only after consultation with the appropriate superiors)

If the problem of culpable absenteeism persists, following the next interview period and immediately following an absence, the employee should be interviewed and advised that he/she is to be suspended. The length of the suspension will depend again on the severity of the problem, the credibility of the employee's explanation, the employee's general work performance and length of service. Subsequent suspensions are optional depending on the above condition.

Dismissal (only after consultation with the appropriate superiors)

Dismissals should only be considered when all of the above conditions and procedures have been met. The employee, upon displaying no satisfactory improvement, would be dismissed on the grounds of his/her unwillingness to correct his/her absence record.

(<http://benefits.org/interface/cost/absent2.htm>)

This approach to absenteeism control is very thorough however it neglects to include any motivational means for attendance and rather,

concentrates solely on a punitive approach. Furthermore this approach assumes the employer can differentiate between innocent and culpable absenteeism which in fact is very difficult to ascertain as most absenteeism is certified by a doctor.

Another approach to absenteeism control is proposed by the F.U.E., now IBEC.

The F.U.E. published a practical handbook in 1980 for management action. The F.U.E. acknowledges that absenteeism is a complex human problem and no single cause of absence from work in a company can be pinpointed. Therefore, it is recommended that in planning a company policy to control or reduce it, a multi-faceted approach must be taken (F.U.E., 1980:5)

The F.U.E. recommends the following approach to controlling absenteeism.

Stage 1. : Recruitment/ Selection/ Induction.

A policy for absenteeism control should encompass prospective employees also, this is to avoid the recruitment of persons who may subsequently only add to the problem. With regard to selection, it is imperative that a pre-employment medical is carried out. Furthermore, a full understanding of absenteeism policy should be given to new employees at the induction stage.

Stage 2. : Information and Measurement

Adequate information is an essential prerequisite to an understanding of the pattern of absenteeism and the planning of remedial action (1980:8). The F.U.E. further recommends that the absenteeism levels within the organisation are measured.

Stage 3. : Costs

Absenteeism should be costed in monetary terms and communicated to the workforce.

Stage 4. : Formulate company policy in relation to absence attributable to illness

The employers concern for the ill should be made manifest in the provision of facilities appropriate to the size and prosperity of the company.

The policy should include items, such as sick pay schemes, the role of the company doctor, the company's policy in relation to alcoholism and the company's commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment.

Stage 5. : Management Action

The company's management must give consideration to a range of measures to convince the workforce that it is serious in its efforts to

ensure regular attendance at work. Management actions that will yield results are grouped under the following headings:

- * Commitment of managers/supervisors to reducing absenteeism;
- * Agreement with trade unions in promoting good attendance at work;
- * Communicating to the workforce the level of absenteeism;
- * The provision of satisfactory working conditions;
- * To encourage job satisfaction;
- * To organise the working time to suit both the organisation and employee;
- * To offer incentives to employees with full attendance.

The stages proposed by the F.U.E. in controlling absenteeism are useful for the organisation in attempting to control absenteeism levels. However, as this model incorporates both control and preventative measures, a more useful approach may be to look at absenteeism control under these two headings specifically.

Therefore, by looking at control strategies in isolation of prevention strategies, the organisation can implement the control strategy first of all, this should yield the best results in curbing absenteeism. Then the

preventative strategy can be implemented as a follow on, this reminds the employees of management's commitment to encouraging attendance in the workplace.

Blennerhasset and Gorman (1986) believe that management by their actions can influence workers decisions on whether to go out sick or not, or if out on sick - when to return. They present two strategies to control absenteeism. They are:

1. Punitive (or Control);
2. Motivating (or Preventative)

Blennerhasset and Gorman furthermore looked at these control strategies from the individual and collective focus.

Redmond (1986) categorises absenteeism control and its eradication into control and preventative strategies.

In this context:

Control Strategies include:

1. Feedback on levels of absenteeism;
2. Disciplinary approaches leading if necessary to suspension and dismissal;

3. Compulsory medicals with company doctor;
4. Other specific rules and regulations.

Preventative Strategies include:

1. Employee Assistance Programmes for alcoholism, drug addiction etc.
2. General care and counselling (managerial style, professional advice).
3. Medical Programmes (Company doctor - anti flu injections).
4. Job Satisfaction Programmes (Job enrichment, involvement, participation).
5. Incentive Programmes (Financial/ non financial)

The basic model format proposed by Redmond and Blennerhasset and Gorman will be used in the attendance control programme in this study where control strategies and preventative strategies will be applied.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research Design

The methodologies employed in this research are outlined below.

In the first instance we have surveyed the nature of the concept of absenteeism. In Chapter 2 we have attempted to show there is unanimous agreement in literature surveyed that absenteeism control requires management action in order to curb or reduce it. In Chapter 4 an absenteeism control strategy will be developed as a result of literature surveyed and previous unpublished research by the author.

This will form the basis for the case study.

Chapter 5 will contain a case study and outline the implementation of the attendance control strategy in the workplace and include unstructured interviews with the managers involved in its implementation. In Chapter 6 we have surveyed a sample of employees in the organisation used for the case study where recently a control strategy was introduced and in addition to surveying attitudes to absenteeism control have surveyed the true causes for absenteeism. This survey consisted of a sample survey by questionnaire (preceded by a pilot survey) followed by statistical analysis of the data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 6.1.

Population

In order to research the questions of does attendance control reduce absenteeism and what are the true causes for absenteeism, I have chosen the organisation in which I am employed. There are a number of reasons for choosing this organisation 1) There was no formal management strategy in place to control attendance. 2) I was in a position to negotiate and implement a control strategy and 3) I am privy to information on the attendance records which is necessary for the completion of this study. Therefore the organisation Iarnród Éireann was chosen. As this organisation is a very large one employing over five thousand personnel the population was too large to implement a control strategy for absenteeism within the time constraints of this study. Therefore the population of interest for the purpose of this investigation is the Catering Department within Iarnród Éireann - Network Catering. This department employs three hundred and thirty one personnel.

Sample

Systematical sampling was used to select personnel to participate in the survey. A systematic sample, also know as an Integral Sample, is where each sample element has a know and equal probability of selection (Green and Tull, 1978: 212). Muller et al (1979:378) point out that to establish the width of the sampling interval (k) in any given problem, we merely find the ration of population size (N) to desired sample size (n):

$$k = N / n.$$

In the present study the population from which the sample is drawn,

consists of 331 personnel. A sample size of 150 was selected and by applying the formula $k = N / n$ the width of the sampling resulted in every second person being selected.

Sampling Error

As previously stated a sample size of 150 was chosen (approximately 50% of the population). This gives a low error on the total sample and an acceptable error for analysis on the variable. The error for a strategic sample is calculated by using the following formula

$$L = \sqrt{\frac{K^2 \cdot DF^2 \cdot P(1 - P)}{\text{Sample Size}}}$$

K is used to denote the multiple associated with the standard error in defining confidence limits, its value will depend on the level of confidence (or conversely the level of risk) acceptable in the qualifying statement. For 95% confidence K has a value of 1.96 which is used in this study.

DF is the design factor of our sample design. If this is not known we take an arbitrary value of about 1.3 (such that $DF = 2$) this value is taken for this survey.

L represents the other term in the qualifying statement, the limit (above or below the estimate) within which the required level of confidence holds i.e. the error in percentage terms.

P is the answer we expect to obtain. Because this is difficult to calculate prior to the study the value of 0.5 (or 50%) is taken which

maximises this term's effect on the error.

Using the above formula the error for the total sample is 11%.

Research Instrument

The research instrument for the sample survey stage of the investigation is a postal questionnaire. (Appendix A) The data obtained from this questionnaire is to be coded and entered on a spreadsheet and later transferred to SPSS the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Before the completion of the statistical testing it is proposed, as noted above, to conduct a case study. The case study will consist of quantitative analysis of absence levels in the presence of and absence of control strategies. The case study will furthermore consist of short interviews with the four other managers responsible for the implementation of the attendance control strategy.

Quantitative Analysis

Hakim (1987:36) refers to this type of research as an analysis of administrative records. She defines administrative records as collections of documents mainly factual information and used by organisations to record developments and the implementation of decisions and activities that are central to their functions. In the present study the absenteeism levels per period are in written format. The analysis of this quantitative data is undertaken to compare absence levels for 1995 - when no formal absenteeism control programme was in place, to 1996 where the control strategy had been implemented.

The annual data is presented in the format of 13 periods, each period being a four week span. The data is further analysed by looking at total absenteeism levels for Total Network Catering, Supervisory and Technical Personnel, and Operative levels.

Pilot Survey

Prior to the conduct of the main survey, the proposed questionnaire was circulated to thirty personnel selected from outside the sample within Iarnród Éireann, but in areas which seem likely to share some of its characteristics. Adjustments were made to the research instrument in accordance with the pilot study indications.

Statistical Techniques

There are a number of statistical techniques which will be employed in the analysis of the survey.

Firstly frequencies will be reported upon with the mean, median, mode and Standard Deviation for all closed ended questions in chapter 6.

In Chapter 7 an analysis of the results will be conducted. Variables will be cross tabulated and a statistical test of association and correlation will be applied to the cross tabulation to determine strengths of relationship and correlation levels.

Test of Association

The test for association chosen for the purpose of the analysis of the cross tabulation in Chapter 7 is the Chi Square test. The Chi Square test measures how likely it is that the distributions we observe is due

merely to chance (Kane, 1991:64).

Chi Square will be conducted for each of the contingency tables contained within the cross tabulation section. The value of the Chi Square will be shown with the number of degrees of freedom and the significance level.

Tests of Correlation

The Programme Pearson Corr which computes Pearson's r was chosen for the statistical test of correlation. Correlation entails the provision of a yard stick whereby the intensity or strength of a relationship can be gauged. To provide such estimates correlation coefficients are calculated. These provide succinct assessments of the closeness of a relationship among pairs of variables (Bryman & Cramer, 1992;163). Pearson's r allows the strength and direction of linear relationship between variables to be gauged and determines positive or negative relationships.

Statistical Significance Levels

Chi Square - Statistical Test of Association

The level of significance accepted in the interpretation of the data in this study is <0.05 of 5 per cent. This means an acceptance that the observed distribution might come up 5 out of 100 times purely by chance i.e. there is a five per cent chance that the distribution occurred randomly.

Pearson's r - Statistical Test of Correlation

A measure of correlation between -1 and +1 tells us about the strength of the strength of the relationship between two variables.

The interpretation of correlation relationship between two variables in this study will be reported upon as follows; .19 is very low, .2 to .39 is low, .4 to .69 is modest, .7 to .89 is high, .9 to 1 is very high. (Bryman & Cramer, 1990:168)

Conduct of Survey

The survey instrument - the postal questionnaire was distributed through the internal mail system in Network Catering in February 1997. The last returned questionnaire was received in April 1997.

Chapter 4. The Attendance Control Strategy

Introduction

This chapter will outline an attendance control strategy which can be used in Network Catering to curb or reduce absenteeism. This attendance control strategy will then be implemented in an organisation to test the hypothesis that management control of attendance in the workplace reduces or curbs absenteeism. Section 4.2 outlines the background to the attendance control strategy. Section 4.3 outlines the absenteeism problem. Section 4.4 defines what is meant by an attendance problem within Network Catering. Section 4.5 outlines the fundamentals of the programme. Section 4.6 outlines the Principles of the Programme. Section 4.7 outlines the procedural steps to be taken when an absenteeism problem has been identified. Section 4.8 outlines the preventative measures which will be used in conjunction with the control strategies in this programme. And Finally Section 4.9 outlines the negotiation process for the implementation of the programme.

Background to the Attendance Programme

Network Catering is a department within Iarnród Éireann that employs 331 personnel. The monitoring and control of absenteeism and the maintenance of absence records for these personnel are undertaken at local level. A report of all absenteeism is then submitted to the Human Resources Department on a periodic basis (every four weeks). The Human Resources Department monitors absenteeism for the company

as a whole but does not become involved in the day to day control and monitoring at local level.

The Catering Department maintains an absence record for every member of the staff employed within it. Where high levels of absenteeism occur, such problems are tackled at local or departmental level. While the Human Resources Department is available to advise on dealing with such a situation, no specific criteria for dealing with absenteeism problems have been defined. Where a personnel member is deemed to have an attendance problem they are dealt with in accordance with the Grievance and Disciplinary Policies and Procedures within the company.

It is in light of this background that the Attendance Programme is proposed. It is anticipated that when the programme is implemented it will provide defined guidelines for controlling absence at local level which could be applied company wide if successful in curbing or reducing absenteeism in the Catering Department.

The Absenteeism Problem

Over the past decade the average annual absenteeism level for the Catering Department has been between 5% and 6%. This adverse absenteeism level was having profound effects on staff morale, team spirit and resulting in huge costs being incurred by the department as a result of this excessive absenteeism. A survey of literature (IBEC, 1993; Redmond, 1986) indicates that control of absence by management in a formal manner will reduce absenteeism levels. This case study will test the hypothesis that effective management of

attendance in the workplace will curb or reduce absenteeism levels. In so doing, it is necessary to formulate a written strategy - attendance programme.

An Attendance Problem - Definition

An individual is deemed to have an attendance problem if there is

- a) a pattern of intermittent absence i.e. occasional absence for a day or two at a time which is repeated.
- b) a pattern of specific days where an employee does not report for duty i.e. a Monday or the day following an official day off.
- c) an overall attendance record which is not satisfactory taking account of the extent of absence, the particular duties involved and business requirements and costs.

Regular monitoring of attendance will ensure that each individual's attendance pattern will be established and that any necessary follow-up action is taken on an objective basis.

This programme is designed to assist employees with attendance problems to overcome any difficulties they may be experiencing and to assist in a full return to work.

The Programme

As a result of the literature review in Chapter 1 and 2 and unpublished research by the author, the programme for use in the control of attendance in Network Catering is proposed as follows:

- a) Absence is discussed in confidence with the employee concerned. This applies to prolonged and intermittent absences. In cases of illness absence, this applies whether medically certified or not.
- b) A balanced view of the cause of the individual employee's absence is obtained. (This may include a medical assessment - without breaching the Doctor - Patient relationship).
- c) Circumstances contributing to poor attendance whether inside or outside the workplace will be taken into account.
- d) The absence is discussed with the employee by their immediate supervisor/manager. If the employee so wishes he/she may discuss the absence with a supervisor/manager other than their immediate supervisor/manager.
- e) The employee will normally be dealt with, by the same manager/supervisor for the duration of the review process.

Principles of the Programme

The main purpose of the programme is to encourage and assist employees toward full attendance. All matters shall be dealt with

taking account of individual circumstances and in strict confidence.

Procedural Steps

The following constitutes the procedural steps to be taken in cases where an attendance problem is identified.

- First Interview
- First Review
- Second Review
- Application for formal disciplinary machinery

First Interview

- * The supervisor/manager shall advise the employee of concern over the time lost, and ask the employee in writing to a meeting to discuss same. (Appendix C)
- * The meeting will be held to try and establish the cause of absence and determine what needs to be done to improve the situation.
- * If any medical condition is disclosed by the employee at this stage that may have an affect on job suitability, the supervisor/manager will arrange an appointment with the Chief Medical Officer.
- * If, from the discussion, it emerges that the problem does not

appear to be due to an underlying unfitness for work, the supervisor/manager should advise the employee that, while the recorded ailments may be genuine, a sustained improvement in attendance is expected or the next stage in the procedure will be invoked.

- * Any action agreed under the above will normally be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days.
- * A review, of the situation will automatically take place each month in line with monitoring procedures.

The First Review

Should the employee's absence continue or worsen following analysis of regular monitoring, he or she should be invited to attend a formal review meeting with his or her manager.

- * The absence record should be detailed in a letter inviting the employee for this interview. They should also be advised that they are entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague.
- * The purpose of this meeting will be to:
 - (a) continue to discuss the absence and reasons;
 - (b) identify any underlying reasons for absence;
 - (c) consider the necessity to seek the assistance of the Chief Medical Officer if fitness emerges as an issue;
 - (d) advise the employee of the service and cost implications of their absence.

(e) warn the employee that if there is not a substantial and sustained improvement, inevitably the long implications would involve formal disciplinary machinery.

- * Where medical advice is sought, the meeting is therefore only adjourned to allow this part of the process to be completed. (Appendix D)
- * Within five working days of receipt of medical advice, the review meeting will reconvene. The employee will be advised of medical opinion in relation to fitness for work.
- * Where this confirms that the employee is fit, he or she should be advised at 2.2 (e) above.
- * The outcome of this meeting must be confirmed to the employee in writing by the manager / supervisor who held the meeting within 5 working days.

Second Review

Where regular monitoring indicates that little or no improvement in the absence pattern has occurred, a second formal review will be arranged.

- * The letter inviting the employee to the meeting will include the attendance record and again, advice on representation. (Appendix E)

- * Any new information given at the meeting regarding ill health or a change in the nature of illness may need to be assessed by the Chief Medical Officer.

- * The employee should be given the opportunity to explain any deficiency in attendance record.

- * The employee should be informed that failure to comply with the company's attendance requirements and to improve the present unacceptable record will result in the implementation of the company's formal disciplinary machinery.

- * The outcome of the meeting must be confirmed in writing by the Manager / Supervisor who held the meeting again within 5 working days.

- * It may be decided that further reviews are necessary depending on the circumstances of each case and a date may be set at this stage for a further review.

- * If there is little or no improvement in the attendance pattern disciplinary action should be applied.

Preventative Measures

A formal control policy is unlikely on its own to manage attendance

(Edwards et al 1987:5) therefore it is important to include some preventative strategies in conjunction with the control strategies:

The preventative strategies included in this programme shall be:

- General care and counselling from management for absentees
- Incentive programme - in the format of a monthly draw for those with full attendance for the month and furthermore an annual draw for those with full attendance for the year.
- Involvement of the company doctor to assist in providing anti-flu injection and general medical check-ups.

The Negotiation of the Implementation of the Programme

In order for such a programme to be implemented within Network Catering, its implementation had to be negotiated with:

- The Manager, Network Catering
- The Human Resources Manager, Iarnród Eireann
- The trade union representing the personnel within the department

The manager of the Catering Department was extremely supportive of the idea of having a formal control policy for dealing with absenteeism, as indeed was the Administration Manager for the department who deals with all human resource issues for Network Catering. The Administration Manager provided assistance in defining the format of the programme. This process commenced in March 1995 and in May 1995 the formal programme outline had been agreed upon within the

Catering Department.

The implementation of the programme was then proposed to the Human Resources Department, Iarnród Éireann. A number of adjustments were made to the original proposed format and in August 1995 the format had been agreed upon with the Human Resources Manager and negotiations for the formal implementation of the programme commenced with the trade Union S.I.P.T.U.

Fortunately all the personnel who would be affected by the introduction of the programme were members of that union. This eased the task of negotiating its implementation considerably as only one union had to be consulted.

Within Network Catering there is a 'House Committee' which consists of Management representatives and Trade Union representatives who meet on a regular basis to discuss issues within the department.

In the case of the negotiation of the implementation of this programme, agreement was reached at local level for its implementation with Network Catering.

Negotiations with all concerned complete the programme was officially implemented on January 1st 1996.

Chapter 5: The Analysis of the Case Study

Absenteeism Percentage Levels For 1995 And 1996.

As already outlined in chapter 4 absenteeism percentages for Network Catering are compiled on a periodic basis. The table below shows a comparison of absenteeism percentages for each period in 1995 and 1996.

Total Absenteeism Levels			
1995		1996	
Period	Percentage	Period	Percentage
1	7%	1	8%
2	7.3%	2	6%
3	5.4%	3	6%
4	5.3%	4	4.4%
5	5.8%	5	4.7%
6	6.1%	6	4.4%
7	4.4%	7	4.3%
8	4%	8	4.2%
9	4%	9	5.2%
10	5%	10	5.2%
11	5%	11	6%
12	8.06%	12	5%
13	7%	13	5%
Average Periodic Absenteeism % 1995		5.72%	Average Periodic Absenteeism % 1996
			5.28%

Table. 1

As recommended by Redmond 1986 it is important to analyse absenteeism levels further by job category.

The tables below show the breakdown of absenteeism levels for

- a) Supervisory and Technical Personnel
- b) Operative Personnel

Supervisory, Technical Personnel				
1995		1996		
Period	Percentage	Period	Percentage	
1	3.28%	1	9%	
2	0%	2	11%	
3	0%	3	7%	
4	3.0%	4	2%	
5	7.1%	5	2.3%	
6	7.1%	6	0%	
7	5.3%	7	1.7%	
8	7.5%	8	0%	
9	3.2%	9	1%	
10	5%	10	0%	
11	7.5%	11	7%	
12	16%	12	0%	
13	11%	13	1%	
Average Periodic Absenteeism %		5.32%	Average Periodic Absenteeism %	
			2.74%	

Table. 2

Operative Personnel				
1995		1996		
Period	Percentage	Period	Percentage	
1	8%	1	8%	
2	8.3%	2	7%	
3	7.4%	3	6%	
4	5.5%	4	5%	
5	5.7%	5	5.2%	
6	6.3%	6	4.9%	
7	4.6%	7	4.7%	
8	4.48%	8	5%	
9	5.5%	9	6%	
10	5%	10	6%	
11	5%	11	6.4%	
12	7.9%	12	5%	
13	7%	13	6%	
Average Periodic Absenteeism %		6.20%	Average Periodic Absenteeism %	
			5.78%	

Table. 3

Analysis of Absenteeism Levels.

The average periodic absenteeism percent for 1995 was 5.72% while this had reduced to 5.28% in 1996 when the programme had been implemented. [Table 1]

As a result of the implementation of the attendance control program the average periodic absenteeism level for 1995 decreased by 44% in 1996.

Looking at the absenteeism levels in terms of person days lost, in 1995, 4233 days were lost due to absenteeism while in 1996, 4029 days were lost due to absenteeism a decrease of 204 days lost on the previous year.

This result was disappointing as a greater improvements in attendance levels had been anticipated once the programme had been implemented.

Further analysis of the absenteeism levels reveals that the average periodic absenteeism level for supervisory and technical personnel in 1995 was 5.32% while in 1996 this had reduced significantly to 2.74%.

[Table 2]

However the total number of personnel employed in the supervisory and technical capacity is only on average 15, so the overall impact of the total of Network Catering is minimal, although this trend in terms of the reduction in absenteeism levels is very encouraging.

Table 3 shows the absenteeism figures for Operative Personnel in 1995 and 1996. Again a downward trend in absenteeism levels is obvious. In 1995 the average periodic absenteeism level for operative personnel was 6.2% this had reduced in 1996 to 5.78% an average periodic decrease of .42% in absenteeism percentage levels on the previous year.

Overall - the result in the decline of absenteeism is disappointing as it had been hoped that the total rate for 1996 would have been lower than 4%.

In order to ascertain why the level of attendance had not improved more significantly it was decided as part of the analysis of this case study to conduct unstructured interviews with the managers who are responsible for the implementation of the programme.

The Managers are namely:

- a) The Catering Manager who is ultimately responsible for the Department.
- b) The Administration and Personnel Manager who is responsible for the implementation of all Human Resource initiatives
- c) The Area Catering Manager who is responsible for all operative personnel working in ground catering units and finally
- d) The Train Catering manager who is responsible for all operative personnel in rail catering.

The Interviews

Interview with the Manager Network Catering

The absenteeism level in Network Catering is higher than the national average and is unacceptable particularly in light of the fact that we have such a young workforce.

Our absenteeism level should ideally be 3.5% however, we are still a long way from achieving this goal.

The implementation of the attendance programme within our department purported to provide the solution to our absenteeism problems. However absenteeism levels have not significantly declined since its implementation.

The decline in absenteeism in 1996 is encouraging but we still have to endeavour to reduce absenteeism levels further. Like many other management strategies perhaps we have paid lip service to the attendance programme and have not followed it through effectively.

Absenteeism levels certainly can be controlled but its control ultimately lies with management and to a large extent line management to ensure persistent absentees are tackled in this regard.

In 1992 the absenteeism level in Heuston Buffet was 16%. I intervened and requested that all personnel who were absent from work reported to me on return to duty. Within four months the absenteeism level had dropped to 1.6% a decrease of 14.4%.

Management control is essential if absenteeism levels are to be curbed. If attendance levels are monitored more strictly and real support is given to the programme from line management it should produce instant results.

The main causes for absenteeism in our department are a poorly motivated workforce, poor job satisfaction, lack of team spirit and lack of management control. These factors should be dealt with in conjunction with the attendance programme and our absenteeism levels will certainly decline significantly.

Interview with Administration Manager

The concept of the attendance programme is excellent however the decrease in absenteeism has only been marginal since its induction.

The implementation of the programme is a major contributory factor - the programme itself appears to have the potential to be used as an effective management tool - however its implementation has been too fragmented with no concerted effort made by all management and supervisors. The commitment to implementing the programme was not given by all managers concerned and the results of the lack of commitment can now be seen.

The high absenteeism level in Network Catering is attributable to lack of supervision and lack of follow up from managers and supervisors. Work pressure and the pay structure for personnel also have had bearings on the absenteeism level. Furthermore the structure of the personnel section of Network Catering is such that information on absenteeism levels are not communicated effectively on a regular basis to managers and supervisors. While absenteeism levels are compiled on a periodic basis the information is historic by the time it reaches line management and therefore can not always be acted upon.

The system of recording attendance levels manually in the wages department is dated and consideration must be given to investment in technology to speed up the process of information flow. A computerised database would be a more effective management tool in assisting to curb absenteeism levels.

The attendance programme should be reviewed in light of the fact that it has been in operation now for over a year. The commitment of all managers and supervisors to following the programme must be secured if the programme is to succeed in reducing absenteeism levels.

Interview with the Area Catering Manager - Finbar Maguire.

The absenteeism level in Network Catering has to be described as poor. Personnel appear to have a lack of interest in their positions and that combined with lack of follow up on absentees by management has led to unacceptably high absenteeism levels.

The attendance programme should assist in reducing absenteeism levels but it needs to be implemented consistently and personnel need to be made more aware that a medical certificate does not save them from reprimand and it is possible to be dismissed if you have a persistent high level of absenteeism. Absentees should be made aware of the high costs encountered by the department as a result of absenteeism and also be made aware that other personnel have to absorb their work load when they are absent.

The monthly draw for personnel with full attendance at work is a good incentive for personnel to attend the workplace. However attendance levels have not improved significantly as a result of its implementation. A reason for this may be that the draw is not high profile enough. There should be greater communication of who the winners are.

The self certification system would appear to encourage staff to be absent. The system is often abused and again this is not followed up on by management.

We need more consistency in our management approach to controlling absenteeism.

Absenteeism can be controlled but it is down to managers and supervisors to control it. A lot of work has been done to date in attempting to reduce absenteeism levels. Acknowledging we have an absenteeism problem and making personnel more aware of the fact that absenteeism is not acceptable is a good start however we still have lots of room for improvement.

Interview with the Train Catering Manager

The overall absenteeism level in Network Catering is very high. However at senior and middle level there is little or no absenteeism, it is at junior level that absenteeism is out of control.

Where a junior staff member misses a day due to absence he / she simply loses £10 from their net pay for the week - the incentive is just not there to attend. Our recruitment of juniors must also be questioned, sometimes we will simply take anybody to fill a job vacancy even though we know that their commitment to the position is minimal. The jobs our juniors do are uninteresting simply pushing a trolley up and down a train and cleaning and washing up in our kitchens. That coupled with the fact that our juniors are let go at the age of twenty years means they have no commitment to attend the workplace every day.

It is also apparent that there is no team spirit amongst our personnel their lack of duty to each other heightens the absenteeism problem.

The attendance programme is an excellent idea but needs to be followed through more rigorously. There was an improvement in attendance levels in 1996 - even though it was marginal - however any improvement has to be welcomed. The effectiveness of the monthly draw for those with full attendance is questionable as is the inclusion of unit managers and supervisors in the draw.

Reduction in absenteeism levels will be achieved if management and unions work together to curtail it. Peer pressure must be the best tool

available to curb absenteeism - a counsel should be established with management and union representatives and collectively solutions to all our problems - including absenteeism should be agreed.

Worker loyalty needs to be encouraged - what better means that through creating a greater working relationship amongst all personnel - only then will absenteeism levels decline.

Conclusion

All literature surveyed in Chapter 2 is unanimous in agreement that attendance improvement programmes work once implemented, monitored and managed effectively.

In the case of the implementation of the attendance programme in Network Catering, the key findings of the analysis are listed below:

- The absenteeism level did decline, although not significantly as a result of the implementation of the programme.
- The greatest improvement in attendance levels was in the supervisory and technical personnel category where the average periodic absenteeism level fell to 2.74% in 1996 as opposed to the previous year 1995 where the average periodic absenteeism level was 5.32%.
- An improvement of .42% per period was apparent in the operative section of personnel in 1996.
- As a result of the personal interviews conducted with the Managers responsible for the implementation of the programme, the following is evident:

- the programme is viewed favourably by all managers interviewed
- there is agreement amongst all the Managers that the programme was not implemented effectively.
- the potential the programme has to reduce absenteeism levels is acknowledged by all.
- accurate and reliable data on absenteeism levels is available in Network Catering but no prompt is given to the Managers when absenteeism becomes a problem for an individual employee, work location or unit.
- a more consistent approach by all Managers to the management of absenteeism is required if the programme is to be effective.
- in relation to the perception of the causes of absenteeism by personnel the following were listed:
 - poorly motivated work force
 - poor job satisfaction
 - lack of team spirit
 - lack of managerial control
 - work pressure
 - pay structure
 - poor structure of personnel section within Network Catering
 - poor communication
 - lack of incentive to attend to workplace
 - self certification of sickness scheme

The next chapter will address the issue of absenteeism from the employees perspective and in particular address the areas of -

employees attitude to the attendance control programme and the true causes for absence amongst employees in Network Catering.

Chapter 6: Results of Survey

Response rate for the Questionnaire

A total of 58 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 38.6%.

In keeping with the guarantee of anonymity contained in the covering letter, the questionnaires carried no identification as to the Respondent's name or location. Instead each completed questionnaire was given a sequential number (from 1 to 58) as it came back. The study will refer to Respondent R12, Respondent R25 and so on as a means of indicating each returning questionnaire.

Method of Analysis of the results

The software product SPSS for MS Windows Release 6.1 was used to analyse the results of the questionnaires. SPSS permits a number of statistical operations to be carried out. For example

- frequencies can be derived
- correlations can be performed among groups of data
- cross tabulations can be undertaken of groups of data
- statistical tests can be carried out as an indication of the validity of results.

All the data from the completed questionnaires whether numerical or written text was coded so that it would be in a suitable form for inputting into the SPSS software. This created a dataset. The data in this SPSS dataset was checked against the original questionnaires for

accuracy.

It was then possible to analyse the data using the statistical functions incorporated into SPSS. For example the data was summarised by finding the frequency distribution of variables and by computing averages that would describe a typical observation (the measures of central tendency).

General notes on the results

Not Answered N / A refers to instances where some respondents did not give a response or where the response was uncodable. As a guide to the value these Not Answered 1.7% is equal to one respondent.

Some rounding errors introduced by the SPSS program when it calculates statistical values may be noticed in the frequency analysis of respondents responses or in the tables of results. As a consequence, some percentage figures do not exactly add up to 100%.

Analysis of the Results

1. Gender of Respondents

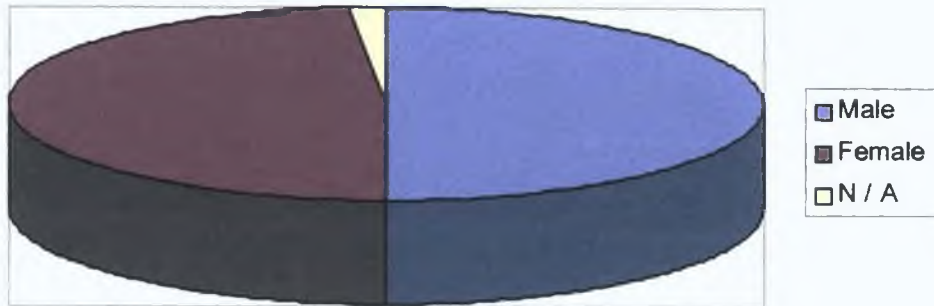


Fig. 1

Mean 1.517.

Median 1.500.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .538.

29 respondents were male (50%), 28 Respondents were female (48.3%) and there was 1 missing response (1.7%)

2. Age Category

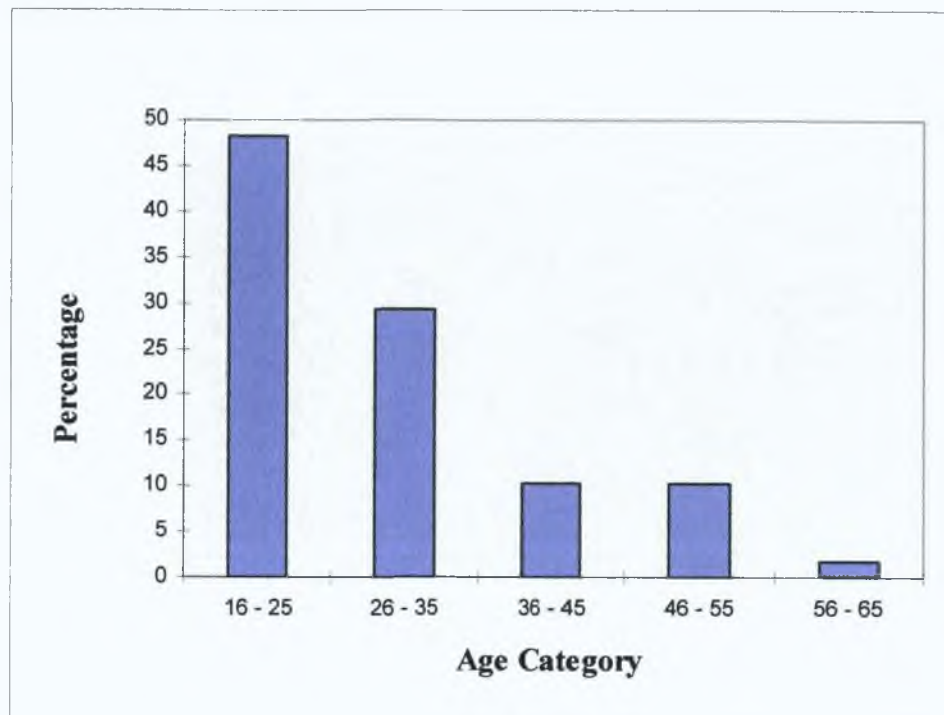


Fig. 2

Mean 1.879.

Median 2.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 1.077.

28 respondents were aged between 16 - 25 (48.3%), 17 respondents were aged between 26 - 35 (29.3%), 6 respondents were aged between 36 - 45 (10.3%), 6 respondents were aged between 46 - 55 (10.3%) and only 1 respondent was aged between 56 - 65 (1.7%).

3. Marital Status

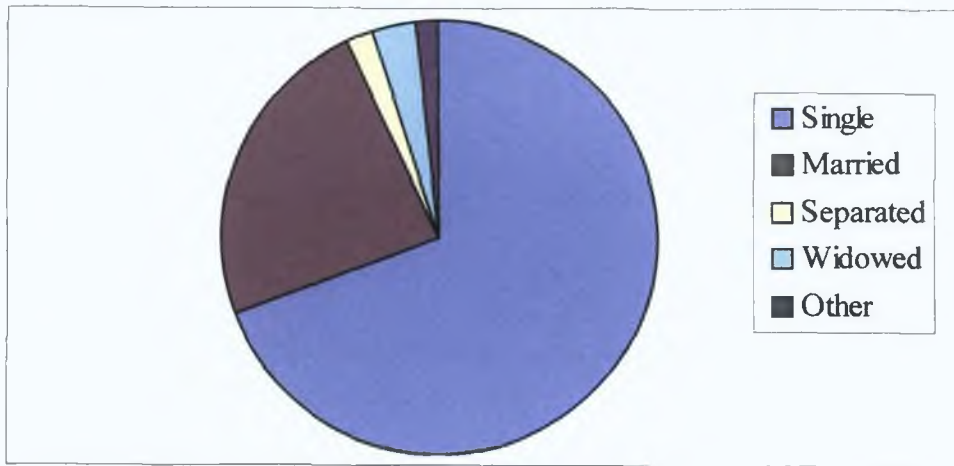


Fig.3

Mean 1.466.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .922.

40 of the respondents are single (69%), 14 are married (24.1%), 1 is separated (1.7%), 2 are widowed (3.4%) and 1 respondent specified living with a partner (1.7%)

4. Religion

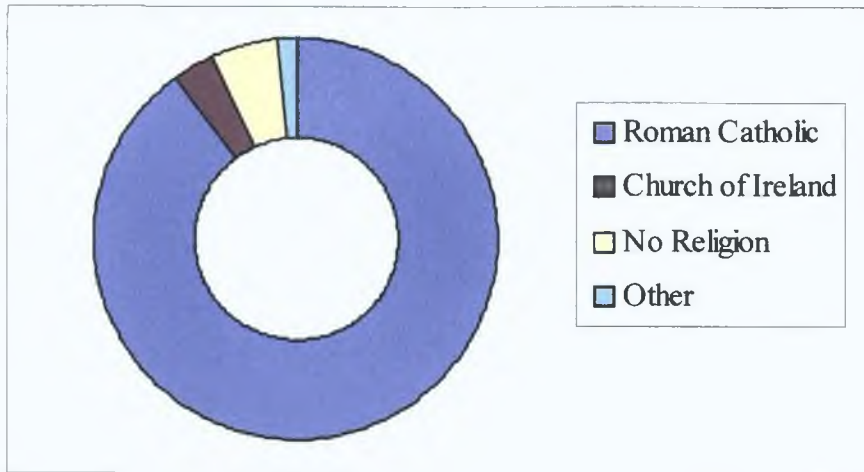


Fig.4

Mean 1.414.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 1.427.

52 of the respondents are Roman Catholic (89.7%), 2 are Church of Ireland (3.4%), 3 subscribe to No Religion (5.2%) and 1 respondent specified a belief in the bible but not man made religions (1.7%).

5. Number of Children

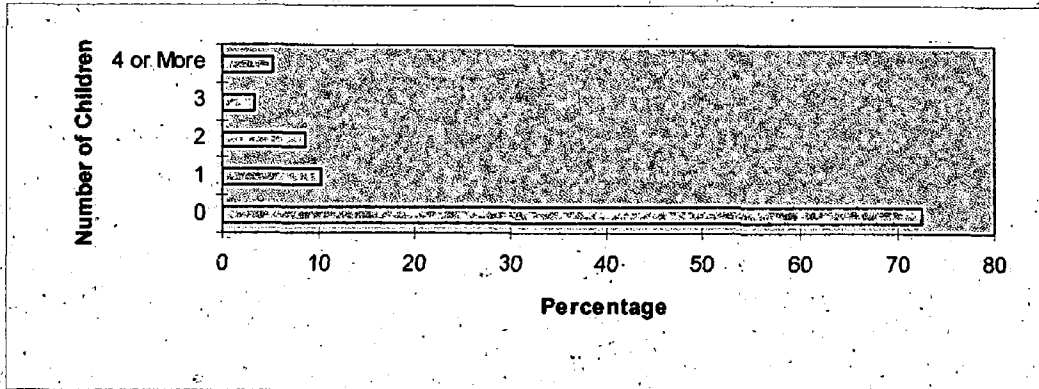


Fig 5

Mean 1.586.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 1.124.

42 of the respondents indicated that they had no children (72.4%), 6 respondents have 1 child (10.3%), 5 respondents have 2 children (8.6%), 2 respondents have 3 children (3.4%) and 3 respondents have 4 or more children (5.2%).

6. Education

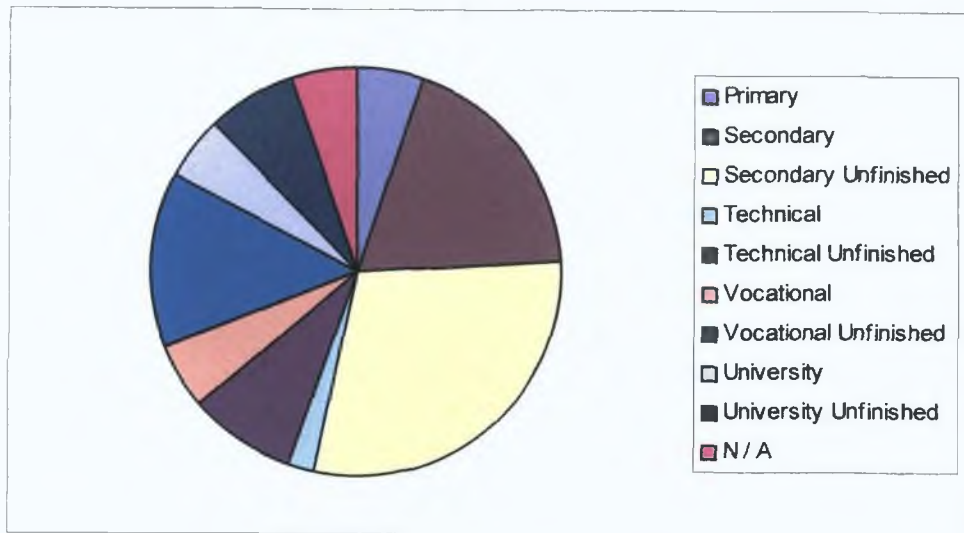


Fig. 6

Mean 5.638.

Median 4.000.

Mode 4.000.

Std. Dev. 2.68.

3 respondents indicated they left the education system at primary level (5.2%), 11 respondents indicated they left at secondary unfinished (29.3%), 17 respondents completed secondary education (11.9%), 1 respondent left at technical unfinished (1.7%), 5 respondents left at technical finished (8.6%), 3 respondents left at vocational unfinished (5.2%), 8 respondents completed vocational education (13.8%), 3 respondents left the educational system at university unfinished (5.2%), 4 respondents completed university education (6.9%) and there were 3 missing responses (5.2%)

7. Employment Duration

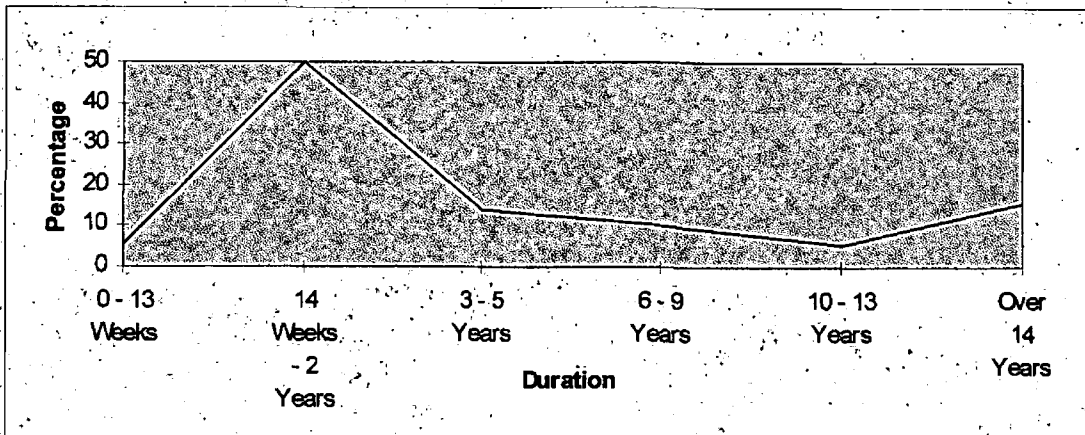


Fig. 7

Mean 3.069.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. 1.566.

3 respondents have just commenced employment (5.2%) and answered in the 0 - 13 week category. 29 respondents have been employed between 14 weeks and 2 years (50%). 8 respondents have been employed between 3 - 5 years (13.8%). 6 respondents have been employed between 6 - 9 years (10.9%), 3 respondents have been employed between 10 - 13 years (5.2%) and nine respondents have been employed by the company for over 14 years (15.5%).

8. Medical Condition.

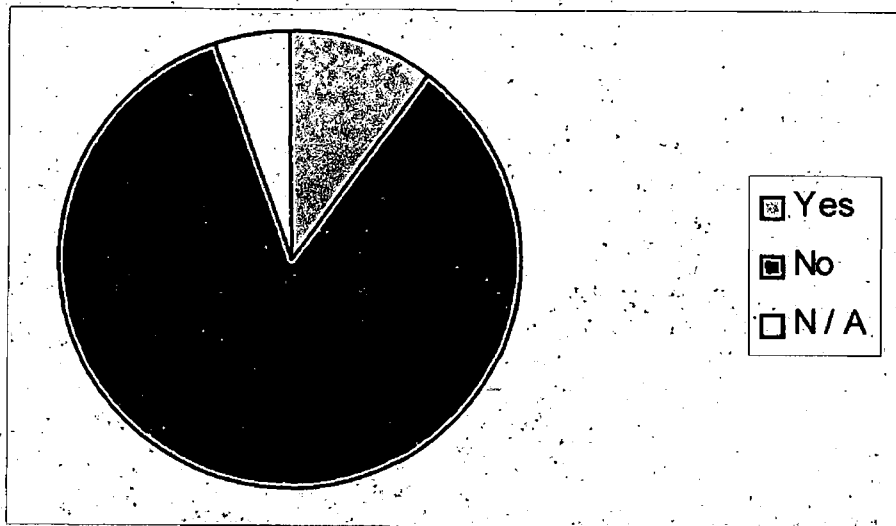


Fig. 8

Mean 1.948.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std Dev. .394.

6 of the respondents indicated that they do have a medical condition which prohibits them attending the workplace on occasion (10.3%). 4 of the respondents specified the following medical conditions - back and hip problem, irritable bowel syndrome and migraine, diabetic and asthma (6.9%). 1 respondent specified continually hitting the display cabinet door in the dining car resulting in a cut head, as a reason for absence (1.7%) and another respondent did not specify the medical condition but stated absence occurred due to keeping medical appointments (1.7%). 49 of the respondents indicated they do not have a medical condition which prohibits them from work (84.5%) and there were 3 missing cases (5.2%).

9. Employment Position

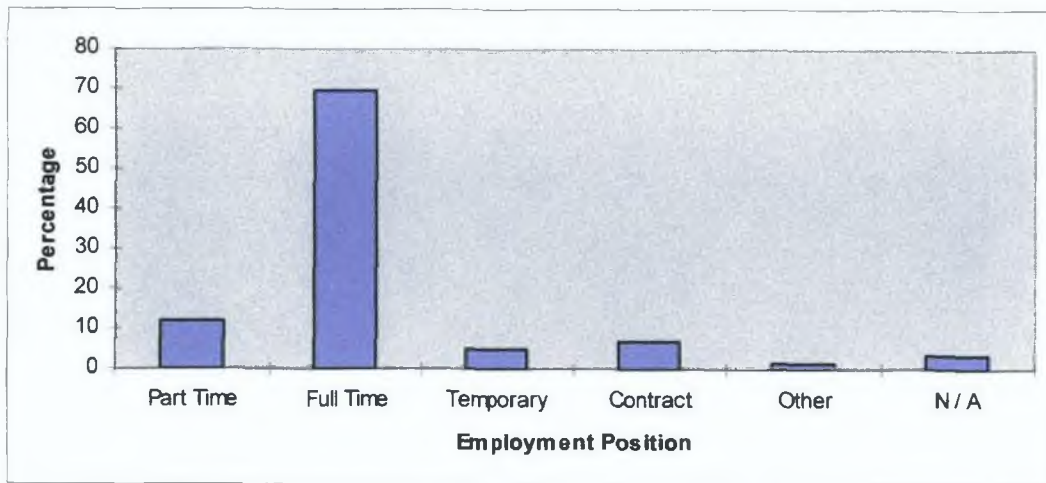


Fig. 9

Mean 2.190.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .926.

7 of the respondents indicated that they are employed on a part time basis (12.1%), 41 are employed on a full time basis (69.7%), 3 are employed on a temporary basis (5.2%), 4 have contracts for a specified time (6.9%), 1 respondent indicated other employment on a trial basis (1.7%) and there were 2 missing response. (3.4%).

10. Sources of Income

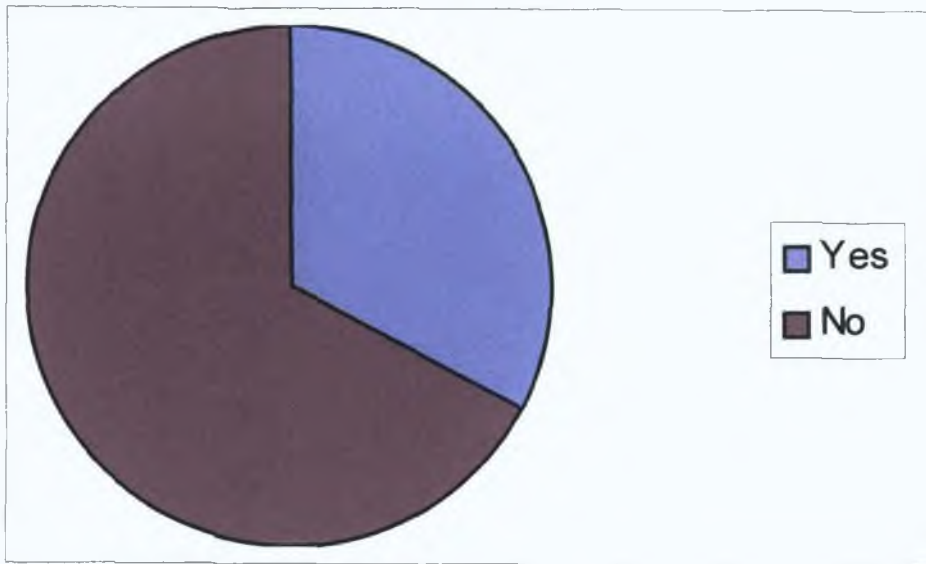


Fig. 10

Mean 1.672.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .473.

19 respondents indicated that their wage is the sole source of income in their household (32.8%) while 39 respondents indicated that their wage is not the sole source of income in their household (67.2%).

11. Family Income Support

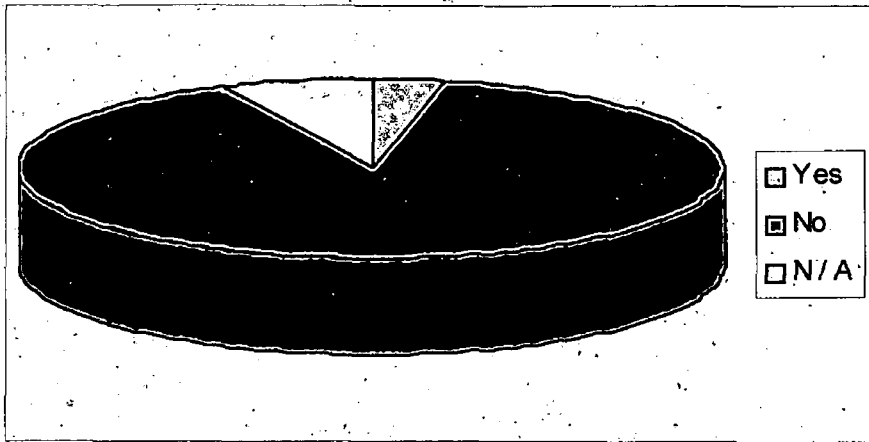


Fig. 11

Mean 2.034.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .323.

2 of the respondents indicated that they qualify for Family Income Support (F.I.S.) (3.4%), 52 of the respondents do not qualify for Family Income Support (89.7%) and 4 respondents did not answer this question (6.9%).

12. Employee Control



Fig. 12

Mean 3.586.

Median 3.000.

Mode 3.000.

Std. Dev. 1.298.

2 of the respondents rate the level of employee control within Network Catering as high (3.4%), 7 of the respondents indicate it is fairly high (12.1%), 25 of the respondents rate the level of employee control as average (43.1%), 10 respondents indicate it as low (17.2%), 7 respondents indicate it as very low (12.1%) and 7 respondents indicated they don't know (12.1%).

13. Employee Participation

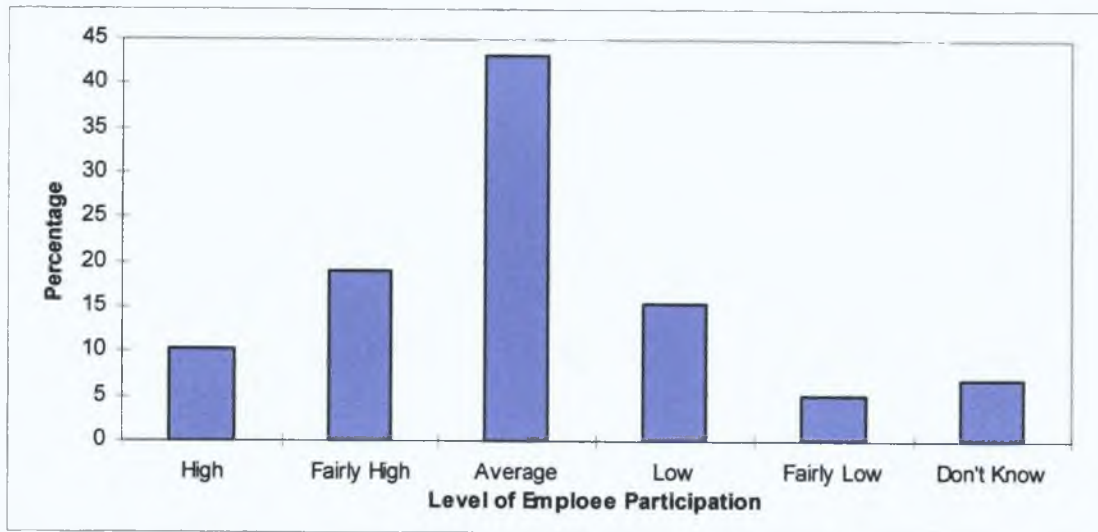


Fig. 13

Mean 3.069.

Median 3.000.

Mode 3.000.

Std. Dev. 1.269.

6 of the respondents indicated that the level of employee participation within Network Catering is high (10.3%), 11 respondents indicated fairly high (19%), 25 respondents indicated the level of employee participation as being average (43.1%), 9 respondents indicated that the level of employee participation is low (15.5%), 3 respondents indicated that the level of participation is fairly low (5.2%) and 4 respondents indicated that they didn't know (6.9%).

14. Level of Pay

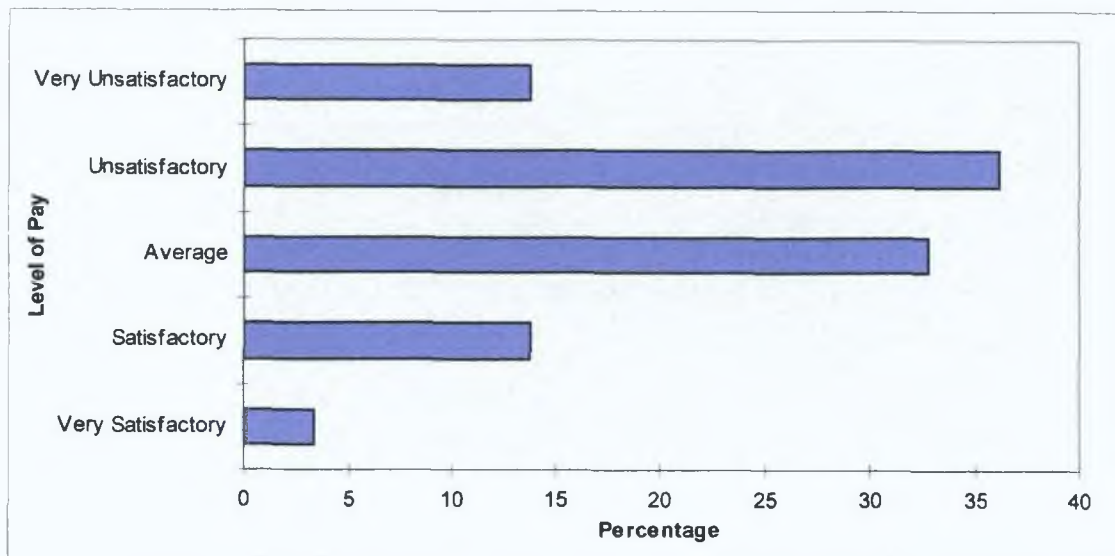


Fig. 14

Mean 3.431.

Median 3.500.

Mode 4.000.

Std. Dev. 1.011.

2 of the respondents indicated that the level of pay within Network Catering is very satisfactory (3.4%), 8 respondents indicated that the level of pay is satisfactory (13.8%), 19 respondents rated the level of pay as average (32.8%), 21 respondents indicated that the level of pay is unsatisfactory (36.2%) and 8 of the respondents indicated that the level of pay is very unsatisfactory (13.8%).

15. Satisfied with Work in General

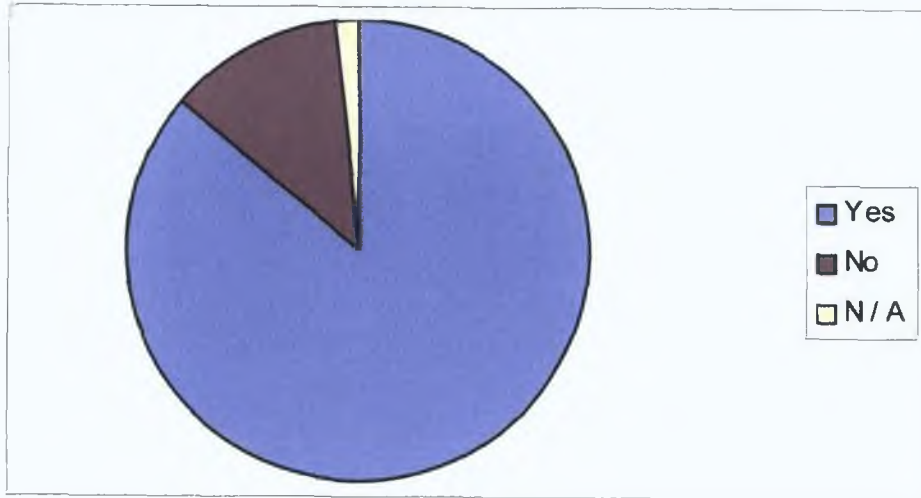


Fig. 15

Mean 1.155.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .410.

50 of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the work in general (86.2%), 7 of the respondents indicated that they are not satisfied with the work (12.1%) and 1 respondents did not answer this question (1.7%).

Synopsis

43 of the 58 respondents answered question 15(a) - What you like most about your job. The following were specified as what respondents liked most about their job.

<i>Like most about Job</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>
Meeting People	18
Work Colleagues & friendships formed	7
Travelling	3
Free Travel	2
Job Satisfaction	2
Working Alone	2
Cookery	1
Getting Paid	1
Variety	1
Friday	1
Getting a trade	1
Promotion Prospects	1
Challenge	1
Customer Satisfaction	1
Step up from unemployment	1

Table. 4

Total Responses	: 43
Missing Cases	: <u>15</u>
Total	: 58

51 of the 58 respondents answered question 15(b) - what you dislike most about your job. The following were specified as what respondents disliked most about their job.

<i>Dislike most about your job</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>
Long Hours	11
Wages	6
Rude and Undesirable Customers	5
Management interference / too many bosses / no communication from / no support from	4
Early starts	4
Turnover of management and staff	3
Late finishes	3
Working weekends	2
Lack of Staff	2
Working double shifts	2
When it is very busy	2
Poor public image	1
No personal washing facilities	1
Rumours and back biting	1
Washing up	1
Train Overcrowding	1
Getting so tired	1
Shift Work	1

Table 5

Total Responses	: 51
Missing Cases	: 07
Total	: 58

Of the 51 responses received, 23 of these relate to working hours and times of work.

16. Feedback on Work Performance

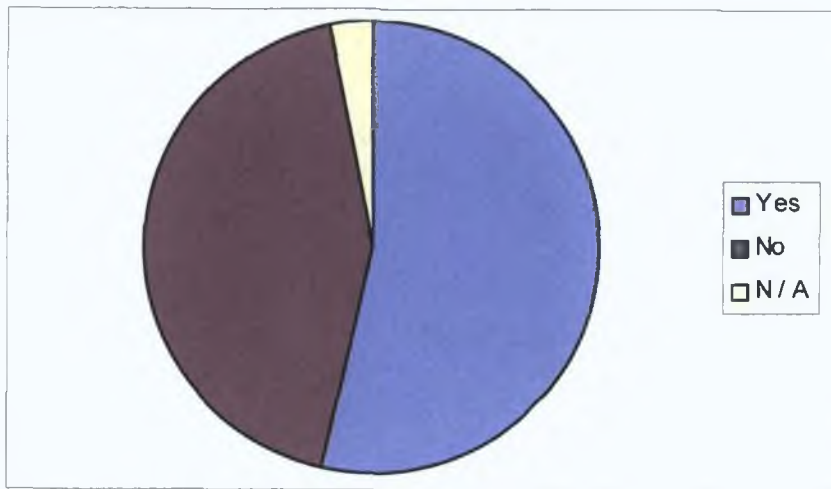


Fig. 16

Mean 1.500.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .57.

31 of the respondents indicated that they do get feedback on work performance (53.4%), 25 responded they do not get feedback on their work performance (43.1%), 2 respondents did not answer this question (3.4%).

17. Level of Supervision

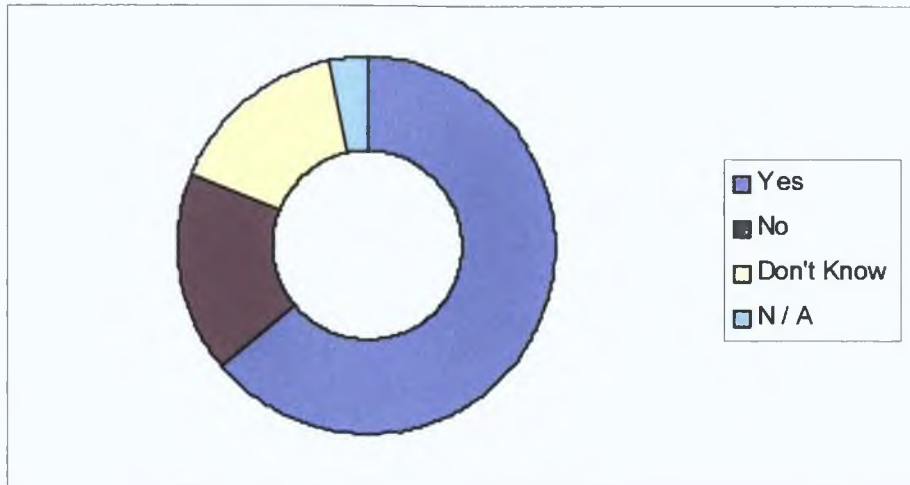


Fig. 17

Mean 1.586.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .879

37 respondents are satisfied with the level of supervision for their job (63.8%), 10 respondents are not satisfied (17.2%), 9 respondents don't know if they are satisfied with the level of supervision for their job (15.5%). There were 2 missing responses (3.4%).

18. Level of Supervision within Company

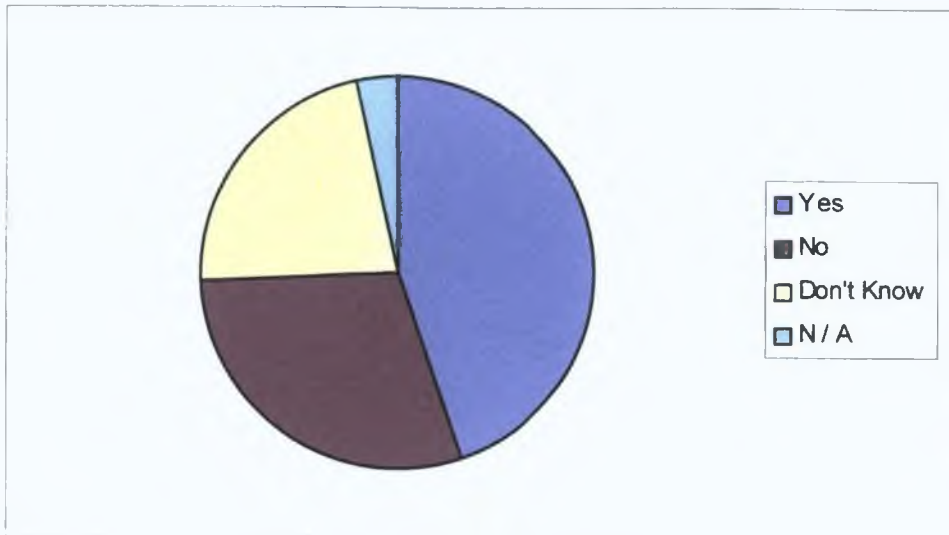


Fig. 18

Mean 1.845.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .894.

26 of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the level of supervision within the company (44.8%), 17 of the respondents are not satisfied with the level of the supervision within the company (29.3%), 13 of the respondents don't know (22.4%) and there were 2 missing responses (3.4%).

19. Same money present or absent from work

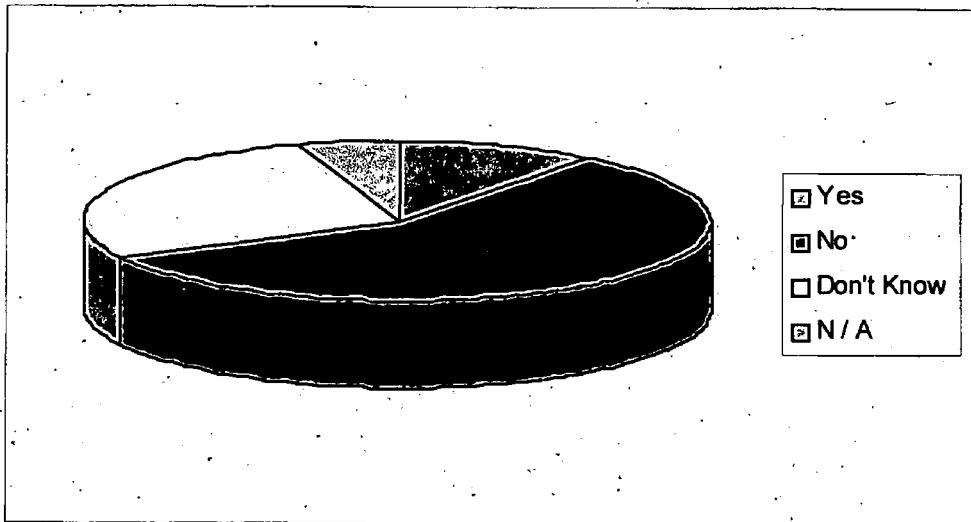


Fig. 19

Mean 2.276.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std: Dev. .720

6 of the respondents indicated that they receive the same amount of money if present or absent from work (10.3%). 33 of the respondents indicated they do not receive the same amount from work (56.9%). 16 of the respondents don't know (27.6%) and 3 respondents did not reply to the question (6.9%).

20. Self Certification System

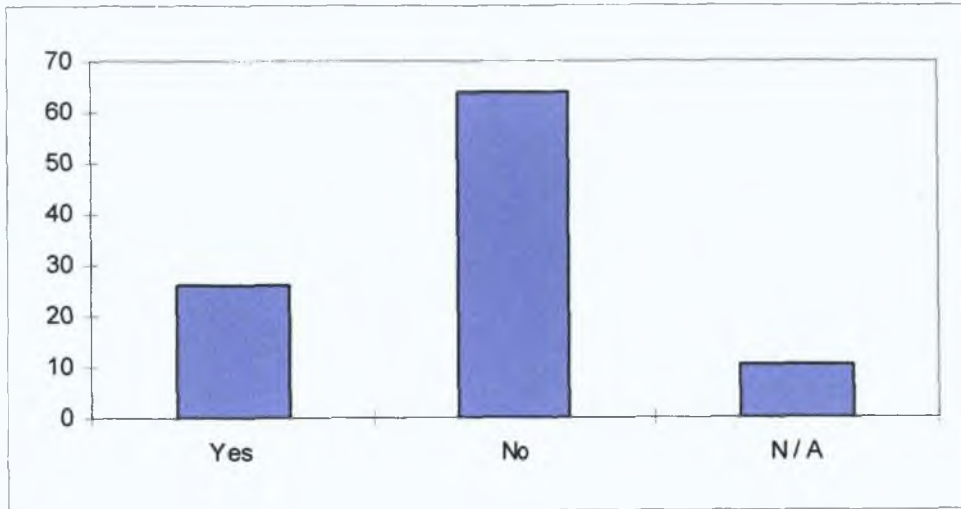


Fig. 20

Mean 1.845.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .586

15 of the respondents do use the self certification system if absent from work (25.9%), 37 do not use the self certification system if absent from work (63.8%) and 6 respondents did not reply to that question (10.3%).

21. Position Require Shiftwork

Yes	48.3%
No	43.1%
N / A	8.6%

Table. 6

Mean 1.603.

Median 3.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .647.

28 respondents stated that their position involved shift work (48.3%).
25 respondents stated that their position does not involve shift work
(43.1%) and 5 respondents did not reply to that question (8.6%).

22. No of People in Section / Crew

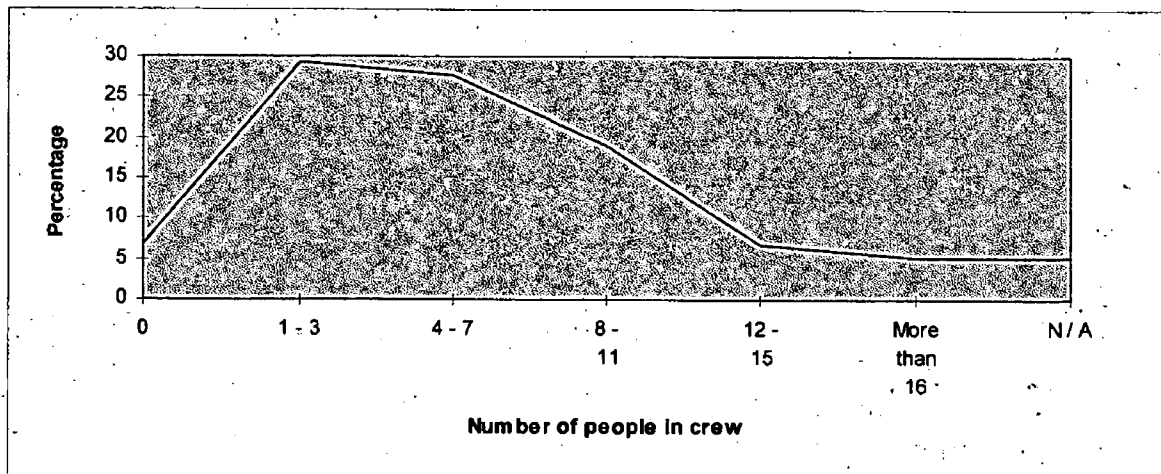


Fig. 21

Mean 3.259.

Median 3.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. 1.517.

4 of the respondents indicated that they worked alone (6.9%), 17 of the respondents indicated that they worked with between 1 - 3 other people (29.3%), 16 of the respondents work with between 4 - 7 other people (27.6%), 11 of the respondents work with between 8 - 11 people (19%), 4 of the respondents indicate they work with between 12 - 15 other people (6.9%), 3 of the respondents indicate they work with more than 16 other people (5.2%) and 3 respondents did not answer that question (5.2%).

23. Days Absent in 1996

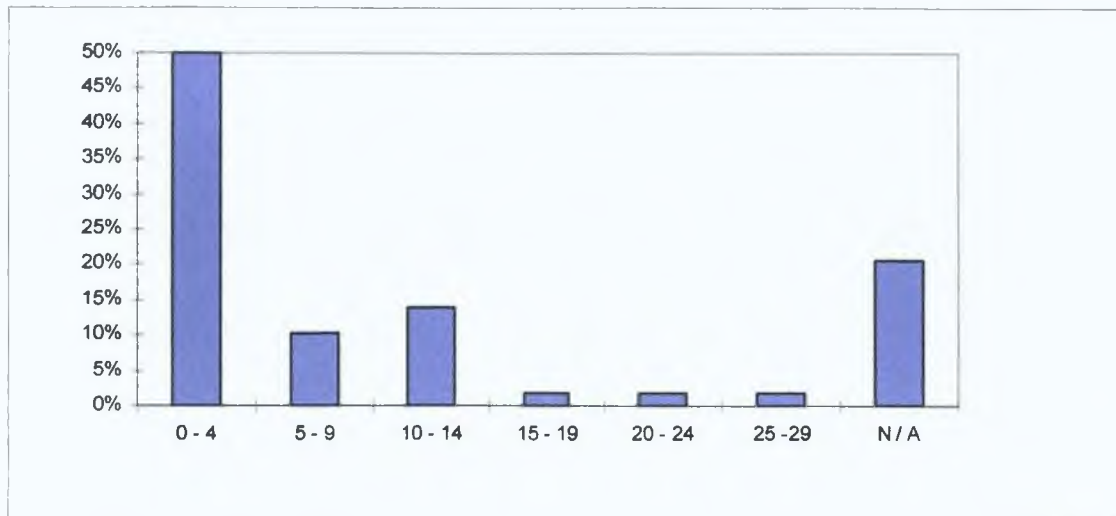


Fig. 22

Mean 3.034.

Median 1.500.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 2.765.

29 of the respondents indicated that they were absent between 0-4 days in 1996 (50%), 6 of the respondents indicated that they were absent between 5 - 9 days (10.3%), 8 of the respondents indicated that they were absent between 10 - 14 days (13.8%), 1 of the respondents indicated that they were absent between 20 - 24 days (1.7%) , 1 of the respondents indicated that they were absent between 25 - 29 days (1.7%) and 12 respondents did not answer that question (20.7%).

24. Verbal Warning

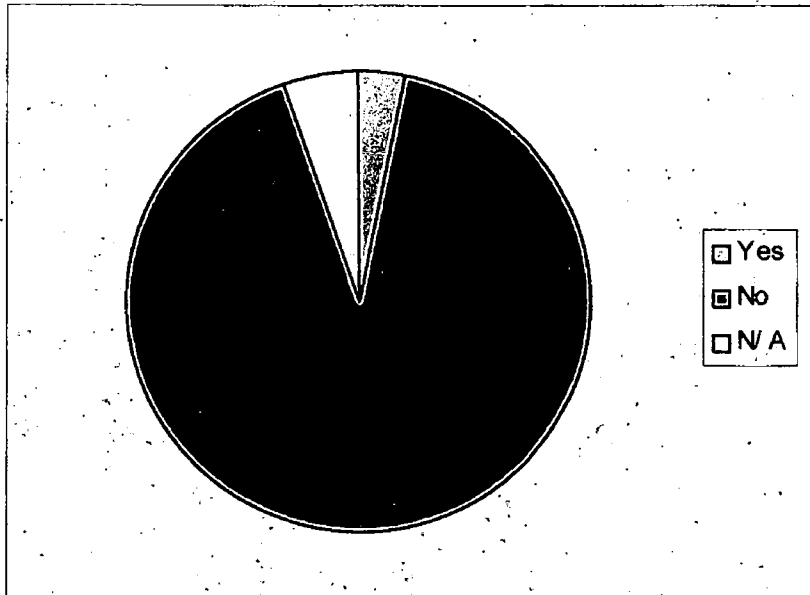


Fig. 23

Mean 2.017.

Média 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .296.

2 of the respondents have received a verbal warning in relation to absenteeism (3.4%), 53 of the respondents have not received a verbal warning in relation to absenteeism (91.4%) and 3 respondents did not answer that question (5.2%).

25. Written Warning

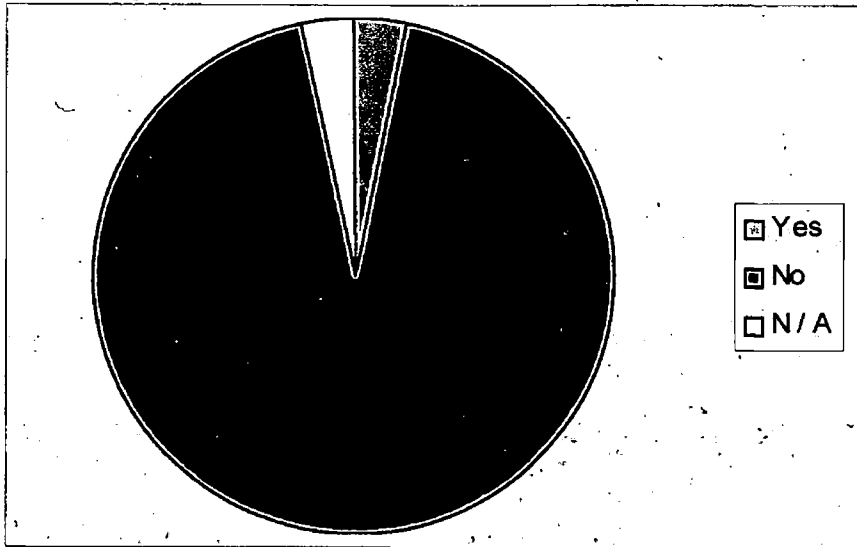


Fig. 24

Mean 2.000.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .265.

2 of the respondents have received a written warning in relation to absenteeism (3.4%), 54 of the respondents have not received a written warning in relation to absenteeism (93.1%). 2 of the respondents did not answer this question (3.4%).

26. Attendance Programme

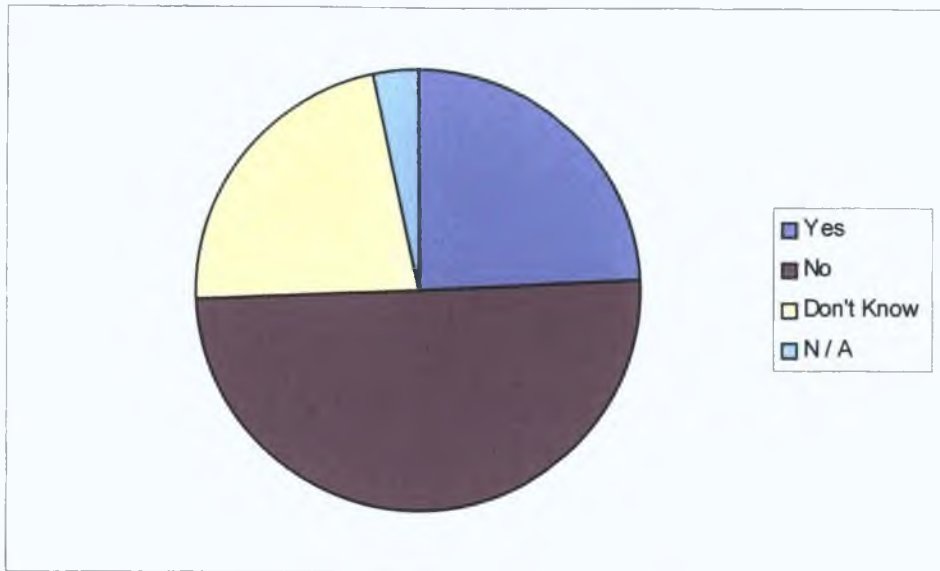


Fig. 25

Mean 2.053.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .782.

14 of the respondents believe that the attendance programme within Network Catering encourage you to attend work (24.1%) , 29 of the respondents do not find the attendance programme encouraging (50%), 13 of the respondents don't know (22.4%) and 2 respondents did not answer this question (3.4%).

27 Monthly Attendance Draw Encouraging

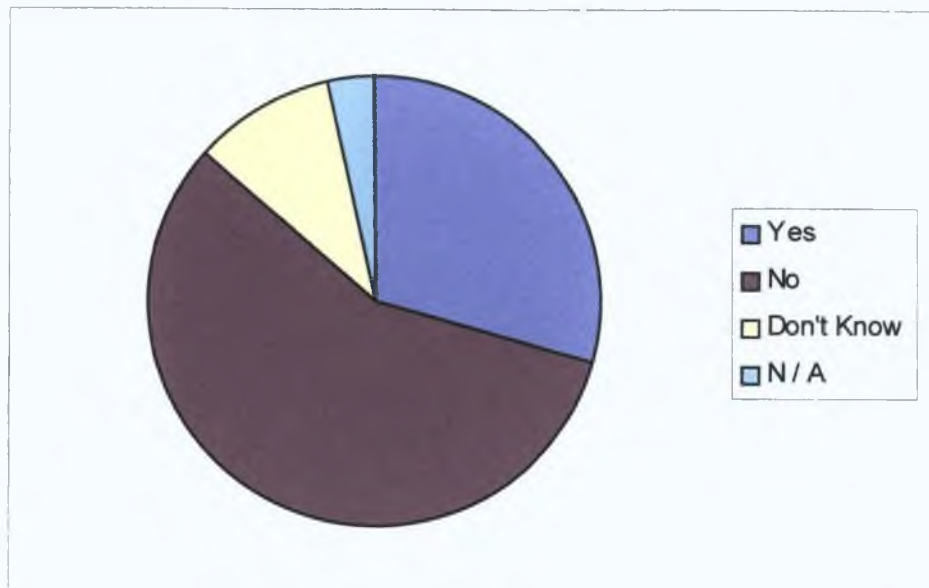


Fig. 26

Mean 1.879.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .727.

17 of the respondents feel that the monthly draw encourages you to attend at work (29.3%), 33 of the respondents felt that it does not encourage you to attend at work (56.9%), 6 of the respondents don't know (10.3%) and 2 respondents did not answer this question (3.4%).

28. Recrimination Dissuade Absences

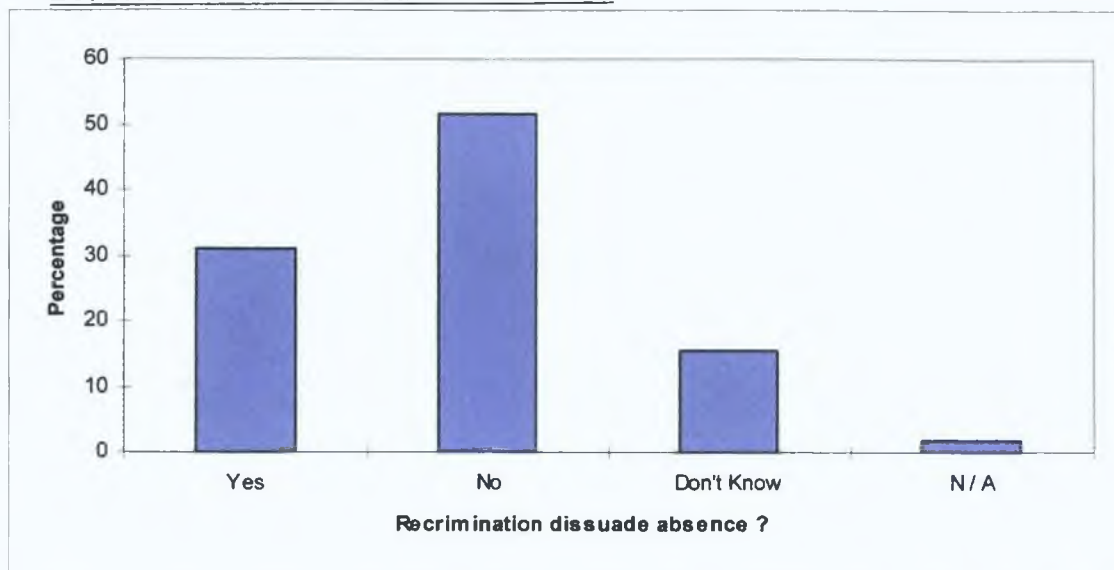


Fig. 27

Mean 1.879.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .727.

18 of the respondents indicated that the fear of recrimination dissuades them from ringing in sick (31%), 30 of the respondents indicated that the fear of recrimination would not dissuade them from ringing in sick (51.7%), 9 of the respondents don't know (15.5%) and 1 respondents did not answer this question (1.7%).

29 Medical Certificate for Absence

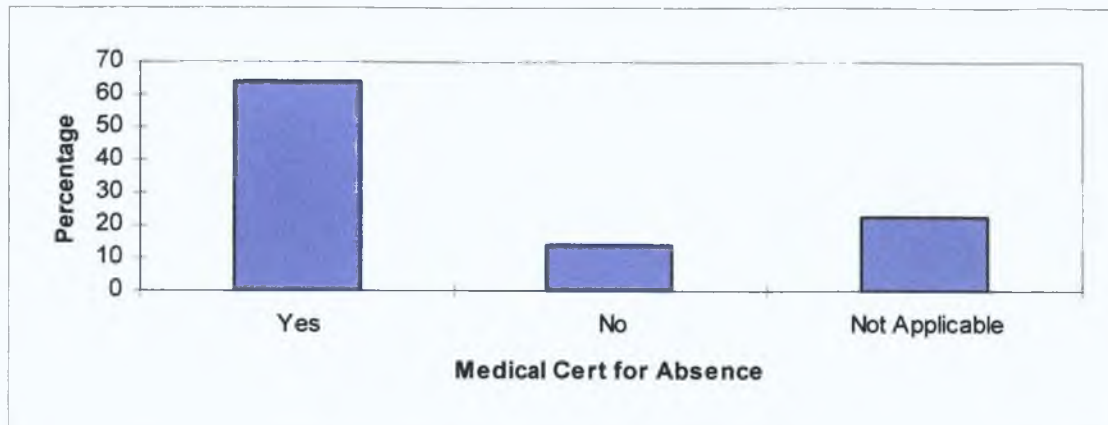


Fig. 28

Mean 1.586.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .836.

37 of the respondents indicated that they would always get a medical certificate if absent from work (63.8%), 8 of the respondents indicated that they would not always get a medical certificate if absent from work (13.8%). 13 of the respondents indicated that this is not applicable (22.4%).

30. Participant on Attendance Programme

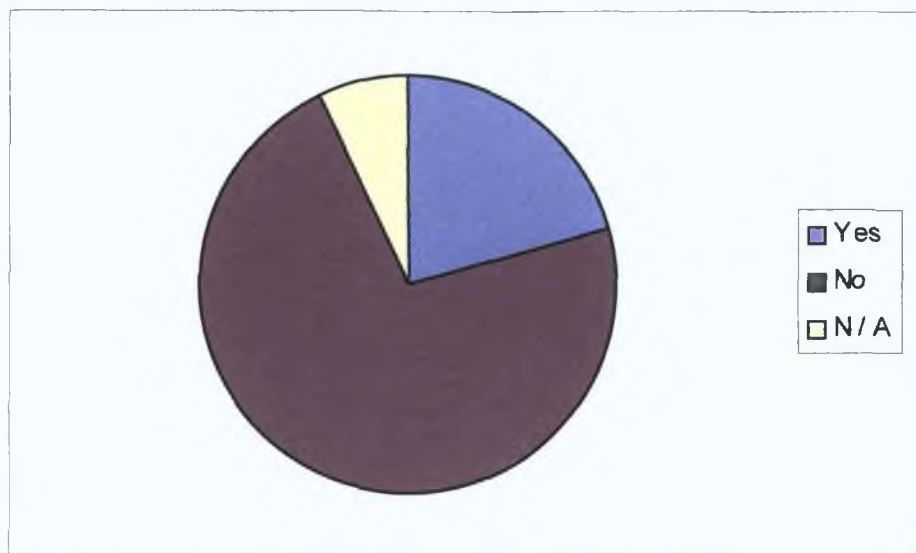


Fig. 29

Mean 1.862.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .511.

12 of the respondents indicated that they have participated on the attendance programme (20.7%). 42 of the respondents indicated that they have not been a participant on the attendance programme (72.4%). 4 respondents did not answer this question (6.9%).

31 Know Current Absenteeism Percentage

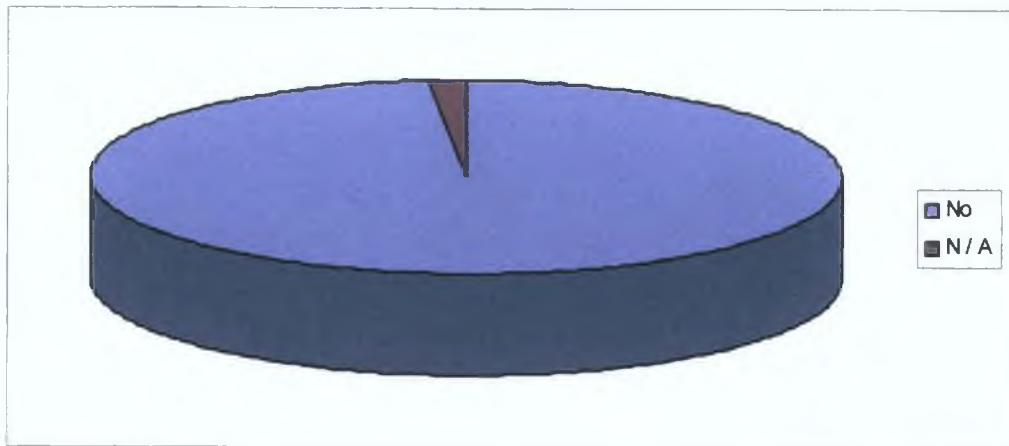


Fig. 30

Mean 1.500.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .656.

57 of the respondents indicated that they do not know the current absenteeism percentage (98.3%). 1 respondent did not reply to that question (1.7%).

32 Think Absenteeism is High

Yes	59%
No	33%
N / A	9%

Table. 7

Mean 1.500

Median 1.000

Mode 1.000

Std. Dev. .656

34 of the respondents indicted that absenteeism is high in Network Catering (58.6%). 19 of the respondents indicated that they do not believe absenteeism is high in Network Catering (32.8%). 5 respondents did not reply to that question (8.6%)

33.Day of the Week Most Likely to be Absent

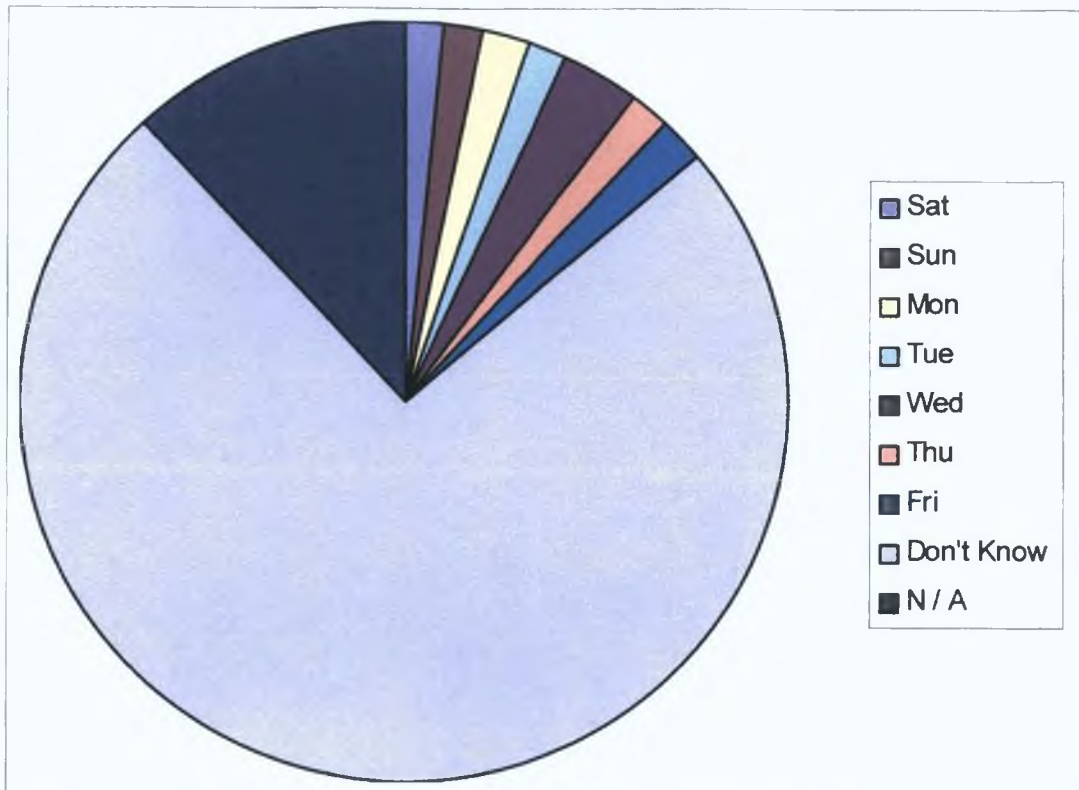


Fig. 31

1 respondent indicated Saturday (1.7%) 1 respondent indicated Sunday (1.7%) 1 respondent indicated Monday (1.7%) 1 respondent indicated Tuesday (1.7%) 2 respondents indicated Wednesday (3.4%) 1 respondent indicated Thursday (1.7%) 1 respondent indicated Friday (1.7%) 43 respondents indicated don't know (72.1%) and 7 of the respondents did not answer that question.

34. Season Most Likely to be Absent

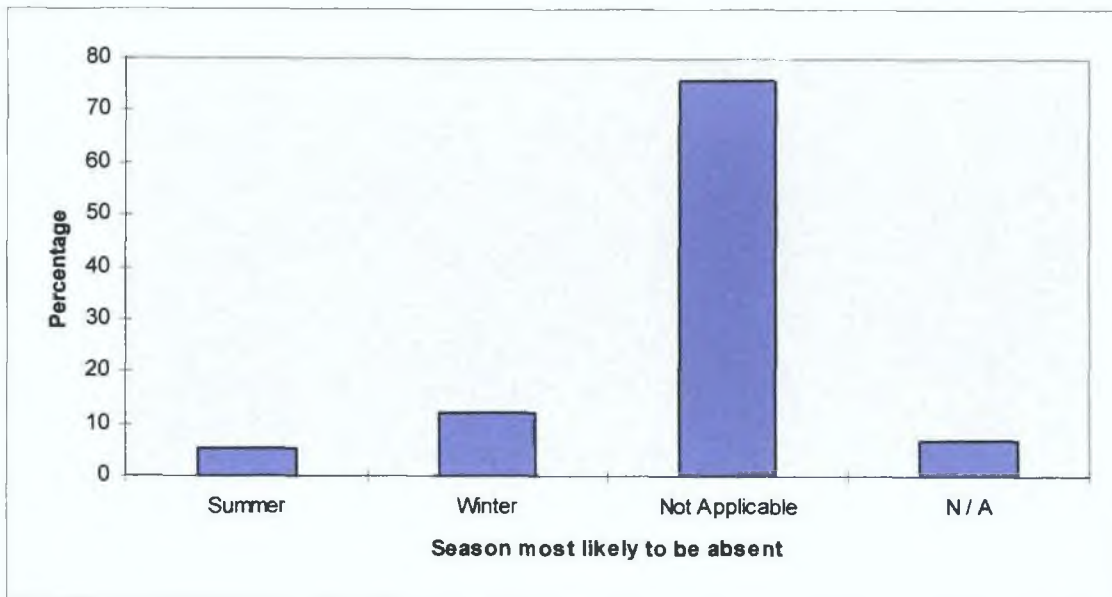


Fig. 32

Mean 4.793.

Median 5.000.

Mode 5.000.

Std. Dev. .789.

3 of the respondents indicated that they are most likely to be absent in the Summer (5.2%), 7 of the respondents indicated that they are most likely to be absent in the Winter (12.1%). 44 of the respondents indicated not applicable (75.9%). 4 of the respondents did not answer that question (6.9%).

35. Where do you live

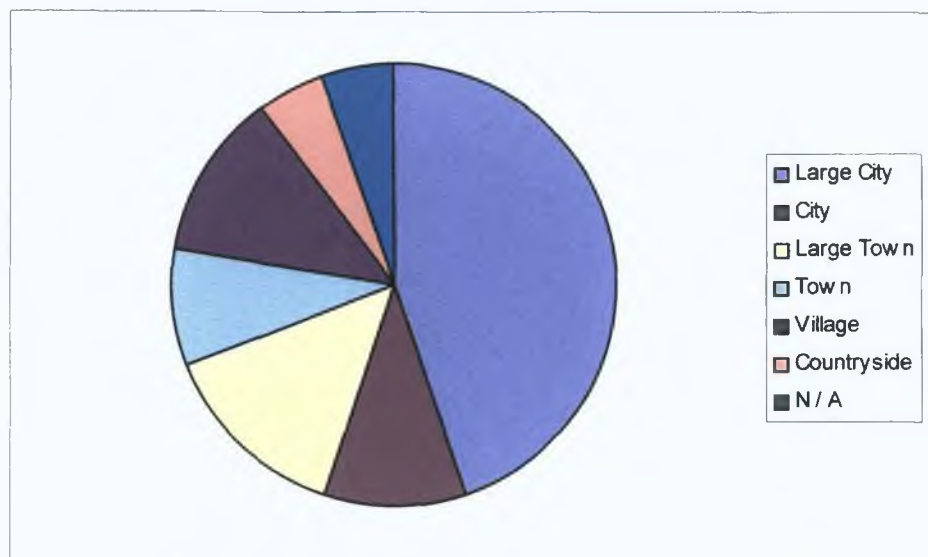


Fig. 33

Mean 2.690.

Median 2.000,

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 1.930.

26 of the respondents live in a large city (44.8%), 6 of the respondents live in a city (10.3%), 8 of the respondents live in a large town (13.8%), 5 of the respondents live in a town (8.6%), 7 of the respondents live in a village (12.1%), 3 of the respondents live in the countryside (5.2%) and there were 3 missing cases (5.2%).

36. Distance from place of work

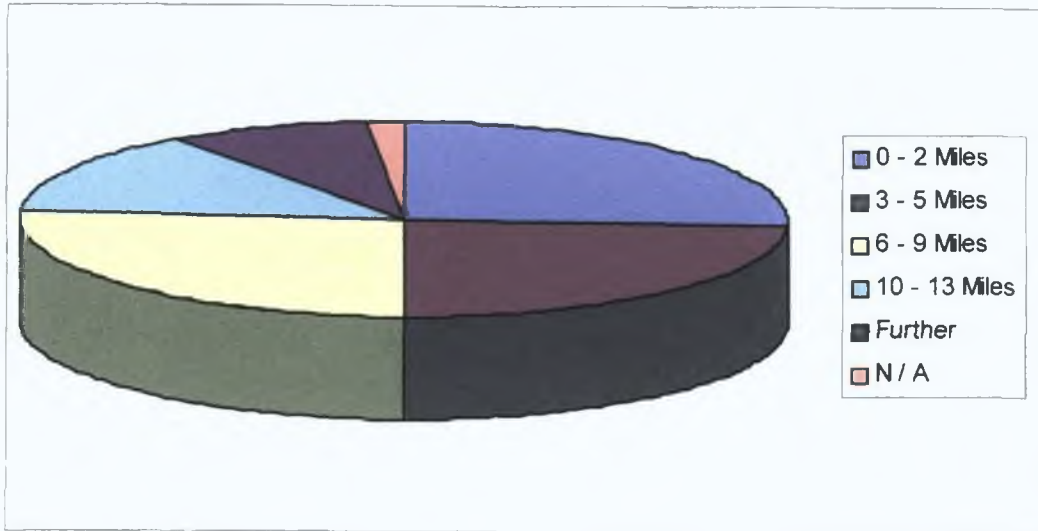


Fig. 34

Mean 2.603.

Median 2.500.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 1.337.

15 of the respondents indicated they live between 0 - 2 miles from the workplace (25.9%), 14 of the respondents indicated they live 3 - 5 miles from the workplace (24.1%), 15 of the respondents indicated they live 6 - 9 miles from the workplace (25.9%), 8 respondents live 10 - 13 miles from the workplace (13.8%), 5 respondents live further than 14 miles from the workplace (8.6%) and 1 respondents did not answer this question (1.7%).

37. Public Transport Available

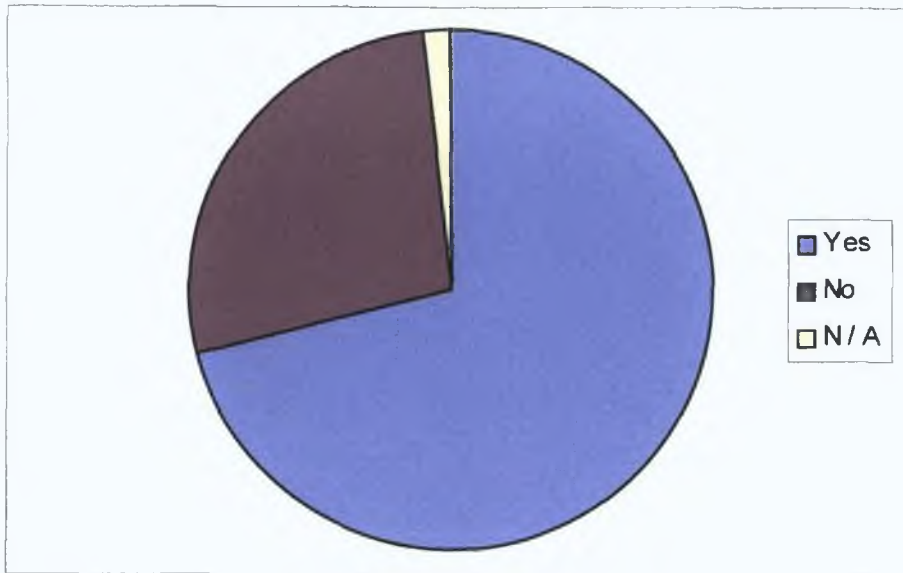


Fig. 35

Mean 1.310.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .503.

41 respondents indicated that public transport is available from their home to the workplace (70.7%). 16 respondents indicated that public transport is not available from their home to the workplace (27.6%) and 1 respondents did not answer the question (1.7%).

37(a) Public Transport Within Walking Distance of Home

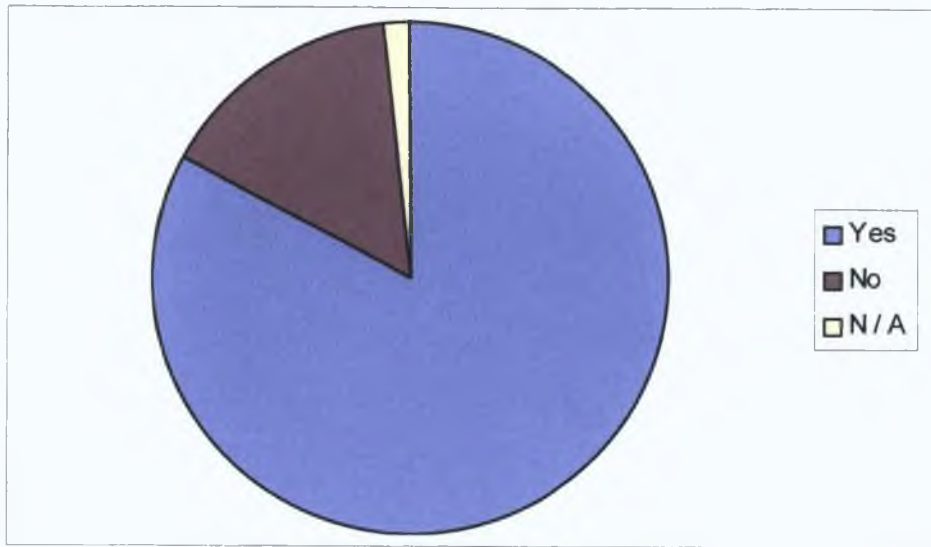


Fig. 36

Of the 41 respondents who indicated that public transport is available from their home to the workplace (70.7%), 39 of these respondents indicated that public transport is within walking distance of their home (67.2%) while 2 of the respondents indicated that public transport is not within walking distance (3.4%).

38 Means of Transport

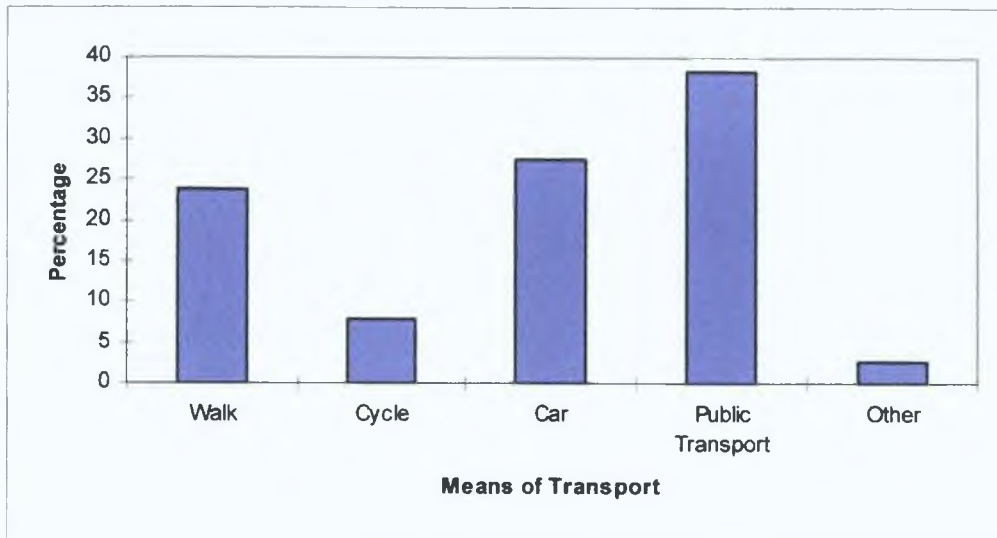


Fig. 37

The 2 respondents (3.4%) who answered other, specified [r17] lift and [r51] train.

39 Following Reasons which Account for Absence

Domestic Problem	21%
Weather	4%
Social Event	9%
Lack of Transport	6%
Overslept	13%
Lack of Interest	4%
Other	43%

Table. 8

22 of the respondents who answered other and 5 others specified the following as reasons to account for absence:

22 respondents indicated sickness or illness as a reason for absence, 1 respondent specified a back problem, 1 respondent specified an ingrown toenail, 1 respondent specified sick or hungover, 1 respondent specified bug in stomach and 1 respondent specified none of the above.

40 Used Sickness as a Reason for Absence, when not

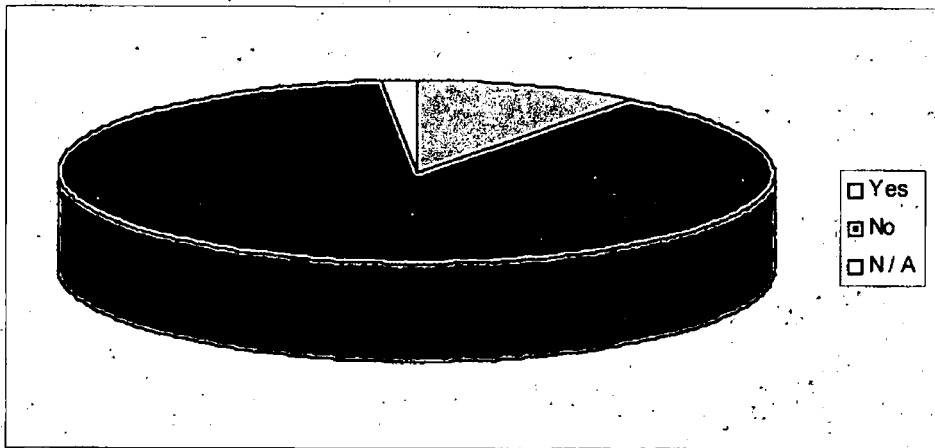


Fig. 38

Mean 1.914.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev: .339.

6 of the respondents indicated that they used sickness as a reason for absence when this was not the sole reason (10.3%). 51 of the respondents indicated that they never used sickness as a reason for absence when this was not the sole reason (87.9%). 1 respondent did not answer this question (1.7%).

41. Satisfied with Holiday Entitlement

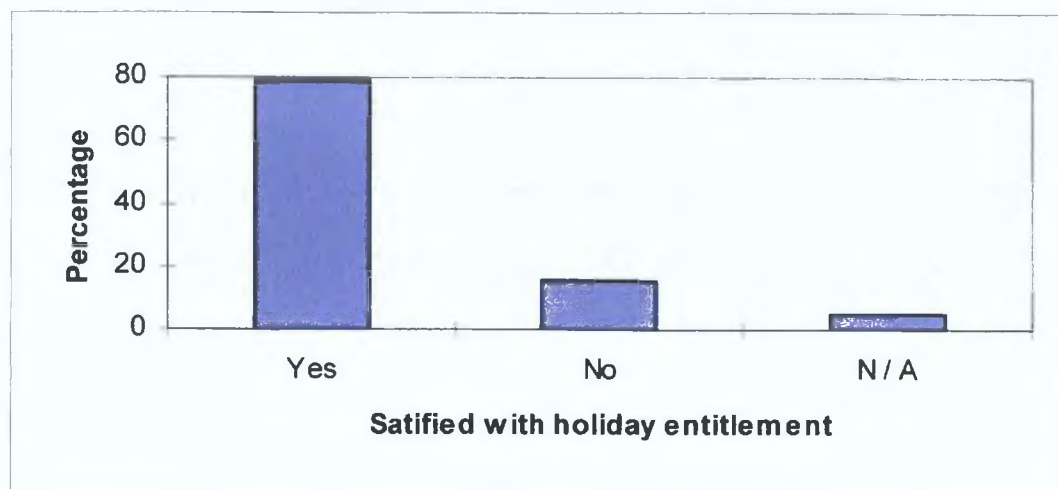


Fig. 39

Mean 1.259.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .548.

46 of the respondents are satisfied with their holiday entitlement (79.3%). 9 of the respondents are not satisfied with their holiday entitlement (15.5%) and 3 respondents did not answer that question (5.2%).

42. Other Members Absent - do you feel entitled to be absent too

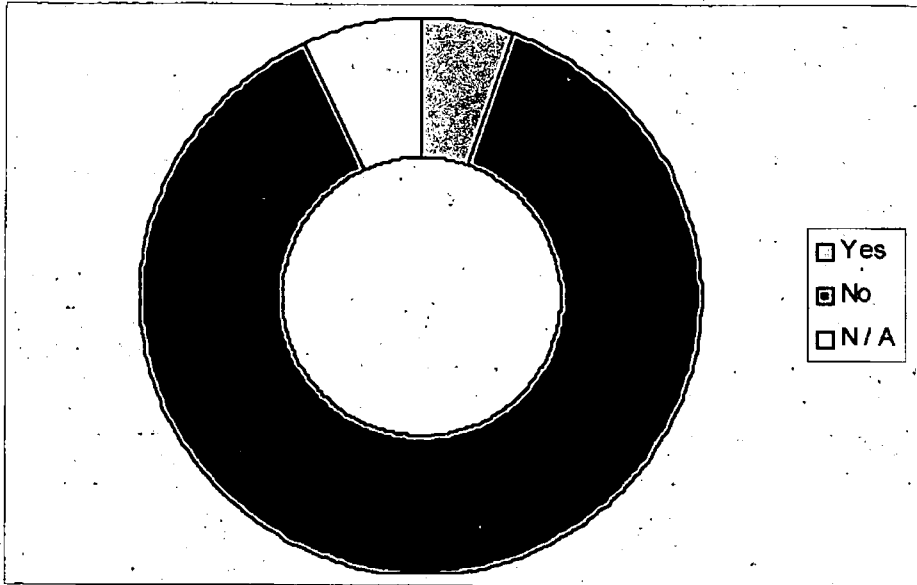


Fig. 42

Mean 2.017.

Median 2.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. .350.

3 of the respondents indicated that is other members of Network Catering are frequently absent they feel entitled to absent too (5.2%). 51 of the respondents do not feel entitled to be absent (87.9%). 4 respondents did not answer that question (6.9%).

43 Good Working Relationship with Colleague

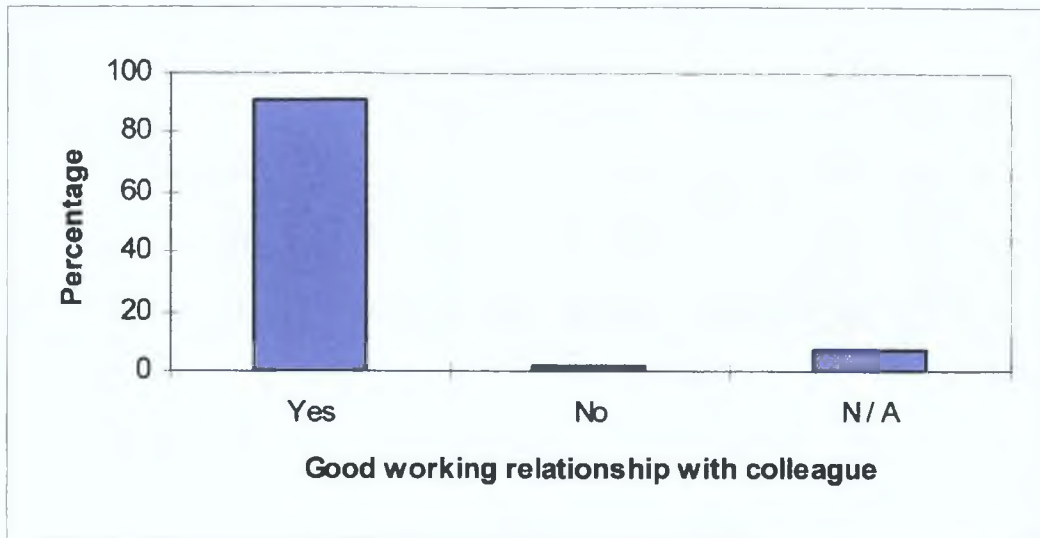


Fig. 41

Mean 1.155.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .523.

53 of the respondents indicated that they have a good working relationship with their colleagues (91.4%). 1 of the respondents indicated that they did not have a good working relationship with their colleagues (1.7%). 4 respondents did not answer that question (6.9%).

44. Free from Harassment in the Workplace

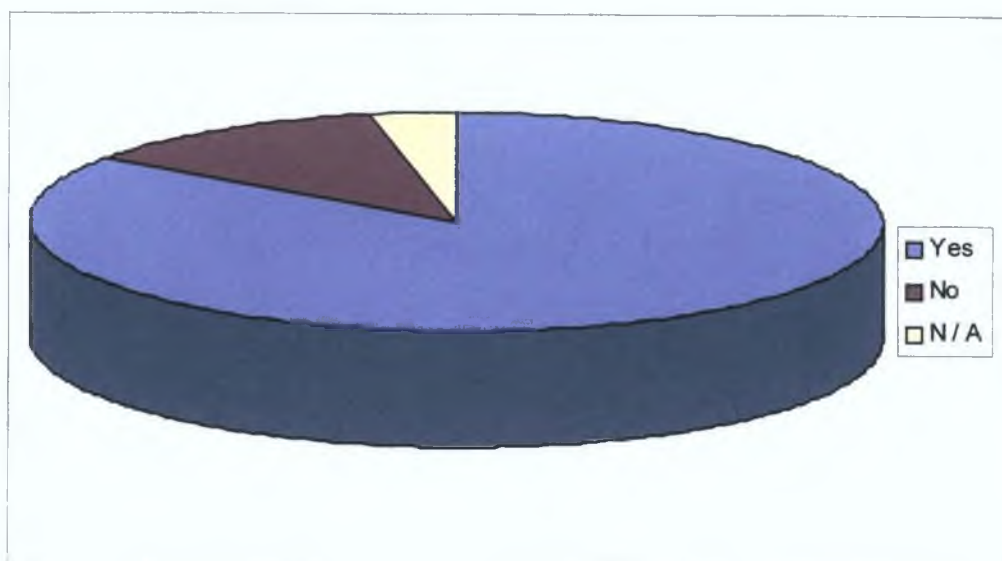


Fig. 42

Mean 1.190.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .476.

49 of the respondents indicated that they are free from harassment in the workplace (84.5%). 7 of the respondents indicated that they are not free from harassment in the workplace (12.1%) and 2 respondents did not reply to that question (3.4%).

45 Permanent Position

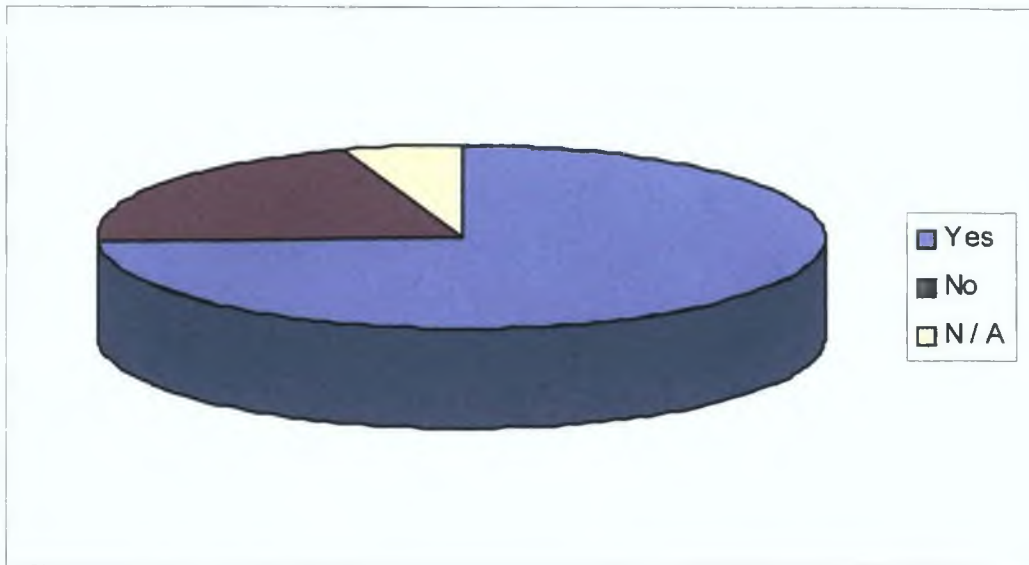


Fig. 43

Mean 1.310.

Median 1.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. .568.

43 of the respondents indicated that they have a permanent position in Network Catering (74.1%). 12 of the respondents indicated that they do not have a permanent position (20.7%) and 3 respondents did not answer this question (5.2%).

45.(a) Job Security

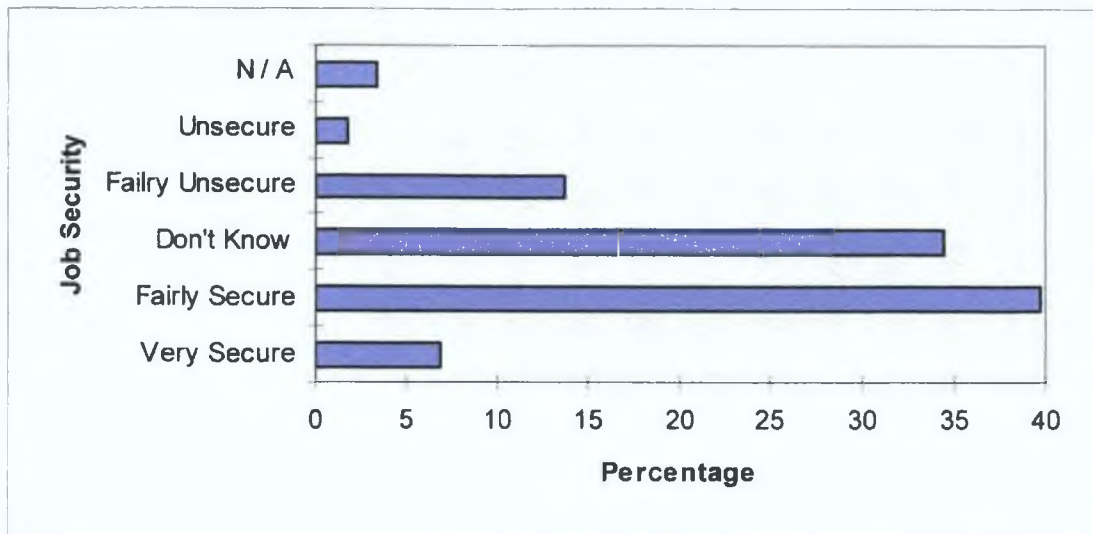


Fig. 44

Mean 2.741.

Median 3.000.

Mode 2.000.

Std. Dev. 1.069.

4 of the respondents rated their position in terms of job security as very secure (6.9%). 23 of the respondents rated their position as fairly secure (39.7%), 20 of the respondents answered don't know (34.5%). 8 of the respondents indicated fairly unsecure (13.8%) and 1 respondent indicated unsecure (1.7%) and 2 respondents did not answer that question (3.4%).

46 Interests Outside Work

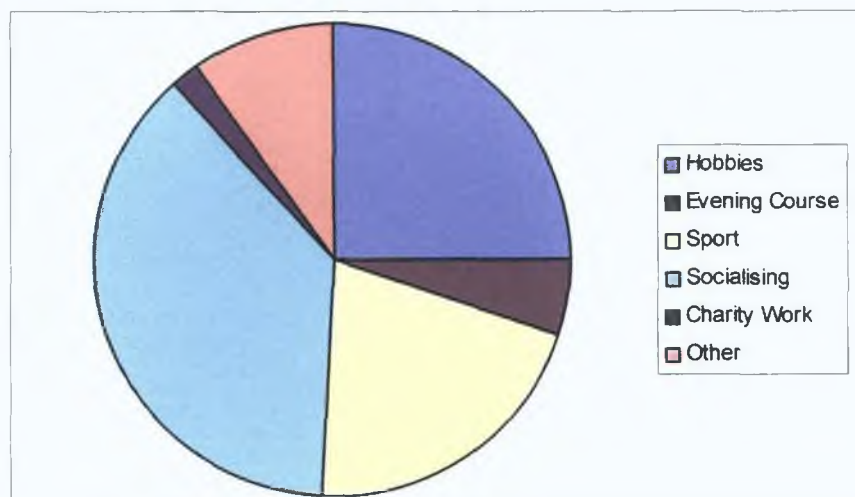


Fig. 45

11 of the respondents who answered other and 2 others indicated the following interests outside the workplace:

- [r7] - Swimming and Flower Arranging
- [r15] - Photography
- [r32] - Reading, Gardening, Travel
- [r46] - Walking and Swimming
- [r6] - Member of local G.A.A. club
- [r5] - Keeping fit
- [r4] - Drink
- [r53] - Home life
- [r39] - Music
- [r36] - Pubs and going dancing
- [r21] - Hunting, shooting etc.
- [r14] - Gardening and card playing
- [r17] - Law and human rights and equality

47. Satisfied with Contract of Employment

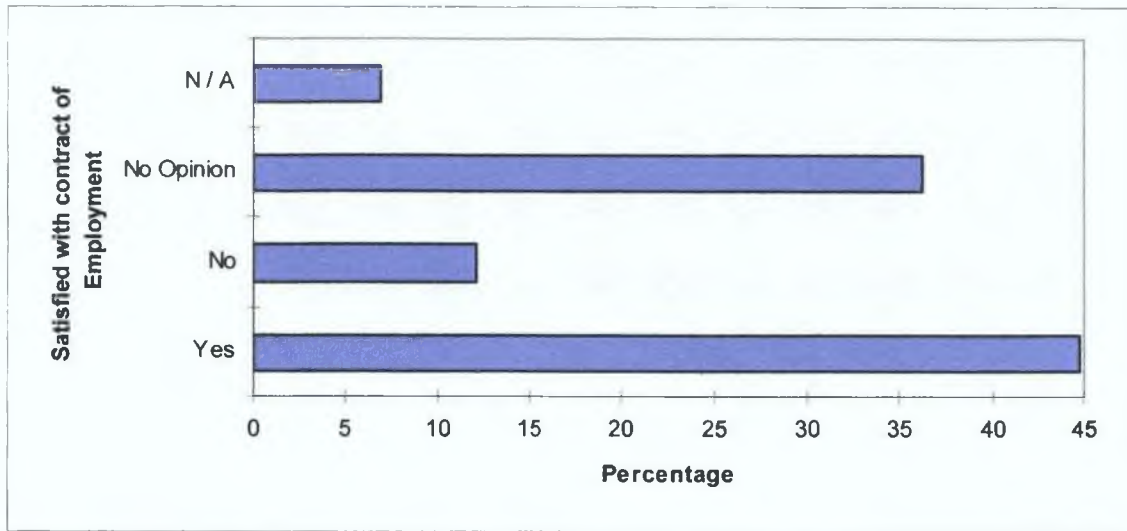


Fig. 46

Mean 2.052.

Median 2.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 1.050.

26 of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their contract of employment (44.8%). 7 of the respondents indicated that they are not satisfied with their contract of employment (12.1%). 21 of the respondents have no opinion on their contract of employment (36.2%) and 4 respondents did not answer this question (6.9%).

48 If Married is Partner Working

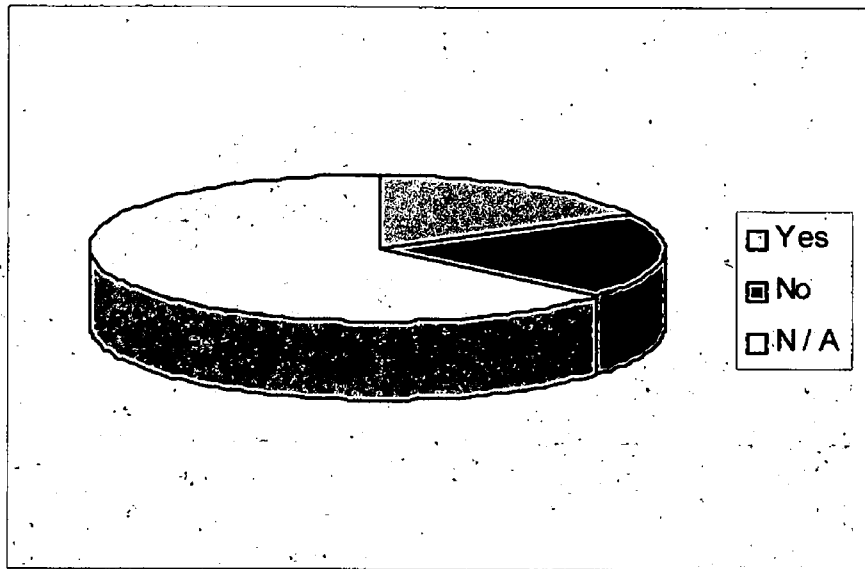


Fig. 47

Mean 2.466.

Median 3.000.

Mode 3.000.

Std. Dev. .777.

10 of the respondents indicated that their partner is working (17.2%), 11 of the respondents indicated that their partner is not working (19%) and 37 respondents did not answer this question (63.8%).

49 How Many Dependant on Your Income

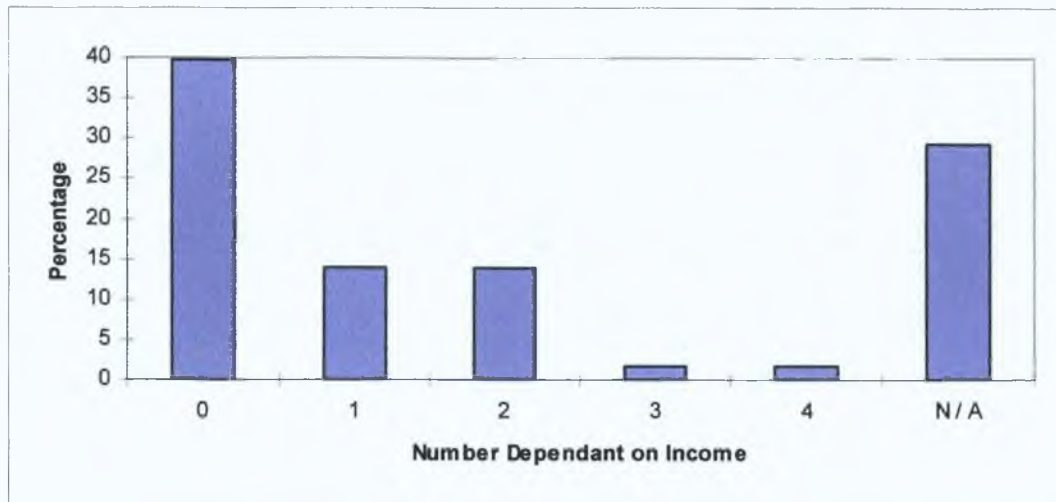


Fig. 48

Mean 3.293.

Median 2.000.

Mode 1.000.

Std. Dev. 2.555.

23 of the respondents indicated 0 (39.7%), 8 of the respondents indicated 1 (13.8%), 8 of the respondents indicated 2 (13.8%), 1 of the respondents indicated 3 (1.7%) and 17 respondents did not answer the question (29.3%).

50. Promotion Prospects

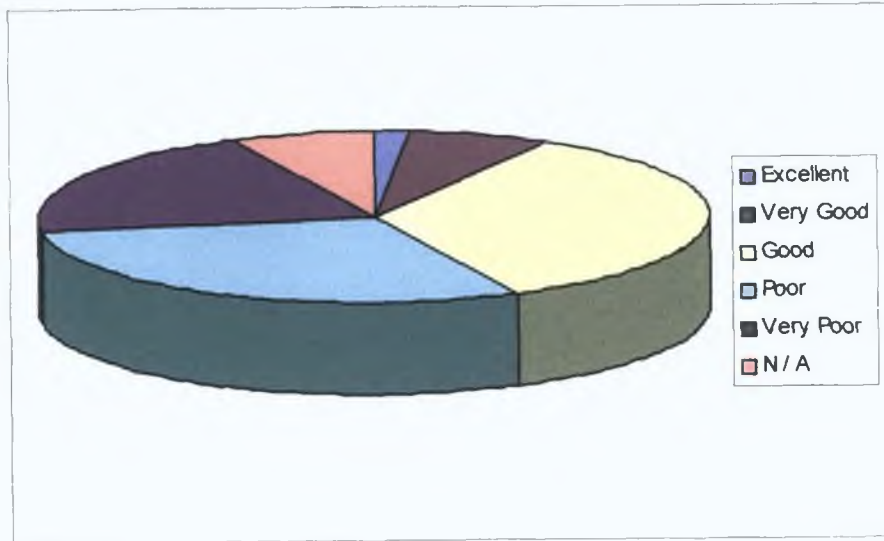


Fig. 49

Mean 3.810.

Median 4.000.

Mode 3.000.

Std. Dev. 1.115.

1 respondent indicated a rating of excellent for promotion prospects (1.7%). 4 respondents indicated that promotion prospects are very good (6.9%). 20 respondents indicated promotion prospects are good (34.5%) 17 respondents indicated promotion prospects are poor (29.3%) and 12 respondents feel promotion prospects are very poor (20.7%) and 4 respondents did not answer this question (6.9%).

Chapter 7: Analysis of the Results of the Survey

Attitude to Management Control of Absence in the Workplace

Question 24 to Question 32 (inclusive) relate to employees attitudes to management control of absence in the workplace.

For the purpose of analysis of this survey all of these questions have been cross tabulated with all other variables in the questionnaire.

Because of the vast amount of data generated as a result of these cross tabulations the tables shown in this section of the study are only those that have suggested a strong relationship.

The results of the cross tabulation including statistical tests of association and correlation are shown below.

Number of Days Absent in Relation to Verbal Warning Received for
Absence

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>N/A</i>
0-4		28	1
5-9	1	5	
10-14		7	1
15-19		1	
20-24	1		
25-29		1	
NA		11	1

Table 9

<u>Chi-Square</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Pearson:	34.59853	12	.00054
<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>ASEI</u>	<u>Val/ASEO</u>
Pearson's R.:	.04217	.12178	.31587

A strong relationship exists between verbal warning through absence and absenteeism level. The Chi-Square significance level is .00054. It is suggested that the absentees rarely receive a verbal warning.

Number of Days Absent in Relation to Written Warning Through
Absence

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>0-4</i>		28	1
<i>5-9</i>	1	5	
<i>10-14</i>		8	
<i>15-19</i>		1	
<i>20-24</i>	1		
<i>25-29</i>		1	
<i>NA</i>		11	1

Table. 10

<u>Chi-Square</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Significance</u>	
Pearson:	34.33333	12	.00060	
<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>ASEI</u>	<u>Val/ASEO</u>	<u>Approx. Sig.</u>
Pearson's R.:	.04790	.13666	.35883	.72107

A strong relationship exists between written warning and absenteeism level. The Chi-Square Significance level is .00060. It is suggested that the absentees rarely receive a written warning.

Number of Days Absent in Relation to Recrimination Dissuade

Absence

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>0-4</i>	6	21	1	1
<i>5-9</i>	1	4	1	
<i>10-14</i>	5	3		
<i>15-19</i>			1	
<i>20-24</i>			1	
<i>25-29</i>	1			
<i>NA</i>	5	2	5	

Table. 11

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance	
Pearson:	33.52778	18	.01440	
Statistic	Value	ASEI	Val/ASEO	Approx. Sig.
Pearson's R.:	.05444	.15311	.40797	.68485

A strong relationship exists between reprimand dissuading absenteeism and absenteeism level. The Chi-Square significance level is .01440. It is suggested that 31% of personnel are dissuaded from being absent because of fear of reprimand.

Attendance Programme Encouraging in Relation to Participated on the Attendance Programme

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Yes</i>	3	11	
<i>No</i>	7	21	1
<i>Don't Know</i>	2	10	1
<i>N/A</i>			2

Table. 12

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance	
Pearson:	28.93446	6	.00006	
Statistic	Value	ASEI	Val/ASEO	Approx. Sig.
Pearson's R.:	.28152	.13868	2.19546	.03229

There is a strong relationship between attendance programme encouraging and participated on the attendance programme. The Chi-Square significance level is .00006. It is suggested that few people who participate on the programme find it encouraging.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS IN RELATION TO EMPLOYEES

- It is suggested that absentees rarely receive a verbal warning in relation to absenteeism.
- It is furthermore suggested that rarely receive a written warning in relation to absenteeism.
- The Fear of recrimination dissuades nearly 50% of personnel from being absent.
- It is suggested that few people who participated on the attendance programme found it encouraging.

Factors Contributing to Absenteeism

In order to establish the true causes for absenteeism tests of association were conducted on all the variables with the number of days absent. Furthermore gender, age level and marital status were all cross tabulated with all other variables to establish strengths of relationship. Because of the vast amount of data generated as a result of these cross tabulations, the tables shown in this section of the study are only those that have suggested a strong relationship in determining true causes for absence.

The factors contributing to Absenteeism have been analysed under the following headings:

Personal Factors

Job Satisfaction

Organisational Factors

Time / Place Factors

Personal Factors

Under this heading the following areas will be addressed:

- a) Age
- b) Gender
- c) Marital Status
- d) Family Size
- e) Education Level
- f) Years of Employment
- g) Experience
- h) Medical Condition
- i) Domestic

AGE

The findings of this analysis does not reflect any relationship between age and absenteeism level. These findings are concurrent with those of Kahne et al (1957) who found no relationship between these variables. However this view would not be accepted across the board. Much research to date in this area has shown there to be a positive relationship between age and absenteeism level (Educational Research Service, 1980; O'Muirheartaigh, 1975).

GENDER

An analysis of the findings in this study shows the relationship between gender and absenteeism level to have a Chi-Square significance level of .62034 suggesting no strong relationship between these variables. Most research to date has shown a strong relationship in this regard

(Bryson, 1968, O'Muircheartaigh, 1975). However because of the lack of the common definition of absenteeism as outlined in Chapter 1, many analysts in the measurement of absenteeism, include maternity leave in their calculations which tends to give a distorted picture of female absence levels when such levels are compared to men (Sunday Times, 6/5/90). In the case of the definition of absenteeism in Network Catering - maternity leave is not included. This is likely to have a bearing on these results.

MARITAL STATUS

A strong relationship between Marital Status and absenteeism level has been found. The highest absenteeism level has been found to occur in the single status employee.

Number of Days Absent in relation to Marital Status

	<i>Single</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Separated</i>	<i>Widowed</i>	<i>Other</i>
0-4	18	9		1	1
5-9	5	1			
10-14	7	1			
15-19	1				
20-24	1				
25-29			1		
NA	8	3		1	

Table 13

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson:	63.05982	24	.00002

The Chi-Square significance factor of .00002 suggests a very strong relationship between the variables of marital status and absenteeism. This finding is somewhat consistent with previous research in the area. Previously it has been shown that marital status is consistent with absenteeism level, when taken in conjunction with gender. But as already outlined the statistical tests of association carried out on gender and absenteeism level in this study suggest no relationship.

However if marital status is taken in conjunction with number of children a strong relationship is suggested.

Marital Status in relation to No. of Children

	0	1	2	3	4 or More
Single	37	2	1		
Married	4	4	3	1	2
Separated			1		
Widowed	1				1
Other				1	

Table. 14

<u>Chi-Square</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Pearson:	69.15514	16	.00000

Therefore although the findings of this study suggests a strong relationship in terms of marital status and absenteeism level - this may be due to a direct relationship with the number of children each single employee has. Or is it?

Upon examination of this possibility no of days absent by number of children a Chi-Square significance level of .58789 is shown showing no strong relationship. Therefore it must be surmised that :

- Marital Status has a direct relationship with absenteeism level.
- Number of dependants does not have a bearing on this.
- Gender does not have a bearing on this.
- Highest levels of absence occur in the single status employee category.

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Previous research on the relationship between educational levels and absenteeism is inconclusive. The findings of this research suggest no relationship between these variables with a Chi-Square significance level of .99216. However a significant finding of this study suggests a strong relationship between gender and educational level - where females remain in the educational system to a higher level than their male counterparts.

	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary</i> <i>Unfinished</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Technical</i> <i>Unfinished</i>	<i>Technical</i>	<i>Vocational</i> <i>Unfinished</i>	<i>Vocational</i>	<i>University</i> <i>Unfinished</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Male</i>	2	6	7	1	5	2	2	1		3
<i>Female</i>		5	10			1	6	2	4	
<i>N/A</i>	1									

Table. 15

Chi-Square:	Value	DF	Significance		
Pearson:	36.59568	18	.00591		
Statistic	Value	ASEI	Val/ASEO	Approx. Sig.	
Pearson's R.:	.03484	.13913	.25089	.79514	

YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT

Research to date in this area has produced conflicting results (Metzner & Mann, 1953, Nicholson, Brown & Chadwick Jones 1976, O'Muircheartaigh 1975). The findings of this study suggests no strong relationship in this area with a Chi-Square significance level of .93410.

MEDICAL CONDITION

The findings of this research indicates no strong relationship between medical condition and absenteeism level with a significance level of .45150. It is therefore suggested that the absenteeism levels within Network Catering are not adversely affected by personnel who have medical conditions which prohibit them from attending in the workplace on occasion. As 90% of the absences in Network Catering are covered by medical certificates it is suggested that common

sickness has more of a bearing on the absenteeism levels than acknowledged medical conditions.

DOMESTIC PROBLEM

The findings of this study suggests a strong relationship between absenteeism level and domestic problems (Question 39.1) with a Chi-Square significance level of .00876.

Domestic Problem by Number of Days Absent

	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	N/A
N/A	7						1
Domestic Problem							

Table. 16

<u>Chi-Square</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Significance</u>	
Pearson:	17.14571	6	.00876	
<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>ASEI</u>	<u>Val/ASEO</u>	<u>Approx. Sig.</u>
Pearson's R.:	-.00608	.10197	-.04554	.96384

Job Satisfaction

Under this heading the following areas will be addressed:

- a) Employee Control
- b) Employee Participation
- c) Satisfaction with Pay
- d) Lack of Interest

EMPLOYEE CONTROL

The findings of this study suggests no relationship between employee control and absenteeism level with a Chi-Square significance level of .89825. This is not consistent with the findings of O'Muircheartaigh who suggests that a relationship exists between these variables.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

The findings of this study suggests that there is no relationship between employee participation and absenteeism level, with the Chi-Square significance level of .89573. However this area was included in the study as a Joint Participation Council exists within Network Catering and the relationship between participation and absenteeism level was of significant interest.

SATISFACTION WITH PAY

The findings of this study suggests no relationship between satisfaction with pay and absenteeism level with a significance level of .87079. This is an interesting finding as it had been commonly perceived by management (interviews Chapter. 4) that pay levels had a direct relationship with absenteeism.

LACK OF INTEREST

The findings in this regard suggest a very strong relationship between lack of interest and absenteeism level. There have been no studies conducted previously in this area from which comparisons can be made with this finding.

Lack of Interest by Number of Days Absent

	0-4	5-9	10-14	14-19	20-24	25-29	N/A	Total	% Total
<i>N/A</i>	29	6	8	1		1	11	56	96.6
<i>Lack of Interest</i>					1		1	2	3.4

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance	
Pearson:	30.46726	6	.00003	
Statistic	Value	ASEI	Val/ASEO	Approx. Sig.
Pearson's R.:	.23889	.10990	1.84097	.07092

Organisational Factors

Under this heading the following area will be addressed:

- a) Size of Work Group
- b) Satisfaction with Work in general
- c) Satisfaction with supervision

SIZE OF WORKGROUP

Research to date has shown a relationship between size of work and absenteeism level. The findings of this research indicates no relationship between absenteeism and number of personnel in the work group with a Chi-Square significance level of .51803. However in this context this finding supports the views of the management team where they have suggested that there is a lack of team spirit amongst employees - if a strong team spirit existed one could anticipate a strong relationship between size of work group and absenteeism level with

lower absenteeism levels in smaller work group where work colleagues would have commitment and loyalty to each other.

SATISFACTION WITH WORK IN GENERAL

The findings of this research suggests no strong relationship between satisfaction with work in general and absenteeism levels with a significance level of .32094. To further analyse this finding cross tabulations were conducted with absenteeism level and all areas deemed to have a bearing on work in general:

<i>Variables Cross Tabulated with Absenteeism Level</i>	<i>Chi-Square Significance Level</i>
Shiftwork	.86855
Good Working Relationship	.44067
Free from harassment	.69828
Permanent Position	.21782
Rating Job Security	.16125
Satisfaction with contract of employment	.16595
Promotion Prospect	.11348

Table. 18

This analysis provided support for the suggestion that there is no strong relationship between satisfaction with work in general and absenteeism level.

SATISFACTION WITH SUPERVISION

Findings suggest no strong relationship between satisfaction levels with supervision and absenteeism level, with a Chi-Square significance level of .46233 found for satisfaction with the level of supervision for the job

and a significance of .30235 found for satisfaction with supervision within the company when cross tabulated with actual absenteeism level.

Time / Place Factors

Under this heading the following areas will be addressed:

- a) Day of the week
- b) Season of the year
- c) Travel distance from work
- d) Mode of travel to the workplace
- e) Social event occurring

DAY OF THE WEEK

Research to date has been conclusive in suggesting a relationship between absence and the day of the week. (O'Muircheartaigh 1975; Behrend, 1979; IBEC 1993) The research findings from this study suggests no strong relationship between these variables with a significance level of the multi response cross tabulation showing as follows:

Variables Cross Tabulated with Absenteeism Level	Significance Level
Sat	.98494
Sun	-
Mon.	.18403
Tues.	.98494
Wed	.65152
Thurs.	.69013
Fri	.18403

Perhaps an explanation for this may be that Network Catering is a seven day operation and the typical 'Monday Blues' scenario may exist on a Wednesday for an employee whose official day off is Tuesday.

SEASON OF THE YEAR

The findings of this research suggests no relationship between the variable of season of the year and absenteeism level with a Chi-Square significance level of .96303.

Previous research in this area had suggested a relationship exists between Winter and absenteeism level (Taylor, 1973, O'Muirheartaigh 1975) This is not consistent with the results of this study which is further supported by the qualitative analysis of absenteeism levels in the case study in Chapter 4.

TRAVEL DISTANCE FROM WORK

The findings of this study suggests no direct relationship between travel distance from work and absenteeism level with a Chi-Square significance level of .96851. This is consistent with previous research in that area (Bryson, 1968 Taylor, 1973).

MODE OF TRAVEL TO THE WORKPLACE

An analysis of the results of this survey shows no significant relationship between mode of travel and absenteeism level.

Variables Cross Tabulated with Absenteeism Level	Significance Levels
Walk	.88491
Cycle	.58976
Car	.91897
Motorcycle	No Level Available
Public Transport	.63168
Other	.65152

Table. 20

This is not consistent with previous research which suggested a relationship existed in this regard. (Bryson 1968, Taylor 1973) Further analysis of this variable with public transport available and public transport available within walking distance of the home showed no relationship with significance levels of .99816 and .79375 for those categories.

SOCIAL EVENT OCCURRING

Findings from this research suggests a strong relationship between social event occurring and absenteeism level.

	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 -	15 -	20 -	25 -	N/A	Total	% Total
			14	19	24	29			
NA	26	5	8	1		1	12	53	91.4
Social Event Occurring	3	1			1			5	8.6

Table. 21

<u>Chi-Square</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Significance</u>	
Pearson:	13.27799	6	.03883	
<u>Statistic</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>ASEI</u>	<u>Val/ASEO</u>	<u>Approx. Sig.</u>
Pearson's R.:	-.11590	.08121	-.87318	.38629

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS IN RELATION TO FACTORS THAT SEEM TO HAVE A BEARING ON ABSENTEEISM

- * Marital Status - Single employees have higher absenteeism levels.
- * Domestic Problem - A significance level of .00876 suggests a very strong relationship between domestic problems and absenteeism levels.
- * Lack of interest - A significance level of .0003 indicates a very strong relationship between lack of interest and absenteeism level.
- * Social event occurring - A significance level of .03883 suggests a very strong relationship with absenteeism levels.

Chapter 8 : Conclusion

This research has investigated the phenomenon of absenteeism. The focus of the study was concerned with the management of absenteeism in the workplace and establishing the true causes and influencing factors on absenteeism.

The first part of the study tested the hypothesis that management control of attendance in the workplace will curb or reduce absenteeism. A case study was conducted for this purpose.

The second part of the study in addition to testing the hypothesis explored the causes and influencing factors on absenteeism in the workplace, an area which has been neglected in recent research in this topic area.

The findings described in this study support the hypothesis of the research question, that management's control of attendance in the workplace will curb or reduce absenteeism. However as a result of an analysis of the research findings, a number of shortcomings have been identified in the management of absenteeism in Network Catering. These will be outlined later in this chapter.

Rather than restate the contents of this study afresh, the key points are summarised as follows:

Absenteeism

- A National definition on what is meant by the term absenteeism is of utmost importance to this topic
- Absenteeism levels need to be monitored and measured if they are to

be controlled.

- A high absenteeism level has direct and indirect costs for the organisation.
- The cost of absenteeism to the organisation should be calculated in order to realise the extent of the problem.
- Costs are borne by the individual, the organisation, the exchequer and the overall economy as a result of absenteeism.
- The Main causes for absenteeism can be categorised under the following headings
 - Personal Factors
 - Organisational Factors
 - Job Satisfaction
 - Time / Place Factors

Control of Absenteeism

- Absenteeism has to be managed in order for it to be controlled.
- Recording, Analysis, Feedback and Action forms the basis for management's control of absenteeism.
- All literature surveyed is unanimous in agreement that the management of attendance in the workplace will curb or reduce absenteeism levels.
- There are many different strategies that can be used in the organisation to reduce absenteeism. These may be surmised under the headings of control strategies, preventative strategies or a combination of both control and preventative strategies.

The Case Study

- An attendance control programme containing a control strategy and prevention strategy was implemented in an organisation.

- The programme was implemented in 1996 and comparisons of absenteeism levels in the absence of (1995) and presence of (1996) the formal programme were made.
- The absenteeism levels did decline in 1996 where the formal programme had been implemented, although this decline was only marginal (0.44% per period).
- An analysis of the results discovered the following:
 - the attendance programme had not been implemented effectively and consistently.
 - there was inconsistent monitoring of the attendance levels by managers, consequently some problematic absentees had not been identified and as a result has not participated on the programme.
 - the absence of a personnel function within Network Catering was identified as a shortcoming. There was no programme controller and managers individually had responsibility to identify absentees and administer the programme in their area of responsibility.
 - the programme was acknowledged by all managers interviewed to have the potential to reduce absenteeism. There was unanimous agreement that its major shortcoming was at the follow through - implementation stage.

The Survey

The significant findings of the survey are surmised as follows:

Employees Perceptions and Involvement in the Attendance Programme:

- Findings suggest that absentees rarely receive a verbal warning in relation to absenteeism

- It is suggested that absentees rarely receive a written warning in relation to absenteeism.
- The fear of recrimination dissuades nearly 50% of personnel from being absent.
- The results of this study show that few people who participated on the attendance programme found it encouraging.

Factors that have a bearing on Absenteeism:

- Single employees are most absence prone than those of any other marital status.
- Lack of interest in the job was discovered to be a major factor in relation to absenteeism.
- Domestic problems were highlighted as a reason as to why absences occur.
- A social event occurring has been suggested as a common cause of absence.

Proposals

- The Attendance Programme has the potential to decrease absenteeism but needs to be applied effectively, consistently and unanimously department wide if absenteeism levels are to be reduced.
- Specific responsibility for absenteeism control should be assigned to one individual.
- Consistent monitoring of absenteeism levels on an individual employee basis is required.

- Information on absenteeism levels for individual employees should be circulated to the relevant manager and supervisor to ensure the absentee is dealt with in accordance with the programme.
- Absentees who have been identified as having an absenteeism problem should be given a verbal warning in this regard and a written warning if no improvement is evident in attendance levels after the verbal warning.
- The benefits of the Attendance Programme needs to be positively communicated to all personnel.
- Participants on the programme should be asked after each review session did they find the meeting encouraging. If it is found that they do not find the programme encouraging, ascertain why it is not encouraging and react accordingly.
- Employees should be encouraged to take more interest in their positions and a reward system for this commitment is recommended.
- The possibility of employees ringing in for an urgent days annual leave should be considered. This may alleviate the absenteeism problem caused by domestic problems when employees presently ring in sick for this reason.
- Finally to deal with the contributory factor to absenteeism of social event occurring - employees should be encouraged to take their annual leave entitlement and facilitation of their applications should be made where at all possible in this regard. An analysis of all attendance records shows that in some cases individual employees took no annual leave within the time span of a year but had days lost though absenteeism within that time period.
- In conclusion - all areas of attendance need to be managed by all managers and supervisors within the department to ensure that absenteeism levels decline.

Suggestions for Further Research

The phenomenon of absenteeism is very broad and far reaching. Much research has been carried out in the topic area to date.

An area which may be considered for future research is to evaluate the influence increased worker flexibility would have on absenteeism levels.

Worker flexibility may be considered in terms of flexi-time, working from home and not always the office, job sharing etc.

It could be assumed that the greater flexibility the worker has - the lower the expected level of absenteeism. This hypothesis may be worthy of future research.

Appendix A

Please tick next to chosen answer:

1. Male _____
Female _____

2. Which of the following age categories applies to you?

16 - 25 _____

26 - 35 _____

36 - 45 _____

46 - 55 _____

56 - 65 _____

3. Are you ?

Single _____

Married _____

Separated _____

Widowed _____

Divorced _____

Other _____

Please specify _____

4. What religion do you subscribe to if any ?

Roman Catholic _____

Church of Ireland _____

Methodist _____

Jewish _____

Presbyterian _____

No religion _____

Other _____

Please specify _____

5. How many children do you have ?

0 _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

6. At what stage did you leave the educational system ?

Primary unfinished _____

Primary _____

Secondary unfinished _____

Secondary _____

Technical unfinished _____

Technical _____

Vocational unfinished _____

Vocational _____

University unfinished _____

University _____

7. How long have you been employed in the catering department ?

0 – 13 Weeks _____

14 Weeks – 2 Years _____

3 – 5 Years _____

6 – 9 Years _____

10 – 13 Years _____

Over 14 Years _____

8. Do you have any medical condition(s) which prohibit you from attending at work on occasions ?

Yes _____

Please Specify _____

No _____

9. Which of the following categories best describe your position ?

Part Time _____

Full Time _____

Temporary _____

Contract for specified time _____

Other _____

Please Specify _____

10. Is your wage the sole source of income within your household ?

Yes _____

No _____

11. Do you qualify for FIS ?
(Family Income Support)

Yes _____

No _____

12. How would you rate the level of employee control within Network Catering?

High _____

Fairly High _____

Average _____

Low _____

Very Low _____

Don't know _____

13. How would you rate the level of employee participation within Network Catering ?

High _____

Fairly High _____

Average _____

Low _____

Very Low _____

Don't know _____

14. How would you rate your level of pay ?

Very Satisfactory _____

Satisfactory _____

Average _____

Unsatisfactory _____

Very unsatisfactory _____

15. Are you satisfied with your work in general ?

Yes _____

No _____

15(a). What do you like most about your job ?

15(b). What do you dislike most about your job ?

16. Do you ever get feedback on your work performance ?

Yes _____

No _____

17. Are you satisfied with the level of supervision for your job ?

Yes _____

No _____

18. Are you satisfied with the level of supervision with the company ?

Yes _____

No _____

Don't know _____

19. Do you earn the same amount of money if present or absent from work?

Yes _____

No _____

Don't know _____

20. Do you ever use the self certification system if absent from work?

Yes _____

No _____

21. Does your position require you to work shift ?

Yes _____

No _____

22. How many people work with you in your section / crew ?

0 _____

1 - 3 _____

4 - 7 _____

8 - 11 _____

12 - 15 _____

More than 16 _____

23. How many days approximately were you absent from work in 1996 ?

24. Have you ever received a verbal warning due to absence ?

Yes _____

No _____

25. Have you ever received a written warning due to absence ?

Yes _____

No _____

26. Do you believe that the attendance programme within Network Catering encourages you to attend work?

Yes _____

No _____

Don't know _____

27. Does the monthly attendance draw encourage you to attend work ?

Yes _____

No _____

28. Would the fear of recrimination dissuade you from ringing in sick?

Yes _____

No _____

Don't know _____

29. Do you always get a medical certificate if absent from work ?

Yes _____

No _____

Not applicable _____

30. Have you ever been a participant on the attendance programme ?

Yes _____

No _____

31. Do you know what our current absenteeism % is ?

Yes _____

No _____

32. Do you think absenteeism is high in Network Catering ?

Yes _____

No _____

33. If you were absent from work indicate on which day this absence is most likely to occur ?

Sat _____

Sun _____

Mon _____

Tues _____

Wed _____

Thurs _____

Fri _____

Don't know _____

34. Is there any season that you are more likely to be absent in ?

Spring _____

Summer _____

Autumn _____

Winter _____

Not applicable _____

35. Where do you live ?

In a large city (population over 100,00) _____

In a city (population 50,000.- 90,000) _____

In a large town (population 30,000 - 49,000) _____

In a town (population 10,000 - 29,000) _____

In a village (population 1,000 - 9,000) _____

In a the countryside _____

36. How far do you live from your place of work ?

(Domicile to workplace)

0 – 2 miles _____

3 – 5 miles _____

6 – 9 miles _____

10 – 13 miles _____

Further _____

37. Is there public transport available from you home to the workplace?

Yes _____ See Q.37(a)

No _____

38. What means of transport do you use to come to work ?

(Tick as many as apply)

Walk _____

Cycle _____

Car _____

Motorcycle _____

Public Transport _____

Other _____

Please specify _____

39. If you have ever rang in sick please indicate if any of the following reasons would account for any of your absences ?

(Tick as many as apply)

Domestic Problem _____

Weather _____

Social event occurring _____

Lack of transport to work _____

Overslept _____

Other _____

Please specify _____

40. Have you ever used sickness as a reason for absence when this was not the sole reason?

Yes _____

No _____

41. Are you satisfied with your holiday entitlement ?

Yes _____

No _____

42. If other members of Network Catering are frequently absent do you feel entitled to be absent too ?

Yes _____

No _____

43. Do you have a good working relationship with your colleagues ?

Yes _____

No _____

44. Are you free from harassment in the workplace ?

Yes _____

No _____

45. Do you have a permanent position in Network Catering ?

Yes _____

No _____

45(a). How do you rate your position in terms of job security ?

Very secure _____

Fairly secure _____

Don't know _____

Fairly insecure _____

Unsecure _____

46. Do you have any of the following interests outside the workplace ?

Hobbies _____

Evening course _____

Sport _____

Socialising _____

Charity work _____

Other _____

Please specify _____

47. Are you satisfied with your contract of employment ?

Yes _____

No _____

48. If you are married is your partner working ?

Yes _____

No _____

49. How many people are dependant on your income ?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 or more _____

50. How would you rate promotion prospects within Network

Catering?

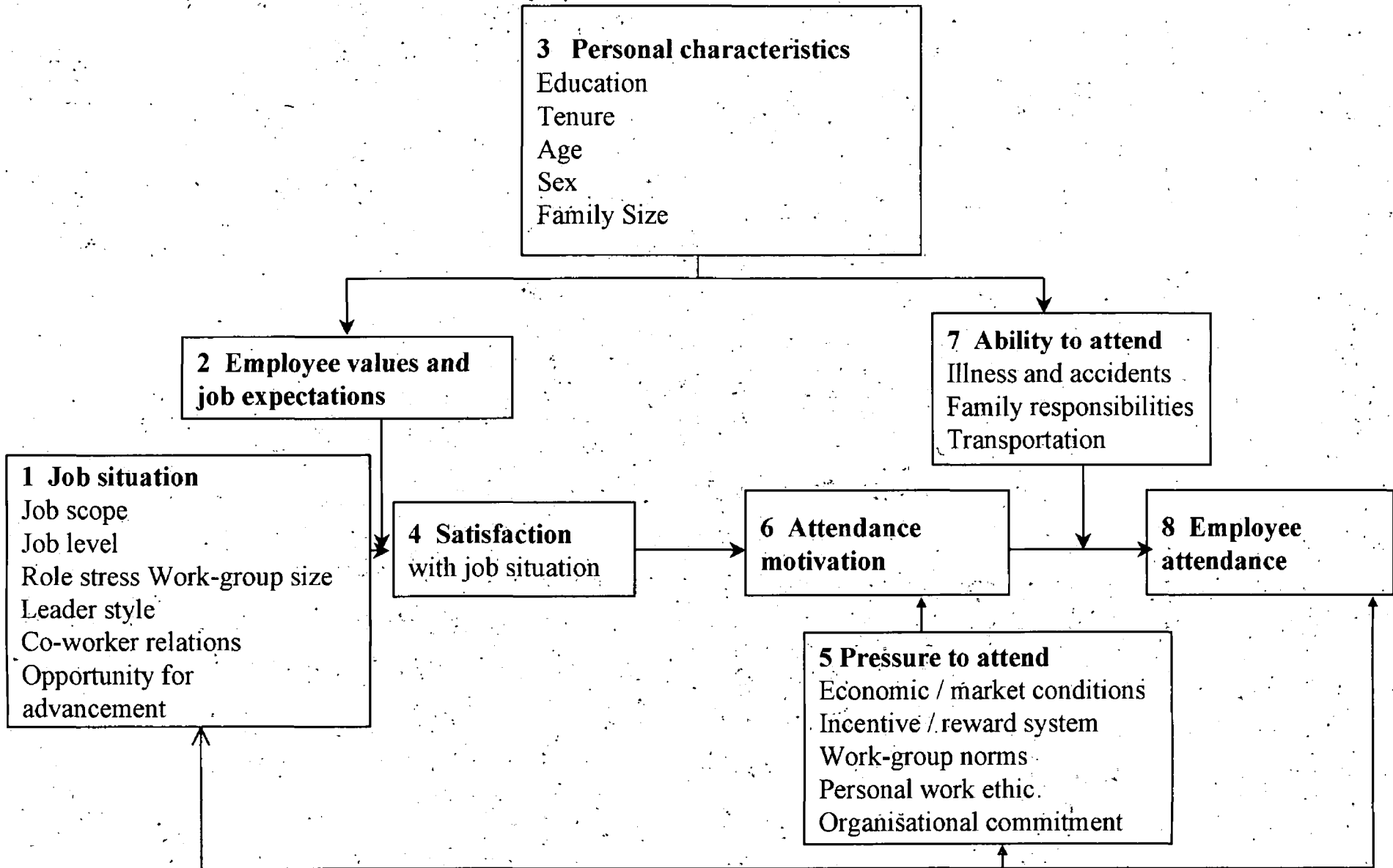
Excellent _____

Very good _____

Good _____

Poor _____

Very poor _____



Appendix C

**Letter from Supervisor or Manager
Invitation to meeting
First Review of Attendance**

Date:

Employee:

Dear

It has been noted that your attendance record over the past indicates an unacceptable level of absence. Details of the number and duration of absences are outlined below.

It is now necessary to meet you in order to ascertain how this situation can be resolved. Accordingly please attend at on If you wish, you may invite your trade union representative or a colleague to accompany you to this meeting.

Yours etc.

Appendix D

**Letter from Supervisor or Manager
Invitation to attend Company Doctor**

Date:

Employee:

Dear

I am sorry to note your current illness absence since.....(date)

As you can appreciate, your continued absence makes it necessary to consider appropriate re-scheduling of work in order that the service of this department can be maintained. To this end, I would be most glad if you would contact me to let me know when you estimate you will be fit to return to work. If you feel that you will not be in a position to return to work by..... (date) you should contact me to arrange a suitable date for an appointment to visit the Chief Medical Officer. This is in order to establish if continued medical supervision or treatment will be necessary and to establish an approximate return work date. This is in accordance with the agreed attendance monitoring programme.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you fit for early return.

Yours etc.

Appendix E

Letter from Supervisor or Manager

**To Employees who still have
An Attendance Problem
Following their first review**

Date:

Employee:

Dear

It has been noted that your absenteeism record has shown no major improvement since our last meeting. Details of the number and duration of absences are outlined below.

I would like to meet you in order to ascertain how this situation can be resolved, accordingly please attend aton..... At this meeting you may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a colleague.

Yours etc.

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